



# Negation in Baroja

A KEY TO HIS NOVELISTIC CREATIVITY

LEO L. BARROW



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA PRESS  
TUCSON ARIZONA

## *Preface*

DON PIO BAROJA — Don, in this case, is charged with the affection and respect Spaniards feel for this eccentric, sincere, and very human writer who stands easily in the company of Spain's greatest novelists, Cervantes and Galdós. Many English readers share these sentiments, and writers like Hemingway and Dos Passos have been generous in their praise of el maestro Don Pío.

Probably more of his books have been translated into English than those of any other Spanish author except Blasco Ibáñez whose popular and sensational literature has not stood the test of time. Also there have been scores of books published about Baroja, dealing with his life, his political thought, and his style, but thus far no significant volume of a critical nature published in English.

Baroja himself writes with a clarity and precision that leave no need for critical aid to understand. Nevertheless readers of his novels often feel more is there than they see at first glance — an extra something that they have trouble putting into words. There is indeed an extra something. Understanding of it may hopefully provide the key to Baroja's creativity and how he worked, leading in turn not only to fuller appreciation of this novelist but of others in the so-called "Generation of 98."

This generation derives its name from the date of Spain's defeat in the Spanish American War. The loss of the last of Spain's once great empire caused writers and intellectuals to take a new and hard look at Spain and reappraise her values. They rejected Spain's old values of God, King, and Country, her old traditions and myths — the Don Juan myth for example — the old Cervantine style, and, each in his own way, embarked on a quest for the essence of Spain, of the Spaniard, and finally of man himself. Azorín coined the name, but it is the concept of negation

which binds these disparate writers together as the "Generation of 98." Also this was a generation that resisted being tagged or classified. Baroja himself objected to generic classification of his work. Application of the timeworn labels used to describe literature will not serve — almost by definition — to instruct the reader on the aims and methods of Baroja and his contemporaries.

Among the many critics of Spanish literature interested in Baroja, a large number have concerned themselves with his life, believing that knowledge of the creator leads to understanding of what has been created. Yet it is a truism — in Spanish a *perogrullada* — that the study of an author's life is *not* a substitute for a study of his works, effective though biography is in casting sidelights.

Study of Baroja's works as distinct from his life has largely been confined to articles, essays, and reviews, in newspapers and journals. An exception might be Juan Uribe Echevarría's *Pío Baroja: técnica, estilo, personajes*. But the attempt to compress the three elements of Baroja's voluminous and unorthodox work into 160 pages eliminated in this instance the possibility of comprehensive treatment.

Among articles, García Mercadal's anthology of magazine pieces about Baroja and his works has been a considerable contribution (José García Mercadal, *Baroja en el banquillo*. Zaragoza: Librería General, 1947). A number of other short pieces have served to stimulate interest in Baroja, but they have been limited in space and time.

On a comparative basis, the critics who have studied several members of the Generation of 98 in one work have made a valuable contribution — pointing out similarities and differences among these writers. Such works include Laín Entralgo's *La Generación del 98*, Hans Jeschke's *La Generación de 1898 en España*, Díaz-Plaja's *Modernismo frente a 98*, and César Barja's *Libros y autores contemporáneos*.

However this collective approach permits no concentrated study of any one phase of any one author's work. Yet it is in concentrated study of a single phase that a key is often found to the unique creativity of a particular writer or a literary period.

This study, therefore, proceeds in terms of a hypothesis generated by a single phase: the belief that there is an intimate and vital relationship between negation and literary creativity in many twentieth-century authors, and specifically in the members of the Generation of 98. Applied to Baroja, the hypothesis calls for investigation of the role that negation has played in his creativity as a novelist.

A comprehensive study of negation should reveal with clarity those values that Baroja has retained, throwing them into relief through a process of elimination of the values rejected. It is hoped also that the

study may make the reader more aware of Baroja's efforts to isolate, penetrate, and portray novelistically the essence of humanity.

From an investigation of limited scope, there is hope for findings of greater depth; hope also of inspiring additional single-phase studies, their results eventually combining in a portrait of Baroja's creativity that should be significant in detail as well as truthful in outline.

José Camilo Cela calls for this type of phase-by-phase contribution in his *Recuerdo de don Pío Baroja*:

For Pío Baroja I would like to ask — and precisely here and at this time — the homage of our dedication. If each one of us, according to our strength and our true knowledge and understanding, takes up our pen and sketches a corner of our man and of his characters, we will have contributed jointly to raising something much more enduring — and much more serious also — than a statue. At this moment, all of us feel that Don Pío Baroja deserves it. The important thing is for us not to weaken. Ladies and gentlemen, let's get to work! (México: Ediciones de Andrea, 1958.)

In the following pages, therefore, negation will be studied as a fundamental aspect of Baroja's style, showing forth in his dialogue, his creation of atmosphere, his revelation of character and delineation of minor characters, his evocation of landscape, his poetical interpretation of all these phases, and finally his total novelistic world.

Among the primary aims will be to determine the extent to which negation is used; its relationship to Baroja's theory of the novel; its importance relative to the totality of his production, and finally, how and why negation is used at all.

In each chapter the method will include four main parts: an objective starting point, a listing of negative or creative factors involved; examples of these factors, and corroboration of them by Baroja and his critics. Application of the method will vary in detail with the varying material in the chapters. In most cases a comparison will be the objective starting point, but in one chapter a basic idea found in Granjel's *Retrato de Pío Baroja* will serve the same purpose. In each chapter, examples of the major factors of negation in Baroja will be taken from each of the four decades of his novelistic production. This division into decades is arbitrary — a pragmatic ordering of a large mass of novelistic material, possible because of the overall consistency of Baroja's work.

In a study thus ordered, one may hope to trace a continuity of artistic devices in Baroja's writing. There should emerge also a basis for comparison, not only between Baroja and other members of the Generation of 98, but between this Spaniard and twentieth-century novelists in the English language, for some of whom negation has seemed almost a *modus operandi* — such writers as Sherwood Anderson, Hemingway, and John

Dos Passos. It is in the interest of these broader applications by students of comparative literature that the passages from Baroja's novels and the comments from his Spanish critics are presented here in English translation. For the most effective exposure to Baroja's style there is of course no substitute for reading and re-reading the novels themselves in the original Spanish.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BRINGING INTO EXISTENCE a book about an author as prolific and profound as Pío Baroja requires a lot of reading, some serious thought about oneself and mankind in general, and considerable patience. Along the way one encounters a number of people, in person or through correspondence, who know and admire, or discover and admire, Don Pío Baroja. These people have helped the writer in his research and encouraged him in his writing. I am grateful to all those who so generously helped me and so willingly extended to me the honor and pleasure of their intellectual and human friendship.

Here is a partial list of those who have contributed to the publication of a book which should shed some light on what Don Pío Baroja had to say about mankind and how he said it: the Graduate College Research Committee of the University of Arizona gave me a grant to do research at Baroja's personal library in Itzea, Spain, in the summer of 1967. My research there and my lengthy and fascinating talks with Baroja's nephew, Don Julio Caro Baroja, provided a wealth of additional information and spurred me on to the completion of the book. Since that time the committee has sponsored me in a number of research projects, even though publication of the final results has been painstakingly slow. This manifests, I believe, the committee's firm conviction that original research, aside from publication, produces better teaching and more knowledgeable and enthusiastic guidance.

Don Julio Caro Baroja deserves special thanks for permission to quote without restriction from Baroja's works and for the wealth of information and insight he gave me about his uncle, Don Pío Baroja.

Marshall Townsend, director of the University of Arizona Press, and Elizabeth Shaw, associate editor who has done most of the editorial work on the book, deserve special credit, first for believing in the book — the *sine qua non* of publication — and then for working hard to make it more meaningful and readable for people who don't know Spanish.

The difficult problem of designing pages for adjacent Spanish and English text was well solved by Doug Peck, production manager of the Press.

I thank the following writers and publishers for permission to quote from their works: José Suárez Carreño, *Las últimas horas*, Ediciones Destino, S. L.; Joseph Conrad, *Three Great Tales*, Random House, Inc.; Ortega y Gasset, *Obras Completas*, W. W. Norton Company, Inc.; Juan Uribe Echevarría, *Pío Baroja, técnica, estilo, personajes*, Ediciones de los Anales; Camilo José Cela, *Recuerdo de don Pío Baroja* and *La colmena*, Editorial Noguer, S. A.; Marguerite Rand, *Castilla en Azorín*, Revista de Occidente; Carlos Bousoño (my professor at the University of Madrid to whom I owe a considerable debt for the formation of my own *modus operandi* for literary criticism) *Teoría de la expresión poética*, Editorial Gredos; Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*, Viking Press; Luis Granjel, *Retrato de Pío Baroja*, Editorial Barna; García Mercadal, *Baroja en el banquillo*, Librería General; R. W. B. Lewis, *The Picaresque Saint*, J. B. Lippincott Company; James Joyce, *Dubliners*, The Viking Press.

LEO L. BARROW

## 1. *Introduction*

*Esas tardes del Retiro,  
en pleno mes de noviembre,  
me dan la impresión romántica  
de un mundo que desfallece.<sup>1</sup>*

BAROJA'S NOVELS, like the November afternoons in the Retiro, give the impression of a world that is dying; their total impact is pessimistic and antivital. The feelings, ideas, and sensations received from reading and studying his novels are quite different from those produced by literary artists of other times. Reading Cervantes, one is somehow filled with a great enthusiasm for life and with an indomitable courage and faith to master all its obstacles. Adventure stories of the past century, such as those of Melville and Poe, awaken the reader's desires for adventure, and arouse an optical avidity for new and strange lands. The gentle creaking of the timbers and the rolling of Vasco da Gama's ship as it gets under way makes of the most sedate reader an explorer and conqueror of new worlds. These novels, adventure stories, and epics whet the appetite for a more intense participation in life.

Baroja's novels produce the opposite effect. The world Baroja creates fills the reader's sensibility with a sense of dejection and lifelessness, making him more critical and pessimistic.

R. W. B. Lewis has stated, "Twentieth Century literature began on the note of death."<sup>2</sup> The line refers to the first story in *Dubliners* by James Joyce. It could have easily referred to Pío Baroja's first novel, *La casa de Aizgorri*, published in 1900. Don Lucio, master of the house of Aizgorri, is dying, and the atmosphere of the entire novel centers around his death. James Joyce's Father Flynn and Pío Baroja's Don Lucio become symbols of the paralytic dying world of the Twentieth Century depicted by so many writers. From the beginning of the century the world has been depicted thus. "And the world or Europe or some fragment of Europe or

America is depicted thereafter as maleficent and sinful, paralyzed and dying," continues R. W. B. Lewis.<sup>3</sup> He adds that the very titles of works such as *Death in Venice* and *The Wasteland* suggest the fascination and the importance of death in the literature of our century. Baroja's titles, *Las agonías de nuestro tiempo* and *César o nada* are as suggestive. Ernest Hemingway, self-confessed debtor to Baroja in the art of writing,<sup>4</sup> was fascinated by titles and themes dealing with death. According to Auerbach, such writers as Joyce, Proust, and Virginia Woolf show a hostility to the reality that surrounds them and a tendency to turn away from the will to live.<sup>5</sup> For writers quite different from Joyce, Proust, and Thomas Mann — for Camus, Silone, Moravia, Faulkner, and Graham Greene, death and negation of their world also have played an important role.<sup>6</sup>

The pall of death and devitalization in Baroja's novels links them to the works of the aforementioned writers of our century. These same qualities weld his works to the writers of Baroja's own generation. The most cursory of glances at the literary production of a group of writers later to be known as the "Generation of 98"<sup>7</sup> will show their intense preoccupation with the twilight hours of life. The poetry of Antonio Machado, the languishing and abulic world of Azorín, the frequency of executions, suicides, and macabre scenes in Valle-Inclán and Unamuno, are enough to suggest the important role of death in this generation.

Negation nourishes the spiritual, intellectual, and philosophical roots of the Generation of 98. The Krausista movement in Spain and later the Institución Libre de Enseñanza stand as overt manifestations of the tendency to question, criticize, and reevaluate some of the traditional Spanish values. Indications of the denial of the status quo in Spain are found also in the writings of Echegaray, Campoamor, and Galdós, according to Azorín: "Unite then, the passionate cry of Echegaray, the subversive sentimentalism of Campoamor, and Galdós' vision of reality, and you will have the factors that were to be embodied in the Generation of 1898."<sup>8</sup> (A) These writers helped to set the stage for a literary creation impregnated with negation of the traditional values of Spain and Spanish life.

In the year 1898, defeat in the war with the United States and the loss of the last of the holdings of Spain's once great colonial empire made the Generation of 98 fully aware of the existence of a Spain and a Spanish way of life they could no longer accept. Thus the tendency to question, to criticize, to be preoccupied over the problems of Spain, to deny many of its traditional values, became general, or as Azorín expressed it, "A spirit of protest, of rebellion, animated the youth of 1898. Ramiro de Maeztu wrote impetuous and flaming articles, tearing down traditional values and manifesting his eager desire for a new and powerful Spain."<sup>9</sup> (B) The critical, questioning attitude seemed to be one of the few things that the members of this so-called generation had in common.

As one critic expressed it, "No matter how singular those individual attitudes might be, they were all similar in one fundamental note: they all began negatively with a violent rejection of the historical Spanish life then in progress."<sup>10</sup> (C) Alfonso El Sabio's sweeping praise of Spain, "¡Ay, Espanna, non a lengua nin engenno que pueda contar tu bien!" (Oh! Spain, no tongue nor wit can tell of your greatness!), was turned into an all-encompassing criticism of contemporary Spain. Every facet of Spanish life — religion, pedagogy, politics, philosophy, sociology, etc. — was criticized. This group of young Spanish writers, influenced perhaps by the tragic outcome of the war, was forced to view its world through the same critical lenses used by Joyce, Proust, Mann, Camus, Silone, Faulkner, and Hemingway.

More important for placing Baroja within the currents of literature, the novel of his day, especially, is the consideration of the answer given by each artist to the hopeless and dying world that surrounded him. R. W. B. Lewis has set up a useful dichotomy between the answers given by what he calls the first generation — Proust, Thomas Mann, Virginia Woolf — and the second generation: Moravia, Camus, Pietro Spina, Faulkner. The difference pointed out between the two generations gives insight into one of the basic directions and purposes of Baroja's novels. Referring to the first generation, Lewis states, "For the latter, perhaps the simplest adjective would be 'artistic.'"<sup>11</sup> For the second generation his key adjective is quite different:

But for the world of Silone and Camus, of Faulkner and Moravia and Greene and Malraux, perhaps the best single word is "human." It is a world in which the chief experience has been the discovery of what it means to be a human being and to be alive.<sup>12</sup>

Lewis points out just what form this humanity takes in each individual author and work. In each of the novelists of the second generation, the answer to the dying, negative world that surrounds him is a human

---

(A) Unid, pues, el grito de pasión de Echegaray al sentimentalismo subversivo de Campoamor y a la visión de realidad de Galdós, y tendréis los factores de un estado de conciencia que había de encarnar en la generación de 1898.<sup>8</sup>

(B) Un espíritu de protesta, de rebeldía, animaba a la juventud de 1898. Ramiro de Maeztu escribía impetuosos y ardientes artículos, en los que se destruían los valores tradicionales y se anhelaba una España nueva, poderosa.<sup>9</sup>

(C) Por muy singulares que sean estas actitudes individuales, todas ellas se asemejan en una nota fundamental: todas comienzan negativamente, por una violenta repulsa de la vida histórica española entonces en curso.<sup>10</sup>

answer. In Moravia the thing that gives meaning and humanity to such meaningless and inhuman things as money and politics is *eros*; in Ignazio Silone's works it is the power of human sympathy.

For the moment three observations can be made about Lewis' appraisal of these six authors. First, their worlds are still essentially pessimistic and retain a close relationship to death. Second, out of their negative and dying cosmos springs a hopeful reaffirmation of humanity and a sense of the meaning and direction one may give to life. Third, these reaffirmations are not all-encompassing but rather minute and carefully delimited values that have been salvaged meticulously from the chaos of the nihilistic ambients created by the authors.

These three observations could apply partially to the Generation of 98. Principally because of their spiritual origins, the worlds created by the literary artists of the Generation of 98 — by artists in different media as well, if one considers the painting of Zuloaga and others — could not be worlds of vital optimism. These creators began by criticizing many aspects of Spanish life; they sought new, more real values or a reaffirmation of the old. Out of their negative worlds come new values or old ones reaffirmed. These values and reaffirmations seem more carefully selected and more stringently delimited, as are those of the second generation mentioned by Lewis.

Criticism in Spanish letters has not pointed out all these new values and reaffirmations of the generations, but it is safe and reasonable to mention a few that have received notice from the very beginning. In keeping with the selectivity and delimitation already mentioned, some of the members of this generation have been noted for their interest in and keenly poetic portrayal of the minutiae of Spanish existence. With the broad concepts of Spain's *raison d'être* undergoing criticism and reevaluation, Valbuena Prat points out that many of these writers turned toward less grandiose, more immediate, and perhaps more tangible things for the substance of their literary creations.

In the face of an affirmative position towards the Spanish past and present, and the tendency toward generalization of commonplaces in the novel and criticism, one attunes his sensibilities to small details, to intimate self-communion, and adopts a critical attitude toward the Spanish problem.<sup>13</sup> (A)

One of the most positive of the new values and affirmations is the rediscovery of the Spanish landscape which becomes an integral part of the existence of the men of 98.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, an intimate and binding relationship exists between the negative dying worlds created by these authors and the very process of the artist's creativity. In all the novelists mentioned, and in many more of the twentieth century, the paralytic, agonizing world seems to become more than just the substance with which they must work or choose to

work. This world seems to become inextricably part of their creative *modus operandi*, a part of the style and form, as well as of the background. It is not difficult to observe many suggestive instances of indivisibility of form and content in the works of these writers. A glance of their vocabularies may suggest the possible validity of the conjecture. A few lines from one of Joyce's short stories in *Dubliners*, called "A Painful Case," indicate the role reiterative negation plays in the formal aspects of his prose.

He had neither companions nor friends, church nor creed. He lived his spiritual life without any communion with others, visiting his relatives at Christmas and escorting them to the cemetery when they died. He performed these two social duties for old dignity's sake but conceded nothing further to the conventions which regulate the civic life. He allowed himself to think that in certain circumstances he would rob his bank but, as these circumstances never arose, his life rolled out evenly — an adventureless tale.<sup>15</sup>

Carlos Baker has pointed out another use of negation in the creative technique of Ernest Hemingway.

Several other stories among the first forty-five — perhaps most notably the one called "A Way You'll Never Be" — engage the *nada*-concept. And whoever tries the experiment of reading "Big Two-Hearted River" immediately after "A Clean Well-Lighted Place" may discover, perhaps to his astonishment, that the *nada*-concept really serves as a frame for what is ostensibly one of Hemingway's happiest stories.<sup>16</sup>

In the Generation of 98 there are more definite guides to link the writers' negative conception of the world to the literary form of the conception. Hans Jeschke has outlined many of the negativistic attitudes of the Generation of 98 as reflected in the formal aspects of its literature. One such attitude is the rejection of the traditional Spanish sentence with its complex subordinate clauses and concomitant logical connectors. This was replaced by the simple or the coordinated sentence.<sup>17</sup> The vocabulary of the generation was specifically and drastically affected. Members of the generation often used an unintensified series of commas to produce a steady monotonous intonation. They were drawn irresistibly to negative words, words indicating the decadent, the crumbling, the infirm.<sup>18</sup> The frequent use of colors, principally black, white, and yellow, to suggest sadness and decadence, is another indication of the workings of this pessimism on author vocabulary.<sup>19</sup> In conclusion Hans Jeschke states:

---

(A) Frente a una posición afirmativa ante el pasado y presente españoles, y una tendencia a la generalización de tópicos en la novela y la crítica, se afina una sensibilidad del pequeño detalle, del íntimo recogimiento, y una postura crítica ante el problema español.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore the generation's abandonment of the traditional construction of sentences which, especially oriented towards a strong Latin syntax by Renaissance influences, was characterized by its artistic connecting words and phrases and its complex dependent clauses, didn't remain merely a theory but became a reality which they practiced. From a stylistic-esthetic point of view, the fact that the writers of 98 preferred the paratactic construction of sentences and avoided complex formations led to a new art of sentence construction typical of the generation. The sentences are no longer developed, as in the "pure Spanish style," in a well-balanced form with a pompously bombastic tone, but sometimes short and sometimes long, they follow one another in rapid and energetic succession and produce the strongest physis and rhythmic effects with their simple and uniform structure.<sup>20</sup> (A)

Because the strong feeling of death and negation in Baroja's novels relates him closely to other novelists of his century and more particularly to his fellow members of the Generation of 98, it seems worthwhile to search out and to study carefully and define the other tendencies common to the other writers of his day.

These writers were seeking an answer to what appeared to them as the inhuman chaos of their times. Their artistic creations, to a large degree, have been this answer. Spread falteringly and sporadically, but nevertheless penetratingly, throughout their works, in most cases is a human answer to the inhumanity that they felt surrounded them. Even those works that don't give an answer as such, those filled with nihilism and inhumanity, cry out for a touch of humanity they do not or cannot possess. In some of these authors the answer takes a somewhat concrete and almost definable form; in others it remains esoterically ineffable. The answers frequently appear to be fractional; the human or esthetic values established in their works seem to be disconnected, minute, piecemeal, and without order. The values salvaged from the nihilistic cosmos of this generation seem to be flickerings of human truth that reflect a mere hope of man's salvation rather than a dogmatic assurance.

In none of these writers has the answer been given in capital letters on every page. In some cases, through a combination of careful study, appraisal, and intuition, the answer has been discovered and at least partially defined, although the nature of the problem tenaciously resists reduction and definition. Baroja too may have given a positive answer enveloped in the nihilistic world he created. The fact that Baroja's positive answer is not evident at first glance makes the effort to discover it more interesting and challenging.

The consideration of negation, not only as a basic element in the content of artistic works of our century, but also as a vital and directing force in their formal aspects (style and technique) is highly suggestive. Such critics as Carlos Baker and Hans Jeschke have prepared the way for more intense investigation of this in one twentieth century writer. Baroja stands almost without paragon in his ability to write pessimistic lines,

create nihilistic orbs, and to people them with quasi nonentities. The scope and penetration of his pessimism, the almost flawless consistency of his rejection of everything and everybody, makes his art potentially a rich field for such investigation. Paradoxically, the extremity of his negation almost assures finding the concealed positive. The systematic damnation of all ideologies presupposes some hidden spark of an ideal.

Negation as a key to the understanding of a literary art is not without literary precedent in Spanish letters. Américo Castro in his chapter on "El judío en la literatura y pensamiento españoles" suggests that the fundamental bitterness, lack of true faith, pessimistic attitude, and the desperate existence of the converted Jewish man of letters determined the form of his artistic production.<sup>21</sup>

The predilection for a negative, failing world is clearly marked in many of the contemporary novelists of Spain, who in several ways followed in Baroja's steps. The Madrid of 1942 represented in Camilo José Cela's novel *La colmena* is clearly such a world. This land also is peopled with quasi entities who spend the dead hours thinking "... vaguely, about that world that, alas! wasn't what it could have been, about that world in which everything has been slowly failing, without anybody being able to explain it, probably because of some insignificant little thing."<sup>22</sup> (B)

Many contemporary novels draw the greater part of their substance and their complete artistic ambience from nonpositive sources of Spanish life. To be counted among these are such works as *Nada* by Carmen Laforet, *Las últimas horas* by José Suárez Carreño and *La noria* by Luis Romero.<sup>23</sup>

Because the negative factor plays an important role in the contem-

(A) Por consiguiente, no siguió siendo mera teoría, sino que se realizó prácticamente, como acabo de mostrarlo, el abandono que hizo la generación de 1898 de la tradicional construcción de períodos que, especialmente orientada con fuerte sentido latino por las influencias renacentistas, se caracterizaba por sus artísticos encadenamientos y oraciones dependientes complejas. Desde un punto de vista estético-estilístico, el hecho de que los noventaiochistas, prefirieran la construcción paratáctica de los períodos y eludieran las formaciones oracionales complicadas, condujo a una nueva tectónica de las oraciones típicas de ellos. Las oraciones ya no se desarrollaban, como en el "estilo castizo," en una forma bien equilibrada de acento ampulosamente patético, sino que se siguen unas a otras ya más breves, ya más largas, en un cambio a veces rápido y enérgico y producen los más fuertes efectos anímicos y rítmicos con su estructura uniforme y sencilla.<sup>20</sup>

(B) "... vagamente, en ese mundo que, ¡ay!, no fué lo que pudo haber sido, en ese mundo en el que todo ha ido fallando poco a poco, sin que nadie se lo explicase, a lo mejor por una minucia insignificante."<sup>22</sup>



porary novels of Spain, Pérez Minik lists it as a primary requirement for the novelist:

We have already repeated several times, in the course of this debate, that the novel in order to be authentic must say "no" to the world that surrounds it. This "no" lends credence to its existence and individuality, force to the incitements received and reality to the critical answers emitted.<sup>24</sup>

Baroja assuredly is one of that group of writers who, as the first step in his creative process, said "no" to the world around him.

## 2. Style

COMPARISON OF A PAGE of prose written by one of Baroja's contemporaries and a page of prose by Baroja points the direction his prose style will take. Comparison and study in this chapter will be limited to certain formal and rather traditional aspects of style such as rhythm, vocabulary, sonority of words, figures of speech, syntax, sentences, and paragraphs.<sup>1</sup>

The comparison also indicates partially the devices used by Baroja and the devices he rejects in order to achieve his highly personal and individualistic style. A selection from one of Ricardo León's novels was chosen here because León's ideas about writing were diametrically opposed to those held by Baroja and many members of the Generation of 98. Ricardo León tried to imitate the style of the writers of the Golden Age of Spanish literature, as he states in his prologue to *El amor de los amores*.

And although it may not be in keeping with the humility of my project, already in an advanced stage, of coming out with a book of this kind — outside modern taste, contrary to the ideas and customs in use, cordial enemy of what they call life and art — I am pleased to have recourse to the canons and pragmatic sanctions of the Muses, taking for light, authority, and delightful company that of those greatest of all poets of the Golden Age who coined their medals in pure gold, in that noble metal of the language of Castile, so hard and so resistant to vile thoughts, so harmonious and soft for the divine die of chaste thoughts.<sup>2</sup> (A)

(A) Y aunque no se ajuste a la humildad mi propósito, llevado ya muy adelante, de salir con un libro de este jaez, fuera de los gustos modernos, contrario a las ideas y hábitos en uso, enemigo cordial de lo que llaman ahora vida y arte, soy servido de acogerme a los fueros y pragmáticas de las Musas, tomando por luz y autoridad y sabrosa compañía las de aquellos altísimos poetas del siglo de oro que en oro puro acuñaron sus medallas, en este noble metal de la lengua de Castilla, tan duro y tan rebelde a pensamientos viles, tan armonioso y blando para el troquel divino de los castos pensamientos.<sup>2</sup>

The selection that follows is from Ricardo León's *Casta de hidalgos*.

A fellow countryman of *Gil Blas*, dreamer, rebel, poet, and lover, was Jesús de Ceballos, a young man of handsome cast, tall in stature, lean of limb, and grave in speech. He had dark pale skin, big flashing eyes, an aquiline nose, a humid and sensual mouth, and a proud head with romantic locks. He was the son of a mountain nobleman — one of those firstborn sons that still exist, carved out of the old stone, in the far corners of Cantabria — said nobleman lived, for many long years, in his ancestral home in Santillana, forgotten by the world. Jesús, born and educated in that silent village, his thoughts nurtured by ancient memories, and his fantasy by books of adventure, began to cultivate slowly the desire to see new things, to let his spirit soar freely, like a lark, and flee from that tomb of the dead and the living where he leisurely dwelled. That night he put his thought in practice, furtively abandoning the village and leaving behind him the calm serenity of his home to ride at will over distant lands.

It was a balmy and peaceful night, a summer night in Asturias de Santillana. Mounted on a diminutive nag, Jesús went along, his heart spurred on by his eagerness to see the adventures he had dreamed of become a reality. Although he was riding alone along the deserted road, with no other arms than an old pistol, nor more money than thirty poorly counted silver coins, enough to frighten away any anxiety were his few years and that wild young madness that had launched him upon unknown roads, leaving behind his soft and idle bed to ride up one trail and down another.<sup>3</sup> (A)

The following selection is taken from Pío Baroja's *Zalacain el Aventurero*.

In this country house Martín Zalacain de Urbía, the one who later was to be called Zalacain el Aventurero, was born and spent the first years of his childhood; in this country house he dreamed his first dreams and tore his first britches.

The Zalacain family lived a few steps from Urbía; but neither Martín nor his family belonged there; their house was a few yards outside the village.

Martín's father was a farmer, a somber man and not very talkative, he was killed by a smallpox epidemic; neither was Martín's mother a woman of character; she lived in normal psychological obscurity among the country people, and went from a maiden to a wife, and from a wife to a widow with complete unconsciousness. When her husband died she was left with two children, Martín and a young girl called Ignacia.

The farm house where the Zalacains lived belonged to the Ohando family, Urbía's most ancient, aristocratic, and richest family.

Martín's mother lived almost on charity from the Ohando family.

Under these wretched and poverty-stricken conditions, it seemed logical that, because of his inheritance and the action of his environment, Martín would be like his father and mother: somber, timid, and humble; but the young man turned out to be determined, fearless, and audacious.<sup>4</sup> (B)

There is a sharp opposition between the two styles. The respective vocabularies of the two authors form opposites. The words that Ricardo León uses, Baroja avoids. Ricardo León's passage seems a study in traditional Spanish rhetoric and figures of speech; Baroja's passage seems an

effort toward a precise and graphic use of the language of the street. Ricardo León's syntax and grammatical usage seem carved and elaborated after the fashion of what he believes to be traditional Spanish prose. His sentences are long, with many parenthetical expressions and subordinations. Baroja's sentences are shorter, and there is a definite preference for coordination over subordination and parenthetical expressions. Closely related to the difference in syntax is the difference in the cadence, rhythm,

(A) *Compatriota de Gil Blas, soñador, rebelde, poeta y enamorado*, era Jesús de Ceballos un mozo de gallarda estampa, alto de estatura, enjuto de miembros, grave de expresión. Tenía la tez morena y pálida, los ojos grandes y ardientes, la nariz aguileña, la boca húmeda y sensual y una altiva cabeza de melenas románticas. Era hijo de un hidalgo montañés — uno de esos mayorazgos que aun quedan, tallados en viejo pedernal, en los rincones de Cantabria —, el cual hidalgo vivía, de luengos años, en su casa solariega de Santillana, olvidado del mundo. Nacido y educado Jesús en aquella villa silenciosa, nutrido el pensamiento de antiguas memorias y excitada la fantasía con libros de aventuras, fué poco a poco cultivando el deseo de ver cosas nuevas, de echar el alma a volar, como una alondra, y huir de aquel sepulcro de muertos y vivos en que moraba ocioso. Aquella noche había puesto en práctica su pensamiento, saliendo hurtadamente de la villa y dejando el blando sosiego de su casa para cabalgar a su gusto tierras adelante.

Era la noche templada y apacible, noche de verano en las Asturias de Santillana. Jinete en menguado rocín iba Jesús, espoleado su corazón por el ansia de ver realizadas sus soñadas aventuras. Aunque iba solo por la desierta carretera, sin más armas que una vieja pistola, ni más dineros que treinta duros mal contados, bastaban para ahuyentar toda zozobra sus pocos años y aquella brava locura juvenil que le lanzaba a ignorados caminos, dejando el blando y ocioso lecho para correr por trochas y veredas.<sup>3</sup>

(B) En este caserío nació y pasó los primeros años de su infancia Martín Zalacain de Urbía, el que más tarde había de ser llamado Zalacain el Aventurero; en este caserío soñó sus primeras aventuras y rompió los primeros pantalones.

Los Zalacain vivían a pocos pasos de Urbía; pero ni Martín ni su familia eran ciudadanos: faltaba a su casa unos metros para formar parte de la villa.

El padre de Martín fué labrador, un hombre oscuro y poco comunicativo, muerto en una epidemia de viruelas; la madre de Martín tampoco era mujer de carácter; vivió en esa oscuridad psicológica normal entre la gente del campo, y pasó de soltera a casada, y de casada a viuda, con absoluta inconsciencia. Al morir su marido quedó con dos hijos, Martín y una niña menor llamada Ignacia.

El caserío donde habitaban los Zalacain pertenecía a la familia de Ohando, familia la más antigua, aristocrática y rica de Urbía.

Vivía la madre de Martín casi de la misericordia de los Ohando.

En tales condiciones de pobreza y de miseria, parecía lógico que, por herencia y por la acción del ambiente, Martín fuese como su padre y su madre; oscuro, tímido y apocado; pero el muchacho resultó decidido, temerario y audaz.<sup>4</sup>

and intonational patterns of the two prose selections. Baroja's paragraphs are short, and Ricardo León's are long. Ricardo León's prose exudes a vitality, a varied intonational pattern, a ringing sonority, an assertative conclusiveness, while Baroja's prose seems flat, sometimes inconclusive, and almost without inflection.

In short, Ricardo León's prose is the result of a long and careful study and assimilation of what he considers classic Spanish literature, and an attempt to recreate, to give new life to this rich tradition.

A comparison of the respective vocabularies of the two authors, immediately bears out certain factors. Ricardo León's vocabulary shows a tremendous predilection for four constellations of words and phrases: words and phrases dealing with patriotism, such as *compatriota*; names of literary figures and places, such as *Gil Blas*, *Santillana*; words and phrases lifted from Spain's literary tradition, such as *soñador*, *poeta*, *mozo de gallarda estampa*, *melenas románticas*, *tallados*, *enjuto*, *luengos*, *solariega*, *moraba*, *como una alondra*, *cabalgar*; words that have an artistic flavor such as *gallarda*, *grave*, *altiva*, *hidalgo*, *montañés*, *mayorazgos*, *armas*.<sup>5</sup>

To show the preponderance of all these words, they have been italicized where they appear in the Spanish text. Although some of them do not have the indicated connotation apart from the text, they all do have it, within the text. In essence, all the words in the quoted passage fall into one or more of these four categories.

Furthermore, Ricardo León's prose shows a certain delight in the beauty and sonority of words, a certain faith in their intrinsic worth. It reflects the attitude that these words carry within themselves a creative potential and a somewhat immortal vital reality. It reflects a belief in words as such.

Baroja quite evidently avoids these four constellations of words. "Those words," he states in his *Discurso de ingreso en la Academia Española*, May 12, 1934 (and he could well be referring to those words used by Ricardo León), "those words that screech and whose use for some constitutes the desideratum of literature, produce a very disagreeable and grotesque effect for me."<sup>6</sup> Baroja's attitude toward the literary lexicon of the past, commonly called *lenguaje castizo*, although by far the most extreme, is shared by Valle-Inclán and others of his own generation.

For many years now, day by day, in that which concerns me I have been at work digging a hole to bury this hollow and pompous Castilian prose which can no longer be ours when we write, if we feel the demands of the hour. Apparently, such a manner still exists because we look at words as if they were shrines and not living souls. We love them more and they seem more beautiful to us when they preserve bones and ashes.<sup>7</sup> (A)

Azorín joins Baroja and Valle-Inclán in their criticism of *el lenguaje castizo* or pure Spanish:

Among the majority of those given to literature — not among true artists — it is believed that a style is pure Spanish when it is shaped by turns of phrase, words, and expressions of the writers of three or four centuries ago. Such an idea, in turn, implies another: the idea that languages do not evolve, that they don't progress.

Sensibility evolves and language evolves; if we were to admit the concept of pure Spanish that we are censuring, the Castilian language would have stopped centuries ago.<sup>8</sup> (B)

Baroja declares that he has always had a poor memory for the sound of words. "En la infancia tenía una buena memoria de cosas vistas, pero mala para palabras oídas."<sup>9</sup> The sound of words or their musicality is of no importance to Baroja.<sup>10</sup> They are all too often a cover for a vacuum of ideas and feelings. "The literary novice learns words and turns of phrase before he has ideas or impressions and wants to write to have the pleasure of using them and of hearing them sound in the air."<sup>11</sup> (C)

If Baroja feels that certain words have no intrinsic value and are of no use to him in his writing, he feels even more strongly about their use in the vital affairs of life.

The span, the structuralization, the volume of events, the horizontality of life, the ecumenical factor, vertical syndicalism, astronomic sums . . . All that, which might give a vague impression, if it were dealing with literary and subjective matters wouldn't be important, but when it deals with vital questions it produces confusion, a sort of mystic and obscure haze which gives things false perspective and presents concepts which aren't concepts and justifies the unjustifiable. This reminds one of the sentence by Feliciano de Silva, quoted in *Don Quijote*: "The reason of the non reason that is my reason

---

(A) Desde hace muchos años, día a día, en aquello que me atañe yo trabajo cavando la cueva donde enterrar esta hueca y pomposa prosa castiza, que ya no puede ser la nuestra cuando escribamos, si sentimos el imperio de la hora. Aparentemente, tal manera perdura porque miramos las palabras como si fuesen relicarios y no corazones vivos: Las amamos más, y nos parecen más bellas cuando guardan huesos y cenizas.<sup>7</sup>

(B) Entre la generalidad de los afectos a cosas literarias — no entre los verdaderos artistas — se cree que un estilo es castizo cuando se plasma sobre giros, voces, maneras de decir de los escritores de hace tres o cuatro siglos. Tal idea implica otra a su vez: la de que las lenguas no evolucionan, no marchan. . . .

Evoluciona la sensibilidad y evoluciona el language; de admitir el concepto de casticismo que censuramos, el idioma castellano se hubiera detenido hace siglos.<sup>8</sup>

(C) "Este literato novicio aprende nombres y giros antes de tener ideas o impresiones y quiere escribir para tener el gusto de emplearlos y para que suenen en el aire."<sup>11</sup>

presents itself in such a manner that my reason weakens, that with good reason I complain of your beauty."<sup>12</sup> (A)

In the same essay he denies the intrinsic value of neologisms (non-scientific ones, of course) and of the renovation of the lexicon.<sup>13</sup> "The lexicon was renewed, but the ideas weren't. The idea that all you have to do to modify ideas is to change the words is pure fantasy."<sup>14</sup> (B) Baroja seems to believe that the sound and the orthography may vary but the idea and the substance remain the same.

Many passages in Baroja's novels point out the intangibility and the arbitrariness of words. In *Aurora roja*, Juan has taken Manuel, Salvadora, Canuto, and others to a *merendero*. The owner, symbolic of the atmosphere of the place and of all of Madrid, has greeted them with these words:

Gentlemen: I am the master of this establishment, in which you have taken a seat so intimate and you will be served nourishment with good condiment, for here there is good sentiment although little ornament, and if one thirst after merriment he will be brought refreshment, so have a look at this document — and he showed a list of prices — and let's get on with the action.<sup>15</sup> (C)

In the same novel Manuel, upon hearing a speech by an anarchist called Caruty, suspects that there exists some strange relationship between revolutions, anarchy, and literature. "¡Anarquía! ¡Literatura! Manuel encontraba una relación entre estas dos cosas; pero no sabía cuál."<sup>16</sup> In this passage Baroja indicates that revolutions, anarchy, and literature are related because they are all composed of words.

Baroja is fully aware of the fact that certain words when used constantly and indiscriminately lose their power and meaning.

Today, thanks to the diligence of the Director of the Editorial Society in the publication of perfectly useless scientific and literary works, and aided by the young artist Videgain, we can give the public a resume of the interesting (that's the word used for everything) work by Doctor Guezurtegui.<sup>17</sup> (D)

The word *interesante*, as illustrated by the passage, has lost its power.<sup>18</sup>

Baroja also believes that adjectives are not especially precise.

The same thing happens to adjectives; they carry beforehand and in a veiled manner an idea of praise or disdain, but they are never the result of a judgment that is clear and without passion.

Believing the contrary is for me the error of all dogmatic persons. Human sentiments don't have a clear and definite label in our language. Definitions and adjectives are no more than approximations.<sup>19</sup> (E)

Baroja feels that adjectives, besides being approximations, depend almost entirely on the person who utters them. He illustrates the point with the character Afsaguin in *El mundo es así*.

Afsaguin came up to Sacha and warmly praised his ape-like friend, said that he was a true Russian and a true socialist.

Since this praise coming from Afsaguin had become a constant commonplace they didn't pay much attention to his friend.<sup>20</sup> (F)

Intention is the most important factor in determining the true meaning and significance of adjectives according to Baroja.

Baroja pays little heed to the etymology of words. He believes it has little significance in regard to their present meaning. Usage is what interests him. He categorically states in one of his essays called *Arbitrariedad y*

---

(A) La envergadura, la estructuración, el volumen de los acontecimientos, la horizontalidad en la vida, lo ecuménico, el sindicalismo vertical, las cifras astronómicas . . . Todo esto, que da una impresión vigorosa, si se tratara de cuestiones subjetivas y literarias, no tendría importancia, pero tratándose de cuestiones vitales produce una confusión, una especie de bruma oscura y mística que da falsas perspectivas a las cosas y presenta conceptos que no son conceptos y justifica lo no justificable. Esto le recuerda a uno la frase de Feliciano de Silva, citada en *Don Quijote*: «La razón de la sinrazón que a mi razón se hace de tal manera mi razón enflaquece, que con razón me quejo de la vuestra fermosura.»<sup>12</sup>

(B) "Se renovó el léxico, pero no se renuevan las ideas. Eso de que basta que cambien las palabras para que se modifiquen las ideas es una fantasía."<sup>14</sup>

(C) Señores: soy el amo de este establecimiento, en donde han tomado ustedes asiento y se les servirá el alimento con un buen condimento, que aquí hay muy buen sentimiento, aunque poco ornamento, y si alguno está sediento, se le traerá un refrescamiento; conquese vean este documento — y enseñó una lista de los precios — y ande el movimiento.<sup>15</sup>

(D) Hoy, gracias a la diligencia del director de la Sociedad Editorial para la impresión de los trabajos científicos y literarios perfectamente inútiles, y ayudados por el joven artista Videgain, podemos dar al público un resumen del interesante (es la palabra que sirve para todo) trabajo del doctor Guezurtegui.<sup>17</sup>

(E) Así pasa con todos los calificativos; llevan de antemano y de una manera velada una idea de elogio o de desdén, pero no son resultado de un juicio limpio y sin pasión.

El creer lo contrario es para mí el error de todos los dogmáticos. Los sentimientos humanos no tienen en el lenguaje una etiqueta clara y definitiva. Las definiciones y los calificativos no son más que aproximaciones.<sup>19</sup>

(F) Afsaguin se acercó a Sacha e hizo un elogio caluroso de su simiesco amigo, de quien dijo que era un verdadero ruso y un verdadero socialista.

Como este elogio en boca de Afsaguin se había convertido en un lugar común constante, no hicieron del amigo mucho caso.<sup>20</sup>

*estilización* found in *Vitrina pintoresca* that, "Estas puerilidades etimológicas no demuestran gran cosa."<sup>21</sup>

Baroja never resorted to what he considered cheap words to elicit erotic responses. Although he made no big issue of that practice in his critical writings, his works are almost completely devoid of the sensation-arousing terms that seem to be so necessary to many of his fellow writers of this century. José M. Salaverría, in an article published in the *A B C* of Madrid, pointed out a constant restraint in the use of erotic words by Baroja. He speaks of the restraint in these delicate matters as *el pudor vasco*.<sup>22</sup> Although Salaverría's article was written in 1935, Baroja remained true to this code of writing throughout his novelistic career.

Baroja's cry echos Hamlet — words, words, words. In *La caverna del humorismo*, Savage, maddened by the tremendous pedantry, repeats the cry: "Nature capriciously makes men gelastic or agelastic. There are also hypergelastic men — words, words, words — murmurs Savage, like Hamlet."<sup>23</sup>

Comparison of León's and Baroja's writing shows how León has exaggerated oratorical and rhetorical tones, and how Baroja has tried to avoid such tones, or at least to subdue them markedly. Rejecting much of Spanish rhetoric in the formation of his style, Baroja, in his *Divagaciones apasionadas*, explains and justifies this rejection. "It is not strange that I have abominated oratory and rhetoric in a country like Spain, super-saturated with a rhetoric that does not let it see reality."<sup>24</sup>

A continuous preoccupation with avoiding rhetoric is found in Baroja's essays and also throughout his novels. In *El mundo es así*, Sacha, worthy of a better fate, is wooed and won by mere empty words, by rhetoric:

Sacha let herself get carried away by Nature's charm and by the charm of words.

There is in love, as in everything expressed by human lips, a skillful and artificial rhetoric which gives signs of life to that which is dead and a brilliant aspect to that which is opaque.<sup>25</sup> (A)

Baroja's characters often profess a dislike for *el tono mayor*, or rhetoric. Larrañaga, in *Los amores tardíos*, confesses a liking for the modest and the unpretentious, even in regard to women. "Naturally, because you look at it from a woman's point of view; you prefer an elevated style, but I don't."<sup>26</sup> Arcelu, in *El mundo es así*, expresses a dislike reflecting Baroja's for pure verbiage, rhetoric, and obscurity for obscurity's sake.

"Yes," he was saying the other day — "one keeps looking for the truth, keeps feeling hate for wordiness, for exaggeration, for everything that brings obscurity to ideas. One would like to squeeze the language, cut it down, reduce it to its quintessence, to something algebraic; one would like to suppress everything superfluous, all the flab, all the excess foliage."<sup>27</sup> (B)

Ortega y Gasset praises the absence of rhetoric in Baroja's style and his refusal to imitate others in *El espectador*.<sup>28</sup> Further comparison of León's and Baroja's syntax and León's preoccupation with grammatical niceties demonstrates a marked contrast. Unlike León, Baroja does not have much respect for strict adherence to grammatical rules. He and others have had a great deal to say about his disrespect for the sacred idol, grammar. In a letter to Federico García-Sanchiz, Baroja writes:

Therefore, in everything I write there will always be a touch of sadness and a couple of insults to grammar. I don't dominate all the means of expression and I always tend, by temperament, to say things graphically and without adornment.<sup>29</sup>

Baroja states at the beginning of *Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía*, "Besides, like a good Basque I have always been just a little disrespectful to that respectable and chaste lady they call grammar."<sup>30</sup>

Emilio Carrere referred to Baroja's antigrammatical qualities in this manner, "Visions of a little misogynous and misanthropic burgher, with the paradoxical soul of a vagabond, stumbling at times through grammar and at catch-as-catch-can with rhetoric."<sup>31</sup>

Baroja's syntax, along with his grammar, has been the subject of many comments.

Critics have quibbled with Baroja's syntax and language. We have seen that sometimes he does give new meanings to his words or at least slightly different meanings. In this event, he has the excuse of being only one of many. But must one really accept as carelessness, such sentences as: don't call — For luck is cruel to me! — Or did he introduce them deliberately to see what the pedants would say about them?<sup>32</sup>

Ignacio de Areilza, Cristóbal de Castro, and Peseux-Richard are among the many who have praised Pío Baroja for consistent rejection of the traditional Spanish sentence. Ignacio de Areilza quotes from Baroja's own character, Doctor Guezurtegui: "That sentence," he says, "always cut in the same way, in which a number of parenthetical phrases are

---

(A) Sacha se dejaba llevar por el encanto de la Naturaleza y por el encanto de las palabras.

Hay en el amor, como en todo lo que se expresa con labios humanos, una retórica hábil y artificiosa que da apariencias de vida a lo que está muerto y aspecto de brillantez a lo que es opaco.<sup>25</sup>

(B) —Sí — decía él el otro día —, uno va buscando la verdad, va sintiendo el odio por la palabrería, por la hipóbole, por todo lo que lleva oscuridad a las ideas. Uno quisiera estrujar el idioma, recortarlo, reducirlo a su quinta esencia, a una cosa algebraica; quisiera uno suprimir todo lo superfluo, toda la carnaza, toda la hojarasca.<sup>27</sup>

mounted and which always ends in a theatrical manner, depresses me," and adds his own criticism:

Reading this automatically brings to mind that eagerness to swell endlessly the sentence or to give it exaggerated dimensions, that hail of adjectives, that external high-flown language and musical thrilling, so much in favor with so many Spanish novelists, that it has reached a more than annoying degree in some.<sup>33</sup>

Following the same procedure, Cristóbal de Castro quotes from Baroja: "The author" — he says in *The Wax Figures* — "rejects the pure Spanish sentence, the idiomatic turn of phrase. All this undoubtedly strikes him as excess foliage, a putrified commonplace, something pestiferous from which one must flee." Then he comments, "And, actually, his sentence is rapid, brusque, intermittent. The turn of phrase, hurried, invertebrate, reportesque, authentic writing as the pen moves, without reflection. Baroja prefers naturalness to finesse; sacrifices exactitude to vividness."<sup>34</sup> Peseux-Richard states: "No rhetoric, no display of empty eloquence. Not one of these ready-made phrases which stud the periods of the best Spanish writers and which, clinging to the thought, are carried along by it and hinder its expression."<sup>35</sup>

Reading the selections from León and Baroja aloud demonstrates that the difference in the pattern of the sentences and the paragraphs causes an even greater difference in the rhythm and moving speed of the prose. Ricardo León's sentences, being long and complex, flow smoothly, easily, and assuredly, rising gracefully to the intonational peaks at the end of the inconclusive subordinate clauses and falling decisively at the end of the conclusive clauses. The rhythm of these sentences is not slow or tortuous but rather steady, flowing, and musical. Baroja's sentences are short; most of them are simple sentences or independent clauses connected by a semicolon.<sup>36</sup> The many abrupt stops, occasioned by the periods and the semicolons, cause his prose to move with a somewhat punchy and telegraphic rapidity.<sup>37</sup>

Baroja considers this restless, uneven rapidity of his prose one of its salient qualities. In *Juventud, egolatría* he enlightens those who attribute the peculiar flavor of his prose to the lack of grammatical knowledge or to a Basque syntax.

Principally what I lack in order to write Castilian isn't pure grammatical correction nor is it syntax. It is the timing, the rhythm of style. This is what disturbs one who reads my works for the first time; he notices something that doesn't sound right, and a manner of breathing that isn't traditional.<sup>38</sup>

The rapidity of movement in Baroja's prose is, in a sense, a rejection of the literary tradition of lingering upon certain subjects. Baroja refuses to dwell upon any one phase or subject. He seems to have only a certain amount of time for each character presentation, each description, each

narrative episode. None of these individual parts swell with importance; none seem lulled or static. All parts of Baroja's novel are subject to the dynamic movement of his brisk sentences and paragraphs. His style has been likened by Juan de la Encina to the rapid flame of Jamaican rum that licks at everything but never seems to slowly devour or turn its objects into ashes.<sup>39</sup>

Jean Cassou considers this rapidity a curse to Baroja's style, an act of desperation and an indication of emptiness. "In reality, the velocity which circulates through one of Baroja's novels leaves a painful impression of emptiness, and in regard to novelistic invention it is nothing more than an act of desperation."<sup>40</sup>

Ramón Sender also becomes impatient with Baroja's rapidity.<sup>41</sup> Julio Laborde, in an article that appeared in the *Comoedia* of Paris, thinks it is pernicious. He feels that Pío Baroja has tried, rather unsuccessfully, to imitate Pierre Loti. "But his own sentence, so short, so contrary to Spanish style, where did he find the model, if not in Pierre Loti. What am I saying? The short verbless sentences of Pierre Loti are, at times, less rapid than Baroja's complete ones."<sup>42</sup>

Most critics, however, consider this quickness one of Baroja's greatest virtues and one of the most individual characteristics of his style. "... our thought is pleased by the facility and freeness of his expression, and we are drawn into the novelistic farce, because of its realistic tone, with instantaneous rapidity. . . ."<sup>43</sup>

Baroja, in his "Prólogo casi doctrinal sobre la novela" to *La nave de los locos* says: "Heaviness, slowness, slow time cannot be a virtue. Slowness is antibiological and anti-vital."<sup>44</sup> In this rejection of slow-moving prose rhythms, he hints that the justification for his own rapidity is to be found in its vital, biological relationship to himself. He seems to be indicating that a drive within him forces him to perceive life at a certain quick pace and record it thus. His repeated comment "I think that writing is like walking,"<sup>45</sup> emphasizes this point of view.

## PURE STYLE

While Baroja's critics usually mark and praise his striving for a more natural mode of communication and his rejection of traditional literary artifices, some of them have exaggerated it, and this exaggeration has hindered complete understanding of Baroja's prose technique. These critics suggest that an exact parallel exists between the man and his expression — the man and his style. They imply that no stylistic device is used, that Baroja, simply does not know how to write, that he doesn't think the business of how one says things is important, and therefore he carelessly flings words, phrases, and sentences at a piece of paper. The

promoters and perpetrators of this viewpoint — the writer himself, ironically, is sure to be counted among them — imply that Baroja, through genius, black magic, or just pure orneriness, has been able to create a system of communication all his own which disregards all systematic conventions in expression.<sup>46</sup>

The following anecdote has been cited many times by those who wish to prove that Baroja finds difficulty in saying things correctly and therefore doesn't particularly care how he expresses them. Many writers, including Miguel de Unamuno and Ortega y Gasset, have told the little story. Baroja and Ortega have gone on a hiking excursion in the Sierra de Gata. At night, Baroja looks up from a stack of papers where he is laboring over the exploits of Aviraneta and says,

You see? There is nothing worse than to start to think about how to say things, you end up losing your mind. I had written here "Aviraneta came down in slippers (*de zapatillas*)," but I asked myself if it is right or wrong, and now I no longer know if I should say "Aviraneta came down in slippers (*de zapatillas*)," or "he came down (*con zapatillas*)," or "he came down (*a zapatillas*)."<sup>47</sup>

This anecdote has given certain critics a great feeling of liberty in their disparaging comments on Baroja's style. Federico García Sanchiz has likened it to an emotional babbling. "With an unfinished style, intense and poor like an emotional babbling, he tells about Sacha, the daughter of a barbarous general of the Czar."<sup>48</sup>

Some critics simply speak of a pure style. Francisco de Miomandre thinks this will speed his hour of recognition in France.

If you add to this the fact that he possesses a clean incisive, direct style, as pure as crystal, you can't help but conclude as I have that, because he has waited much longer than many many others for his hour of success in French, Pío Baroja perhaps will know it more completely, still more perfectly.<sup>49</sup>

Still others comment on the complete lack of adornment. "Stylistic trappings always grow old faster than the man himself, but Baroja's literary garb doesn't go out of style, because his style is nudity itself."<sup>50</sup> Baroja's own description of natural style becomes a little more complex. He speaks of an absolute parallelism between the psychic movement of ideas, sentiments, and emotions, and the movement of style. This idea, together with the idea that style is a means of self-portrayal, is expressed by Doctor Quezurtgui in *La caverna del humorismo*.

For me, the absolute in art is to arrive at an absolute parallelism between the psychic movement of ideas, sentiments and emotions, and the movement of style. The more precise this relation is, the better. I believe that here it should be like it is with a portrait: the more it looks like the man being painted, and not how much more beautiful it may be, the better it is as a portrait (not as a work of art).

Thus, the simple, humble, and careless man will reach perfection in a simple, humble, and careless style, and the rhetorical, high-sounding, and gongoristic man in a rhetorical, high-sounding and gongoristic style.<sup>51</sup> (A)

Gregorio Marañón treats this statement as the whole truth of Baroja's stylistic success.

For years now I have had this paragraph marked as the key to Pío Baroja's literary esthetics and, in part, to his psychology; also, as an argument against the nonsense that has circulated about his style, about his lexicon and about his supposed anti-academic attitude. It is evident that Baroja is the same "simple, humble, and careless man" of the words transcribed.<sup>52</sup> (B)

Baroja divides style into two parts: that which is interior and spontaneous and that which is exterior and artificial. "Style, from a psychological point of view, can be of two classes: interior, a spontaneous product of the imagination, of the sensibility, of the temperament of the author or artist that gives form to his ideas and a characteristic nuance to his sensations, and exterior, manneristic, made with artificial and studied formulas."<sup>53</sup> (C)

A friend, Azorín, echoes this idea in the introduction to Baroja's *Obras completas*. "Why isn't a prose that is vital and not fictitious, that is a product of physiology and not of a formula, going to be read?"<sup>54</sup> (D)

---

(A) Para mí, el *summun* del arte literario es llegar a un paralelismo absoluto entre el movimiento psíquico de ideas, sentimientos y emociones y el movimiento del estilo. Cuanto más exacta sea esta relación, mejor. Yo creo que aquí debe pasar como en un retrato: que es mejor como retrato (no como obra artística) cuanto más se parezca al retratado, no cuanto más bonito esté.

Así, el hombre sencillo, humilde y descuidado, tendrá su perfección en el estilo sencillo, humilde y descuidado, y el hombre retórico, altisonante y gongorino, en el estilo retórico, altisonante y gongorino.<sup>51</sup>

(B) Hace años que tengo anotado este párrafo como clave de la estética literaria de Pío Baroja y, en parte, de su psicología; también, como argumento contra los despropósitos que han venido circulando acerca de su estilo, de su léxico y de su supuesto antiacademicismo. Es evidente que Baroja es el propio «hombre sencillo, humilde y descuidado» de las palabras transcritas.<sup>52</sup>

(C) El estilo, desde un punto de vista psicológico, puede ser de dos clases: interior, producto espontáneo de la imaginación, de la sensibilidad, del temperamento del escritor o del artista que da a sus ideas una forma y reviste sus sensaciones de un matiz característico, y exterior, manierista, hecho con fórmulas artificiales y estudiadas.<sup>53</sup>

(D) "¿Cómo no ha de ser leída una prosa que es vital y no ficticia; que es producto de una fisiología y no de una fórmula?"<sup>54</sup>



All this can be accepted as a poetic description of his style, but it can never be an exact, scientific description. What Baroja feels and desires to express may well be interior and spontaneous, but the expression of these feelings and sensations of the printed page must be achieved through an artifice. There is no natural style, as José Sánchez Rojas claims. "And he lets it glide along thus, smoothly, in a transparent, clear, simple, natural spontaneous style. He writes as if he had been born writing. With Baroja style is nature, not a robe. A theologian would call it a grace."<sup>55</sup> (A)

In the criticism of Edmundo González Blanco there is a flickering of recognition of the fact that Baroja is nursing this legend of the natural, spontaneous style. Blanco admits in an article that appeared in *La Esfera* of Madrid that Baroja is a stylist and that some of the defects of form serve directed and purposeful ends.

Defects in form? . . . Yes, his work has them and in great numbers. But somehow they are conscious defects, characteristics of a stylist who takes too many liberties with language, because he knows it well enough to abuse it, and who begins by saying that his way of writing isn't the classic or academic but rather the anarchic or romantic which is based upon the imitation of nature without worrying about any rule and interpreting life capriciously.<sup>56</sup> (B)

Peseux-Richard sounds just a note of caution in regard to taking Baroja's pure and antigrammatical style seriously, in the following comment:

Autodidactic — at least in literary matters — and an irreducible adversary of all restraints and of all rules, such is the immutable physiognomy he will present to our eyes. And that hate for the pedagogue is so alive, Pío Baroja takes advantage of every occasion to emit it with such intimate pleasure, that we would almost be tempted to take him seriously.<sup>57</sup>

In *Paradox, Rey*, a strangely philosophical cyclops, watching the explosion that will flood the valley of Uganga, says that destruction is the first step of creation, that it is, in essence, creation itself. "Destruir es crear."<sup>58</sup> This statement of the anarchist's creed, which seems to be Baroja's creed in many facets of life and especially in regard to novelistic technique, is reiterated many times. The following comes from *La caverna del humorismo*: "Man is like a beaver, like an ant, like a swallow; an animal who builds. He is also destructive. He cannot build without destroying."<sup>59</sup> (C)

Many critics consider rejection to be the essence of Baroja's style. Linking Baroja's lack of stylistic formation to those gentlemen from the provinces, noted for their lack of affectation and superficial elegance, Rafael Sánchez Mazas says, "They have achieved a great style, as one always should, by renouncing the superficial."<sup>60</sup> Morales San Martín, in an article that appeared in *El Mercantil Valenciano*, cursorily mentions the lack of three elements in Baroja's prose: high rhetoric, flowered

speech, and musical cadence.<sup>61</sup> Ignacio de Areilza comments on the harsh, brusque, and silenced effect of Baroja's prose.

In regard to external dress — style, Pío Baroja has achieved, except for exceptions of unpleasant brusqueness, his ideal of writing with carefully ground and silent words that do not shine or make a noise when pronounced. He has almost arrived at that admirable impossibility of an unexpected style that can't be imitated because of the force of its personality. He finds himself on the difficult peaks of the natural; he makes his thought flow in common words.<sup>62</sup> (D)

Baroja himself speaks of the process as one of economy of literary artifices. In an interview that appeared in the *Comoedia* of Paris he makes the following statement:

Yes, I have always tried for a rapid expression without adornments and practiced an economy of devices that borders on poverty. This has brought me all kinds of reproaches; I have the reputation of writing badly. Since you have insisted on preserving scrupulously the tone of my style, or of my lack of style, they will accuse you of having translated me poorly, of writing as badly in French as I do in Spanish.<sup>63</sup> (E)

---

(A) Y la desliza así, suavemente, en un estilo transparente, claro, sencillo, fresco, natural, espontáneo. Escribe como si hubiera nacido escribiendo. El estilo no es en Baroja hábito, sino naturaleza. Un teólogo diría que era gracia.<sup>55</sup>

(B) ¿Defectos de forma? . . . Sí, los tiene la obra, y en gran número. Pero son defectos conscientes en algún modo, rasgos de un estilista que se permite demasiadas libertades con el lenguaje, por conocerlo lo bastante para abusar de él, y que empieza por confesar que su manera de escribir no es la clásica o académica, sino la anárquica o romántica, que estriba en imitar la naturaleza sin preocupación de regla alguna e interpretando la vida a capricho.<sup>56</sup>

(C) "El hombre es como el castor, como la hormiga, como la golondrina: animal de instintos constructores. También es destructor. No se puede construir sin destruir."<sup>58</sup>

(D) En cuanto a la vestidura externa, el estilo, Pío Baroja ha llegado, salvo excepciones de una brusquedad ingrata, a su ideal: a escribir con palabras esmeriladas y silenciosas que no brillasen ni metiesen ruido al pronunciarlas. Casi ha llegado al admirable imposible de un estilo inesperado que no se puede imitar en fuerza de su personalidad. Se encuentra en las difíciles cumbres de lo natural, hace fluir su pensamiento en palabras vulgares. . . .<sup>62</sup>

(E) — Sí, siempre he buscado la expresión rápida y sin adornos y practicado una economía de medios que va hasta la pobreza. Eso me ha valido toda clase de reproches; tengo la reputación de escribir mal. Como usted ha puesto empeño en conservar escrupulosamente el tono de mi estilo, o de mi falta de estilo, le acusarán de haberme traducido mal, de escribir tan mal el francés como yo el español.<sup>63</sup>



In the prologue to *La dama errante* he gives the genesis of his hate for the adornments he rejects.

From this little sympathy for the past, complicated by my lack of idiomatic sense — because of being Basque and my ancestors not having spoken Castilian — the repugnance that rhetorical frills inspire in me comes. Rhetorical frills strike me as adornments of a cemetery, rancid things which smell of death.<sup>64</sup> (A)

### SIMILES

Much caution should be used in accepting the creed of destruction as the totality of Baroja's belief and practice in regard to his prose. The fact that Baroja does employ stylistic devices is evidenced in his use of the simile. This means of joining or comparing two objects, or certain qualities of two objects, is probably the most common device found in the Spanish vernacular. This is probably why Baroja finds it inoffensive in his own stylistic designs. The linking words *parece* and *como*, because of the frequency of the simile, become a literary constant in all of Baroja's prose. Two principal types of similes are found throughout Baroja's novels. The first type links that which moves to that which doesn't move, that which is unstable to that which is stable. The second type links human beings to members of the animal kingdom. Here is a list of samples of the first type, selected at random from the first decade of his novelistic production.

They are the first hours of the afternoon. Bright sunshine is coming in through the window. In the sky, a pale blue, clouds go swimming along like chunks of marble.<sup>65</sup> (B)

The atmosphere that fills the room is somewhat opaque; it resembles a tenuous liquid, in which objects are swimming, like the fallen leaves in the tranquil and cold waters of a pool in autumn.<sup>66</sup> (C)

And the old woman and the child talk and talk, without tiring, of unimportant things, and affection floats upon their words, like in autumn the rose petal on tranquil pools . . . and they talk and talk about life and about death.<sup>67</sup> (D)

Suddenly, a wooden bridge, long and narrow, appeared before the eyes of the travelers; it looked like the white bones of some fabulous animal.<sup>68</sup> (E)

Now and then a leafy orchard bordered the river, and the royal road stretched out like a white ribbon scaling red and yellowish peaks, shaded by darkish elms and green-topped acacias.<sup>69</sup> (F)

The trees, already stripped of their leaves by autumn, seemed like mist floating upon the ground; from the chimneys of the houses came tenuous and whitish clouds of smoke.<sup>70</sup> (G)

The afternoon, sad and unpleasant, seemed wrapped in tears; drops of rain splashed against the windows of the carriage.<sup>71</sup> (H)

The list clearly shows that many times a moving, dynamic landscape enters into the comparison. In the first simile the clouds, which seem pieces of marble, are swimming in the pale blue sky.<sup>72</sup> The verb *nadar* and the verb *flotar* appear in all the comparisons. These verbs lend a sense of instability and movement to the similes, making of the landscape and the other ingredient of the comparison, a living, moving object.

In some cases the author has been careful to offer an esthetic justification for the simile. In the last example, for instance, it might be somewhat crude to say that an afternoon was soaked in tears. Baroja has the justification in the sentence. The afternoon can be soaked in tears because it is a sad and depressed afternoon, and the drops of rain are splashing on the carriage windows. Thus the comparison stands and seems reasonable.

In the following list, Baroja displays the use of similes to compare human beings to members of the animal kingdom. First is a general comment made by the Englishman Bothwell:

---

(A) De esta poca simpatía por el pasado, complicada con mi falta de sentido idiomático — por ser vasco y no haber hablado mis ascendientes el castellano —, procede la repugnancia que me inspiran las galas retóricas, que me parecen adornos de cementerio, cosas rancias, que huelen a muerto.<sup>64</sup>

(B) Son las primeras horas de la tarde. Entra un sol brillante por la ventana. En el cielo, azul pálido, van nadando nubes blancas como trozos de mármol.<sup>65</sup>

(C) El ambiente que llena la estancia es algo opaco; parece un líquido tenue, en el cual nadan los objetos, como en otoño las hojas caídas en las aguas tranquilas y frías de un estanque.<sup>66</sup>

(D) Y hablan, hablan la vieja y la niña, sin cansarse, de cosas sin importancia, y el cariño flota sobre sus palabras, como en otoño la hoja de rosa en los tranquilos estanques . . . , y hablan, hablan de la vida y de la muerte.<sup>67</sup>

(E) De pronto, un puente de tablas, largo y estrecho, se presentó ante los ojos de los viajeros; parecía la blanca osamenta de algún animal fabuloso.<sup>68</sup>

(F) Alguno que otro huerto frondoso bordeaba el río, y el camino real se tendía como una cinta blanca escalando lomas amarillentas y rojas, sombreado por olmos negruzcos y acacias de copa verde.<sup>69</sup>

(G) Los árboles, ya desnudos de hojas por el otoño, parecían brumas flotando sobre el suelo; por las chimeneas de las casas salían humaredas tenues blanquecinas.<sup>70</sup>

(H) La tarde, triste y desapacible, parecía empapada en lágrimas; en el cristal del coche salpicaban las gotas de agua.<sup>71</sup>

Knowing full well that he could choose and cultivate whatever *yo* or group of *yoes* that he wished, he chose and cultivated the one best suited to the ephemeral identification with special subjects and objects, those which had undergone a process of negation in real life. Thus Baroja's poetic vision may well have been the result of a deliberate limitation. Rejecting the traditional forms and subjects of poetry, he attuned his sensibility to the forms and subjects poetry has rejected or ignored. The negation lies in both the perceiver and the form and subject perceived. His vision may merit the term "lyrical" since it is uniquely Barojian. After all, doesn't negation enter into every lyrical poet's vision of reality? Doesn't he tend to reject even the possibility of any other vision and project only his own?

## 9. Conclusion

THIS STUDY HAS CONSISTED of an investigation of negation as a principal substance of Baroja's novels and its use as a *modus operandi* in their creation. The topic was, in part, suggested by the works of writers such as James Joyce, Moravia, Silone, Camus, and the writers of the Generation of 98; the study should establish a closer relationship between their creations and Baroja's. The problem was to find out just how consistently negation was used, and its relative importance to the total form and content of Baroja's novels. The hope was expressed that a study of negation would disclose the fundamental purpose of its use, reveal and outline the positive elements in his novels, give a positive answer — although fragmentary — to the sad, nihilistic, and chaotic worlds Baroja created. The study should also reveal some of the creative potential of negation. Finally, such a study should provide a key to just how and why Baroja created his novelistic worlds, helping the reader to appreciate more fully and to become more finely attuned to the essence of humanity reflected in them.

In drawing any conclusions from the study of negation in Baroja's novels, a great deal of caution and care should be used. His writings are complex and diffuse. He is also extremely prolific. Any affirmation that might sum up the totality of his works in a few paragraphs or with a few well-chosen tags might disorient or harm future studies. The summing-up or the conclusions that follow should be considered as topical suggestions offered about one phase of Baroja's writings. A brief reiteration of the principal negative elements in each of the chapters seems an appropriate first step for the formation of the conclusions.

The study of Baroja's style sought to illustrate how important a role negation played, how often Baroja rejected the noble and patriotic terms, the literary names and clichés, the elaborate syntax with its assured and complex patterns of rhythm and intonation so often found in the so-called

*prosa castiza*. Baroja's attitude toward this *prosa castiza* is reflected in his comments on style. These comments form a rather negative stylistic creed best exemplified by his three phrases, *destruir es crear* (to destroy is to create), *estilizar es falsificar* (to stylize is to falsify), and *se escribe como se anda* (one writes as one walks).

Most of the critics corroborated this negative attitude of Baroja's style, but some of them exaggerated, describing it as completely natural and devoid of any stylistic device. Baroja used a number of devices, the most common being the simile, the symbol, and the word deflator. Most of these devices seemed to have a negative purpose or direction; one type of simile tends to reduce or limit man by comparing him to an animal; the symbols all seem to elicit a sad, negative, depressing reaction; the word deflators, such as *un tanto*, *no del todo*, tend to negate or to soften any affirmation or statement. Thus the direction, in regard to style, remains quite consistent.

The study of Baroja's dialogue stressed its extensive use in his novels, its dull and lifeless qualities, its failure to stand out in sharp relief against the narrative background, and its similarity to Baroja's own speech. It was found that the general negative direction followed in Baroja's style is continued in his dialogue and that almost everything said about one applies to the other. Baroja's dialogues point out the near impossibility of an exchange of ideas or opinions through conversation, the tendency of these conversations to become colorless monologues in which only one idea or opinion, usually the author's, is expressed.

Baroja's novelistic atmosphere is principally created through the reiteration of negative signs and symbols. These have been divided into four groups, centering around death, decadence and solitude, ideologies, and meteorology. The totality of this atmosphere is dark, antivital, lifeless. This atmosphere does not necessarily represent Baroja's impressions of objective reality, but it has fulfilled a creative need, a need for darkness and antivitality which he augments with all sorts of unrelated materials.

The term *character revelation* rather than *character development* has been used with reference to Baroja's characters because they show no growth or change, their essential qualities being gradually disclosed — or unmasked — through a special process of revelation. This process is essentially one of negation. Most of Baroja's protagonists have been stripped or denied most of this life's valued things. These persons are taken away from their home, their friends and families, their religion or political beliefs, and exposed to economic and physical adversities. They are left alone, little islands of humanity living apart from the world. The end product is not one of greatness, but littleness — in Baroja's words — *poca cosa*.

Baroja's technique for revealing his protagonist discloses one of his most significant negations. He shows how he denied or strongly ques-

tioned most of the traditional values attributed to man, considering these attributes obfuscations of his most essential and real qualities.

Baroja's minor characters were too numerous for the type of revelation used in exposing his protagonists. But these minor characters were related to the protagonists in that they were isolated from the main stream of life, lived apart from society and accepted few of its truths. This relationship showed that life, or objective reality, had done Baroja's work as a novelist and had been the negative force in the revelation of these persons, by stripping them of life's most traditional values, casting them aside from life's main currents.

The investigation of Baroja's work has revealed that the landscape and those strange cast-off elements of life which elicited Baroja's poetic responses were positive values. These values remained essentially poetic and ineffable, being undefined, unnamed, and unrelated — appealing strongly to the reader's guided sensibilities. Negation, and the negative orbs in which the positive values are found, help to keep them unrelated and unnamed, to guard the purity of their poetic essence. This same negation guides and sharpens the reader's sensibilities to these poetic moments.

The reiteration of these negative elements clearly indicates that negativity is used consistently in Baroja's novels and plays a major role in his creative procedure. These negative elements, by themselves, do not reveal their purpose, their *raison d'être*, but their very abundance and consistency strongly suggest that there is such a purpose, that they are fulfilling a creative need.

Baroja felt a need to prune, to whittle away, to take away from the Spanish language, in order to create his novelistic world. He felt obliged to throw out whole constellations of words, to chop and fragment the syntax, to deaden and flatten the flow of the intonation pattern, to weed it of its commonplace and much too violent and overblown images, to deflate it with little nonaffirmative voices. He gave it a certain jerky and sporadic rapidity. This trimmed and deflated instrument seemed best suited for the creation of Baroja's personal novelistic world. Baroja's style appears as a necessary and principal step in his novelistic creativity. It is just as important for what it destroys as for what it creates.

Through this pruning and trimming process Baroja has made a special and personal creative tool of the Spanish language. This tool served him well, having certain destructive potentialities necessary to Baroja's special needs. Its potential for flatness and monotony, its ability to depress and darken, its corrosive action which eats away at values and truths, are indispensable for the creation of an almost completely negative world.

Inasmuch as half of Baroja's novels are made up of dialogue, it was necessary that he used language that could be dull and lifeless in order to

achieve the over-all negative impression. A more rhetorical, colorful and scintillating dialogue would have destroyed the total, dark and doomed feeling of the novel, and consequently its novelistic unity.

A major portion of the creation of Baroja's novelistic atmosphere is accomplished through the repetition of negative signs, symbols, and other depressing material. Baroja's major characters seem to be the result of a relentless stripping and displacement, of a novelistic taking-away of all the extraneous elements that surround them. Multitudes of minor characters have undergone this same process before the novel begins. Life, in their case, has done the work of the novelist. It has stripped them of its most highly touted treasures, reduced them to lonely islands of humanity. The rejection found in Baroja's treatment of the landscape, although secondary, is again of surprising importance. He has refused to link it to any other meaning, to any ideology. He has stripped away its long-standing literary dress, ridded it of its ordered rhetoric, captured it directly. Negation plays a surprisingly important role in the lyrical moments found throughout Baroja's novels. The subjects of his lyrical emanations are nearly always sad, lonely, forgotten discards.

It is easy to see the predominance of the negative in all these phases of Baroja's novels is a constant and continuous factor. Moreover, each negative phase complements mutually all the other phases. The dialogue — probably half of the total content of the novel, is one of the most efficacious atmospherical depressants. The dialogue and the atmosphere account for a large percentage of the bulk of the novel and are therefore very important in the revelation of its characters. They also form the background, the frame, for the flickering essences of lyricism and humanity, and for the dynamic landscape.

Besides these negative factors, Baroja's literary doctrine is very iconoclastic.<sup>1</sup> His stylistic creed is negative; most of his discussions of literary doctrine begin with the words, *no creo*, and in his prologue to *La nave de los locos* he systematically denies all of Ortega y Gasset's *Ideas sobre la novela*. He is against all norms of schools, demanding complete liberty of material, procedure, and purpose. When asked what is left after all this negation, Baroja answers that a certain undefined but essentially human quality remains and should be the substance of novels.

Humanity undefined, which Baroja thinks should be the substance and theme of novels, humanity that is left after all other purposes and directions of the novel are rejected, seems a thing quite apart from all these negative factors profusely extended throughout his novels. The antivital factors help to show what this humanity is not. They show that rhetoric or words, conversation, ideologies, are not a vital part of this essential substance of man which Baroja wishes to present. They are, of course, a part of the world in which man lives just as they are a part of Baroja's novelistic world.

A greater part of Baroja's novelistic world is pessimistic and almost lifeless; a consistent use of negative factors plays a major role in its creation. However, the negative factors cannot be the full explanation or even, by themselves, the principal explanation of how Baroja wrote nearly 100 excellent novels. The very consistency of this negation as a builder of novelistic orbs makes the positive values, the unrejected elements, all the more discernible. The sharpness with which this dark side of Baroja's novels brings out the brighter side cannot be overlooked. Baroja cites this process in *La caverna del humorismo*. "In *humorismo* we go from the individual to the general, from the obscure to the clear, from pessimism to optimism."<sup>2</sup> (A)

In Baroja's style the most important positive element seems to be the rapidity, the movement, the idea that one writes as one walks; that style is a biological something. This rapidity, this movement, was usually evidenced in his similes, giving life and animation to his descriptions and especially to the landscape. It is important to note that this same biological rapidity, this same personal manner of speaking so akin to one's manner of walking, is the most salient positive element carried over into Baroja's dialogues. The words therein remain almost lifeless and meaningless — only the author's aggressive tone, his attacks against all things human and divine, his bitterness, seem alive and moving.

The positive aspects of Pío Baroja's novelistic atmosphere are easy to discern and separate from the predominantly negative factors. One of the principal parts of this vital atmosphere is the satisfaction of the physical drives and necessities of the body. Those things which satisfy the need for nourishment, our thirst, fresh air, form an integral part of this atmosphere. Particularly important in this group is physical activity, that which satisfies the need for bodily exercise. There seems to be a close equation in Baroja between that which moves and that which lives. Warmth is also important. Sunshine becomes in Baroja a sort of primitive symbol of life.<sup>3</sup> The fire, preferably in the fireplace or in the Basque kitchens, is part of this vitality.

Sex appears with less frequency than the other vital factors and is presented in its most pure and simplified form. The delicate candor combined with clinical honesty with which Baroja has handled sex is difficult to pin down. It might be helpful and enlightening to state that the inclusion of sex in Baroja's novels has never sold a single copy for him. The difficulty of handling and including sex within a novel without shading it with romantic, moralistic, religious, perverse, or any of the multifarious

---

(A) En el humorismo vamos a lo general por lo individual, a lo claro por lo oscuro, al optimismo por el pesimismo.<sup>2</sup>

overtones to which it lends itself with such great facility, probably accounts for the sparsity of its appearances in Baroja's novels.

— We cannot fully separate the fact that Baroja was a doctor and had received medical training — whatever its limitations — from his choice of the vital things of life. After the tragic end of *El árbol de la ciencia*, in which heroic but stumbling and inadequate medical science fails, the attending physician guesses that the vital things of nature — pure air, healthful food, exercise, and the sunshine of the country — might have saved Lulú and her child.<sup>4</sup>

— The same basic components of the vital atmosphere become the things to which the stripped, misplaced, and somewhat broken-down protagonists of Baroja's novels cling most tenaciously. When everything has been stripped away, Don Fausto of *Los últimos románticos* and *Las tragedias grotescas* becomes more aware of the lifegiving qualities of shelter, warmth, and food. Procopio Pagani's electric foot-warmer in *El hotel del Cisne* might have been the one touch of vitality that stood between him and complete blackness, desperation, and perhaps suicide. Fresh air and sunshine are the last telluric strings that hold Luis, in *El cantor vagabundo*, to this life before he cuts his boat loose and lets it drift aimlessly into the sea.

— Perhaps the most vital and positive aspect of all Baroja's protagonists is their liberty. This liberty is treasured highly by Baroja. For him it seems to be an essential part of humanity. It is principally a freedom from the mores of society, from responsibility except for one's own biological needs, from the fetters of a myriad of ideologies and truths. True, his protagonists all have some little personal philosophy of life, some little vital illusion to which they cling. But this illusion is always a self-elaborated and unique truth; it is never a philosophy elaborated and superimposed upon the individual from the outside. It is never one of those ready-made, store-bought outfits of truth completely adaptable to all those who care to or can be persuaded to don them.

Some of these self-elaborated and personal vital illusions are amazingly biological in nature. Capitán Chimista's philosophy of life seems to be summed up in these words: "¡Eclair! ¡Eclair! ¡Adelante! ¡Adelante! ¡Hurra!"<sup>5</sup> It seems, more than anything else, a philosophy of sheer physical movement, of action and adventure for their intrinsic, biological value. The phrase is reiterated throughout *La estrella del capitán Chimista* and *Los pilotos de altura*. It is the last thing uttered by an adventurer which might have been Chimista himself before the executioner compresses the lever and turns the wheel of the *garrote*.<sup>6</sup> Aviraneta's philosophy does not differ too much from that of Chimista. His principal reason for existence throughout twenty-two adventure novels is adventure and intrigue for their own sake. One of the principals of one of these novels, *La Isabelina*, has a purely biological philosophy of life. He, a priest

called Padre Chamizo, believed in his friends and in eating, in satisfying a purely physical hunger. This hunger was the basis for his association with Aviraneta.<sup>7</sup> For Baroja's sense of values, this quality tends to make him more rather than less human.

Some of Baroja's characters are left with no vital fiction as the novel ends. The most extreme of these cases, finding themselves left with no illusions about life, commit suicide. Even in the abundance of suicides in Baroja's works — three occur in the last two pages of *Los enigmáticos* — there is something positive, something vital.<sup>8</sup> These suicides seem to be the ultimate in the denial of all vital illusion. They wrench the physical act of death from the religious will of God, from its social protocol (the expectation that one should die smothered in the tears and sorrows of loved ones), and from the hands of the medical profession. Suicide seems a liberated and independent death. In general, death in Baroja's novels appears somewhat in physical purity, stripped of many of the multifarious fictions built up around it.

As stated before, the minor characters in Baroja's novels suffer no novelistic transformation or stripping process. They are taken into the novel as is, and they are considered as positive human values. They, like the protagonists, appreciate and are finally attuned to biological needs. They are also completely autonomous beings, little hampered or molested by the principal march of society. They too have their own little philosophy of life, their own unique wisdom in the art of living. Baroja insists that this art is unique, that it cannot be communicated from one person to another, and that it most certainly will not fit into any general maxims or doctrines.<sup>9</sup>

The landscape, as it appears in Baroja's novels, stripped of all literary dressing and bucolic falsity, is a completely positive value. Why this is so is not quite clear. Part of the positive value of the landscape springs from Baroja's rendering it as vital, dynamic, and living. This point is well illustrated by the speaking landscape in the novel *La leyenda de Jaun de Alzate*.<sup>10</sup> The study of Baroja's landscape illustrates some of the devices he used to give it movement and animation. Most important of these devices were the moving perceiver and the drifting clouds which gave an illusion of movement to the land, the similes which linked the landscape to something animate or something which moves, and the very rapidity of his prose which described a minimum of details before moving the descriptive lens.

There is also the feeling that man depends on the landscape, that he walks through it and derives his substance from it, that it has the positive and solid value of the biological. The countryside allows the liberated men in Baroja's novels a certain amount of special freedom; it invites them to a free movement of both eye and limb. But the essential attraction and value of the landscape remains poetic and ineffable. It is

one of those basic things that endure after all the superficial things, such as ideologies and supposed truths, have been swept away.<sup>11</sup>

The positive values in the poetical moments of Baroja's poetry are inseparable from the mass of negation surrounding them. Both the positive and the negative play a vital role in Baroja's personal lyrical outbursts. The emotional impact that sensitive readers absorb from these poetic moments seems to stem from a basic conflict between that which is vital and that which is antivital, that which is positive and that which is negative. The things which steadily and inexorably destroy life make it momentarily and instantaneously more precious.

First, the negative world reduces, delimits, and beats down the receptor of these poetic moments until he becomes a fine and sensitive tool for recording them. The people who are capable of perceiving these little flickerings of poetry, people like José Larrañaga, Silvestre Paradox, María Aracil, Fernando Ossorio, Luis Murguía — are people who have been reduced to a point where they are just barely clinging to life and existence. From their own reduced status stems their acute sensibility to all the insignificant minutiae around them.

Secondly, this negative world fashions and isolates, clearly outlines, the minutiae which are the objects of these lyrical moments. Only a man neglected by time and isolated in space could feel compassion and sense a certain poetic beauty in the old merry-go-round. Both cling to life precariously; both represent the peripheral or the ephemeral. Both find a sort of heroic pose in this paralytic and undirected movement.

Because of the inexorable march of the negative world which surrounds and crushes them, both the poetic perceiver and the poetically perceived become isolated, fragmented ephemera, these being some of the positive values found in Baroja's poetic moments. Some of the most obvious categories of values are: street epigraphy, popular songs, printed ephemera such as the *literatura de cordel*, the Basque proverbs, some of the jokes and anecdotes of the street. The landscape, because it has to be sensed in this same momentary fashion, could be included in this same category. Vagabonds form an integral part of the ephemeral, and the author, the protagonist, and the reader identify themselves with them for a moment, sense instantaneously the palpitation of their human tragedy.

In a sense, all of Baroja's minor characters are momentary positive values. They are probably the most important found throughout his works. Their main attraction for Baroja appears to be that they are human — human because they have no other qualities. These human derelicts can say of themselves only what one of Gorky's beggars says when asked by the merchant who or what he was. "'A man . . .'" he answered in a hoarse voice."<sup>12</sup> This last bit of humanity could hardly be salvaged from a more negative story, significantly called *Creatures That Once Were Men*.

If the most essential thing, the most positive thing, in Baroja's novels is human, then the proportion of inhuman to human is staggeringly in favor of the inhuman. There is human sympathy, this Baroja does not deny, but it is a precious drop of water lost in the nothingness of the sea.<sup>13</sup> According to Baroja, this human sympathy does not emanate from a higher source; it is more basic than this, for it is found in animals as well as men. The proof of this, Baroja feels, is that a war prisoner would rather be tried by a pack of dogs than a human war tribunal.

Those sentiments of sympathy also exist in animals. The dog is one of the most effusive animals toward man. If it were possible, after a war, to allow an accused man to choose between a jury of dogs or a jury of men for his trial, he would choose a jury of dogs, because he would know it would be more benevolent towards him.<sup>14</sup> (A)

It is significant that this ounce of Christian charity is carefully separated from all the standard doctrines that teach the same. Any human sympathy in these doctrines of universal brotherly love is completely obfuscated and its value nullified by its own self-praising ritual, its literature, and its propaganda.

Viewed in retrospect, this clash between the vital and the antivital has been the conflict around which all novels have been fashioned. The title he applies to one of his first trilogies, *La lucha por la vida*, might well be applied to all of his novelistic production. All of Baroja's novelistic entities undergo a savage fight for life and existence. This fight for life seems closely related to the struggle of animals for existence. It is principally the struggle for liberty against social restraint and conformity, the struggle for disorder against order, the struggle for the liberty of physical movement. In fine, it is the struggle of the ego, of the self, for survival.

The odds against the individual who seeks these liberties are overwhelming. For every ray of sunshine, there are a thousand dark moments. A thousand commonplace ideas and mores try to channel his every thought and action. A thousand ready-made tags exist for every emotion within his breast. Then, too, there is the crushing weight of his own lack of will power, his *abulia*, so much a part of his generation. This *abulia* explains, in part, why sheer physical movement is so vital to him. It

---

(A) Esos sentimientos de simpatía existen también en los animales. El perro es uno de los animales más efusivos para el hombre. Si fuera posible, después de una guerra, que a un procesado se le diera a elegir un tribunal de perros o un tribunal de hombres para que lo juzgasen, elegiría un tribunal de perros, porque sabría que sería más benévolo para él.<sup>14</sup>

represents a partial victory over one of his most antivital enemies, his own inertia.

Movement, in Baroja's novels, seems to represent a struggle for a certain spatial liberty. But the struggle for life is also a struggle against time. Baroja's world is extremely sensitive to the inexorable march of time. Clocks seem to be cursedly antivital to him. They are arbitrary, man-made contraptions, which measure out with their monotonous circles, in meaningless minutes and hours, that which is without measure, the human essence which Baroja is trying to portray in his novels. The phrase, linked to clocks — "they all wound, the last one kills" — appears five times in Baroja's complete works.

Baroja's protests here seem feeble but sincere. They are against a man's life, which should be the measure of all things, being cruelly and constantly dissected into little meaningless signs of nothingness by an infernal machine of his own invention. It is T. S. Eliot's protest against our lives being measured out in coffee spoons. But, as Truman Capote says, "The clocks must have their sacrifice,"<sup>15</sup> and this fleeting quality so akin to humanity makes it all the more precious. Thus the negative quality of time forces one to attach so much vital importance to egotism and the struggle for life.

Artistically, the advantages of negation seem more than obvious. Principally, it gives Baroja complete artistic freedom. The negation of any canons or precepts concerning the writing or purpose of the novel allows Baroja to construct a completely personal work; it allows him to write a novel in which he can wander around at ease and express his thoughts, angers, sentiments, and, above all, the delicate nuances of sensation, when and how he pleases. They allow him to write a porous novel.

A novel in which everything can be included without any particular reason for the inclusion, must necessarily lack order and continuity. This is certainly true of Baroja's novels. However, the negative tone which plays such an important role in all the facets of his novels does serve as a tremendous unifying force. The myriad things and persons which go into the making of one of Baroja's novels do tend to form an integral whole because of their negative aspects. They are either denied by the surrounding world or deny it.

Negation as an artistic procedure or creed can never be the vehicle of any great truths. It can be, and it certainly is, in Baroja's novels, a vehicle of sincerity. In an age when many feel that too many heads are nodding in the affirmative in too many directions at the same time, Baroja's negative motion before all is at least refreshing. Baroja praises little; when he does single out something as being worthy of attention or praise, he is sincere. Baroja, who has considered everyone to be a *farsante* or a *mixtificador*, and has called them these names repeatedly, has been

taken as a most sincere man. This is one of the qualities most often mentioned in works dealing with the author himself. Whether this evaluation of personal sincerity is just is not pertinent to this study. Sometimes it seems that Baroja — he had a hard time believing in anything — would not admit the existence of sincerity in others and in himself. But it is obvious that his denial of most ideals and truths and the devaluation of almost everything lend an air of sincerity to all his novels.

Perhaps the greatest artistic potentiality of negation lies in its ability to fragment, to atomize, to isolate. Affirming the great truths tends to make the surrounding world and all the worlds of the past, present, and future more cohesive, more unified. The great truths tend to unite man, to emphasize his oneness, his universality. The truth of brotherly love makes a fine example of this unifying quality. Negation, on the other hand, tends to destroy this universal unity. It tends to shatter and splinter reality into little particles, into fragments, into small egotistical entities. It often leaves only a moment of an individual, only one aspect. It can never reveal to us a completely noble heart but only at great intervals a somewhat noble gesture or, more often, an inkling of a noble sentiment that fades long before it is translated into an action. Thus, negation as an artistic procedure becomes a vehicle of the fragmentary, of the minute, of the instantaneous.

Another and somewhat surprising artistic potential of negation is its ability to render a dogmatic and general statement, a piece of rhetoric, or a hyperbolic tendency more exact. The negative words, for example, leave just enough of the positive statement to make it plausible and seemingly much more exact. Baroja's word deflators are a fine example of this power of exactness found in negation. Such harmless little phrases as *un poco*, *no del todo*, and even *no* have the ability to circumscribe and delimit a somewhat commonplace statement with a precision which renders it poetically exact.

This study has tried to show how Baroja can be linked to other writers of this century because of his iconoclastic literary doctrine, his creation of sad, negative worlds, and the positive answer he gave to them. Baroja, with his desire to break most rules and traditions of literary doctrine, and to write as individually as he walked, fits well into the Generation of 98. He, no less than the other members of generation, strove to create a completely autonomous literary doctrine. The independent tenor of these statements of literary doctrine for every member of the generation is manifest. Every member set down his own artistic code. Certainly the ideas about literary art set down in Valle-Inclán's *La lámpara maravillosa* have few points of contact with those outlined by Miguel de Unamuno. All, except Azorín, seemed to deny any vestige of affiliation of their own artistic creed with that of other members of the Generation of 98.



Baroja denies the very existence of any such generation. "I have always stated that I didn't believe that a generation of 98 existed."<sup>16</sup> (A) Antonio Machado expresses his desire for the complete artistic freedom of his poetry in this manner. "Am I classic or romantic? I don't know. I would like to leave my verse, as the captain his sword: famous for the virile hand that blandished it, not appraised for the learned craft of the man who forged it."<sup>17</sup> (B) This same independence of literary doctrine links Baroja to numerous other writers of our century.

Baroja is closely related to the novelists and other writers of his own century, so many of whom created sad, negative worlds. The novelistic worlds of Joyce, Proust, Moravia, Pietro Spina, Camus, Greene, and Faulkner are essentially sad and negative. Baroja's own generation, the Generation of 98, is outstanding in the creation of sad and negative worlds. Some of the best novelistic and literary talents of this century have dedicated themselves to the creation of dark, antivital nihilistic worlds.

Baroja's answer to this nihilistic world links him closely to the writers of this century. R. W. B. Lewis's observation that the answer James Joyce and Proust give — that the artistic experience is to be the only positive value — seems adequate and just. His affirmation that the other writers treated in his study give a human answer is also justified. Both the answers are partial and limited, and they are stated artistically and never overtly and dogmatically. His thesis of the partial human answer to the overpowering nihilism of the novelistic world which is artistically expressed could be applied to any number of the writers of our century. In Azorín, for example, this answer might well take the form of an intensified sensibility to the minutiae of time and space which surround one.

Baroja's answer to the dark and antivital world he created is also a partial one and is expressed artistically and not overtly or as a dogma. It is also a human answer, an answer concerned with that which is most basic and essential to humanity. This positive answer to a negative world is reduced and limited to those things which are available to the senses, to the surroundings that are most essential to the animal or biological existence of man.

Baroja's use of negation in the creation of the sad and negative worlds of his novels, and his fragmentary but positive answer to these worlds, suggest several fields for future study. It seems that an intensive study of the negative elements and the use of negation in other works, especially in those works considered completely negative, might help to disclose more fully the author's creative technique and genius and to outline more clearly their positive values. Such an approach might be rewarding, for example, in certain novels such as *Don Casmurro* and *Memorias póstumas de Brás Cubas* by Machado de Assis. This type of study might also be suitable for some of the more modern poetry and poetic prose of the Spanish-speaking world.

Some of the findings in this study provide more definite avenues for the investigation of Baroja's literary kinship to certain novelists of the nineteenth century. Although Rosalie Wahl states that Dickens, Gorki, Balzac, and Dostoyevsky influenced Baroja's style, she does not say just what the possible influences from each of these writers might be.<sup>18</sup>

In the light of the present study, one of the things that surely would be of interest to Baroja in the writings of Gorki is the latter's tendency to take his characters out of their natural habitat and to strip them of almost everything they once possessed, in order to reveal them. Zunzunegui has clearly recognized that the two authors share this procedure as his answer to the question: "With what foreign author would you associate Baroja?" shows.

With Gorki; both of them write an itinerant literature. In the majority of his novels Baroja needs to get his protagonists out on the highway in the fourth or fifth chapter . . . he constructs his novels to function like a trip. . . and, as in Gorki, there are no women in his literature.<sup>19</sup> (C)

For one who has read Gorki's short story *Fellow Traveler*, found in his collection of short stories called *Creatures That Once Were Men*, the relationship of the two authors, especially in their technique of character revelation, will need no further proof nor clarification. The porous elements of the novelistic world of Balzac must have interested Baroja considerably. In Dostoyevsky it was probably the ability of the author to double himself into both an actor and observer which intrigued Baroja. Baroja mentions this several times, calling it *el desdoblamiento psicológico*. This *desdoblamiento psicológico* is somehow closely related to Baroja's concern with the author's ability to identity himself, if only for one moment, with the socially displaced character.

The novelistic world of Charles Dickens must have been especially attractive to Baroja because it was essentially a negative world laced with a *souçon* of true Christian humanity. The temporally and spatially

---

(A) Yo siempre he afirmado que no creía que existiera una generación del 98.<sup>16</sup>

(B) ¿Soy clásico o romántico? No sé. Dejar quisiera mi verso, como deja el capitán su espada: famoso por la mano viril que la blandiera, no por el docto oficio del forjador preciada.<sup>17</sup>

(C) Con Gorki; los dos hacen una literatura itinerante. Baroja necesita en la mayoría de sus novelas sacar al protagonista a la carretera al cuarto o quinto capítulo . . . construye sus novelas en función de un viaje . . . y, como en Gorki, no hay mujeres en su literatura.<sup>19</sup>



displaced characters of Dickens' world, such as the parish beadle, the shabby genteel, Damon and Pythias, and all the other little isolated and forgotten entities who appear in works like *Sketches by Boz*, must have been very meaningful to Baroja. The character Mark Tapley from Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit* must have impressed Baroja — who quoted him at the beginning of a chapter in *El mayrazgo de Labraz* — because of his ability to create his own vital illusion of "jollity" in the face of adversity and sadness. This evidence of specific relationships between these novelists and Baroja suggest that a study might substantiate and enlarge the theme and reveal much more.

Baroja's legacy to younger novelists promises to be the richest field of study.

It is easy to trace the same preoccupations with the basic things of life in Carmen Laforet's *Nada*. Andrea, the protagonist, comes in darkness to the darkest house on a dark street in Barcelona. She finds there a vortex of ideological madness, a sort of compendium of all of Spain's past ideologies, such as the traditional Spanish honor and Catholicism. Against this background, Andrea becomes highly sensitive to and very appreciative of the basic things of life, such as sunshine, good food, and the pleasure of a walk.

In José Suárez Carreño's *Las últimas horas*, Manolo finds the meaning of life in his own physical assurance, in the physical things which surround him and concludes, "You have to live," something within him kept saying; 'be what you are this very instant.'"<sup>20</sup> *La noria* by Luis Romero deals with the daily lives and struggles of a series of individuals. It traces the vicious but vital circle of life, the heroic struggle for existence.

These examples demonstrate that not only is the positive answer of the basic things much like that which Baroja gives but also this positive factor depends on the negative background, the nothingness which surrounds it, for its emotional and esthetic impact. In these cases, as in Baroja, the negative forms the background and outlines the positive.

Hemingway, with his emphasis on that which tastes "damn good" and feels "fine" and his use of the concept of nothingness as a framing device for his characters, certainly falls into this group. The Spanish-born Cuban novelist and short-story writer Lino Novás Calvo, who, incidentally, was helped by the Generation of 98, shows the same direction. In his short story called *Cayo canas*<sup>21</sup> he shows a man alone on an island and surrounded by fire slowly creeping up on him, and his struggle for existence. *El negrero*, reminiscent of Baroja's *El capitán Chimista* and *Pilotos de altura* portrays action and adventure without purpose or direction. In this novel, as in the novels of Baroja, action and adventure exist for their own intrinsic and biological value.

A study of Baroja's influence on these young writers would no doubt

reveal that Baroja had a direction and a positive answer in his writings, and that it made its imprint on many writers.

Some or many readers may object to the limited and highly restricted answer Baroja has given to the negative world. It does have stringent limitations, but those who seek answers, complete dogmas, and panaceas can find an abundance elsewhere. Baroja's positive values are limited to the individual. They are without significance beyond the pale of the individual ego. They are further limited to the temporal, mortal existence of the individual. The thing you cannot find in Baroja is a promise or hope of immortality or a paradise in a life to come.

Although Baroja's positive values, found scattered throughout the negative world of his novels, are of little scope, they seem values solid and tangible enough, possessing enough vitality to sustain and make interesting the entirety of his prolific novelistic production. These same values must have been the only ones which sustained Baroja during his long writing career. Further, the fresh air, the landscape, the good food, the physical exercise, and the warmth of the morning sun or of a fireplace do leave room for the sublime. They seem to actually carry within themselves the potential of elevating the individual to his highest physical and spiritual point.

Baroja must have intuited that nature's elements have more power spiritually to elevate or depress man than do abstract words or ideas. It is the elements, intensified by a storm at sea, and not the empty literature of revolutions and dogmas, which momentarily tosses Paradox Rey, standing alone amidst the tempest, to the most sublime of physical and spiritual heights.

*The wind* has taken Paradox's hat, and he ties a handkerchief around his head. The rain, pulverized by gusts of wind, soaks his clothes.

PARADOX (Clinging to the helm) "Who would have ever told you, poor man dedicated to the natural sciences and to philosophical speculation, that you were destined to struggle alone against the immense sea, until you dominated and overcame it, for an instant!"

THE WIND "Hu . . . hu . . . hu . . . I am the whip of these huge and obscure waves that run upon the sea. I lash them, push them toward the sky, sink them into the abyss . . . Hu . . . hu . . . hu . . . hu . . ."

THE SEA "I have no freedom of choice; I have no will; I am an inerte mass. I am blind force, fatality which saves and condemns, which creates and destroys."

THE WIND "My angers are your angers; my commands, your furies."

THE SEA "This wave which charges like a furious bull, that strikes like a battering ram, that leaps, that rips, that takes apart, wishes no harm, doesn't seek to destroy; yesterday it sparkled in pearls on the flowers, at dawn, in the fields. Then it ran down the river, was a red cloud in a splendid sunset one afternoon, and today it is a wave, and tomorrow it will once again be what it was, rolling through the eternal circle of eternal substance . . ."



<sup>51</sup> "But the artist appeals to that part of our being which is not dependent on wisdom: to that in us which is a gift and not an acquisition — and, therefore, more permanently enduring. He speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives; to our sense of pity, and beauty, and pain; to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation — and to the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts, to the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity — the dead to the living and the living to the unborn.

It is only some such train of thought, or rather of feeling, that can in a measure explain the aim of the attempt, made in the tale which follows, to present an unrestful episode in the obscure lives of a few individuals out of all the disregarded multitude of the bewildered, the simple and the voiceless. For, if any part of truth dwells in the belief confessed above, it becomes evident that there is not a place of splendor or a dark corner of the earth that does not deserve if only a passing glance of wonder and pity." (Conrad, p. VIII.)

<sup>52</sup> "Me parecen todos ellos decadentes y, al mismo tiempo, defectuosos, productos de vejez y de neurastenia.

Si yo supiera corregirlos — he intentado hacerlo, sin éxito —, lo haría; pero no tengo norma clara para ello. Si intento mejorarlos, pierden su carácter y se hacen afectados, y si los dejo tal como están, quedan toscos." (Baroja, *Canciones* . . . , VIII, p. 980.)

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER 9 pages 181—186

<sup>1</sup> Rosalie Wahl has written a doctor's dissertation on Pío Baroja's literary doctrine. ("The Literary Doctrine of Pío Baroja" [unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1959]).

<sup>2</sup> Baroja, *La caverna* . . . , V, p. 409.

<sup>3</sup> It is significant that many of his characters who are almost completely swallowed up in the antivital elements seem to migrate towards the Levante, the Mediterranean coasts, when they make their bid for freedom and life. We remember that Fernando Ossorio of *Camino de perfección* and Don Juan from *El mayorazgo de Labraz* found new life and vitality in the Mediterranean sunshine of the Levante.

<sup>4</sup> — Para mí — decía la voz desconocida — esos reconocimientos continuos que hacen en los partos son perjudiciales. Yo no conozco este caso, pero ¿quién sabe? Quizá esta mujer, en el campo, sin asistencia ninguna, se hubiera salvado. La Naturaleza tiene recursos que nosotros no conocemos.

— Yo no digo que no — contestó el médico que había asistido a Lulú —; es muy posible." (Baroja, *El árbol* . . . , II, p. 569.)

<sup>5</sup> Baroja, *La estrella del capitán Chimista*, VI, p. 138.

<sup>6</sup> Baroja, *Los pilotos* . . . , II, p. 1341.

<sup>7</sup> "Los días de fiesta, aunque me esforzaba por quedarme en casa, no tenía bastante voluntad, y me iba a buscar a Aviraneta. Ese réprobo amigo de usted, como sabía mi flaco, me llevaba a una fonda de un navarro, un tal Iturri, de la calle de los Vascos, y me convidaba a una cena suculenta. ¡Qué bien se guisaba en aquella casa! ¡Qué merluzas, qué angulas, qué perdicés rellenas he comido allí! Ante unas comidas como aquéllas, ¿qué quiere usted, amigo mío?, yo era un hombre al agua." (Baroja, *La Isabelina*, III, pp. 1016—17.)

<sup>8</sup> Baroja, *Los enigmáticos*, VIII, pp. 453—54.

<sup>9</sup> — Mi última consecuencia — contestó él — es que no hay sabiduría en la vida, y que aunque la hubiera no serviría para nada expresada en principios o en máximas. — Luego añadió —: También podría suceder que hubiera una sabiduría para cada persona, pero indudablemente no creo que haya una sabiduría comunicable." (Baroja, *Los enigmáticos*, VIII, p. 429.)

<sup>10</sup> "¡Aufa! ¡De aquí para allá! ¡A jugar! ¡A correr! ¡A andar en rondas caprichosas por el aire! ¡Bastante tiempo hemos padecido esclavizadas, obligadas a estar quietas!" (Baroja, *La leyenda de Jaun de Alzate*, VI, p. 1132.)

<sup>11</sup> *La leyenda de Jaun de Alzate* illustrates the enduring qualities of the countryside. Jaun rejects both the old Basque gods and the new Roman Catholic idols. "No hay más que la Naturaleza." (Baroja, *Ibid.*, p. 1165.)

<sup>12</sup> Maxim Gorky, *Creatures That Once Were Men*, trans. by J. M. Shirazi (New York: The Modern Library, 1925), p. 103.

<sup>13</sup> "Nadie duda que al mismo tiempo que egoísmo hay en el hombre un principio de simpatía por los demás, que en las religiones se llama caridad y entre los positivistas altruismo. con esta palabra que creo inventó Augusto Comte. Hay que reconocer que es una gota de agua al lado del mar." (Baroja, *La intuición* . . . , VIII, p. 984.)

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Capote, p. 81.

<sup>16</sup> Baroja, *La influencia del 98*, V, p. 1240.

<sup>17</sup> Machado, *Campos de Castilla* (1907—1917), *Poesías completas*, p. 92.

<sup>18</sup> Rosalie Wahl, pp. 95—105.

<sup>19</sup> "Encuesta en torno a Baroja," *Índice*, p. 23.

<sup>20</sup> José Suárez Carreño, *Las últimas horas* (Barcelona: Ediciones Destino, 1954), p. 298.

<sup>21</sup> Lino Novás Calvo, *Cayo canas* (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe Argentina, 1946), pp. 9—43.

<sup>22</sup> Baroja, *Paradox*, *Rey*, II, pp. 172—73.