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IBERO-AMERICAN INTERSECTIONS:

Constructing (Trans)National Imaginaries

in Spain and Latin America, 1898-1938

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Spanish,
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Abstract

This study explores the ways in which Spain and Latin America have represented each other culturally, and the so-called singular cultural space of Ibero-America, through essays and travel narratives produced between 1898 and 1938. In particular, it reflects on the supranational contexts in which (trans)national identities are negotiated and defined. Intellectual representations of Argentina and Mexico are offered by three Spaniards: Miguel de Unamuno, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez and José María Albiñana Sanz. From the other side of the Atlantic, imaginative constructions of Spain are provided by five Latin Americans: Rubén Darío (Nicaragua), Alfonso Reyes (Mexico), and Manuel Ugarte, Ricardo Rojas and Manuel Gálvez, all from Argentina.

Spain’s newfound interest in its former colonies after 1898 was orchestrated in official circles through the ideology of hispanoamericanismo. As Spain’s postimperial project, intent on national regeneration and securing renewed influence by proclaiming the allegedly shared spirit uniting all Ibero-America, it sought a cultural reassertion of Spain’s hegemony. In contrast, while Peninsular regenerationists looked to rekindle their nation’s authority, the emergent hegemony of the United States drew Latin American intellectuals towards Spain. In consideration of their renewed mutual interests, this contextualised study traces what I deem are reciprocal gazes projected back and forth between Spain and the Americas, given that each is drawn to the other so as to reassess postimperial/postcolonial realities.

Although the Peninsular writers analysed in this study showed little faith in the rhetoric of hispanoamericanismo, I argue that their individual and national aspirations in Latin America are equally evident of Spain’s postimperial inability to approach the former colonies without reviving its imperial myths. In contrast, the recourse by Latin American intellectuals to Spain allows for an often overlooked opportunity to map the cultural significance that the ex-Metropolis held for them, articulated in response to the threat of US cultural and economic neoimperialism and what were perceived as the ill effects of modernity.
For Luisa and Luca,
and in loving memory of my father, Owen
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# Table of Contents

**Abstract**  
ii

**Dedication**  
iii

**Acknowledgements**  
iv

**Introduction**  
Reciprocal Gazes: Regeneration and the Construction of (Trans)National Imaginaries in Spain and Latin America, 1898-1938  
1

**Part One**  
Debating Cosmopolitanism and Universalism:  
The Writings of Rubén Darío, Miguel de Unamuno and Alfonso Reyes  
46

**Part Two**  
"Race," Revolution, and the Convivial Culture of Consent: Argentina and Mexico through the Eyes of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez and José María Albiñana Sanz  
100

**Part Three**  
Towards the "Reespañolización" of Argentina:  
The Spanish Travels of Manuel Ugarte, Ricardo Rojas and Manuel Gálvez  
164

**Conclusion**  
Rethinking Reciprocation  
241

**Works Cited**  
253
"El pintor que quiere retratarse, tiene que ver su imagen reflejada en un espejo. Algo semejante les sucede a las naciones. Para conocerse, no les queda otro recurso sino mirarse en estos espejos lucientes y claros—los escritores de fuera—.

(Pardo Bazán 313)

"La práctica de la idea de nuestra renovación tiene un precepto máximo: el viajar. Reformarse es vivir. Viajar es reformarse."

(Rodó, Motivos 412)

"A manera de ejercicios espirituales, al americano debiera imponerse la meditación metódica de las cosas de España, y al español la de las cosas de América."

(Reyes, “Ventana” 572)
Introduction

Reciprocal Gazes: Regeneration and the Construction of (Trans)National Imaginaries in Spain and Latin America, 1898-1938

"Y si hemos de cumplir nosotros, los de la noble raza ibérica, nuestra excelsa misión civilizadora, ha de ser uniéndonos en apretado haz los pueblos todos de la Grande Iberia . . . para que todos á una movamos la pujante rueda del espíritu patrio."
(Altamira, Mi viaje 12)

"Soñemos, alma, soñemos un porvenir en que a la plenitud de la grandeza de América corresponda un milagroso avatar de la grandeza española, y en que el genio de la raza se despliegue así, en simultáneas magnificencias, a este y a aquel lado del mar, como dos enredaderas, florecidas de una misma especie de flor, que entonasen su triunfal acorde de púrpuras del uno al otro de dos balcones fronteros."
(Rodó, "Niña" 740-41)

Following the official dismantling of British imperialism, the status of Britain’s overseas dominions was subsequently transformed, as former colonies, dependencies and protectorates became members of what was to be known under the global rubric of the Commonwealth of Nations. It can be said that those occupying this newly imagined realm were seen to dwell in an illusory space that, euphemistically, sought to prolong a semblance of empire and unitary cohesion beneath an alternate banner (Mishra and Hodge 276). The title “Commonwealth” obscured the realities of Britain’s past colonial expansion and constructed in its place a singular façade that proclaimed to the ex-colonies the supposed values of a shared stake in the tradition, heritage, and cultural capital of Great Britain, as the former Metropolis.

Such a unitary vision of otherness, projected outward from the dispossessed imperial centre in the direction of its former colonies has a parallel, I suggest, within the Spanish-speaking world. Discussed at length in 2005, during the fifteenth Ibero-American Summit in Salamanca, Spain, and passed a year later in Montevideo, the "Carta Cultural Iberoamericana" essentially recognised the Iberian Peninsula and its former overseas colonies as a culturally unified whole, as “un espacio cultural dinámico y singular” ("Carta" 11).1 Within the arena of the annual Ibero-American Summits, the notion of a unified transatlantic cultural space had been initially voiced in 1998, when Heads of State pledged to strengthen their commitment to

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1 This document may be accessed at the following address: http://www.xvicumbre.org.uy/pdf/xvi_cultural.pdf
this supranational idea of cultural identity, which they perceived to be based on a mutual sociological inheritance, and a shared history, ethnicity, and language ("Declaración").

However, as a discursive construct and a practical source for action, notions of cultural commonalities between Spain and Latin America in the postcolonial arena have had a longer history. Indeed, it is not coincidental that, exactly a century earlier, the historical juncture of 1898 sparked Spain’s renewed interest in its former colonies. What served most in official circles to promote this restored consciousness of the Americas within Spain’s cultural imaginary was an ideological movement and postimperial project in pursuit of new cultural capital. Spurred on by the emphatic rise of the empires of Europe and North America, the two-pronged purpose of this movement sought simultaneously Spain’s rejuvenation from its so-called decadence at the turn of the twentieth century and, by way of compensation for its decline, a wider sphere of cultural influence in the wake of the nation’s definitive loss of empire. To achieve these dual objectives Spain’s intellectual focus was directed outwards towards its former colonies in what was a reappraisal of the Ibero-American cultural space in a somewhat comparable manner to the transnational imaginary created by the British Commonwealth, despite obvious distinctions between British and Spanish imperialism based on disparate temporalities and imperial ideologies. What served to fashion an illusion of postimperial/postcolonial unity within the Spanish-speaking world after 1898 was the projection of a Peninsular sociocultural discourse that came to be known under the umbrella term of *hispanoamericanismo*.

One of the objectives of the present research is to trace broadly the development of this discourse in terms of the ways in which Peninsular writers have projected their desires upon the Americas after 1898, and reimagined the transnational cultural space circumscribed by Spain and its ex-colonies. My aim, however, is not to provide a detailed historiography of *hispanoamericanismo*, as other studies exist by scholars who have outlined extensively the
historical development of the concept. As a consequence, a focal point of my study are Peninsular perspectives on Argentina. Gathered together in *Temas argentinos*, first published in 1943, are articles by Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936) that centre on Argentina, and that had first appeared in print in the columns of the Argentine national daily, *La Nación*, roughly between 1899 and 1935. Although he does not set foot on American soil, Unamuno’s articles can be seen to “think Argentina” from within the cultural space of Spain. One prominent intellectual who did cross the Atlantic was Valencian novelist, political essayist, historian, travel writer and fervent republican, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (1867-1928), who, in 1909, travelled to Argentina during a historical period in which the arrival en masse of European immigrants to the Southern Cone was dramatically altering the social fabric of the region. Although the title of his account of this experience suggests otherwise, one theme to surface from his text, *Argentina y sus grandezas* (1910), is Blasco Ibáñez’s project to seek the reaffirmation of Spain’s alleged prestige in the Americas.

While Argentina is pivotal, what is also brought to bear in the present study is an examination of Spain’s perceptions of Mexico. One of the writers through whom I address this issue is, again, Blasco Ibáñez. Spending two months there in 1920, Blasco Ibáñez covered the events of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), coming to denounce that nation’s slide towards its perceived lawlessness in *El militarismo mejicano* (1920). A decade later, the lesser-known medical doctor and extreme right-wing conservative, José María Albiñana Sanz (1883-1936), also from Valencia and founder of the Spanish Nationalist Party in 1930, published *Bajo el cielo mejicano* (1930). Following a seven-year residence in Mexico, Albiñana Sanz bore witness not so much to the nation’s spiral into violence but to Spain’s diminished imperial standing in Latin America. Thus, the writers whom I analyse, with the exception of

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Unamuno, all left Spain’s shores and travelled to Argentina and Mexico, studying firsthand the sociocultural realities of the nations that they visited. Their essays, articles, conferences and travel narratives form the analytical basis for a large part of my research.

As to why I address Peninsular readings of Argentina and Mexico in particular, that question may be most effectively answered in consideration of the respective sociocultural contexts and ethnic makeup of these nations. At the risk of my slipping into a homogenising discourse, in terms of ethnicity Argentina and Mexico convey highly disparate versions of what could be termed a Latin American cultural identity. As Martín Caparrós once remarked, while Mexicans have descended from the Aztecs, Argentines have descended from ships; where Argentina has a beginning, Mexico has an origin (qtd. in Fuentes, Soles 7). Thus, on the one hand, the notable indigenous element in Mexico and its historical intercultural amalgamation with the Spanish colonisers suggest the imagined epitome of the mestizo nation. On the other, the omnipresence of European immigration to Argentina, in many respects a settler society, offers a contrasting picture.³

However, there is another important contrast between Argentina and Mexico worthy of mention, which informs the Peninsular writers’ approach to these nations. Due to its apparent lack of a discernible indigenous heritage, Argentina appears far more adept at embracing modernity and the material advances attributed to so-called progress. In contrast, Mexico is imagined as heavily burdened by tradition and the past. Such a viewpoint is best summed up by the Argentine modernist writer, Leopoldo Lugones (1874-1938). While in conversation with Mexican intellectual, Alfonso Reyes (1889-1959), Lugones asserted that, paradoxically, due to the weight of history in Mexico, Mexicans are almost like Europeans. Moreover, the nation’s multiple ethnic groups and their recourse to “native” tradition are seen as distinct hindrances to advancement. As such, he considers that only those nations judged as devoid of history,

³ It should be noted that the myth of Argentina’s “beginning” resonates most strongly in its largest urban centres, especially Buenos Aires. It was there that mass European immigration and a Europeanised outlook tended to diminish local tradition, forsake Argentina’s indigenous peoples, and undermine a sense of origin that was more palpable in the nation’s interior provinces. Furthermore, to emphasise solely Mexico’s indigenous populations similarly belies the presence in Mexico of the European element and those sectors of society with stronger affinities to European cultural traditions than to the nation’s indigenous origins.
like Argentina, have the capacity to fully embrace the future. Indeed, it is not coincidental that Lugones’ criticisms of Mexico, reported by Reyes, are levelled from the centre par excellence of European culture, and incorporate, albeit momentarily, its language:

—Vosotros, mexicanos—me decía Leopoldo Lugones, en París—, sois casi como los europeos: tenéis tradiciones, tenéis cuentas históricas que liquidar; podéis jouer à l’autochtone con vuestros indios, y os retardáis concertando vuestras diferencias de razas y de castas. Sois pueblos vueltos de espalda. Nosotros estamos de cara al porvenir: los Estados Unidos, Australia, y la Argentina, los pueblos sin historia, somos los de mañana. (qtd. in Reyes, “Apuntes” 263)

It was therefore Argentina’s proximity to the cultural traditions of Europe that concerned those seeking to renew Spain’s intellectual influence via the ideals of hispanoamericanismo. Furthermore, Mexico’s indigeneity, and its geographical proximity to the United States, posed a similar threat to the imagined unity of Ibero-America. Both of these factors jeopardised the very historical, cultural and linguistic foundations upon which that discourse proclaimed the postcolonial Spanish-speaking world as a singular and unified cultural space.

In large part, what gives the aforementioned Peninsular writers both the currency and impulse to direct their gazes across the Atlantic rests on comparable beliefs and assertions to those reverberating early in the twenty-first century from within the conference rooms and publications of the Ibero-American Summits. In his historical examination of Hispanismo from 1898 to 1936, Fredrick Pike affirms that those who adhered to its principles believed in the reality of a “vast spiritual patria” that, encompassing Spain and its ex-colonies, amounted to a “transatlantic Hispanic family.” As these dominions had formerly been under Spanish colonial

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4 Antonio Niño Rodríguez has stated that Pike initiated some confusion by using the term Hispanismo to describe what was, in essence, an ideological and political movement. For Niño Rodríguez, “hispanismo” connotes the study of the Hispanic world—its language, literatures, history, culture and politics—from the outside: that is, from the Anglo-Saxon world. See Antonio Niño Rodríguez, “Hispanoamericanismo, regeneración y defensa del prestigio nacional (1898-1931),” España/América latina: Un siglo de políticas culturales, ed. Pedro Pérez Herrero and Nuria Taberna García (Madrid: AIETI/SÍNTESIS-OEI, 1993) 16n2. When not citing the work of others, I have endeavoured to use the more common Spanish term hispanoamericanismo throughout.
rule, all were deemed now in the postcolonial space to belong to the same “raza,” intimately bound together not by ethnicity alone but also by the dictates of an alleged common culture, forged by way of traditions, language, and shared historical experiences (Pike 1).

Nevertheless, faith in a so-called shared culture cannot account for the vigorous and intense resurgence of Latin America in the cultural imaginary of Peninsular intellectuals after 1898, following what had been decades of mutual ignorance and neglect. As Antonio Niño Rodríguez notes, the redirection of Spain’s gaze towards Latin America must also be viewed in terms of Spain’s turn-of-the-twentieth-century initiatives toward national regeneration, its damaged reputation in international circles, and its waning ability to exert its influence in the Americas vis-à-vis competition from the then rising imperial powers in Europe and, most significantly, the United States. Thus understood, as a discursive basis for Spain’s treatment of postcolonial Latin America, hispanoamericanismo cannot be seen as merely the initial rhetorical manifestation of Spain’s imperialist nostalgia following its resounding defeat in 1898 in the Spanish-Cuban-American War (1895-1898). Rather, it was as a vital factor for Spain’s national regeneration in the early 1900s that hispanoamericanismo aimed to overcome the much debated climate of so-called national pessimism through a collective patriotic enterprise that might recoup lost international prestige (Niño Rodríguez 16-17, 19).

Considering the objectives of hispanoamericanismo as a national postimperial project, I seek to measure the extent to which the physical and intellectual presence of Peninsular writers in Argentina and Mexico reveals more about their distinct ambitions for the nation and individual desires for rejuvenation and identity formation back in Spain than it does about gauging the viability of any so-called transatlantic fraternal community. Indeed, as Sebastiaan Faber observes, “in spite of Hispanism’s transnational ambitions, it is simply too tied up with cultural nationalism” (89). At the same time, what concerns me here is not so much an exclusive attempt to map out Spain’s cultural and literary efforts to form a cohesive vision of the alleged Hispanic family, as articulated by the precepts of hispanoamericanismo. While this angle is pertinent to my project, I also attend to the instances when these writers in the first
third of the twentieth century harnessed the objectives of this movement to articulate not always the common vision of equality and harmony that it claimed to promote, but a hierarchical project of dominance over an Other. Thus, to present *hispanoamericanismo* solely as a project of cultural nationalism belies its wider goals to exert transnational authority; as Joan Ramon Resina has remarked, Hispanicism exists as “[a]n emanation of empire . . . the earliest instance of a postcolonial ideology engaged in promoting hegemonic ambitions by cultural means” (161). Nonetheless, it should be noted that the postcolonial condition is articulated from the margins, from the former colonies themselves, and not from the ex-Metropolis. Therefore, in response to Resina, I suggest that *hispanoamericanismo* surfaces not as a postcolonial ideology but as a postimperial project articulated from Spain, in order to reimagine its ex-colonies through a sociocultural discourse harnessed to offset the loss of empire.

According to Pike, what characterised those who subscribed to the ideological stance of *hispanismo* was faith in the notion that realisation of Spain’s potential, and consolidation of its national identity, could only be achieved in unison with Latin America. It was thus deemed necessary that Spain study manifestations of its own nature as it exists and is revealed across the Atlantic (1-2). Nevertheless, and understandably so, Pike’s critical inquiry into *hispanismo* deals with the idea as a Peninsular construct exclusively, as a method through which postimperial Spain, as the initiator, legitimises its renewed contact with postcolonial Latin America after 1898. However, solely viewing *hispanismo* from the Peninsula excludes the various responses and counterbalances articulated from Latin America in return. Absent from Pike’s study are the justifications employed by Latin America’s cultural elites to account for their own renewed postcolonial contact with Spain and their revived awareness of the ex-Metropolis during this same period. When coupled with Peninsular perceptions of Spain’s

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5 One of the most vocal advocates and theoreticians of *hispanoamericanismo* was the Spanish historian Rafael Altamira, who affirmed of the programme that, while nationally patriotic in its motives, its wider scope was first and foremost a project of peace, harmony and humane endeavours. See Rafael Altamira, *Mi viaje á América* (Madrid: López del Horno, 1911) xii. Altamira’s “americanista” programme is discussed at greater length later in the Introduction.
former colonies, then, Latin America’s newfound interest in Spain evidences what are reciprocated gazes between the Peninsula and Latin America. Simultaneously criss-crossing the Atlantic, these gazes both culturally construct images of otherness within each of their respective national imaginaries, while at the same time composing distinct representations of the communal, transnational cultural space of *Iberoamérica*, manufactured between Spain and the Americas in the wake of 1898.

Indeed, it is with this very notion of the reciprocated gaze as a pivotal theme of this study that I intend to proceed in the Introduction. Carlos Fuentes unearthed the power of buried mirrors on either side of the Atlantic as the motif to achieve his objective: a sense of looking from the Americas to Spain and back again to uncover the “cultural continuity” of the Hispanic world (*Mirror* 10). Although my purpose differs to that of Fuentes, the properties of the mirror are fitting images to harness, for where the heart of my research lies is in the ideal of exchange and reciprocity, and in reflections on the self as seen through an Other. This is not just any Other, however, but one that is within this Ibero-American space, where it is claimed that a unique affinity exists between the nations therein. Therefore, I do not only endeavour to go back and forth between Spain and Latin America in each of the three Parts of this study. The simultaneous traversal of *Iberoamérica* is also deliberately utilised here in the Introduction in my delineation of the diverse intellectual frameworks that have emerged from both sides of the Atlantic. Through the ensuing discussion I aim to situate my writers within broader sociocultural contexts so as to explore their interactions with, and contributions to, the debates that fashioned (trans)national imaginaries in Spain and Latin America in the first four decades of the twentieth century, and that continue to underpin these (trans)national identities today.

Carlos Serrano has pointed out that, around the turn of the twentieth century, “España mostraba que para celebrar su propia existencia necesitaba redescubrir América” (329). Likewise, Isidro Sepúlveda contends that “América ha sido para España un referente constante, pero muy matizado y variable: espejo para la autocontemplación [y] . . . motivo de
meditación y campo de proyección” (18). Although such remarks, like Pike’s study, reinforce the notion that the discursive basis of Peninsular hispanoamericanismo had been initially articulated from Spain, a focus solely on the Peninsula conceals what I argue is a more productive field of inquiry that takes into account Latin America’s imaginative constructions of Spain, and the wider transnational space that is Iberoamérica. The internal and external pressures exerted upon the former colonies in the wake of Spain’s loss of empire, in the form of the increasing political, economic, and cultural hegemony of the United States, as well as mass immigration from Europe, saw Latin America’s intellectuals initiate a process of critical inquiry into their own cultural identities. Just as Spain’s 1898 political exit from the Americas created a cultural rebirth of the former colonies in Spain’s national imaginary, so too were renewed imaginings of postimperial Spain reborn in the cultural nationalisms of those Latin American intellectuals intent on defining their postcolonial conditions. They similarly asked themselves the extent to which, by looking back to Spain, the Americas could combat the neoimperialist threat, realise their potentials, and consolidate their respective constructions of national identity.

One such intellectual was Rubén Darío (1867-1916), poet, writer, and leading light of Latin American modernismo. Immediately after Spain’s defeat in the Spanish-Cuban-American War, Darío travelled to Spain in December 1898 as a correspondent for the Buenos Aires newspaper, La Nación. In the wake of Spain’s loss of empire, his assignment was to examine the sociocultural climate of the nation over a period of sixteen months, reporting back to the Latin American reading public in the form of articles that were later published in book form under the title España contemporánea (1901). A few years later, at the behest of a doctor who urged him to avoid another winter in Paris due to his ailing health, Darío left for the warmer climate of Andalusia. Inspired by his surroundings, as well as by accounts of the region by nineteenth-century French Romantics, Darío published Tierras solares (1904), in which he offers a vastly different image of Spain.
Although born in Nicaragua, justifications for Darío’s inclusion in this study are based on his long-term residency among the cultural elite of Buenos Aires. As Sergio Ramírez has asserted in his 1998 prologue to España contemporánea, “Darío habla como argentino, y su idea americana es argentina” (19). Moreover, it is his cosmopolitan outlook and his intellectual proximity to, and presence in, a largely pessimistic, self-absorbed Spain in the aftermath of that defining juncture for the Spanish-speaking world that make his assessment of the former Madre Patria crucial for my research. In Part One, I consider his call in España contemporánea for Spain to become modern and then, ironically, his contempt for what he perceives to be a detrimental progress that threatens his image of an exoticised Andalusia in Tierras solares.

Textual representations of Spain in the national imaginary of Argentina are further advanced by Manuel Ugarte (1875-1951), one of the writers of the so-called Generation of 1900 in Argentina whom I address in Part Three. Also in 1904, after travelling in Spain from October 1902 to January of the following year, Ugarte, an ardent socialist and anti-imperialist who sought the unification of the Latin American continent as the Patria Grande, published his travel narrative, Visiones de España: Apuntes de un viajero argentino. A few years later, around 1910, two writers and cultural nationalists of Argentina’s “Centenary Generation” of intellectuals, Ricardo Rojas (1882-1957) and Manuel Gálvez (1882-1962), also included in Part Three, undertook separate journeys to Spain against the historical backdrop of the centenary celebrations of what had been Latin America’s first cries for emancipation in 1810. Crucial for the Centenary Generation was their critical stance in relation to Argentina’s rampant European immigration and the alleged detrimental direction of its moral and spiritual values. It was perceived that the nation’s ideals were being forsaken in favour of a rapidly developing culture of aesthetics and materialist consumption. Writing for La Nación from Spain in 1908, Rojas’ articles were later revised and published thirty years later, during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), under the title of Retablo español (1938). There, imagining a stable, historic Spain set against the fragmented sociocultural situation in Argentina, Rojas searches, and not without irony, for examples of Peninsular cohesion as a counterbalance to the heterogeneity
of Argentina’s cultural reality. While social tensions in his homeland are also of concern to
Gálvez, in his selection of essays cum travel narrative, *El solar de la raza* (1913), Gálvez flees
the unfavourable aspects of Argentina’s nascent modernity. In what can be read as his moral
and civilising mission for Argentina’s spiritual rejuvenation, he seeks imaginative refuge in his
vision of an idealised Spain, within which a heightened artistic and spiritual appreciation is
viewed as an antidote to the ills of modernisation.

1910 was not only a historical juncture for Argentina and its Centenary Generation of
writers. Also commemorating one hundred years of independence at this time was Mexico.
However, it did so in the same year that social unrest boiled over, sparking its Revolution.
Largely spared the conflict in his homeland due to his diplomatic duties overseas was Mexican
intellectual, Reyes (1889-1959), whom I take up in Part One. Stationed in Madrid between
1914 and 1924, residence in neutral Spain during this period also quarantined him from direct
contact with violent struggle in Europe because of the First World War (1914-1918).

Through an analysis of texts by lesser known writers, such as Albiñana Sanz, Gálvez
and Ugarte, as well as more obscure works by writers more firmly situated within the canon of
Peninsular and Latin American literature, I propose to examine the heterogeneity of
*hispanoamericanismos* in their plurality, as they are revealed both from and between Spain,
Argentina, and Mexico from 1898 to 1938. Until now, the writers and their works that form
the analytical framework for my research have not been considered with regard to the
imaginative construction of national and supranational cultural identities in the Ibero-American
space. Moreover, by addressing Latin America’s various responses to the neocolonial threat
after 1898, articulated through its intellectuals’ recourse to Spain, sections of this study
address an aspect largely overlooked in the scholarship concerning transatlantic relations
within the cultural space of *Iberoamérica*: the need to explore and attend critically to the
notion of Spain’s cultural significance for Latin America (Simson 7-8).  

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6 One text that has sought to address the theme of Spain’s image as it is projected from several nations in the
Americas, including the United States, is *La imagen de España en América 1898-1931*. However, its rather
Following the Latin American independence movements, the idea that Spain could somehow be culturally significant for the emancipated fledgling republics was a notion largely scoffed at in the former colonies. Rather, it was from within a climate of hispanophobia that influential Argentine liberal intellectuals, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Juan Bautista Alberdi, were highly critical of Spain, which they perceived as backward, decadent, and generally averse to progress and modernisation (Moya 336). However, it was not only in the nineteenth century that such attitudes were evident. According to Sepúlveda, in revolutionary Mexico a second strand of hispanophobia surfaced. Anti-Spanish sentiment derogatorily conceived of Spanish immigrants in Mexico as “gachupines,” as the desecrators of cultures and civilisations and the exploiters of indigenous peoples (“Hispanofobia” 61, 64-65). Such an attitude was typical in Mexico of the radical discourse of “Indianism.” It was the aim of its proponents to eliminate from Mexico’s indigenous cultures all traces of foreign and, particularly, Spanish influence and avow the right of all indigenous in Mexico to autonomous development (Knight 81). Thus, from about 1913, as a consequence of this distinct anti-Spanish sentiment, levelled largely by those adherents to “Indianism,” the historical reality of sixteenth-century Spanish colonialism in Mexico appeared to be brought forward. Collapsing itself upon the sociocultural climate of the nation during the initial upheaval of revolution, the line between coloniser and Peninsular immigrant became blurred. Identified as the landowning enemy, which had been favourably considered during the rule of strongman General Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911), the “gachupines” suffered violent attacks, forced evictions,

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7 However, “Indianism” should not be confused with the much more widespread movement known as indigenismo, which enjoyed far greater support. As an ideology, indigenismo was a non-indigenous-led movement that strove to emancipate Mexico’s indigenous, revive their histories and traditions, and integrate them into mainstream Mexican society. Indeed, the new Mexican Constitution of 1917 actually incorporated the ideology of indigenismo into official state discourse. In contrast, “Indianism” was a clear rejection of the elites’ attempt to incorporate Mexico’s indigenous peoples through what was seen as coercion and imposition from the outside. For further discussion, see Alan Knight, “Racism, Revolution, and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910-1940,” The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: U of Texas P, 1990) 77, 80-81.
and the sacking of their lands and properties (Sepúlveda, “Hispanofobia” 67). Indeed, in large part, contempt for the Peninsular immigrant, resident in 1920s Mexico, provides the impetus for the critical attacks on Mexico’s alleged tendency towards violence and lawlessness in Blasco Ibáñez’s *El militarismo mejicano*. It also serves as motivation for Albiñana Sanz’s vehement assault on Mexico’s supposedly morbid nationalism and problematic indigeneity, both of which are perceived to threaten Spain’s alleged prestige and the integrity of the Ibero-American cultural space.

By exalting the autonomy of indigenous culture, and in basing its claims for continental identity on the indigenous as the only allegedly genuine culture in the Americas, the Indianist movement also acted to offset the principle proclaimed by *hispanoamericanismo* that the Iberian Peninsula was crucial to upholding the ideals of the transatlantic family. It is therefore evident that, aside from those intellectuals who did look back to Spain as a cultural point of reference for identity formation, the *Madre Patria* was not, of course, Latin America’s only vehicle for its self-discovery. On the contrary, casting aside any affinities with the Peninsula, at times, and to varying degrees, Latin America’s intellectual elite looked outward to Europe (*europeísmo*) or the United States (*sajonismo* or *monroísmo*) for foreign stimulus and influence. Others looked inward on themselves to their pre-Columbian origins (*indigenismo*).  

However, there were those who, rejecting both Spain as the former empire, and the United States as the new hegemonic power, also looked inward to proclaim the virtues of Simón Bolívar’s ideal of “Latin Americanism,” or the continental political and cultural unity of all the nations of Latin America. Such was the stance of Cuban revolutionary, writer, poet, diplomat, and political figure José Martí (Faber 67).

For Iris Zavala in her analysis of Hispanic modernisms, the vision propounded by Martí (1853-1895) constitutes a “third way out” between European colonialism and US imperialism, by professing a desire for continental sovereignty to be expressed through Latin America’s

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8 Regarding the ideological standpoints against Latin America’s Peninsular heritage as defined by *indigenismo*, *europeísmo*, and *sajonismo*, see also Sepúlveda, *Comunidad* 195-213.
self-assertion (*Colonialism* 9). Martí articulates the divide between Northern aggression and the fragile, but strong-willed, South in his essay, “Nuestra América” (1891). The title clearly conveys his focus on the wider cause of all Latin America vis-à-vis the alleged Northern menace, expressed in terms of the urgent preservation of the “alma continental. . . . del Bravo a Magallanes” (“Nuestra” 17-18). Safeguarding Latin American sovereignty was a pressing concern for Martí, given that a scornful United States, imagined as “el gigante de las siete leguas” (9) and ignorant of Latin America, was about to wield its rapidly forming imperial might in the South (16).

What was key in Martí’s agenda for Latin America’s sociopolitical reorientation and maintenance of its sovereignty was a search for an originality that eschewed foreign models and was born from a telluric creativity within. For as he asserts, “[I]os jóvenes de América se ponen la camisa al codo, hunden las manos en la masa, y la levantan con la levadura de su sudor. Entienden que se imita demasiado, y que la salvación está en crear” (“Nuestra” 15). As such, in essence, Martí’s project can be viewed as an act toward emancipation that declares the potency and self-sufficiency of Latin America’s counter-hegemonic aspirations and desire for continental regeneration: “¿Adónde va la América, y quién la junta y guía? Sola, y como un solo pueblo, se levanta. Sola pelea. Vencerá, sola” (“Madre” 25). Thus, for Zavala, the modernism of turn-of-the-twentieth-century Latin America surfaces as a “master narrative” of decolonisation and anti-imperialism, aiming “to generate a cultural capital belonging to a whole society” (*Colonialism* 8). However, as a means for self-determination, and unlike the

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9 According to Iris Zavala, it was José Martí’s belief that the individual subject was capable of emancipation from traditional colonialism. Therefore, his alternative to European colonial values and United States hegemonic modernisation called for “a democratic modernity which would secure self-knowledge and autonomy against a dependency theory. The optimism of this liberatory imaginary was without doubt the most active articulatory point in the ensemble of social practices produced by modernism.” See Iris M. Zavala, *Colonialism and Culture: Hispanic Modernisms and the Social Imaginary* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992) 46-47.

10 For Roberto Fernández Retamar, Martí’s residence in the United States between 1880 and 1895 was decisive for the formation of his anti-imperialist stance. What is more, his proximity to the ever-increasing trend toward capitalist imperialism from the North was instrumental in his founding of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in 1892. Fernández Retamar also asserts that, rather than having been established as a political means through which to reignite Cuba’s 1868 revolution, which had had a marked effect on the young revolutionary, the goal of Martí’s Revolutionary Party was to spark another conflict against not only Spanish colonialism but also a nascent North American imperialism. See Roberto Fernández Retamar, “José Martí en los orígenes del antIMERIALISMO latinoamericano,” *From Romanticism to Modernismo in Latin America*, ed. David William Foster and Daniel Altamiranda (NY: Garland, 1997) 249-50.
Indianist movement, Martí’s project was not an outright refutation of the foreign altogether. Rather, the foreign was only rejected when it surfaced as a neoimperialist threat to Latin America’s autonomy.

Similarly resistant to foreign powers with aspirations of hegemony in Latin America are the Argentine and Mexican writers examined in this study, who were intent on amassing novel forms of cultural capital to re-orientate Latin America’s continental identity. However, to do so, these writers look back to Spain for their objectives. Thus, regardless of, for example, Rojas and Gálvez’s assertions that, in Spain, theirs was not a search for a viable template to mimic, their intentions cannot be read as wholly counter-hegemonic in the same vein as Martí’s Latin Americanism. Rather than a pure form of the “third way out” for Latin American modernity identified by Zavala in her analysis of Martí’s Latin Americanism, any attempt on the part of Darío, Reyes, Ugarte, Rojas and Gálvez to refuse European and US hegemony is rendered problematic. Whether it is by means of the sympathetic gaze in Darío’s cosmopolitan outlook for a reunited Iberoamérica after 1898, or the nostalgic apprehension of Spain by Rojas and Gálvez as a means to re-orientate culturally an increasingly heterogeneous and modernising Argentina, their recourse to Spain as a lens through which to address concerns at home does not just belie a counter-hegemonic stance. I also suggest that, in casting their gazes back to the ex-Metropolis, Latin America’s elite also add credibility to the claims of Peninsular regenerationists who believed that, via a practical hispanoamericanismo, Spain was the only guiding light capable of assisting its former colonies to solve their moral and social dilemmas.

While, for Zavala, Latin American modernism can be re-inscribed as a cultural movement pursuing decolonisation, Faber remarks that the concept of Peninsular Hispanism is equally counter-hegemonic: in part, due to its resistance to Anglo-Saxon modernity at the same time that it struggles to renew Spain’s cultural prestige (87). However, with the United States on its doorstep, the neoimperialist threat was undoubtedly far more palpable in Latin America than in Spain, making Latin American resistance more virulent. Although I do not
challenge Faber’s claim, Spain’s counter-hegemonic stance against the Anglo Other, by the very fact that it is articulated to reaffirm Spain’s supposed prestige, also conveys a renewed effort to exert a hegemonic influence over its former colonies; an attitude most readily identifiable in my analysis of Blasco Ibáñez and Albiñana Sanz.

Notwithstanding Spain’s claims to renewed hegemony, from both sides of the Atlantic collective anti-imperial sentiment, in rejection of the United States and Anglo-Saxon Europe, can be seen to draw Spain and the Americas into a tighter, more mutually influential sphere, within which Spain largely ceased to be demonised as Other. From this discursive sphere a transnational counter-discourse, which professed the supposedly heightened cultural and spiritual ties uniting the Spanish-speaking world, was allowed to take root, as Zavala indicates:

This strategic field is an appropriate point to analyze the multiplicity of forms of resistance which were then conceived in terms of cultural and “spiritual” relationships between the postcolonial collective agents and the previous empire. What had been “othered” during the wars of independence became in the juncture of 1898 an articulatory point under the new hegemonic pressure, and common bonds with the Hispanic world were re-accentuated (a pan-Hispanism). (Colonialism 39)

It is precisely the juncture of 1898 that marks the sociohistorical starting point for my analysis of (trans)national imaginings within the cultural space of Iberoamérica. That moment was not only instrumental in igniting Peninsular intellectuals in their quest to define the Spanish character. It also spurred on their contemporaries in the Americas to do likewise.

As Serrano has remarked, Spain’s renewed interest in the Americas was already increasingly evident in the aftermath of the Restoration (313), which, in 1875, had re-established monarchical rule in Spain following the Gloriosa Revolution of 1868 and a six-year democratic period that culminated in the short-lived First Republic (1873-1874). At this time the nation’s cultural and political elite, while addressing their concerns regarding Spain’s
alleged crisis of identity, had also begun initiating a search for a national commemorative holiday. It was hoped that such an occasion would help imagine a sense of Spain’s cultural unification and cohesion, and it was towards the Americas that they focused their attention. Monuments in honour of Christopher Columbus were erected in Barcelona for the 1888 Universal Exposition and in Madrid in 1892, in anticipation of the festivities celebrating the fourth centenary of Columbus’ “discovery” of the New World (313).\footnote{As Carlos Serrano points out, the fourth centenary celebrations of Columbus’ so-called discovery of the New World, held in October 1892, initiated a lengthy process that would result, just over a quarter of a century later, in the formal institutionalisation of the Spanish national holiday as the "Día de la Raza." See Carlos Serrano, El nacimiento de Carmen: Símbolos, mitos y nación (Madrid: Taurus, 1999) 318-19.}

Consequently, in terms of the institutionalisation of a Spanish national holiday to achieve a sense of unity, it was deemed fruitless for Spain to look inward in order to determine its symbolic origin. Neither the legend of Covadonga nor the Reconquest of Granada from the Moors in 1492, let alone victory over the French in the so-called War of Independence in 1808,\footnote{Although Serrano remains dubious as to the significance of the 1808 popular rebellion against the French for Spanish nation formation, José Álvarez Junco cites precisely this event for producing a sense of a national collective consciousness. See José Álvarez Junco, Mater dolorosa: La idea de España en el siglo XIX (Madrid: Santillana, 2001) 144.} could provide the national body politic with its desired foundational sense of a common origin of purpose. However, following Spain’s loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, its last overseas colonial possessions in the Spanish-Cuban-American War (1895-1898), it was believed that only by looking outward and, in particular, to the Americas, could the nation’s intellectual elite achieve their purpose of fashioning a sense of collective national identity in the post-1898 cultural arena (Serrano 328). In so doing, Serrano argues, it is precisely due to Spain’s political exit from the American continent, depicted in the national discourse as the "Disaster," that the Americas were culturally reborn in the national imaginary of postimperial Spain:

La importancia inversa que adquiere la América soñada sobre la América vivida en el discurso nacional español es sintomática: se exalta tanto más la primera cuanto más se aleja la segunda. América . . . renace a la conciencia española en el preciso instante en que sale definitivamente de su órbita política: ¿o
In addition to the obvious effects of the “Disaster” on Spain’s decimated armed forces, the formal end to the nation’s imperial status was most vividly felt by its cultural elites in terms of what José María Jover Zamora and Guadalupe Gómez-Ferrer Morant have defined as “una crisis de valores.” Although Spain’s sense of internal crisis had been palpable for some time, its definitive loss of empire catalysed those elites, sparking critical inquiries into the nation’s perceived deterioration. Indeed, the most pressing concern was the subsequent crisis for Spanish national identity at precisely this time of loss (“Cultura” 580).

These intellectuals, who came to be known retrospectively as the Generation of 1898, began to take up an uncompromising stance towards national culture and society (Jover Zamora and Gómez-Ferrer Morant, “Cultura” 584). From this vantage point steeped in pessimism they sought to formulate a revised, postimperial idea of fin-de-siècle Spain and Spanish identity, now seen to be in a state of cultural and political regression vis-à-vis the modern nations of northern Europe. It was Spain’s necessary regeneration that constituted the principal preoccupation of these writers, who, as Jover Zamora and Gómez-Ferrer Morant note, focused on the novel and the essay as the literary vehicles for their philosophical and moralising missions (“Cultura” 585). Thus, testament to the cultural impact of Spain’s loss of empire and its alleged crisis of values was their literary and artistic output, in which the primary subject matter was the national landscape and the distinctiveness of its inhabitants, as well as the idea of a national culture and the development of the nation’s historical sensibility (“Cultura” 590).

One writer who contemplated in depth Spain’s so-called national problem by addressing the national psyche from a philosophical perspective was Ángel Ganivet (1865-1898). In Idearium español (1897), Ganivet, highly critical of what he saw as the debased

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13 It was not until fifteen years later, in 1913, that the title of “Generation of 1898” was formally designated to this group of intellectuals in two articles published in the ABC newspaper by Spanish writer José Martínez Ruiz (Azorín). See María Dolores Dobón, “Sociólogos contra estetas: Prehistoria del conflicto entre modernismo y 98,” Hispanic Review 64.1 (1996): 59n2.
materialism of positivist Europe, focuses squarely on the notion of a national psychological and spiritual essence; that is, on the interior development of the people rather than on its outward, material advancement. Ganivet’s remarks here are pertinent, as it is from a comparable standpoint that Rojas and Gálvez, as writers from Argentina’s so-called Centenary Generation, echo a similar desire to locate Argentina’s spiritual core in the face of what they saw as their nation’s debased materialism. According to Ganivet, the essence of Spain had been forged through a national spiritual energy amassed during the Reconquest over the Moors from 711 to 1492 (107). The weakening of that essence was attributed to Spain’s post-1492 imperial expansion: “Apenas constituida la nación, nuestro espíritu se sale del cauce que le estaba marcado y se derrama por todo el mundo en busca de glorias exteriores y vanas, quedando la nación convertida en un cuartel de reserva, en un hospital de inválidos, en un semillero de mendigos” (105).

Subsequent to taking up a critical stance regarding the timing of Spain’s imperialist ambitions overseas, Ganivet advocates, instead, that Spain first be insular. Only by looking inward on itself, rather than outward for models to imitate or with fresh and ultimately hurried imperial aspirations, could Spain hope to address positively its deep spiritual crisis: “Hay que cerrar con cerrojos, llaves y candados todas las puertas por donde el espíritu español se escapó de España para derramarse por los cuatro puntos del horizonte, y por donde hoy espera que ha de venir la salvación” (155). As theorised by Ganivet, the objective of the nation’s necessary insularity was to consolidate a true sense of the national spirit, which, for him, had been continuously infiltrated by outside influences throughout Spanish history. According to his vision, Romans, Visigoths, Arabs, European dynastic rule and colonial subjects had all contributed to the corruption of an otherwise pure version of a Spanish national essence: “[N]o hemos tenido un período puro, en el cual nuestro espíritu, constituido ya, diese sus frutos en su propio territorio” (110). As I will develop in Part Three, Rojas’ imaginings of Spain in Retablo español resonate strongly with Ganivet’s theories on nation-building and the Spaniard’s assertion that, due to Spain’s imperial expansion and exterior
influences, the nation is yet to witness the full potential of the flourishing of its so-called national spirit from within the Peninsula. Likewise, and despite not being against his nation’s immigration initiatives, but merely the way in which they were implemented, Rojas maintains that Argentina’s spiritual cohesion has been severely damaged by an “invasion” of European immigrants, which has weakened Argentina’s spiritual core through division created by cultural plurality.

Like Ganivet, an often overlooked writer of the Generation of 1898, Ramiro de Maeztu (1874-1936), points the finger at Spain’s lack of a unified national will. In *Hacia otra España* (1899), Maeztu looks at Spain as a nation in a state of intellectual, moral, and creative paralysis (*Hacia* 63-64). Where the two writers differ, however, is in their respective prognoses. Ganivet highlights the need for the originality of Spain’s spiritual and intellectual renewal. In contrast, while Maeztu seeks consolidation of the same, this is to be achieved in tandem with the nation’s necessary industrialisation and material progress, with physical effort and hard work emphasised as the stimuli for regenerating a Spain envisaged as free from foreign interests:

Si España presenta una resistencia invencible a la iniciada industrialización burguesa, nuestra nacionalidad será arrollada por extranjeras manos. . . . Y si España camina con decidido paso hacia adelante, podremos esperar de nuestro suelo mayor bienestar, de nuestra fecundidad un pueblo más grande y de nuestro espíritu un renacimiento intelectual. (*Hacia* 51)

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14 As Javier Varela has remarked, Ramiro de Maeztu lived and breathed Spain’s loss of empire in 1898 more than any of the young writers who shared a critical attitude toward fin-de-siècle Spain under the banner of the Generation of 1898. Testaments to Maeztu’s proximity to Spain’s colonial debacle were his familial connections to Cuba through the emigration to the island of his paternal grandfather, and Maeztu’s personal experiences in Cuba between 1891 and 1894. Moreover, his brief duty as a volunteer soldier in the Canarias Battalion, stationed in Mallorca to bolster the national forces back home immediately prior to the imminent entry into the war by the United States in 1898, made Spain’s sociopolitical condition all the more immediate for Maeztu. For further biographical information, see Varela’s Introduction in Ramiro de Maeztu, *Hacia otra España* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1997) 18-31.
Whereas Ganivet had challenged the assumption that a materialistic, progress-driven European civilisation was superior, Maeztu privileges the pursuit of material gain in the hope of forging a stronger, more independent nation. It is precisely this tension between an insular vision of Spain, content to build walls and develop the national spirit from within, and the outward-looking, modern and progressive nation that Darío and Ugarte can be seen to negotiate during their time in Spain, that I will elaborate upon further in Parts One and Three, respectively.

With industrialisation a prime objective for Maeztu, then, it is not surprising that his focus in *Hacia otra España* favours Spain’s industrialised periphery; namely, the modernising centres of Barcelona and Bilbao, the inhabitants of which “han aceptado la ley ineludible del trabajo” (*Hacia* 89). Indeed, considering his Basque and English heritages, as well as a defining fourteen-year residence in London from 1905 to 1919, Maeztu’s ideological outlook could not have been more removed from that of other writers of the Generation of 1898, such as Unamuno, Azorín, and Pío Baroja, all of whom sought to locate the essence of Spain in the harsh interior landscapes and weathered inhabitants of rural Castile. For Maeztu, however, rather than sheltering the supposed essential qualities of national identity, Castile forms a blatant obstacle to the nation’s modernisation, which, if confined solely to the geographical periphery, would fail to effect Spain’s rejuvenation on a national scale: “La causa única de la presente agitación está en la meseta castellana. . . . La renovación viene de fuera; interesa a la periferia pero no llega al centro; comunica su poder creador al litoral, pero se detiene ante los montes que cierran el paso a la meseta de Castilla” (*Hacia* 167-68). The conflict between Maeztu’s modernising mission and the ideals of tradition and spiritual cohesion set out by Ganivet illuminates a comparable anxiety felt by Rojas and Gálvez. It was they who strove to rein in what they saw as Argentina’s wayward liberalism, which, like Maeztu’s philosophy,

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15 E. Inman Fox points out that Ángel Ganivet’s critical attitude towards European modernity is most evident in a text written between 1893 and 1895, just prior to *Idearium*, entitled *La conquista del reino de Maya, por el último conquistador español Pío Cid*, a text inspired by Ganivet’s contact with Belgian society and Belgium’s colonisation of Africa. See Inman Fox’s Introduction in Ángel Ganivet, *Idearium español. El porvenir de España*, ed. E. Inman Fox, 13th ed. (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1999) 17-18.
favoured Europeanisation and the pursuit of material gain as nation-building tools. However, unlike Maeztu, for Gálvez Castile is far from representing any form of impediment for his project. In my analysis of Gálvez’s *El solar de la raza* in Part Three, I will posit that, although he claims to uphold the ideals of Argentine modernity, Gálvez, while condemning the United States’ neoimperialism, seeks refuge from the perceived ills inflicted upon Argentine society by its efforts to modernise. It is precisely the lack of a modern imprint in Castile that causes Gálvez to rejoice and imagine Spain’s interior as a sanctuary for the spirit and a shelter for artistic and creative endeavours, largely seen to be lost by the modern sensibility.

Despite fundamental differences between Ganivet’s defensive insularity and Maeztu’s outward Europeanisation, where these writers unite, I propose, is in their belief that Spain’s national regeneration was to be intimately connected to the former American colonies. For his part, Maeztu shows little hope in the prospect of renewing Spanish imperialism directly. The climate propitious for the creation of another Spain, radicated in “la España de la producción y del trabajo,” requires abandoning “ilusiones nacionales” and rejecting the crutch that is historical Spain (*Hacia* 212). However, in imagining the formation of the new Spain, Maeztu alludes to the parallel forging of a renewed image of Spanish America, which, like Spain, will modernise, industrialise, and exploit its natural resources through work and physical exertion.

Although Maeztu’s pragmatic attitude appears to withdraw from reviving the imperialist national imaginary, he ironically refers to the Latin American nations as the Indies, thus recalling their colonial status. What is more, in keeping with his modernising vision, he imagines a space fit for the exploitation of natural resources: “[L]a industrialización del patrio suelo es, ante todo, un gran negocio. ¿Quién duda de que las nuevas Indias, y consiguientemente la nueva España, están en esas llanadas hoy estepas, en esos montes preñados de minerales, en esos ríos que se pierden miserablemente?” (*Hacia* 219-20). Consequently, regardless of Maeztu’s apparent lack of faith in Spanish imperialism to reawaken the nation, as Mary Lee Bretz has remarked, at times his narrative voice appears to slip noticeably into imperialist rhetoric and literary constructions of otherness, anticipating the
discourse of fascism characteristic of the 1930s (77). Indeed, this early tendency could well account for Maeztu’s emphatic shift away from liberalism to the staunchly conservative stance of the Catholic Right. Such an ideological swing in attitude is perhaps most tangible in his *Defensa de la hispanidad* (1934). For Alistair Hennessy, this text elaborated the notion of *Hispanidad* as the authoritarian right-wing concept of a transnational spiritual patria, as a “surrogate imperialism or an ideology of sublimation” (106). According to Sepúlveda, the concept of *Hispanidad* in the 1930s, as Spain’s universal Christian mission with fascist overtones, strove to transcend Spanish nationalism and marked the evolutionary limit of a conservative strand of *hispanoamericanismo*. *Hispanidad* was based on a philosophical, religious and spiritual mode of thought that harked back to a past historical moment when Spain had held a privileged hegemony in the Americas as a result of just one supposed commonality: a shared religion. In contrast, *hispanoamericanismo* was cultural and ideological, aiming to forge common bonds across the Atlantic according to the perceptions of not only a shared religion but also a common language, culture, history, and "race" (*El sueño* 157, 161-63).

With regard to Ganivet, as mentioned, his principal means for imagining Spain’s regeneration had been through nourishment of the nation’s spiritual essence, with exterior influences rejected in favour of an introspective insularity. Nevertheless, rather than exempt

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16 For Maeztu, writing in the 1930s, the idea of *Hispanidad*, or the alleged spiritual and moral unity that bonds Spain and its former colonies, is in a state of crisis. Both Spain and the nations of Latin America have abandoned the ideals of Spanish Catholicism and what was Spain’s religious mission to bring Christianity to the New World. Thus, it is in the idea of a return to this idealised past, to the “antigua Monarquía Católica,” that an immortal Spain, as the creator and authoritarian leader of *Hispanidad* as an ideology, may best defend itself and its so-called spiritual dominions from the foreign attacks of Bolshevism and economic imperialism. See Ramiro de Maeztu, *Defensa de la hispanidad* (Madrid: Rialp, 1998) 324, 339-40.


18 In addition to Maeztu, a key writer on the notion of *Hispanidad* as a spiritual archetype of Spanish identity was Manuel García Morente (1886-1942). During the Spanish Civil War García Morente gave two conferences in Buenos Aires in 1938: "España como estilo" and "El caballero cristiano." Along with two other seminars, both were later published under the title *Idea de la hispanidad*. In accordance with Isidro Sepúlveda’s remarks concerning *Hispanidad*, García Morente saw in the Christian religion the most potent force in securing a sense of national and spiritual cohesion. See Manuel García Morente, *Idea de la hispanidad* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1961).
him from imperial ambition in the Americas, his inward focus only serves to delay this aspect until such time when, having consolidated Spain’s spiritual and intellectual prestige, the nation’s renewed status and ideals can be transplanted successfully to the American continent: “Si España quiere recuperar su puesto, ha de esforzarse para establecer su propio prestigio intelectual, y luego para llevarlo a América e implantarlo sin aspiraciones utilitarias” (132). Shunning the impulse of nations to modernise, Ganivet envisions Spain’s mission to be based on a higher purpose than merely promoting material advancement, since Spain is to sit atop a virtual spiritual hierarchy as the provider of life to the Americas: “[P]aréceme que la conservación de nuestra supremacía ideal sobre los pueblos que por nosotros nacieron a la vida, es algo más noble y transcendental que la construcción de una red de ferrocarriles” (132-33). According to Ganivet, Spain’s work in the former American colonies is unfinished, for he desires to establish there Spain’s renewed intellectual and spiritual supremacy through a “Confederación intelectual o espiritual” (130). Such aspirations of forging a spiritual empire do not disprove any intention to control other more tangible resources. However, given that Spain’s own fin-de-siècle railway network was far from an example of industrial efficiency, virtually collapsing by 1914, and that Spain was “economically and socially invertebrate” after 1898 (Carr 398-99, 409), the Peninsular desire for spiritual pre-eminence in Latin America, as expressed by Ganivet, was Spain’s only viable option for attempting to retain some semblance of empire at the time.

A comparable notion of Spain’s unfinished mission in Latin America is evident in my reading of Blasco Ibáñez’s Argentina y sus grandezas. In Part Two I will argue that, for Blasco Ibáñez, Peninsular immigrants to Argentina play a vital role in fulfilling this mission. While he

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19 With regard to Ganivet’s treatment of Africa in Idearium español, Mary Lee Bretz has focused on what she sees as his anti-imperialist, although at times racist, stance. Bretz asserts that Ganivet esteems Africa over Europe and colonised over coloniser in what she sees as a novel attempt to envisage “a post-imperial role for Spain in an era when other European nations define power in terms of territorial conquest.” See Mary Lee Bretz, Encounters Across Borders: The Changing Visions of Spanish Modernism, 1890-1930 (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2001) 81-82. I differ from Bretz’s analysis in that, while it is indeed apparent that Ganivet wishes to curb Spain’s impulse to expand politically and militarily, favouring a process of national self-reflection and consolidation of identity, this inward focus and rejection of political expansion fails to excuse him from exercising hegemonic power in another sense. Imperialism is not only about territorial gain. I consider that the very act of seeking spiritual and intellectual hegemony over others is also a form of conquest.
identifies Argentina as a Melting Pot where perceived class and racial differences are nullified in an image of egalitarian utopia, his desire is to see Spain seemingly impervious to its alchemical properties, thus renewing its alleged prestige in the Americas. Like Ganivet, Blasco Ibáñez’s account positions Spain at the summit of a cultural hierarchy within the imagined transatlantic space of *Iberoamérica*.

Significantly, Spain’s loss of its last American colonies at the end of the nineteenth century also marked a turning point across the Atlantic. On the one hand, as already noted, political independence from Spain after 1898 was now a reality for all Latin America. On the other, the absence of Spain’s political role in the Caribbean, coupled with a waning British presence, facilitated a new era of increased neoimperial aggression in the region on the part of the United States. Ever since 1823, following the pronouncement of what came to be known as the Monroe Doctrine, the United States had acted to secure its own influence in the Americas and seek access to the potentially profitable export markets of Spain’s former colonies. However, according to Tulio Halperín Donghi, it was only after 1880 that the rapid growth of Latin America’s economies helped to consolidate the neocolonial status of the new nations, since it was then that the Latin American republics became subjected to the influence of the US as the new colonising metropolis (158-59).

After the events of 1898, direct political intervention by the US in the Caribbean region did become a reality. For one, the United States formally gained a colony with the subjugation and acquisition of Puerto Rico and, although 1898 marked Cuba’s formal declaration of independence from Spain, its sovereignty was also severely threatened by the maintenance of US hegemony on the island (Halperín Donghi 163). What is more, the United States wielded

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21 According to Keen and Haynes, the United States occupied and ruled Cuba from 1898 to 1902. Only after the island nation had included in its Constitution the notorious Platt Amendment, which made Cuba a virtual US colony, did the United States withdraw from the island. See Keen and Haynes 528, 428.
its political might in the Caribbean again in 1903 when it secured the independence of what was then the Panamanian province of Colombia for its own hegemonic ambitions.\textsuperscript{22}

Nevertheless, it would be misleading to think that US neoinperialism around the turn of the twentieth century was an exclusive concern for those Latin American nations more obviously affected by its hegemonic aspirations, such as Martí’s Cuba. United States influence also sought to steer the direction of the Mexican Revolution in favour of its own interests.\textsuperscript{23}

What is more, it caused grave disquiet among Latin American intellectuals who were contemplating the notion of continental identity in the Southern Cone. Indeed, they voiced their unease and concern, despite their nations being seen during the US presidency of Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) to exercise their sovereignty with a greater sense of duty than those in the supposedly underdeveloped Caribbean (Halperín Donghi 164-65).

Consequently, it can be argued that Latin America’s cultural elite, much like their Peninsular counterparts, faced a similar impetus toward reorientation amid identity crises and challenges to their sociocultural realities, brought about as much from US actions as from other external threats to sociopolitical cohesion. Although the causes for these supposed crises of identity differed according to each intellectual, as would their various remedies, all had a renewed sense of (trans)national cohesion as their ultimate aim.

For one of the South’s most esteemed intellectuals, Uruguayan José Enrique Rodó (1871-1917), a form of continental tutelage in Latin America was pivotal for the consolidation of its cultural identity. Nevertheless, tutelage would not be effected by the United States but

\textsuperscript{22} Colombia’s refusal to ratify a treaty enabling the US to lease a strip of land for building a canal that linked the Atlantic with the Pacific across the isthmus of present-day Panama resulted in an uprising against the Colombian government, led by officials of the New Panama Canal Company. In the face of condemnation from Latin America, as well as from further afield, Panamanian independence from Colombia was declared, aided by US navy vessels to dissuade the deployment of the Colombian military to quash the revolt. Two weeks after the US State Department had officially acknowledged the new Panamanian government, a canal treaty was signed that conceded the requested territory to the United States. In return, the US would pay Panama an annual subsidy and would guarantee the new nation’s future independence. See Tulio Halperín Donghi, \textit{The Contemporary History of Latin America}, trans. John Charles Chasteen, ed. John Charles Chasteen (Durham: Duke UP, 1993) 163-64.

\textsuperscript{23} During the Mexican Revolution, the US exercised its self-professed authority by controlling the flow of arms and ammunition across the US-Mexican border. Furthermore, striving to secure revolutionary Mexico’s volatile economic and political climate, the US acted to protect its substantial investments and economic interests there, which had been considerably threatened following the inauguration of Mexico’s radical 1917 Constitution. For further details, see Keen and Haynes 533-34.
by Próspero, the narrator-professor of one of Rodó’s most influential works, *Ariel* (1900). Próspero addresses the youth of Latin America who aspire to the ideals of a continental unity of purpose. Unlike Martí’s “Nuestra América,” which had aimed to decolonise the Latin American continent by combating the capitalist imperialism of the US, the goal of *Ariel* is to counterbalance the cultural threat posed by the North. It is relevant that the moral intent of Rodó’s narrator has resulted in similarities being drawn between Rodó’s text and those of Spain’s so-called Generation of 1898, equally preoccupied with the idea of the nation’s united, national spiritual conscience as they struggled to reconcile cultural identity with the widening divide between tradition and modernity.24

At the beginning of *Ariel* Próspero is giving his final conference of the academic year to his young group of receptive disciples (*Ariel* 152). For Próspero, the harmful effects of the materialism of the modern age, ushered in by technological progress, industrialisation and mercantilism, threaten Latin America’s intellectual and spiritual morality. He considers that this materialistic model for societal advancement amounts to a detrimental “automatismo humano,” whereby the most heightened human energies become sapped as a consequence of “un solo género de ideas, [y] por el ejercicio indefinido de un solo modo de actividad” (*Ariel* 155). As a result, the individual’s growing sense of isolation within society makes increasingly doubtful what Rodó’s narrator deems crucial: the necessary push toward Latin America’s continental solidarity. The moral effect upon the populace of this separation is imagined as the spiritual crisis of the continent, in that it has led to “una desastrosa indiferencia por el aspecto general de los intereses de la humanidad” (*Ariel* 155). Nowhere are the perils of materialism and utilitarianism more overtly tangible than in the example offered by the United States (*Ariel* 196). It is in the North, Rodó claims, where the idealism of the past goes unheeded and a deep sense of tradition has been abandoned for the momentary gains of the

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24 Herbert Ramsden has argued that, despite making no reference whatsoever to the idea of Spain, José Enrique Rodó’s *Ariel* can be thought of as an 1898 text conceived from the other side of the Atlantic. For him, between Rodó’s *Ariel* and texts by the Generation of 1898, such as Ganivet’s *Idearium español* and Miguel de Unamuno’s *En torno al casticismo* (1895), there exist certain generational and epochal parallels concerning the idea of national identity as a psychological problem to be remedied. See Herbert Ramsden, “*Ariel, ¿libro del 98?*,” *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 302 (1975): 446-48.
immediate present: “Huérfano de tradiciones muy hondas que le orienten, ese pueblo no ha sabido sustituir la idealidad inspiradora del pasado con una alta y desinteresada concepción del porvenir. Vive para la realidad inmediata del presente, y por ello subordina toda su actividad al egoísmo del bienestar personal y colectivo” (Ariel 205-06).

According to Zavala, it is at the turn of the twentieth century that the Latin American social imaginary integrates expressions of capitalism, technology, mass production, and the down-trodden working class. Harnessing the concept of modernity, that imaginary defines it as “a form of consciousness expressing both the birth of a newly gathered Latin American national identity and its culture” (Colonialism 44). As in Rodó’s Ariel, this new identity and culture prizes its humanism and the capacity of its idealised continental spirit over and above the material and technological capacities to produce and consume, characteristic of the North. For this reason Rodó’s Próspero insists on the image of Shakespeare’s Ariel, taken from The Tempest (1611), as the figurative embodiment of Latin America; Ariel represents “la parte noble y alada del espíritu. . . . [y] el imperio de la razón y el sentimiento sobre los bajos estímulos de la irracionalidad” (Ariel 139). According to Rodó’s narrator, what sets Latin Americans apart from their counterparts in the US is “el genio de la raza”: a profoundly spiritual sense of heritage and tradition that acts as a sacred link to the immortal pages of History (Ariel 198).

The impact of Rodó’s text on Latin America’s cultural elite cannot be underestimated. As Ricardo Szmetan affirms, Rodó exerted a marked influence on Argentina’s so-called Centenary Generation, given their similar concern for safe-guarding Argentina’s supposed national spirit against a corrupting foreign influence and dehumanising materialism (100). As I

25 It should be noted that Rodó does not reject outright the United States as a model for Latin America to follow. Instead, as Nicola Miller has remarked, what he warns against is wholehearted acceptance of the tenets of materialism and utilitarianism, for such blind recognition threatens to destroy Latin American identity altogether. See Nicola Miller, In the Shadow of the State: Intellectuals and the Quest for National Identity in Twentieth-Century Spanish America (London: Verso, 1999) 175. Thus, Rodó’s narrator in Ariel points out that partial acceptance is permissible, thus creating a balance between the spiritual and the material: “Aun dentro de la esclavitud material, hay la posibilidad de salvar la libertad interior: la de la razón y el sentimiento.” See José Enrique Rodó, Ariel, ed. Belén Castro, 3rd ed. (Madrid: Cátedra, 2004) 158.

26 Indeed, given that Latin America was seen as unable to exist economically on a par with the United States, the anti-imperialism of Rodó’s narrator, instead, is founded on the conviction of Latin America's spiritual supremacy over the North. See N. Miller, Shadow 178.
will develop in Part Three, Gálvez’s travel account in Spain echoes Rodó’s unease with respect to Latin America’s loss of its humanism and its supposedly spiritual essence. In *El solar de la raza*, Gálvez laments the demise of the human instinct to tend to others, to write, paint, and study within what is an increasingly utilitarian society. It is this attitude that accounts for his imagined construction of an ancient, pre-modern Spain within which a safe haven is sought.

Also contemplating Latin America’s intense sociocultural changes from the Southern Cone was Argentine sociologist, Carlos Octavio Bunge (1875-1918). Again pointing to the ideal of continental cohesion in the Americas, Bunge published *Nuestra América* in 1903. Although his text shares with Martí’s the same title, Bunge’s ideological stance concerning the notion of “race” could not have been more dissimilar to that of the Cuban. Unlike Martí or Rodó, Bunge’s call for the sociocultural renewal of the continent is born from his belief in the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon “race” and the alleged ethnic inferiority of the Latin American nations. He bases this principle upon what he sees as “el carácter de la raza”; that is, “[l]a pereza, la tristeza y la arrogancia criollas” (75).

Bunge’s ideological approach stems from his confidence in scientific positivism, as well as from his adherence to the doctrines of social Darwinism and biological and geographical determinism; as he announces, “[l]a culpa está en la sangre y en el clima; la herencia y el medio hacen los pueblos” (97). Consequently, he offers a highly critical attack on Latin American society, which he describes as “una incomensurable ensalada de cosas de Asia, de África, de Europa, de España, de América.” Digestion of such a detrimentally heterogeneous racial dish, Bunge adds, has always been a task undertaken with great difficulty by historians, writers, and anthropologists (20).

As an antidote to the allegedly regressive characteristics of the psychological and racial composition of the Latin American Republics, Bunge’s call for continental regeneration will

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27 In contrast to Carlos Octavio Bunge, Martí did not subscribe to the notion of “race” as a biological construct that could be used to justify the differential treatment afforded to different peoples. On the contrary, Martí’s conviction lay in the idea of the inherent equality of all humanity: “El negro, por negro, no es inferior ni superior a ningún otro hombre; peca por redundante el blanco que dice: ‘Mi raza,’ peca por redundante el negro que dice: ‘Mi raza.’ Todo lo que divide a los hombres, todo lo que los especifica, aparta o acorrala, es un pecado contra la Humanidad.” See José Martí, “Mi raza,” *Ensayos y crónicas*, ed. José Olivio Jiménez (Madrid: Muchnik, 1995) 129.
highlight a similar course of action to that proposed by Maeztu for Spain’s crisis of identity and rejuvenation. Although the Argentine’s convictions concerning geographical and biological determinism are not common to Maeztu, Bunge does share with the Spaniard a strong belief in Europeanisation through industrialisation and hard work. Just as Spain must look to the more advanced nations of northern Europe, so too must Latin America Europeanise:

No hallo, pues, sino un remedio contra nuestras calamidades: EUROPEIZARNOS. ¿Cómo? Por el trabajo. Trabajar la tierra, la usina, la escuela, la imprenta, la opinión, el arte. . . . Nunca nos será dado cambiar nuestras sangres ni nuestra historia ni nuestros climas, pero sí podemos europeizar nuestras ideas, sentimientos, pasiones. (Bunge 98)

Considering his emphasis on Latin America’s necessary Europeanisation, it is little wonder that Bunge saw his native Argentina, heavily influenced by European immigration, as a beacon for the continental progress of Latin America at the turn of the twentieth century. However, his model for advancement was not the same ideal of spiritual revival as proposed by the likes of Rodó. Instead, rather problematically, Bunge’s continental regeneration was to be based on the perceived ethnic renewal of the region, catalysed by a process of European acculturation. As Aline Helg has asserted, Bunge’s faith in Argentina for such a course of action rested on his firm belief in the ability of European immigration to obliterate perceived differences in the nation’s ethnic composition. This process would be most notable between the inhabitants of the interior and those of the cosmopolitan peripheries, thus “turning the shortcomings of the Creole into positive qualities: arrogance would become candor; laziness, work; and sadness, joy” (Helg 41).

A similar attitude towards transformation is examined in Part Two, this time on the part of Blasco Ibáñez. Although directed not towards the Creole but to the arriving European immigrants, this attitude informs his image of Argentina as a space for rebirth, within which perceived class and ethnic differences become broken down. Also in Part Two I explore the reverse: the sense of impenetrability with which Blasco Ibáñez’s El militarismo mejicano
considers Mexico’s *mestizo* population and Albiñana Sanz’s attempts in *Bajo el cielo mejicano* to negotiate what he sees as that nation’s problematic indigeneity. While neither Blasco Ibáñez nor Albiñana Sanz upholds Bunge’s contention of the pre-eminence of the Anglo-Saxons, as they witness instances of hispanophobia in 1920s Mexico, their imaginings of a viable Peninsular-Mexican convivial culture of consent are made all the more doubtful.

Taking to task Bunge’s thesis concerning the apparent biological and racial ills of Latin America was Spanish historian, Rafael Altamira (1866-1951), who in 1903 wrote the Prologue to Bunge’s *Nuestra América*. There, Altamira affirmed the need for Latin America and Spain to modernise through Europeanisation. At the same time, however, he warned readers of Bunge’s text against blind faith in “fatalidades antropológicas y sellos imborrables de raza” (qtd. in Bunge xix, xxii). Not coincidentally perhaps, in the same year that Bunge was elaborating his ideas for *Nuestra América*, Altamira published his own standpoint on Peninsular regeneration: *Psicología del pueblo español* (1902).²⁸ For Carolyn Boyd, Altamira’s aim was to create a public reaction of patriotism (141), crucial for which, as Altamira affirmed, was its spiritual element, rather than the conquest of territorial gains inherent to imperialism: “Los pueblos no adquieren ni pierden personalidad por ganar ó perder unos cuantos kilómetros de frontera, sino . . . por poseer ó haber agotado un espíritu propio, una modalidad de ideas, sentimientos y conducta, una conjunción históricamente condensada” (*Psicología* 37). It is this notion of an intangible spirit held in common, and not the shared physical space of the political nation-state, that sees Altamira’s image of Spain corroborate Benedict Anderson’s view of the nation as an “imagined community,” made up of like-minded individuals with a shared history and common values and ideals.

Boyd asserts that Spain’s spiritual renewal was intimately tied to the need for a restored historical consciousness: “Recovery of a serviceable national past—a past not only held captive, but actually lost or unknown—thus became a major task for patriotic

²⁸ Inman Fox states that, much like Unamuno’s *En torno al casticismo* (1895), Ganivet’s *Idearium* (1897) and Azorín’s *El alma castellana* (1900), Altamira’s *Psicología del pueblo español* (1902), influenced by Krausist thought, is a cultural and historical reflection on the idea of Spain from an ethical and spiritual standpoint, a stance akin to that of the so-called Generation of 1898. See Inman Fox’s Introduction in Ganivet 11.
regenerationists and democratic reformers at the turn of the century” (128). It was in the figure of Altamira that this idea of the renovation of history had its most fervent advocate. However, Altamira affirms that, rather than serve as a means to lament nostalgically what is no longer, a historical consciousness must be made useful as a source of rehabilitation in the present and as an inspiration for the future: “El recuerdo de nuestro ayer, en lo que tiene de bueno, sólo debe servirnos para animarnos en el esfuerzo de hoy y de mañana, no para detenernos en idolátrica contemplación de lo que ya no es” (Psicología 132). Consequently, Altamira’s first objective for Spain’s regeneration was to restore the credibility of national history.

For this restoration of history to serve a national purpose, Altamira determined that it had to reach the nation through educational initiatives (138). History retrieved and reimagined would remain largely ineffectual without the pedagogical channels through which it could be conveyed to the public at large. Destined to steer such an initiative, and with it Spain’s spiritual revival, was a select minority of intellectuals whose task it was to educate the masses (196). Looming largest as a primary educational initiative for Altamira was the need to combat the ill perception of Spain held by those from outside. As he declares, re-establishing Spain’s credibility in the eyes of the world was a necessary step toward national rejuvenation: “[L]a reivindicación del pasado . . . ha de servir grandemente para modificar la leyenda de nuestra historia, que ha creado en los demás pueblos una prevención tal contra nosotros, una falta tan grande de simpatía y confianza” (150). Hence, Boyd has observed that Altamira’s Psicología del pueblo español is not so much a critical reflection on Spain’s national psyche, as the title suggests, but rather the historian’s defence of the nation against the perpetuation of the Black Legend (141-42).

As a corollary to this issue, justification for Spain turning its gaze towards the former colonies rested on what Altamira called, in the Prologue to his text España en América (1908), “nuestro problema americano”: namely, the perceived external threat of North American and European educational institutions that continued to sow the detrimental seeds of the Black
Legend on American soil (*España en América* vii). Consequently, Altamira declares the establishment of permanent intellectual relations between the universities of Spain and Latin America a necessary course of action, calling Peninsular professors and alumni together in what was to be a common pursuit: “[E]l deber de ir á América y de estudiar personal y directamente su vida actual” (v). As my analysis will develop, such an attitude embracing direct contact is also prominently manifest in the personal experiences of Blasco Ibáñez and Albiñana Sanz in Argentina and Mexico.

To offset the claims of the Black Legend, it was also deemed indispensable that an appropriate counter image of Spain be offered to the continental gaze of Latin America. This refigured image, it was hoped, would eliminate prejudices and dispel the Americas’ ignorance of Spain (vi). In this sense, Altamira is not only pivotal for the role he played in the attempt to awaken Spain from its perceived slumber. Through his *hispanoamericanismo* he also stands out as one of those who went furthest to elaborate a programme for determining the extent to which Spain and Latin America could be of mutual intellectual and cultural benefit in the postimperial/postcolonial arena.\(^{29}\)

With regard to Altamira’s goal to correct the accusations of the Black Legend and reverse American ignorance of the Peninsula, Spanish emigrants to Latin America, or what Altamira called “americanos,” played an integral part.\(^{30}\) As crucial factors for Spain’s regeneration, it was they who were to provide evidence that the national soul was indeed equipped to vie with the likes of France, Britain and the United States in the competitive conditions of modern life (*España en América* 24). Thus, according to Altamira, “España está enviando cientos y cientos de sus hijos á que estudien, en contacto con la dura, pero sana

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\(^{29}\) A precursor to Altamira was Rafael María de Labra (1841-1918), who was instrumental in seeking increased intellectual and cultural ties between Spain and Spanish America. Regarding Labra, see Vicente Ramos, *Rafael Altamira* (Madrid: Alfaguara, 1968) 117, Palmira Vélez, *La historiografía americanista en España, 1755-1936* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2007) 162-64, and Pike 32, 34-36.

\(^{30}\) As Vicente Ramos has pointed out, Altamira’s defence of Spain and national culture relied on four fundamental precepts: the perceived role that Spanish emigrants to Latin America would play, the supposed common bond between Spain and the Americas due to a shared language, the influence of Peninsular intellectuals resident in the former colonies, and the necessarily increased diffusion there of Peninsular literature. Thus, the status of Altamira’s “hispanismo,” V. Ramos asserts, had ceased to be merely an idea to become a cultural and economic reality. See V. Ramos, *Rafael* 121.
realidad, cómo se ‘hace país’, cómo se allegan riquezas, [y] por qué caminos los hombres y los pueblos mejoran” (19). It is precisely this exalted image of the Peninsular immigrant, as a force for Spain's regeneration, that predominates as Blasco Ibáñez addresses hard-working Spanish immigrants in Argentina, conceiving of them as the epitome of the national character relocated to, and thriving in, its new environment. For both Blasco Ibáñez and Altamira, then, it is the immigrant who will ensure the revival of Spain’s prestige in the Americas.

However, the specific role that Altamira envisions for those transplanted to the American continent is not that of the emigrant from Spain, in the strict sense of the term. Instead, it is as former emigrants who subsequently return to Spain and pursue patriotic initiatives that modernise the nation that the longevity of Spain’s national character may be assured (21). Rather than an inward, spiritually autarkic approach to solving Spain’s so-called national question, as in Ganivet’s vision, what Altamira premises is the hope of Spain’s spiritual rebirth into the realm of modernity based on the ideal of looking outward and taking Latin America as a positive example: “Es el renacimiento de la tradición española vivificada por el ejemplo de la América moderna” (22).

Following Altamira’s conference tour through the Americas in 1909 and 1910, he addressed the Unión Iberoamericana in Madrid in April 1910 and published an extensive account of his journey under the title Mi viaje á América (1911). 31 There he conveyed to the public this very notion of Latin America’s alleged renewed sympathy and affection for Spain, an attitude that I explore further in Part Three. Altamira defined this intimate bond as a virtual movement of sentimental “españolismo,” which was collectively felt by the former colonies, constituting irrefutable proof of the success of the exchange (Mi viaje 507-08, 167). 32 One of

31 After a proposal that had initially been made in 1900 for an inter-university exchange programme between Spain and Latin America, Altamira toured the Americas between June 1909 and March 1910, giving conferences in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Perú, México and Cuba, as well as in the United States. In the words of the then Rector of the University of Oviedo, Fermín Canela, the objective of the exchange was to seek out “la renovación y afianzamiento de nuestra influencia espiritual en América” (qtd. in Altamira, Mi viaje 4). For an extensive discussion of Altamira’s journey in Argentina, see Hebe Carmen Pelosi, Rafael Altamira y la Argentina (Alicante: U de Alicante, 2005).
32 The timing of Altamira’s journey to the Americas was not coincidental. It had been one hundred years since the initial declarations of independence had first begun to resonate around the Latin American continent in 1810. Now,
the principal aims of Altamira’s visit, which coincided with Blasco Ibáñez’s Argentine journey, was to create in the Latin American continental imaginary a representation of a modern, hard-working Spain that was attempting to compete on an equal footing with the most progressive European nations. It was hoped that such an image of advancement would afford Spain “algún título para llamar á la puerta de los pueblos hispano-americanos” (510-11).

What is clear for Altamira is that, in seeking to promote Spain as a civilised nation with scientific and intellectual capacities worthy of being offered to Latin America, it is his goal that Spain take the lead to stand at the head of a newly unified Spanish-speaking world. In the case of Rojas and Gálvez, however, I will argue that Spain serves a different purpose. As I will develop further in Part Three, it is precisely because Spain is not imagined as modern in their accounts that it may be harnessed in an attempt to forge a sense of cultural nationalism in Argentina. For them, stimulus from the Peninsula can effect its greatest influence in Latin America not through the supposed modernity of the Spanish nation, as proposed by Altamira, but as a warning against, and a refuge from, the societal ills caused by modernisation.

Seven years after his initial visit to Latin America, Altamira himself was to remark on the apparent momentary sterility of Spain’s project in the Americas, due to the continued lack of a lucid vision of the local space, and a fixation on uniquely national rather than transnational questions on both sides of the Atlantic (El programa 16). Further jeopardising his project is his assertion of the apparent weakness of the Spanish character, as yet undefined, a lack of national patriotism in Spain, and the nation’s failure to sense its collective purpose, observations that similarly surface in Darío’s España contemporánea, analysed in Part One. Indeed, what drives Spain to reimagine the Americas is configured by Altamira as the nation’s “instinto nacional” (Mi viaje 665-67). Therefore, I suggest, instead of locating perceived evidence of a shared transatlantic identity, Altamira’s projection of a Peninsular gaze towards the Americas must be read as an impulse that attempts to solve Spain’s

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a century later, he notes the necessity that Spain bring to fruition a sense of spiritual union between Spain and Spanish America, or what he calls “la Grande Iberia.” See Altamira, Mi viaje 11-12.
national, rather than its transnational, concerns. As such, his project is not without ambiguity, given his criticism, mentioned above, of Spain’s detrimental persistence in attending to individual nationalisms rather than to the transnational Ibero-American space.

Not coincidently, during Altamira’s tour of the Americas, perhaps the harshest critic of his *hispanoamericanismo* was the Cuban essayist and anthropologist, Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969). Ortiz published a vehement attack on the spiritual and intellectual union called for by Altamira in a work entitled *La reconquista de América: Reflexiones sobre el panhispanismo* (1910). There, he challenged Altamira’s vision of a united Spanish-speaking world, based on a so-called common “raza,” calling it an enterprise in neoimperialism (5-6). Moreover, he drew attention to the paradoxical nature of the claim that Spain, in desperate need of regeneration itself, could somehow be capable of facilitating a process of cultural renewal in Latin America:

[S]i España está, como nosotros, enferma ¿por qué quiere ser la higienista de América? ¿No sería más lógico que antes que á curas agenas (sic), atendiera á su propia curación? . . . ¿Por qué España, en vez de pretender traernos cultura á nosotros, que no se la pedimos, porque la tomamos mejor de otros países, no gasta las energías de sus hijos buenos en elevar la cultura de su propio pueblo, que clama por la enseñanza? (103)33

Nevertheless, far from siding with Ortiz’s claims of Spanish neoimperialism in the Americas, there were those across the Atlantic, like Rodó, who found much to admire in the American projects of Peninsular regenerationists like Altamira. To account for this disparity, it is important to note that, as a Cuban, Ortiz’s experience of Spanish imperialism would have been far more vivid. In contrast, and unlike Ortiz, Rodó saw that the time was ripe for a degree of union between the Peninsula and Latin America, perceiving in the intellectual exchange programmes initiated under Altamira a merger of consciences based on the notion of a common “raza” (“Homenaje” 1188), provided that Spain not overly encroach on Latin

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33 For further insight into the antagonism between Altamira’s *hispanoamericanismo* and Fernando Ortiz’s claims of Peninsular neoimperialism, see Eva María Valero Juan, *Rafael Altamira y la “reconquista espiritual” de América* (Alicante: U de Alicante, 2003) 99-150.
American culture. In a short essay published in 1911, “La España niña,” Rodó wishes to see that Spain become “embebecida, o transfigurada, en nuestra América,” but at the same time kept apart, “en su propio solar, y en su personalidad propia y continua” (“Niña” 740). While Rodó desires a process of parallel regeneration occurring in tandem on both sides of the Atlantic, he also insists that commonalities should be appreciated from a degree of distance through refiguring Spain and Latin America as two facing balconies. Each is in full view of the other, separated but also united in their shared flourishing of the alleged “genio de la raza.” Moreover, this spectacle is envisioned as the simultaneous blossoming of purple blooms from each of their balconies’ respective “enredaderas”: an image of fraternal community, I contend, that is based not so much on the principles of hispanoamericanismo as on the ideals of republicanism. Such a political motivation will become relevant for my examination in Part Two of the manifestation of Blasco Ibáñez’s republican ideals with regard to his Argentine experience.

A little over a decade earlier, Rodó’s Ariel had focused on the correlation between the life-cycle of the individual and that of a civilisation, positing that the adolescent youth of Latin America held the key to the continent’s spiritual renewal vis-à-vis the material excesses of the North. Rodó returns to this theme in “La España niña.” Rejecting the ridiculed image of the Spain of the Black Legend, he conceives of, and holds faith in, an imaginative construction of the nation according to “ideas de niñez, de porvenir, de esperanza” (“Niña” 740). Rodó’s image of Spain as “niña” can be seen as an instance of a counter-discursive appropriation of colonising language in the sense elucidated by Bill Ashcroft. Articulating a positive desire for Spain’s rejuvenation in terms of the hope and future potential implicit in a child, Rodó can be seen to corroborate Ashcroft’s contention that the child exists as a sign of transformation. No other discursive trope, Ashcroft asserts, has been more persistently deployed to justify imperialism than that of the colony as a child in need of guidance (36). Indeed, it is this metaphor that accounts for Spain’s continual imagining of the Latin American nations as the “hijas” of the Madre Patria. However, Ashcroft goes on to note that postcolonial
transformation is possible when intellectuals from colonised nations “appropriate the discursive tools of imperial discourse and . . . interpolate their own realities and cultural activities into the global arena” (25). In a postcolonial space such as that inhabited by Rodó, the child, as Ashcroft insists, “invented by imperialism to represent the colonized subject amenable to education and improvement, becomes the allegorical subject of a different trajectory, a site of difference and anti-colonial possibility. . . . [and] the site of an unstable and unpredictable potentiality” (53).

Around the same time as Rodó’s postcolonial evocation of Spain as an embodiment of youthful promise, influential Mexican writer, philosopher, politician, and educator, José Vasconcelos (1882-1959), had a similar potential of adolescence in mind. In 1909, on the eve of the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, he founded, together with Reyes and Pedro Henríquez Ureña, the Ateneo de la Juventud, a vehicle for educational reform and scholarly pursuits. Later, as Mexico’s Secretary for Public Education in 1923, a position he held between 1920 and 1924, the Students’ Associations of Colombia, Peru, and Panama named him “Maestro de la Juventud del Continente” (Blanco 123). Also in 1923, after the most violent period of the Mexican Revolution, and the brutality of the First World War (1914-1918), in which conflicting European nationalisms had pitted nation against nation, Vasconcelos addressed the youth of Colombia in an open letter. Drawing on the lesson of the European conflict, he proclaimed the futility with which distinct Latin American nationalisms have been erroneously created in the Americas by way of imitation. For Vasconcelos, these divisive nationalisms, detrimentally imported under the paternal guise of Northern European tutelage, were bringing about Latin America’s collective suicide. For him, a sense of “patria” does not originate in a certain territory or granted political rights but from a common “race” and shared culture: “[P]rincipalmente [es] la estirpe, es decir, el tipo de cultura a que cada pueblo pertenece. La mera nacionalidad se forja en papeles; la estirpe la constituye la vida” (Pueblos 17-18). Such a concept of national cohesion as dependent upon a common culture prompted Vasconcelos to call for what he saw was the necessary union of Iberoamérica, not as a
political entity but as a spiritual ideal: “Nosotros queremos la unión de los ibéricos sin excluir a España y comprendiendo expresamente al Brasil. . . . Creemos que es más importante para una raza, conservar su idiosincrasia que su territorio, y por eso exigimos la emancipación espiritual por encima de la política” (Pueblos 14-15).

Vasconcelos’ theories regarding the Ibero-American peoples and their alleged spiritual and cultural unity anticipate those more fully explored in his often-cited text La raza cósmica: Misión de la raza iberoamericana (1925), and the lesser-known Indología: Una interpretación de la cultura ibero-americana (1926). In La raza cósmica, published while in exile in Barcelona, Vasconcelos rejects the approach taken by the social Darwinists and the racist theories of Joseph Arthur, Comte de Gobineau, concerning the notion of supposedly pure, dominant “races.” Instead, he argues in favour of a positive mestizaje, where the historical fact of the intercultural mixing of Spaniards, indigenous peoples and black Africans is seen as a continual process extended into the future. Consequently, Vasconcelos contends that a new “raza” will be created in Latin America that, in becoming universal, will fulfil Latin America’s unique, transcendental mission “de fundir ética y espiritualmente a las gentes,” and constitute the cohesive force to guide the future of Humanity (Cósmica 26-28).

Joshua Lund has read Vasconcelos’ La raza cósmica as an attempt to negotiate a “certain postrevolutionary anxiety” that arose from the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution (106). Extrapolating from Lund, I also contend that the hispanoamericanismo of Spain’s regenerationists similarly expresses their nation’s postimperial anxiety. Like Mexico’s, Spain’s unease emerges as a result of dramatic sociopolitical upheaval, although it lacks the disquiet that surfaces from what Lund perceives was the Mexican Revolution as a racialised disjuncture (106). Moreover, Vasconcelos’ notion of a “cosmic race” finds much in common with the precepts of Peninsular hispanoamericanismo. Like Vasconcelos’ project, which, as

34 As Marilyn Grace Miller has noted, the thesis contained in José Vasconcelos’ La raza cósmica can be traced back to 1920, to the publication of Prometeo vencedor, while Joshua Lund locates it four years earlier during a speech delivered by Vasconcelos in Peru in 1916. See Marilyn Grace Miller, Rise and Fall of the Cosmic Race: The Cult of ‘Mestizaje’ in Latin America (Austin: U of Texas P, 2004) 31 and Joshua Lund, The Impure Imagination: Toward a Critical Hybridity in Latin American Writing (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2006) 108.
Marilyn Grace Miller has noted, was “ultimately a spiritual cause” despite his allusions to “race” (30), *hispanoamericanismo* was also intent on proclaiming the spiritual oneness of the Spanish-speaking world. However, whereas *hispanoamericanismo* is confined to the Ibero-American space, Vasconcelos contends that *Iberoamérica* serves a broader purpose as the fertile host in which the *mestizaje* of this “cosmic race” has first taken root, prior to its anticipated “superación de todas las estirpes” in the global arena (*Cósmita* 27).

Thus, Vasconcelos’ concept of the “cosmic race” can be seen as both an anxious response to the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution and also a reaction against the incompatible transfer to Latin America of European nationalisms, prone to antagonisms and hostilities. As such, the ideology of the “cosmic race,” much like that of *hispanoamericanismo*, is readable as a counter-hegemonic retort. Vasconcelos’ vision disputes the positivist discourses of Northern European ideas of “race” and nationalism, divided fatally according to a plurality of “races” and languages. In contrast, Vasconcelos asserts, rather problematically, that within Latin America “no hay más que un idioma, un territorio continuo y una raza completamente homogénea” (*Indología* 20). According to Lund, Vasconcelos’ ideal for the formation in Latin America of a homogeneous “cosmic race,” based on the creation of a singular and universal “pueblo mestizo,” points to the conception of a “new and total purity” (117-18). Hence, rather than celebrating the hybridity of heterogeneous cultures, his universalist outlook is evidence of a conservative stance that recalls traditional Spain’s attempts to envisage the unity of *Iberoamérica*. As Lund puts it, Vasconcelos’ vision is predicated upon “a backward gaze toward a totalizing Hispanism, an imperial past that dreamed of a limitless nation” (118). These ideas form an appropriate backdrop from which to view the writings on Mexico by Blasco Ibáñez and Albiñana Sanz examined in Part Two, as it

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35 Although still far from what he sees as the diversity of Europe, Vasconcelos does clarify the alleged homogeneity of *Iberoamérica*. He remarks that his inclusion of Brazil in his thesis is evidence of not one but two languages and two parallel traditions in the Ibero-American space: the Spanish and Portuguese. See José Vasconcelos, *Indología: Una interpretación de la cultura ibero-americana*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona: Agencia Mundial de Librería, n.d.) 20. Nevertheless, Lund draws on Etienne Balibar’s theories on the structures of pan-racial ideologies to point out that, although Vasconcelos attempts to look beyond the borders of the nation-state in his universalism, his thesis fails to rise above positivist discourse. Instead, it repeats it, albeit in a different way, just like Aryanism, Zionism or cultural imperialism, in that “it couples the internationalist elitism of a ‘superior’ or ‘chosen race’ (the mestizo) to the nationalist populism of a ‘unified nation.’” See Lund 109.
was in the 1920s that the Valencians experienced Mexico first hand. Indeed, as I will develop shortly, both writers can be seen to hark back to a past era with renewed imaginings of Spain’s imperialist mission in the Americas, albeit in different ways. Moreover, an allusion to one homogeneous culture is not too dissimilar to Unamuno’s approach to Latin America, which will be examined in Part One. Rather than praise Latin America’s recourse to foreign influence and its ensuing cultural diversity, it was Unamuno’s intention to profess the common ground that allegedly unites Iberoamérica, based on what he saw was a shared language, culture and spirit.

In this Introduction I have sought to map out broadly, by way of the reciprocal gaze, Peninsular and Latin American imaginings of each other and of the so-called transnational cultural space of Iberoamérica. These images were projected through diverse intellectual paradigms from both sides of the Atlantic, which, in advancing notions of cultural renewal and regeneration, criss-crossed this space during the first four decades of the twentieth century, offering illuminating reflections on the self as seen through the Other. I now turn to outline briefly the analytical structure of this project, and the methods through which I address the (trans)national visions provided by writers from Spain, Argentina, and Mexico, whose works refract Peninsular and Latin American aspirations.

Although within each of the three Parts of this study a temporal chronology is evident, I have endeavoured to organise the content bearing in mind two principal criteria. Firstly, in each Part, I have sought to find a balance in accordance with geographical settings that takes into account the site from where the gaze is projected and that to which it is directed. Secondly, what also governs the composition of the Parts is the pinpointing of certain thematic coherences and divergences between specific writers and the manner in which each perceives the Other. Thus, the three Parts into which I divide this project encapsulate generally what I propose as key thematic concerns: notions of cosmopolitan diversity and universal commonalities in Part One; issues of “race” and perceptions of cross-cultural conviviality, or lack thereof, in Part Two; and, in Part Three, ideas regarding nostalgia for a
traditional past, as a means of attaining what is perceived as greater cultural cohesion in the midst of transition and upheaval.

In Part One, which sees each of the three nations represented, I contrast Latin American and Peninsular perspectives on each other. Reflections on Spain from the Americas are undertaken by Darío, representative of Argentina’s intellectual elite, through his texts *España contemporánea* (1901) and *Tierras solares* (1904), and the essays of Mexican intellectual Reyes, which consider the Ibero-American space during his ten-year residence in Spain from 1914 to 1924. Their gazes are reciprocated from the Peninsula by Unamuno’s mental journey to Argentina, undertaken through articles and essays written during the first third of the twentieth century, and later collected in book form under the title *Temas argentinos*, first published in 1943. However, Unamuno’s various other essays that embrace the themes of *Iberoamérica* and cultural exchange therein not included in this text will also be crucial to my analysis of his relationship with Latin America. The principal subject with which I engage in Part One is the tension between notions of cosmopolitanism, which celebrates diversity and affiliations with the foreign, and universalism, driven by the search for commonalities.

Here, my consideration of Robert Fine and Robin Cohen’s identification of four “moments” when cosmopolitanism has emerged historically will assist me to trace the development of cosmopolitan thought. Martha Nussbaum’s call to adopt a cosmopolitan awareness, which, for her, rejects a local sense of belonging in favour of a wider affinity to humanity as a whole, provides a clear distinction between the historical, Stoic-inspired understanding of cosmopolitanism as a universal ideal, and what has come to be thought of more recently as the “new” cosmopolitanism. David Hollinger’s analysis re-thinks the historic sense of the term, positing that the so-called new cosmopolitan ideal favours cultural diversity and personal autonomy over the recognition of sameness that is proclaimed from beneath the banner of a global humanity. I have chosen Darío’s texts to attend to issues of cosmopolitanism’s embrace of diversity and foreign influence, as a means to envisage Spain’s
nascent modernity. I will argue that his writings offer fascinating points of contrast to the universal common ground sought in the Ibero-American space by Unamuno and Reyes.

In Part Two I address Spain’s perceptions of Argentina and Mexico in the writings of Blasco Ibáñez and Albiñana Sanz. Here I explore the tensions created by notions of “race” and their power to disrupt the potentiality for envisaging within Ibero-America a convivial culture of consent. Alan Knight and Helg’s theories on “race,” as they pertain to the sociocultural situations in early twentieth-century Mexico and Argentina respectively, help to foreground such tensions. Similarly, Paul Gilroy’s reflection on the contemporary issues facing postimperial Britain as it comes to terms with its multicultural present is a useful lens through which to begin to assess the potentiality for an Ibero-American convivial culture after 1898. In 1909 Blasco Ibáñez journeyed to Argentina where he embarked on an extensive conference tour of the Southern Cone, through which he hoped to revive Latin America’s image of Spain. Greatly impressed by Argentina’s perceived wealth and modernity, Blasco Ibáñez wrote Argentina y sus grandezas (1910) from notes gathered while on tour. There, the themes of “race,” colonisation and immigration surface as the writer’s key concerns. Drawing on the trope of the Melting Pot as a way of envisaging an Ibero-American convivial culture based on consent rather than descent, Blasco Ibáñez imagines Argentina as a site of democracy and progress, and as a location for transformation and assimilation. To elucidate such notions, I consider Werner Sollors’ work on ethnicity and the metaphor of the Melting Pot for identity formation in North America, theories which prove equally valuable, I will argue, for Blasco Ibáñez’s imagining of a consensual culture in Argentina. Yet, rather than embrace difference, his representation in Argentina y sus grandezas of the assimilatory potency of the Melting Pot homogenises diversity, rendering the potential for convivial culture a distinct, although contrived, possibility.

In contrast, a convivial culture of consent that incorporated Mexico was unimaginable. If the wealth and grandeur of Argentina had showcased the potential of Spain’s former colonies after 1898 (and therefore, renewed Spanish prestige therein), revolutionary Mexico
stood in stark contrast. *El militarismo mejicano* (1920) discusses what Blasco Ibáñez perceives as the regrettable face of Ibero-American identity devalued by Mexico’s violent militarism and the actions of its *mestizo* population. A similar lamentation of Mexico, this time due to its so-called problematic indigeneity, can be seen in Albiñana Sanz’s *Bajo el cielo mejicano* (1930).

Such contempt for Argentina’s Peninsular heritage is notably absent from my analysis in Part Three of the imaginings of Spain by three Argentine intellectuals: Ugarte, Rojas and Gálvez. Noticeably influenced by the writings of Rodó, and the advance of a North American culture of materialism and utilitarianism upon the Southern Cone, Rojas and Gálvez—cultural nationalists and writers of Argentina’s so-called Centenary Generation—sought to balance their nation’s modernity with a newfound exuberance for a cohesive vision of Argentine cultural identity. In their view, due to a perceived displacement of Argentine values by the hegemonic North, and with European immigration drastically altering the sociocultural make-up of the nation, Argentina was running the risk of its “desespañolización.” By drawing on David Lowenthal’s theories on the role of contemporary nostalgia as a quest for unity during epochs of division, such upheaval in Argentina, I will contend, stimulates Rojas and Gálvez’s nostalgic contemplation of an allegedly more traditional past. Thus, turning their respective gazes tellingly towards Spain around the time of Argentina’s centenary celebrations of independence, their intention is to recoup Argentina’s so-called essence through their imaginings of the former *Madre Patria* and its apparent faithfulness to the past.

Furthermore, consideration of Pierre Nora’s distinction between memory and history, and Anthony Smith’s thinking on the role of the past in modern nations helps to illuminate, in particular, Rojas’ representations of Spain. For him, Spain stood as historical testament to a space within which the coexistence of waves of migrating peoples over centuries had forged the present Spaniard in a positive sense. This image of an alleged cultural cohesion that has arisen from cultural diversity is collapsed onto Rojas’ desire for a comparable vision of ethnic and cultural unity back home in Argentina. With regard to Gálvez, while he shares Rojas’ concerns for creating in Argentina a renewed national historical sensibility to offset the
dramatic changes in modern consciousness, he is more concerned with his nation’s slide towards an embrace of materialism. As an antidote, he will perceive Spain as a place of spiritual and cultural refuge, symbolised in its ancient towns refigured as art pieces. In contrast, Ugarte’s criticism of tradition-laden Spain and its idealised past, and his desire for modernisation, is an effective counterbalance to the retrospective gazes of Gálvez and Rojas.

Whether from Latin America or Spain, the reciprocal gazes that I will trace use their Others as points of reference, so as to recognise cultural similarities and differences. In large part, my writers’ relocations are evidence of a desire to account for dramatic change, upheaval, or general discontent in the local space. Yet their production also displays a need to locate a degree of stability, security and familiarity within wholly unstable, unfamiliar, or plainly unsatisfactory temporalities. As such, my attempt to chart these gazes, desires, and sensibilities foregrounds what Nicola Miller has identified as a pressing issue for the study of Hispanic cultural identity: “We need to know far more about the international context in which national identities evolved, about the transfer of people, ideas and images in both directions—both across the Atlantic and between the Americas” (“Historiography” 216). It is precisely an understanding of the supranational contexts in which identities are negotiated and defined in Ibero-America that my study will pursue, in an attempt to shed light on, and provide new insights into, the highly complex dynamic and always contemporary field of reciprocated gazes between Latin America and Spain, and among (trans)national subjects in general.
Part One

Debating Cosmopolitanism and Universalism:
The Writings of Rubén Darío, Miguel de Unamuno and Alfonso Reyes

“For a national culture, if it is to flourish, should be a constellation of cultures, the constituents of which, benefiting each other, benefit the whole.”
(Eliot 58)

“[T]here is no reason to suppose that everybody in this complex, ever-mutating world will find their affinities and their passions focused on a single place.”
(Appiah 95)

Due to the jarring juxtaposition of dissimilar cultures, an often-heard description of the modern urban space of the industrialised city is that it is cosmopolitan. Indeed, for many, the attraction of such spaces lies precisely in their cultural diversity. As a sentiment, however, the historic expression of a cosmopolitan outlook does not so much extol difference as prize the common bonds that allegedly unite all humanity. First for the Cynics and then the Stoics, the cosmopolitan ideal of the ancients strove to imagine the individual as a world citizen. Rather than pledge allegiance to local origins and temporal powers such as governments, they sought to forge an awareness of what they perceived were higher virtues. Thus, an individual’s primary loyalty was seen to be to humanity as a whole and to a single moral community of human beings. In this sense, the world view of the ancients can be read as an early articulation of universal humanism. In fact, the cosmopolitanism advocated by the ancients, if not synonymous with universalism, shares its most basic precept: a search for the common ground and uniformity that purportedly unites all humans with a sense of global belonging.

In contrast, the more localised image of the modern cosmopolitan city that thrives on manifestations of difference is akin to what has emerged in more recent critical approaches as the new cosmopolitanism, characteristic of the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries. For the new cosmopolitans, the mundane intent to locate sameness is replaced by a desire to embrace cultural diversity in all its forms. Rather than a duty to humanity on a global scale,
the spaces where the new cosmopolitanism flourishes are multiple and selective. What is more, it is as an attitude of openness to foreign influences and cultural heterogeneity as a means of identity formation at home, that the new cosmopolitanism prizes the autonomy of each individual to choose their cultural affinities and affiliations from a wide range of sources and influences.

These two concepts highlight distinct means by which post-1898 Iberoamérica sought to fashion an identity and define itself. Through the works of Darío, Unamuno and Reyes, my purpose in this Part is to map out the nuances of these disparate conceptions of cosmopolitanism—the new and the historic, or universal—as instruments for envisaging, on the one hand, Spain’s cultural rejuvenation and, on the other, imagining a sense of Ibero-American cultural cohesion and homogeneity. For one, Reyes criticises Spain’s intellectuals, particularly the so-called Generation of 1898, for their insular focus on the local space, which only exacerbates, he contends, the nation’s decadence. It is to alleviate a national sense of decay, rather than prescribe a cosmopolitan outlook in the manner promoted by Darío, as a quest for modernity and foreign influence, that Reyes desires Spain to look towards Latin America. In addition, he considers that through locating a feeling of common ground, Spain must recover its lost empathy with the Americas and recreate that region in its national cultural imaginary without recourse to imperial myths.

However, while Reyes’ insights are pertinent, my principal focus in Part One is on the writings of Darío and Unamuno. In his numerous articles for La Nación, many of which were later collected under the title Temas argentinos, Unamuno’s approach to Argentina expresses his suspicion of cosmopolitanism as a means for pursuing identity formation there. For him, recourse to foreign influences is not only a betrayal of the local space, it also threatens his vision of Hispanidad, which lays claim to the common culture and spirit that allegedly unites all Spanish-speaking nations, in a similar fashion to Reyes’ vision.

In contrast, Darío’s reports to La Nación during his sixteen-month residence in Madrid, entitled España contemporánea, are preoccupied with Spain’s pessimistic path toward
introspection and cultural isolation. As an antidote for the figurative barrier against the pursuit of modernity that Spain has apparently created for itself, Darío’s remedy, later endorsed by Reyes, is for Spain to look towards Latin America. However, unlike Reyes, Darío’s wish is to see Spain become cosmopolitan and take the example set by Argentina and modernising Catalonia as points of reference. It is there that an outward-looking mentality, together with intense nationalist sentiment, has ushered in the type of cultural modernity that Darío views as positively encouraging. Success in Spain’s endeavour to overcome its insular perspective, he imagines, will go far in creating a fraternal sense of transatlantic union. With a view to preserving the cultural diversity of Iberoamérica from what he sees as a universal, homogenising civilisation rapidly advancing in the name of utilitarian Progress, this union will further serve to join Spain and Latin America in opposition against its perceived common Other: the United States. Indeed, the neoimperialist actions of the US in Cuba, which led to Spain’s humiliating loss of the last remnants of its colonial possessions, prompted Darío’s journey to Spain in the first place. Sent to Madrid by La Nación to report on the state of the nation’s decline, the articles of España contemporánea became the first attempt to diagnose Spain’s national problem and seek its regeneration from a Latin American perspective. Prior to departing, however, Darío’s immediate response to Spain’s so-called Disaster was to defend Spain against the Anglo-Saxon menace at the height of the Spanish-Cuban-American War in a well-known essay, to which I now turn.

On May 20, 1898, nearly three weeks after the United States’ crushing military defeat of Spanish Navy vessels at Cavite in the Philippines, and one month after US President William McKinley’s failed ultimatum ordering Spain’s immediate withdrawal from Cuba, prompting the US to declare war against Spain, Darío responded to the actions of the Colossus of the North by publishing a scathing attack of US imperialism in “El triunfo de Calibán.” Fearful for the future of Latin America’s continental sovereignty at the end of the nineteenth century, Darío was highly critical of what he saw as the United States’ insatiable appetite for material growth and imperial gain, and called for Latin Americans to unite in a common effort to counter the
North’s encroachment upon the South (“El triunfo” 164). Darío reimagines the United States as Caliban, the deformed monster cum slave and the only non-spiritual entity initially inhabiting the island setting of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. In no uncertain terms, Darío viewed the United States as the enemy and its supposedly barbaric inhabitants the “aborrecedores de la sangre latina.” Portrayed as “búfalos de dientes de plata” in perpetual pursuit of “la caza del dollar,” they were seen to be hostile to the search for a heightened sense of idealism (161).

On the surface there was nothing in Darío’s critique that had not already been voiced by Martí, driven by similar concerns. However, it would be a misguided conclusion to dismiss “El triunfo de Calibán” as a mere echo of the Cuban or as a simple precursor to Rodó’s *Ariel*. What distinguishes his essay from those of Martí and Rodó was that, in the course of his opposition to the United States’ emergent hegemony in the South, Darío comes unequivocally to the defence of Spain: “[L]a España que yo defiendo se llama Hidalguía, Ideal, Nobleza; se llama Cervantes, Quevedo, Góngora, Gracián, Velázquez . . . se llama la Hija de Roma, la Hermana de Francia, la Madre de América” (“El triunfo” 166). As Carlos Jáuregui has pointed out, at the same time that Darío laments the rise of the United States as the new empire, “no deja de llorar el fin del anterior” (447). Without doubt it was Darío’s vindication of the *Madre Patria* in just such an essay, although more so as a result of his early twentieth-century works of poetry, that later prompted Maeztu to judge him “el poeta de la Hispanidad” (*Defensa* 221). Unlike Rodó, who, as Maeztu remarked, “saturado de cultura francesa, no había aún

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1 As was stated in the Introduction, Rodó would later draw on Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in his 1900 text *Ariel*, to posit Latin America vis-à-vis North America as the embodiment of the more spiritual figure of Ariel. However, in *The Tempest* an island serves as the backdrop for Caliban’s enslavement by Prospero, who taught him his religion and language. Making a lexical correlation between the terms Caliban, cannibal, and the name given to the original inhabitants of the Caribbean islands, the Caribs, Cuban intellectual Fernández Retamar, affirming in 1971 that the work’s island setting must be read as a mythification of the Caribbean islands, reclaims the name Caliban for Latin America in what is an act of reappropriation: “Nuestro símbolo no es pues Ariel, como pensó Rodó, sino Calibán. Esto es algo que vemos con particular nitidez los mestizos que habitamos estas mismas islas donde vivió Calibán: Próspero invadió las islas, mató a nuestros antepasados, esclavizó a Calibán y le enseñó su idioma para poder entenderse con él. . . . No conozco otra metáfora más acertada de nuestra situación cultural, de nuestra realidad.” See Fernández Retamar, *Calibán. Contra la Leyenda Negra* (Lleida: U de Lleida, 1995) 27-28, 31, 39.

2 For an analysis of Rubén Darío’s characterisation as the modernist poetic voice par excellence of the Spanish-speaking world, see Francisco Gutiérrez Lasanta, *Rubén Darío, el poeta de la hispanidad* (Zaragoza: Noticero, 1962). For a critique of Dario’s role as the defender of the Spanish-speaking peoples after the Spanish-Cuban-
encontrado el sentido de España,” it was Darío who was to go the furthest to ensure contemporary Spain’s emergence in the cultural imaginary of fin-de-siècle Latin America. What is more, for Maeztu, Darío’s focus on Spain provided Latin American intellectuals with a positive lesson, should they too cast their gazes towards the ex-Metropolis as a means to orientate their nations in resistance to the North American threat (217, 222-23).

More importantly, in addition to Darío’s stance of defending Spain, what was to emerge most notably from a subsequent essay, “El crepúsculo de España,” also published in 1898, just three months after Spain’s defeat in Cuba, was his attempt to pinpoint the nature and cause of Spain’s national woes. For Darío, the possibility of Spain’s recovery, or what he calls its “vida nueva,” depends not upon maintaining the folkloric Spain of castanets and bullfights but upon the future actions of the nation’s elite. In this way, I suggest that Darío takes on a similar role to those of Spain’s turn-of-the-twentieth-century regenerationists. Nevertheless, it was to this same elite that Spain’s sociocultural ills were also attributable. Indeed, Darío lays the blame squarely on them for what he notes has been the complete loss of Spain’s former virtues and the weakening of its traditional strengths (“El crepúsculo” 168). Essentially, Darío’s essay is evidence of a wakeup call to Spain’s ruling class, issuing them with a word of warning based on what he observes is a phenomenon not uncommon in other nations: its detrimental insularity. According to Darío, as a consequence of its short-sighted leaders, loath to seek recourse to outside influence at the close of the nineteenth century, all that could ever be achieved from Spain’s state of virtual spiritual and cultural reclusiveness was its ultimate stagnation:

Hay una experiencia de las naciones que la pobre madre patria habrá de tener en cuenta desde hoy, y que, en este momento crepuscular la hará fijar los ojos y poner las manos en la palpable y fría verdad. España ha querido permanecer encerrada en una múltiple muralla china, que no ha dejado desarrollar las

fuerzas interiores, ni penetrar la vida libre de fuera. Una ciega megalomanía ha
influido en algunos de sus espíritus dirigentes . . . que han conservado las
antiguas armaduras, sin poner nada dentro de ellas... ("El crepúsculo” 167)

Not only does Darío denounce Spain’s self-imposed desire to quarantine itself culturally
behind a blockade reminiscent of China’s Great Wall. In fact, Spain’s multi-layered barrier is
apparently far more impenetrable than the Chinese structure, simultaneously repressing the
development of national culture from within and without. According to Darío, the answer for
Spain lies in the age-old predicament of balancing a re-evaluation of the nation’s allegedly lost
and weakened traditions and virtues with a more universal outlook that takes as its guiding
force influences from multiple points of reference beyond national borders. Effectively, the so-
called great walls of Spain must be reduced to ruins. In so doing, Darío concludes, those who
are to come “deben sentarse sobre las viejas piedras del edificio caído, y sobre él comenzar la
reconstrucción, poniendo la idea nacional en contacto con el soplo universal; manteniendo el
espíritu español, pero creciendo en la luz del mundo” (168).

As stated, one of the objectives of Part One is to draw on Darío’s prose writings on
Spain to trace the ways in which he imagines the nation’s decadent, pessimistic insularity,
while at the same time revealing his desire that Spain push towards a more cosmopolitan
modernity. Culturally speaking, modernity itself, as Aníbal González asserts, “is linked to
change, to renewal, to the twin ideas of progress and decadence, to historicism, [and] to
criticism” (2). Nothing, then, could have been a more appropriate textual system to address
these antagonisms in wider contexts than journalism; as John Hartley maintains, journalism is
“the sense-making practice of modernity,” which, by prospering most in the urban arena, also
serves as “a product and promoter of modern life” (33). Darío had noted that one of the most
effective forces for Latin America’s renaissance into modernity, and for the future grandeur of
the “race” vis-à-vis the United States’ cultural and economic imposition, was the cosmopolitan
refertilisation in Latin America of the “antigua semilla.” From Europe and the Universe, Darío
affirms, “nos llega un vasto soplo cosmopolita que ayudará a vigorizar la selva propia” ("El
triunfo” 165). This “antigua semilla” on its own—sown in the Americas by the clash of the Spanish and indigenous civilisations in the sixteenth century—was deemed to lack the fortitude to prompt a renewed cultural flourishing in the Americas following the Latin American nations’ emancipation in the early 1800s. Thus, cosmopolitan intellectuals such as Darío imagined initiating refertilisation by looking abroad, and especially to Europe, to alternative sources of cultural influence and inspiration. In fact, this kind of process, as Jean Franco has pointed out, has occurred in places such as Argentina and Uruguay, which have claimed as their logical inheritance from Europe Western cultural traditions in the absence of a distinct indigenous culture (184).

Indeed, Latin America’s focus on Europe as a cultural stimulus was indicative of what Camilla Fojas has called a “cosmopolitanism from the margins,” whereby European culture was made to be of use to nation-building projects outside of Europe so as to found more “equitable dialogues between centers and peripheries” (4-5). In terms of European cultural influence for Latin America in 1898, it was France that held the greatest sway. Nevertheless, it was Darío’s wish to propel Spain in the direction of a similar cosmopolitanism so that it might gain credence as a progenitor of a worldlier outlook that, while enlivening the nation at home, would also serve as a source for a possible transatlantic mutual invigoration to combat the Anglo-Saxon menace. It was this same faithful optimism that had urged Darío to exalt Spain and the Spanish-speaking peoples in the poems of Cantos de vida y esperanza (1905). Therein he voices his confidence in “el renacimiento de la vieja Hispania en el propio solar y del otro lado del Océano, en el coro de naciones que hacen contrapeso en la balanza sentimental a la fuerte y osada raza del Norte” (Historia 216).

Darío had first visited Spain in 1892 as the Nicaraguan delegate to the fourth centennial celebrations of the so-called Discovery of America. From 1893 until late 1898, he resided in the thriving urban sprawl of Buenos Aires where, for the first two years, he held the post of Honorary Consul of Colombia. One commentator has remarked that the modern urban environment of the Argentine capital, and a vocation that took him to the European and North
American cultural centres of Paris and New York, had done much to enrich his cosmopolitan outlook (Quintián, *Cultura* 76). It was with this worldlier attitude in tow that Darío embarked on his second journey to Spain. In December 1898, less than a month after the publication of “El crepúsculo de España” and with the wounds of Spain’s loss of its colonies still raw, Darío left for Spain, where he stayed until April 1900 as a correspondent for the Buenos Aires daily, *La Nación*. As he makes clear in his *Autobiografía*, the newspaper was looking for someone to report on the state of Spain following the “Disaster” and, with a great deal of enthusiasm, Darío immediately offered himself for the position (61). The forty articles that Darío sent back to *La Nación* were later collected and published under the title *España contemporánea* (1901).

With all the fraught implications attached to notions of objectivity, from the primary vantage point of the Spanish capital Darío’s express purpose as a journalist in Spain was to provide a supposedly objective portrayal of the Spanish reality of the period for his reading public and emigrated Spaniards in the Americas: “[N]o he de engañar a los españoles de América y a todos los que me lean. *La Nación* me ha enviado a Madrid a que diga la verdad, y no he de decir sino lo que en realidad observe y sienta” (*España* 49).

Although Darío’s persona looms large in Spanish American literature, his authority also stems from precisely these assertions to portray accurately Spain’s national reality of the period, a claim that corroborates González’s remarks that the power of journalism derives not from the cult of personality but from the perceived veracity with which events are communicated (88). Hartley has also suggested that, in the nineteenth century, truth was arrived at empirically from eyewitness accounts by explorers who, through observation and description, were subsequently able to compile archives of knowledge (46). Darío’s *España contemporánea* can be read as such an archival compilation of textual glimpses that attempt to show Spain’s sociocultural realities. However, journalism’s claims to truthfulness were not Darío’s sole source of authority for the task set before him by *La Nación*. His exceptional journalistic capabilities and poetic genius aside, it was, for Antonio Vilanova, Darío’s spirit of openness, his expressions of sympathy and solidarity with Spain, and his cosmopolitan
attributes as “un hispanoamericano europeizado y cosmopolita, afrancesado e hispanizante” that acted as the determining factors for the efficacy of his role as a foreign correspondent in Spain (9-10).

While cosmopolitanism has gained a new prevalence in recent times, according to Fojas, the term has also always been a contested one (5). Therefore, to illustrate how particular, present-day, more localised cosmopolitanisms are points of departure from previously held theories that preach its universal scope, I first situate the concept by drawing on Fine and Cohen’s location of what they define as four key “moments” in the historical evolution of cosmopolitan thought. Despite their own admission of the rather arbitrary and limited nature of their selection (137), these four locations of cosmopolitanism in practice provide an appropriate theoretical basis from which to contextualise the cosmopolitanism specific to Darío’s writings on Spain.

Fine and Cohen highlight cosmopolitanism’s first moment as that articulated by the Stoic, Zeno, in the ancient world. Zeno developed the concept further following the theories of the Cynics, Antisthenes and Diogenes. For later, modern thinkers on cosmopolitanism, the most often-cited image put forth by Zeno was that which employed cosmopolitanism’s circles of affiliation, beginning with an inclusion of the local and the particular, and ending with the global embrace of all humanity. According to Zeno, it was due to this notion of ever-expanding concentric circles of affiliation, “from self, to family, to friends, to city, to humanity,” that the state becomes ultimately rendered as obsolete and thus ceases to exist, substituted instead by “pure reason” (Fine and Cohen 138). Indeed, the largest of these circles, representative of an affiliation to humanity as a whole, is an extension of the Cynic Diogenes’ idea of the cosmopolitan figure as an identity that is not bound by the confines of the city-state but is, on the contrary, regarded as a “citizen of the world” (Sabine 137). Here, citizenship is that which links a “single moral community” to a metaphorical city, interpreted

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3 As John Hartley has pointed out, for the most part it is not extensive training and study that stand would-be journalists in good stead but their personal attributes. See John Hartley, Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture (London: Arnold, 1996) 36.
by Diogenes as a “meeting of minds.” Fine and Cohen conclude that, as a consequence of a community imagined as such, it was Diogenes and Zeno who produced the first resonance of a universal humanism (138). What is more, as exemplified in the figure of Diogenes, himself an exile, it was largely the ostracised that adhered to, and promoted, cosmopolitanism as an articulation of this humanism and its concern for human equality (Fine and Cohen 139; Sabine 136).

Fine and Cohen’s second moment centres on the French Revolution of 1789, when it was the enlightened theories of German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) that took these notions of equality and humanism a step further. Kant offered a modified perception of cosmopolitanism that responded to the eighteenth century’s increasing nationalist sentiment. Where Diogenes had advocated the virtues of a cosmopolitan stance to uphold the rights of the marginalised from within the ranks of the rootless, non-citizens of the state, Kant called for more intimate and lawful relations between states through a “cosmopolitan order.” As a “federation of nations,” this order was to combat the negative effects that Kant believed would stem from fervent, over-zealous nationalism: namely, the ever-increasing possibility that humanity itself would be consumed through war. Kant argued that the establishment of a cosmopolitan order would be a requirement if the basic rights of individuals, as citizens of humanity, were to be maintained and strengthened, rather than eroded by the unchecked power of the emerging nation-states (Fine and Cohen 140-41).

Illustrating that Kant’s fear did not go unfounded, the multiple instances of conflict among nations during the first half of the twentieth century have attested to the unease with which he foresaw the detrimental effects of a nation’s increasingly unrestricted authority. As the suppression of individual rights became commonplace during this epoch, it was the intention of Europe’s fascist regimes of the 1920s and 1930s to effect a homogenisation of cultures and to eradicate a diversity and difference that would have otherwise complicated their repressive attempts to forge and maintain uniformity. Seen in this light, then, fascism was a clear rejection of the ideals of universal humanism and cosmopolitanism, perceiving the
cosmopolitan as a figure with no attachments to the fatherland and thus, as an enemy of the state. As such, the events of this period gave rise to a third cosmopolitan moment, articulated by the Jewish political philosopher, Hannah Arendt. Largely within the field of cosmopolitan law, Arendt’s theories stemmed from her critical analysis of twentieth-century totalitarianism, itself an outright denial of cosmopolitanism and universal humanism. Arendt was particularly influenced by the Kantian notion of cosmopolitanism endorsed by Karl Jaspers. In the context of international warfare and the Nuremberg trials following World War II, Jaspers had made it clear that heads of state must not be protected under the principles of national sovereignty for cases of “war guilt.” Instead, as Fine and Cohen affirm of Jaspers’ stance, “[g]uilt must go beyond ‘war guilt’ and must include ‘crimes against humanity’” (146-47).

Cosmopolitanism’s fourth moment continues on the theme of patriotism with the theories of philosopher Nussbaum in the 1990s, as she critiqued what she perceived was the self-promotional, insular patriotism then characteristic of the United States. Nussbaum called US patriotic sentiment into question, for in her eyes it blinkers citizens and detracts from their ability to recognise the humanity that exists outside national borders. In a similar vein to Kant, albeit with differing motives, Nussbaum saw nationalism as an ill, favouring instead the idea of world citizenship advocated by Diogenes. Her aim, a somewhat “restricted agenda” in the view of Fine and Cohen (155), was to bring about reform within the US education system. To do so, Nussbaum called for an overhauled curriculum that would prize the largest of the Stoic’s concentric circles of affiliation, that which encompasses all humanity, while playing down the importance of a circle of national belonging, wherein resides, for her, “the comfort of patriotism and its easy sentiments” (Nussbaum 7). Consequently, with such an affiliation to the global rather than the national, it was hoped that students in the United States would learn to identify with and recognise, on the basis of a moral affinity, humanity in all its forms. In turn, this shift in focus away from an attachment to a sense of national patriotism would encourage the re-evaluation of the nation’s hypocritical “universe” with its “self-serving, narrow scope” (Nussbaum 9, 13).
The capacity to think outside the nation, then, to perceive interrelationships and wider affinities that stretch beyond political borders, is crucial to the cosmopolitan project. Such an ability requires that cosmopolitans display an active willingness to engage with an Other (Hannerz 239; Van der Veer 166). One of the most obvious examples of such a desire can be seen in the figures highlighted by Peter Van der Veer of the many missionaries, colonial officers and anthropologists whose work required negotiating entry into the sphere of an Other during periods of colonisation (166). I would argue that a cosmopolitan outlook is also inscribed by moments of social and political rupture of the kind that affected Spain post-1898, which act as similar prompts to those offered during the era of imperialism. It was only due to Spain’s heavy loss in the war against the Anglo-Saxon Other, and its status as a recently rendered postimperial nation, that Darío was sent to Spain on assignment at all. Furthermore, the deft range of multiplicities that epitomise the cosmopolitan figure’s embrace of various points of simultaneous contact and reference find an echo in the very genre of the modernist, journalistic chronicle as outlined by González, of which Darío’s forty articles in España contemporánea count as prime examples. Meant to entertain as much as they were to inform, these crónicas were brief articles, self-consciously literary in style, that encompassed an array of themes and subjects (González 84).

The faculties needed to embody a cosmopolitan perspective are also dependent upon what Vertovec and Cohen have called “a mode of practice or competence” and an “attitudinal or dispositional orientation” (9). The former implies a degree of skill, as Ulf Hannerz affirms that what is required of the cosmopolitan figure is “a state of readiness, a personal ability to make one’s way into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting and reflecting. . . . [and by] manoeuvring more or less expertly with a particular system of meanings and meaningful forms” (239). The manner in which Darío pursues his duty of describing fin-de-

[In total, Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen highlight six ways that cosmopolitanism may be manifest, of which these are just two. The other four modalities are “a socio-cultural condition,” a sort of “philosophy or world-view,” a political act aimed at “building transnational institutions,” and a “political project for recognizing multiple identities.” See Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen, Introduction, “Conceiving Cosmopolitanism,” Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice, eds. Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002) 9.]
siècle Spain for *La Nación*, characterised by a self-proclaimed, eclectic assortment of influences and sources, is testament to his ability to orientate himself within precisely such differing systems of meaning. As Darío announces of his approach in Madrid: “Por eso me informo por todas partes; por eso voy a todos lugares . . . en un mismo día he visto a un académico, a un militar llegado de Filipinas, a un actor, a Luis Taboada y a un torero” (*España* 49). In this way, Darío aims to provide varied and diverse accounts of Spain from a series of contrasting angles. In so doing, he embodies a mode of conduct that typifies the cosmopolitan figure as described by Jeremy Waldron: “If we live the cosmopolitan life, we draw our allegiances from here, there, and everywhere” (788).

Such an outlook, in recognising the notion of “global belonging,” is not restricted to the local concerns of the immediate space of the individual (Tomlinson 185). By extending beyond the local arena, where, in general terms, a more or less uniform idea of culture would be evident, the cosmopolitan attitude can be seen to enter into an intimate relationship with diversity. According to Hannerz’s claim: “It is an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity” (239). For Vertovec and Cohen, rather than seeking out comfort in sameness, the positive stance of cosmopolitanism towards diversity is a characteristic acquired, for the most part, through experience and travel (13).

If the aim of the cosmopolitan is to locate and engage positively with cultural diversity, it begs the question whether it is not somewhat misleading to highlight Darío as a cosmopolitan figure while in Spain. How culturally diverse is Spain for a Nicaraguan resident in Buenos Aires? As the self-professed “[e]spañol de América y americano de España” (*Historia* 216), Darío announces that he is equally at ease within both realms on either side of the Atlantic. Moreover, it is as he is leaving Buenos Aires on a “nave latina” in December 1898, enthused by the mere idea of journeying back to Spain, that Darío’s feelings of comfort within his immediate surroundings and in the familiar murmurings of the Spanish language around him become tangible: “Siento que estoy en casa propia; voy a España en una nave latina; a
mi lado el sí suena” (España 27). Nevertheless, despite a shared language, and casting aside notions of a supposedly common “raza,” Darío does indeed locate diversity in Spain. It is that nation’s distinctiveness based on its detrimental insularity that does most to contrast Darío’s point of origin (Buenos Aires) with his destination (Madrid). As a consequence of this dissimilarity, the static culture of fin-de-siècle Spain is imagined with a degree of foreignness vis-à-vis the mobile cosmopolitanism of the Latin American urban centres. As Darío notes, these cities had to distance themselves from the stagnant nature of Peninsular cultural life in order to flourish culturally themselves and attempt the rejuvenation of the Latin American continent:

Por lo pronto, nos nutrimos con el alimento que llega de todos los puntos del globo. Hemos tenido necesidad de ser políglotas y cosmopolitas, y mucho tiempo antes de que la Real Academia Española permitiese usar la palabra trole, nos habíamos hecho del aparato. Decadentismos literarios no pueden ser plaga entre nosotros; pero con París . . . tenemos las más frecuentes y mejores relaciones. (España 126)

Darío’s example of the use of the word “trole,” borrowed from the English “trolley” or “trolleybus,” juxtaposes the cosmopolitan buffet of influences that propels Latin America with the rigid insularity characteristic of Spain and the Royal Academy of Spanish Language. What is more, he notes that, fleeing this inflexibility out of necessity, Latin Americans have figuratively taken on the very qualities of the object that his term denotes: the ubiquitous electric tram that criss-crossed modern city centres. Mimicking the tram, Latin Americans become similarly mobile and thus culturally and intellectually modern, unlike their Peninsular counterparts.

For Darío, then, I suggest that Spain exists simultaneously as an image of cultural Otherness and also as a cultural space within which a sense of comfort and familiarity reassures the writer of the virtues of a Hispanic world united against the perils of Anglo-Saxon imperialism. If Darío is to interpret Spain as Other for La Nación, the effectiveness of his
readings of Spain as a foreign culture draws energy from this duality between notions of
difference and sameness. Such a duality is inherent in the figure of the cosmopolitan, who, as
Pico Iyer notes, when confronted with the local culture, feels “in the same relation of
familiarity and strangeness” and has the ability to be “partially adjusted everywhere” (pars. 5,
14). Indeed, this adeptness at negotiating the unfamiliar is what James Clifford calls the
ethnographer’s sense of “an active at-homeness in a common universe” (36).

When viewed together, the first three articles that Darío sent back to La Nación, which
constitute the first three chapters of España contemporánea, trace his itinerary onboard the
ship that takes him from Buenos Aires (“En el mar”), to the Catalan capital (“En Barcelona”),
and then on to the national capital (“Madrid”), where he will spend the next sixteen months.
However, these opening chapters are more than a mere indication of Darío’s physical route to
Spain. They also attest to a journey that takes him from the margins to the centre; from a
cosmopolitan, outwardly looking port city to the isolated, insular core of Castile. As such, his
journey is not necessarily one from a periphery otherwise understood as a marginalised space
to a hegemonic cultural heart. Rather, in terms of the varying degrees of cosmopolitanism
and worldliness characteristic of Buenos Aires, as the point of origin, vis-à-vis Madrid, the
destination, it is quite the opposite. His trajectory charts a course that is a total reversal of the
Stoic’s notion of cosmopolitanism or so-called world citizenship, which is dependent upon the
notion of ever-expanding concentric circles of affiliation. As Darío draws nearer to the Spanish
capital with each of these three chapters, the Stoics’ circular motif can be seen in a state of
regression. Rather than expand, the cosmopolitan ideal retracts as Spain comes into view.
The predisposition of modern subjectivity to seek fulfilment from numerous points of
reference appears to be an ideal that is thwarted by localised images of enclosed insularity, a
theme contemplated by Darío during his time in Madrid.

Darío’s first article transpires within the confines of a sea vessel bound for the Old
World. However, the restricted, isolated nature of the ship and sea travel is challenged by
Darío’s evocations of the multiple belongings and multicultural affinities of cosmopolitanism.
Consequently, genuine insularity and isolation from diversity are not characteristics of the vessel on which Darío travels. While it is isolated on the Atlantic, it is also, more importantly, simultaneously representative of the cosmopolitan "world" of Buenos Aires played out in miniature, the chosen affinities of which extend well beyond its immediate confines:

Una reducción de la gran capital del Plata podría observarse, un Buenos Aires para escaparate: banqueros, comerciantes, artistas, periodistas, médicos . . . y en todos la misma representación que en la vida ciudadana; los círculos, las "afinidades electivas", las simpatías; y una poliglolia que os obliga a entraros por todas las lenguas vivas . . . he ahí que estamos alrededor de una mesa, un argentino, un italiano, un suizo, un venezolano, un belga, un francés, un centroamericano, un oriental, un español...; no hay duda de que venimos de Buenos Aires. (España 28)

Considering Darío’s devotion to, and praise of, the outwardly mobile consciousness of modern subjectivity, it is little wonder that, after having docked at Barcelona on 1 January 1899, his view of the Catalan capital was highly favourable. Despite allusions to social misery, and the residual sense of loss lingering on the docks from the emaciated, half-dead soldiers that had arrived the previous day from Spain’s failed military campaign in Cuba (33), it was in Barcelona that Darío encountered a similar orientation to that evidenced on board the ship and in the Buenos Aires he had left behind: an industrious working class and a modern society in tune with the outside world. As Josep Llobera notes, for centuries Catalonia had been far from insular, openly cultivating economic ties and cultural exchanges with the more advanced nations of northern Europe. Its porosity, actively seeking out and absorbing foreign influences, was instrumental in Catalonia’s propulsion towards industrialisation in the nineteenth century, which, occurring in virtual tandem with northern Europe, had left the rest of the Peninsula behind in a pre-industrial state (3, 14). David Ringrose highlights how the economic expansion of the region had been noticeably intense from 1830 to 1865, and even the loss of the colonial market after 1898, especially Cuba, seemed to have done little to
dampen Catalonia’s role as Spain’s manufacturing heart. Indeed, Barcelona’s expansion as the nation’s “workshop” would continue until 1930 (211).

However, industrialisation and the growth of the manufacturing industry also meant that the city experienced a population explosion and, by the mid-1800s, Barcelona had burst through the confines of its medieval walls and narrow labyrinthine alleys therein. Consequently, the city was forced to look outward once again, this time architecturally. It did so in the form of the Eixample or enlargement: the gridded criss-crossing of arrow-straight avenues that was the brainchild of engineer Ildefons Cerdà i Sunyer, the first stone of which was laid by Isabel II in 1860. Catalonia’s economic exchange with England, France and Germany not only afforded new ideas; the resulting economic boom gave the region the material capital that prompted a Catalan cultural reawakening. It was in this sense that its outward focus was also pivotal for the cultural and artistic movement of Modernisme (Llobera 3). The movement had come at the tail end of what came to be known as the Renaixença, Catalonia’s successful cultural rebirth that had been initiated in the mid-1800s and lasted until the early twentieth century. Itself a by-product of industrialisation, the Renaixença had seen all forms of artistic expression thrive and facilitated a rediscovery of traditional Catalan crafts. Robert Hughes has pointed out that, for Catalans, Modernisme was thus much more than an architectural style. Between 1890 and 1910 it had described the cult of a new subjectivity that was also palpable in literature, music and the visual arts, and was intimately tied to Catalonia’s predisposition to looking abroad, implying “an opening to Europe” (391).

It was precisely into such a climate of intense economic, industrial, and cultural activity that Darío stepped when he alighted at Barcelona’s port. Aside from this vibrant environment, Darío’s affection for Catalonia is based on the notion of social democracy, dependent upon the industrious Catalan working class and its role in the future success of the region. While in the packed Café Colón, he observes two well-dressed businessmen in thoughtful discussion at a nearby table. Much to his admiration, a manual labourer enters the café. Seeing no free tables, the worker pulls up a chair beside the two men. He is attended
to, drinks his coffee, and pays without so much as a glance from the two men, who do not react to what would be considered elsewhere as impertinence. For Darío, this act is evidence of an intense sense of democratic pride and social equality in Catalonia: "[E]l orgullo de una democracia llevada hasta el olvido de toda superioridad" (España 35). Moreover, this instance is also proof that the spirit of modernity, intimately linked to the Catalan working class, is crucial for the future success of the region: "[F]uera de lo permanente, de lo histórico, triunfa un viento moderno que trae algo del porvenir; es la Social que está en el ambiente . . . es el secreto a voces de la blusa y la gorra, que todos saben . . . y que en ninguna parte como aquí resalta de manera tan palpable en magnífico alto relieve" (34). Darío’s favourable view of Barcelona, in particular, is further advanced by the idea of the region’s independent spirit, which he describes as “una elevación y engrandecimiento del espíritu catalán sobre la nación entera.” However, he draws the line at Catalonia’s will to outright separatism from Spain, for which he sees ample support in the region. Speaking for all Latin Americans, he proclaims that the Catalan desire to secede from Spain “nos hiere los ojos con su evidencia” (35).

In addition to allusions to an industrious working class and the ideal of social revolution, Darío is impressed by the parallel intellectual movement in Catalonia that accompanied the wind of change in political and social circles. Darío notes that the “new” and “modern” thought of the age had triumphed in Catalonia more than anywhere else on the Peninsula and that one of those standing at the helm of this movement was the Catalan artist, novelist and journalist, Santiago Rusiñol (1861-1931) (38). Along with Ramón Casas i Carbó (1866-1932), Rusiñol was a Francophile and a firm believer in the notion of an international culture. As a “cultural entrepreneur,” he was Barcelona’s chief advocate in the promotion of the visual arts and did much to spread the regenerative ideals of modernisme (Hughes 426-27).5

5 For further details on Santiago Rusiñol’s relentless activity as an event organiser, and even his influence on Pablo Picasso, see Vinyet Panyella, “From Els Quatre Gats to Cau Ferrat—The Artistic Links between Santiago Rusiñol and Picasso (1896-1903),” Picasso and Els 4Gats, ed. María Teresa Ocaña (Barcelona: Picasso Museum/Lunwerg, 1995) 237.
For Darío, what was most impressive about the modern movement in Catalonia was that it was not merely artistic or intellectual but imbued all aspects of social, political and economic life. As such, Darío perceives Catalonia as offering a tangible instance of the potential for cultural renewal for the rest of the Peninsula. In the Catalans’ pursuit of modernity, Darío remarks, “permaneciendo catalanes” ensured that, culturally speaking, they became “universales” (38). However, what is striking is that Darío did not linger longer in the region to study the Catalan case in greater depth. Granted, it cannot be ascertained with certainty whether or not Darío’s contractual obligations to La Nación prevented him from doing so, or if other commitments hindered a return to Barcelona during this second journey to Spain. He would have to wait five years, until December 1903, before he would return to the Catalan capital, if only for a week (Quintián, “España catalana” 615). It is that visit that is recalled in the first chapter of Tierras solares, to be addressed later in this Part. Even so, one week is hardly befitting a region that would appear to hold some of the keys to sociocultural and economic rejuvenation, especially when compared to the sixteen months that Darío spent in the national capital. Indeed, it is for this reason that Felipe Benítez Reyes has concluded that España contemporánea is not so much a text about Spain as a work about Madrid (8). Even at the mere thought of leaving Barcelona and heading inland to Madrid, Darío was well aware that he would be confronted in the Spanish capital by a far more sombre image of existence: “Desde luego sé ya que en Madrid me encontraré en otra atmósfera, que si aquí [en Barcelona] existe un afrancesamiento que detona, ello ha entrado por una ventana abierta a la luz universal, lo cual, sin duda alguna, vale más que encerrarse entre cuatro muros y vivir del olor de cosas viejas” (España 41).

It is doubly ironic, then, that Darío leaves Catalonia behind; while, in view of the region’s push for political autonomy, it represents one of the Spanish state’s internal Others, for him, it also constitutes a positive alternate image of a more modern and industrialised Spain. In a later article, written while stationed in Madrid, Darío’s criticism of contemporary life in the capital, with its sheltered stagnation and insular obsession with the national past,
provides another relevant example of how cosmopolitanism’s concentric circles of affiliation regress to what he imagines as a solitary and stale space, in which relationship with an outside is non-existent. Here, Darío alludes to Madrid, symbolic of the decaying nation, as a dilapidated house in need not of a mere spring clean but a thorough renovation. In so doing he echoes Maeztu’s call to pursue the ideal of an “other,” more modern Spain: “[H]ay que quitar de sus hornacinas ciertos viejos ídolos perjudiciales, hay que abrir todas las ventanas para que los vientos del mundo barran polvos y telarañas y quedan limpias las gloriosas armaduras y los oros de los estandartes, hay que ir por el trabajo y la iniciación en las artes y empresas de la vida moderna ‘hacia otra España’” (83).

Darío’s initial arrival in the Spanish capital, however, prompted musings not only over the disarray of the state. In his article simply titled “Madrid,” in which Darío observes “una exhalación de organismo descompuesto” (43), the nation’s literature is seen to suffer a similar fate. Referring to what was then the old guard of Peninsular political figures and writers, Darío draws attention to their fin-de-siècle demise as localised examples of Spain’s national decline. He highlights the recent deaths of politicians Manuel Ruiz Zorrilla in 1895 and Antonio Cánovas del Castillo in 1897; the sick and disillusioned former President of the First Republic, Emilio Castelar, who died in May 1899 just four months after the publication of Darío’s Madrid article; the blindness of writer Juan Valera, and the silence that fell upon poet Ramón de Campoamor. For Darío, their deaths and lack of strength late in life appeared as appropriate symbols for a comparably ill nation, seen to be “amputada, doliente, vencida” (43). After the loss of such leading lights, Spain’s current political figures, Darío remarks, have failed to comprehend fully the harm inflicted upon the nation after 1898. Instead, it is their constraint within what Bruce Robbins has called, albeit in another context, affiliations to “ordinary nation-bound lives” (1), or what could be seen as the lack of a cosmopolitan outlook, that obstruct Spain’s progress and search for remedies by misdirecting energies towards “chicanas interiores” and “batallas de grupos aislados,” rather than towards “la suerte común” (Darío, España 43).
The flipside to this exclusive, bounded existence to the nation is the cosmopolitan call to be worldly. Although Darío can be read as a cosmopolitan figure during his period in Spain, the more important issue is his promotion of a cosmopolitan outlook for Spain to shake the nation from its degeneration-induced slumber. However, Darío’s cosmopolitanism is not unequivocal. Rather than the unconditional embrace of all humanity, it is based on exclusions. His is the embrace of the Spanish-speaking world vis-à-vis the Anglo-Saxon and the Germanic. For this reason, and despite Darío’s nomadism and apparent affinity to multiple patrias—Nicaragua, Chile, Argentina, France, Spain, Greece and Latin America in general—Pedro Salinas fails to see Darío in the strict sense of the cosmopolitan as a citizen of the world: “[N]o era un internacionalista, que acepta con el mismo grado de querer a todos los países del mundo. La patria de Rubén, aunque supranacional, es una patria selectiva, y como en toda selección, excluye. (Por ejemplo, su actitud respecto a Alemania, y los Estados Unidos)” (Salinas 42). Therefore, Darío’s cosmopolitanism fails to be aligned through a sense of loyalty to the so-called worldwide community of human beings as a singular, all-encompassing space, a notion that Nussbaum deems “the very old ideal of the cosmopolitan” (4). Instead, it appears as a specific, selective allegiance to plural communities. This view supports Robbins’ assertion, led by Paul Rabinow, that many critics now see cosmopolitanism not via its claims to universalism but as particular encounters with selective transnational spaces that are often experienced from underprivileged, and even coerced, subjectivities (1).

One such marginalised subjectivity that has sought the cosmopolitan alternative to the idea of nation-bound insularity is undoubtedly that of the postcolonial subject, of which Latin America is a prime example. Darío remarks that it is “por obra de nuestro cosmopolitismo” that a productive transformation of intellectual thought has been achieved in Latin America. Moreover, he notes that the pathway is open to a similar cosmopolitan rejuvenation for others, namely Spain, and that there he has witnessed the first glimpse of a will to change (España 46). Without naming specific intellectuals, he cites those who have sought Spain’s
regeneration through agriculture, industry, and wine production and exportation (46). Darío even goes so far as to offer tentative solutions to Spain’s economic stagnation through his promotion of the viability of increased trade between Argentina and Spain. He contends that such practical avenues toward advancement, and the strengthening of ties between the Peninsula and the Americas, are more fitting alternatives to strictly academic and ministerial promotions of "iberoamericanismo" and the numerous "fiestas hispanoamericanas." In this regard, Darío cites Julio Burell’s opinion on such celebrations, the end results of which have always been an over-abundance of useless rhetoric and, even more detrimental, Spain and Latin America’s continued mutual ignorance of each other: "‘[N]umerosas han sido las fiestas hispanoamericanas a cuyo término apenas si ha quedado otra cosa que un poco de dulzor en la boca y otro poco de retórica en el aire; después, americanos y españoles han permanecido en sus desconfiados soledades, colocados en actitud y con mirada recelosa, cada cual a un lado del gran abismo de la historia...’" (qtd. in Darío, España 48).

The cosmopolitanism that Darío advocates for Spain as a means of national regeneration would see the nation’s political and cultural elites become intimately acquainted with locations of modernity beyond the borders of the Spanish nation-state, especially those in its former colonies (48). Indeed, Darío laments Spain’s short-sighted neglect to consider, until now, the concrete examples of Latin American progress, both cultural and economic, that other nations have taken as an impetus for their own growth: “España no se ha tomado hasta hoy el trabajo de tomar en cuenta nuestros adelantos, nuestras conquistas, que a otras naciones extranjeras han atraído atención cuidadosa y de ellas han sacado provecho. En las mismas relaciones intelectuales ha habido siempre un desconocimiento desastroso” (48).7

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6 Intellectual efforts to solve Spain’s so-called national problem at the turn of the twentieth century by addressing social and economic concerns were put forth by a number of theorists. Here, Darío may well have been referring to any one of the following examples: Lucas Mallada’s Los males de la patria y la futura revolución española (1890), Macías Picavea’s El problema nacional (1899), Maeztu’s Hacia otra España (1899), and Damián Isern’s Del desastre nacional y sus causas (1899).

7 One Peninsular writer who did intentionally search for evidence of Latin American modernity was Blasco Ibáñez, albeit nearly a decade after Darío’s utterance. Blasco Ibáñez’s journey to Argentina and subsequent text, Argentina y sus grandezas (1910) will be addressed in Part Two. Other examples of Peninsular writers who sought to account textually for Argentina’s modernisation and progress were Federico Rahola y Trèmols (1858-1919), with Sangre...
In promoting Spain’s closer examination of its former colonies, I suggest that Darío hints at the sort of conclusion that Altamira was to draw a few years later from his reflections on the Americas and Spain’s necessary regeneration. Altamira would decide that the relationship between Latin America and Spain’s spiritual rebirth into a more modern consciousness was crucial, in that locations of Latin American modernity could be used as stimuli for Spain’s need to look outward in order to secure its supposed future prestige. Altamira and Darío’s theories were not entirely harmonious, however. Unlike Darío, Altamira fails to address adequately Spain’s ignorance of Latin America. Instead, he focuses on the besmirched vision of Spain held in the Americas as a consequence of the Black Legend. Furthermore, unlike Darío, Altamira exalts the role of Peninsular emigrants to the former colonies as the key to proclaiming Spain’s capacity to be modern, and thus having the potential to reverse the Black Legend. However, according to Darío, Spain is as yet incapable of offering instances of sufficient national cultural modernity to stir the interest of its former colonies. Moreover, doing so will require Spain’s intimate contact with Argentina. Thus, Darío supports a vision of a Peninsular reacquaintance with Argentina comparable to the goals of the directors of the Peninsular journal, España, inaugurated in 1903. As Ignacio García notes, the journal aimed to promote Spain’s regeneration by seeking its modernisation through its imitation of Argentina (57-58). Hence, what it essentially called for was a reversal of the very dictates of colonialism: the former imperial power, seen as surpassed in terms of its capacity to instruct and impart knowledge, would be now made to follow and be led by one of its former colonies.

If Spain is to be cosmopolitan and attempt to replicate the advances of Argentina, Darío stresses that it should be a strategic imitation, taking great care not to disrupt Spain’s idealised past with the emergent modernity that beckons on the horizon. He considers that embracing outright the progress-driven model of the modern foreign Other is, in itself,
insufficient, for it risks forsaking those non-utilitarian cultural ideals that have been forged in Spain during the nation’s history and which, Darío points out, must be maintained at all cost. Indeed, according to Darío, Spain constitutes the idealist counterweight to a solely utilitarian modernity. To imagine such a Spain, for which material gain is an obsession, is therefore incomprehensible. Problematically, what he envisions for Spain is not the modernisation and modernity that drastically alter the sociocultural landscape of the nation, effacing its former self. It was this sort of transformation that occurred in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Argentina and worried intellectuals such as Rojas and Gálvez, and which will be analysed in Part Three. Rather, Darío argues for a delicate, if not wholly improbable, balance between Spain’s past ideals and its desired future place in a rapidly modernising world. By invoking the supposed intrinsic ideals of the Spanish character, which he epitomises in the figure of Don Quixote, Darío alludes to the creation of an exclusive geographical and cultural space that is to be preserved from Spain’s modernising geographical peripheries, Catalonia and the Basque Country:

España será idealista o no será. Una España práctica, con olvido absoluto del papel que hasta hoy ha representado en el mundo, es una España que no se concibe. Bueno es una Bilbao cuajada de chimeneas y una Cataluña sembrada de fábricas. Trabajo por todas partes; progreso cuanto se quiera y se pueda; pero quede campo libre en donde Rocinante encuentre pasto y el Caballero crea divisar ejércitos de gigantes. (España 125)

Up until now I have argued that Darío’s project in Spain can be viewed as his attempt to facilitate its modernity by calling for the demolition of the figurative walls that maintain the nation in a state of intellectual and economic insularity. In so doing, he advocates a cosmopolitan outlook, albeit one that is selective, which seeks fulfilment from multiple points of possible reference and influence while eschewing the Anglo-Saxon Other. This attitude is to be advanced, however, without losing sight of the nation’s cultural ideals and what they stand for, as these form the ingredients of an alleged national essence that makes Spain distinct.
Such an attitude is what Hollinger considers the essence of cosmopolitanism, which, he affirms, "urges each individual and collective unit to absorb as much varied experience as it can, while retaining its capacity to achieve self-definition and to advance its own aims effectively" (231).

Nevertheless, this notion of cosmopolitanism as an antidote for Spain’s sociocultural ills at the turn of the twentieth century was not as clear-cut as it appears at first glance. Granted, there is ample evidence in Darío’s España contemporánea to suggest that Spain’s entry into the realms of modernity is intimately tied to the aspirations of the cosmopolitan will to engage with diverse cultural, economic, and political practices, and to learn and progress as a consequence in an effort to confront the nation’s postimperial reality. However, in the penultimate article that he sent back to La Nación, entitled “La mujer española,” dated March 1900, Darío’s criticism of Europe’s fashion industry hints at the negative side to embracing influence from abroad, by alluding to the encroachment of foreign cultural centres and their impact upon the local culture. During a masked ball attended by the aristocracy, Darío expresses his frustration and regret at being unable to locate, amid hybrid and corrupted cultural forms, an image of beauty that he deems uniquely Spanish, due to the alleged invasion of what he calls “britanismo” and “parisienismo” (298). Not surprisingly, his reference for what constitutes an allegedly true picture of Peninsular femininity is that immortalised in art and poetry as the idealisation of the gypsy, whose flowing locks of black hair frame an olive complexion, large, dark eyes and a sensual mouth (299-300). It is this ideal type that Darío considers tainted and altered by its clash with the foreign. Indeed, what is judged a typical feminine gait or gesture is viewed as something innate that has been lost: “Hubo una elegancia española: apenas si se recuerda en algún baile de trajes. Porque la moda lo requiere, los opulentos cabellos negros se tiñen de rubio o de rojo; el airosísimo andar de antaño se transforma, los gestos y maneras se aprenden. Se fue primero chic, después vlan, después pschut, después smarl (sic), después swell”(299).
The example of a corrupted image of feminine beauty may well be an isolated case that complicates Darío’s otherwise positive embrace of a cosmopolitan perspective by temporarily and, perhaps nostalgically, privileging an idealised representation of the Spanish woman over and above any aim to see Spain stand alongside Argentina as a modern nation. Yet Darío is quick to warn that attaining that which lies beyond the border must not be an endeavour carried out at the expense of the national culture, for, he asserts, “desdeñando la riqueza propia, no consiguen el tesoro ajeno” (299). It is here that a contradiction arises. In fact, returning to his criticism of the disappearance of the Spanish feminine form, lost amongst “curvas francesas y rectas anglo-sajonas” (298), at least in terms of fashion, Darío appears to reject momentarily the worth of the cosmopolitan notion that considers as necessary multiple and simultaneous affinities for identity formation. Instead, in Spain’s case, it is the uniquely local artistic ideal of beauty that is held in highest regard so as to undermine the value of outside influence: “Una maja de Goya vestida de Chaplin es algo encantador y desconcertante; pero me habrán de confesar que una maja de Goya vestida de Goya es mucho mejor” (298).

How, then, to account for these two apparently conflicting standpoints? On the one hand, Darío is overwhelmingly in favour of locating, beyond the realm of the national, novel forms of being that enrich identity formation with a confident air of worldly modernity. On the other, he is guarded over the threat that this same process poses to the maintenance of the local culture and future cultural production. Nevertheless, in his attempt to negotiate these disparities Darío’s attitude is, I propose, uniquely cosmopolitan, corroborating Hollinger’s claim that “[c]osmopolitans are specialists in the creating of the new, while cautious about destroying the old” (231). It is for such reasons that a corollary to Darío’s promotion of modernity in Spain (and his hand in the creation of Latin American modernismo), is his desire that Spain hold steadfast to its quixotic idealism and maintain an uncompromised image of how he envisions Peninsular femininity, in accordance with how patriarchal societies configure feminised nations.
Hollinger’s notion that cosmopolitans are wary about contributing to the disappearance of old cultural forms proves even more fruitful when considering Darío’s third journey to Spain in December 1903. If his previous voyage five years earlier, as a correspondent for La Nación, had been to relay to a Latin American readership the extent of Spain’s so-called national illness after the loss of its former colonies, now it was his own personal ill health that led him back. While residing in Paris, doctors there recommended that he avoid another winter in the French capital and head south. The prescribed destination was Andalusia and its warmer climes, as a possible remedy for the writer’s acute bronchitis, which had been diagnosed following years of alcohol abuse. The textual account of that journey is Tierras solares, Darío’s first work to be published in Spain (Rivas Bravo 14, 21).

However, as in España contemporánea, in Tierras solares Darío begins his account with a chapter on the Catalan capital. Not even four years after writing his last article for the Buenos Aires daily, it is in Barcelona where he again professes to be witness to profound changes in Spain’s cultural life. Although not constitutive of a total national resurrection, he remarks that he has borne witness to a reawakening of sorts towards a course of action that he deems necessary for the nation’s victorious future (Tierras 41-42). Compared to his previous experience in Spain, Darío now appears far more optimistic about the future of the nation and central to that confidence is the role played by Catalonia.

What Darío perceives as crucial to Spain’s reawakening are the new bonds that he sees forming between Catalonia and the rest of the nation. Darío points out that, like the working class in the whole of the Peninsula, recently united by its pursuit of a more prosperous future, Catalan intellectuals are likewise joining those in the rest of Spain in the hope of sparking a national cultural renewal (Tierras 45). However, in Tierras solares Darío over-simplifies his assessment of the tension between Catalonia and Madrid. Striving to paint

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8 According to Noel Rivas Bravo, Gregorio Martínez Sierra, Darío’s editor, had judged that the chapters devoted to Andalusia, Gibraltar, and Tangier alone were insufficient for the publication of a book. Thus, the inclusion in Tierras solares of chapters on Barcelona, Venice and Florence, as well as a series of brief articles gathered under the chapter title of “De tierras solares a tierras de brumas,” regarding Darío’s experiences in Belgium, Germany, and Austro-Hungary, were added so as to produce a more substantial volume. See Rivas Bravo, Introducción, Tierras solares, by Rubén Darío. (Seville: Don Quijote, 1991) 21.
the rosiest picture possible, Darío casts aside what he had previously stressed in *España contemporánea*: the problematic of Catalonia’s will to separate from Spain. That region’s hatred of the rest of the nation is, he alleges, now no longer evident or believable. In so doing, he attempts to nullify Catalonia’s political othering by the Spanish state. With Spain’s first steps towards modernity given new life by Catalonia, Darío envisions that, together with increased transatlantic diplomatic exchange, a more intimate relationship between Spain and Latin America surely beckons, based on “la fuerza íntima de la idea” and “la internacional potencia del arte y de la palabra” (*Tierras* 45).

As previously mentioned, essential to Darío’s positive reflections upon Catalonia was its cultural rebirth initiated during the Renaixença and the ensuing *Modernisme* movement. Furthermore, the region is important for not only its cosmopolitan outlook towards the foreign but also its nurturing of local culture, providing an example to the rest of Spain of how to balance the ideal of cultural nationalism with an outward gaze that extends beyond the nation. As Kathryn Crameri affirms, it was the goal of the leading lights of *Modernisme*, in their attempts to cast off all constraints and revive a new artistic sensibility, “to create a culture which could compete with any of Catalonia’s neighbours by combining nationalist feelings with European influences” (18). The promotion of nationalist sentiment was crucial, because it prompted the cultural to become political. Embedded in what Crameri has called cultural Catalanism was the attempt to define Catalan identity, from which derived a political Catalanism that would promote and defend this identity (17).

Whether or not these changes in Spain’s outlook over such a short period have been overstated by Darío is not my prime concern. What is now important is that, for him, Spain’s prior inability to stir the curiosity of Latin America through its failure to offer glimpses of an emergent modern culture, an incapacity brought to light in *España contemporánea*, appears to be a tendency in reversal. In what Darío now sees as the work of a potent intellectual youth in Spain, whose words have reached the shores of the Americas, his former criticism of Spain’s lack of national will also appears overturned: “Pero, fijáos bien; una fragancia de
juventud en flor llega hasta nosotros. Voces individuales, pero poderosas y firmes, dicen palabras de bien y de verdad que el país comienza a escuchar. . . . Se vuelve a vivir en un deseo de acción.” For Darío, these voices, resonating from “buenos profesores de trabajo” and “bravos catedráticos de actos,” are responsible for this change in attitude (Tierras 42).

From the newfound ties that he perceives linking the Peninsula to Catalonia and, consequently, Spain to Latin America, Darío envisions a fundamental “unión mental” that, in the future, will overcome their mutual ignorance and bridge the divide between Spain and its former colonies, as well as between the Spanish state and its own internal others.

Nevertheless, Darío is wary of the tendency of such declarations of unification to nullify cultural diversity and homogenise differences. Therefore, his intention is for the uniqueness within the Spanish-speaking world to be maintained by way of an allegiance to the nation, outside of which lies a wider affinity to the shared realm of Ibero-America. This duality of affiliations, first to the nation and then to Iberoamérica, provides evidence of Darío’s desire to imagine the Spanish-speaking world unified by the cosmopolitan ideal. In this sense he adopts the notion of a search for affinities, not too dissimilar to that of the Stoics’ circles of affiliation. Evidently, however, his cosmopolitanism is not entirely that proclaimed by the ancients, whose allegiance was to all humanity. Rather, Darío’s cosmopolitanism is bound within the Ibero-American space as a consequence of the menace posed by the North American Other. That threat was made all the more real following the United States’ actions to secure contractual rights to sever the Panamanian isthmus with a canal in 1903, the same year as Darío’s departure for Andalusia. Consequently, Darío’s specific cosmopolitanism decentres what Sheldon Pollock calls cosmopolitanism’s “conventional locus.” In being geographically and culturally selective, it comes to constitute one of the “new and post-universalist cosmolopolitanisms,” seen as departures from reflecting on the term solely as a historical concept confined to a distant past (Pollock et al. 10).

For Darío, the potential to unite Iberoamérica rests on a trilogy of factors: the likelihood of an intellectual union, based on Spain appearing to catch up to the modernity of
Latin America through its contact with Catalonia; the formation of a “común grandeza” by safeguarding cultural diversity, and the identification of a mutual enemy in the form of North America: "La unión mental será más y más fundamental cada día que pase, conservando cada país su personalidad y su manera de expresión. . . . Que cada región tenga y conserve su egoísmo altivo, pues de la conjunción de todos esos egoísmos se forma la común grandeza; cada grande árbol crece y se fortifica solo y todos forman la floresta.” Ironically, if all these factors were to eventuate, homogeneity of sorts would be inevitable, for in isolating that other, imperialist America, Darío renames Iberoamérica in accordance with the former empire: “Seremos, entonces, sí, la más grande España, antes de que avance el yanqui haciendo Panamaes” (Tierras 46).

To an extent, the content of Tierras solares does not trace Andalusia alone, since the final four chapters are focused on the foreign locations of Gibraltar, Tangier, Venice and Florence. Indeed, aside from one chapter, “La tristeza andaluza,” others are reflections on the cities of Málaga, Granada, Seville, and Córdoba. Having left Barcelona and headed south to Málaga, a highly disparate image of Spain comes into view. Although the industrious nature of the Catalan capital was a favourable aspect in Darío’s opinion, what concerns him is the encroachment of Anglo-Saxon commercialism upon the Andalusian coastline. Deemed by Darío to be “more than cosmopolitan,” it is a utilitarian civilisation masquerading as universal. As such, rather than a positive embrace of cosmopolitan diversity, the advancement of purely “English” business enterprise along Málaga’s coastline, in being detrimental to local culture, must be read instead as an act of Anglo-Saxon imperialism and colonisation: “Mas el color local se va perdiendo, a medida que avanza la universal civilización destructora de poesía y hacedora de negocios. . . . Mas, del lado del mar, surge una Málaga cosmopolita y nueva, y más que cosmopolita, inglesa” (Tierras 51).

Effectively, during the last half of the nineteenth century, Spain, and in particular Andalusia, had become a focus for northern European industrialists, especially British, looking to satisfy their need for minerals and raw materials. By the end of the 1800s, Andalusia had
become a prime mining region, with Málaga a principal site of iron deposits (Harvey and Taylor 245, 249, 252). Such an incursion of so-called industrial progress compromises Darío’s image of the Spanish south, destabilising his vision of an exotic, Moorish Andalusia, shaped largely by his fascination with the East and his readings of the Andalusian travels of the nineteenth-century French Romantics. For them, the allure of southern Spain had rested on the perception of its isolation from European civilisation, due to its cultural and geographical proximity to Africa (López Ontiveros 33-34). Noel Rivas Bravo reads Darío’s experiences in the south in the same way, stating that his trip “significó el encuentro, el reencuentro, con el mundo maravilloso y exótico, tantas veces anhelado en sus lecturas y ensueños orientales” (20).\(^9\)

However, I contend that, thematically, what resounds in Tierras solares is not so much Darío’s initial contact, or even reunion, with an exoticised image of Andalusia. Rather, this text can be seen to sever Darío’s orientalist visions and threaten a traditional narrative that has long imagined Andalusia as Europe’s Other.

To an extent, Darío’s negative view of the English occupation of Andalusia’s coasts compromises his promotion of a cosmopolitan outlook in Spain. In Andalusia, it could be argued that it is the English who are living the cosmopolitan way of life, which, as Pollock stipulates, is an expression of “ways of living at home abroad or abroad at home—ways of inhabiting multiple places at once” (Pollock et al. 11). However, from Darío’s perspective, British presence in Andalusia is not so much cosmopolitan as an example of Anglo imperialism in Spain that is temporally and ideologically analogous to the United States’ hegemonic ambition in Panama. Darío’s criticism is thus less a disapproval of cosmopolitanism there than an expression of anxiety over Britain’s imperialist ambition and the immense changes that he perceives will soon efface Andalusia’s sociocultural landscape through Anglo-Saxon immigration, industrialisation and an alleged progress. In contrast to the rapidly developing Basque Country, where industrialists acted with initiative to secure the region’s interests in the

\(^9\) Darío himself attests to his contact with the Orient early in his life in his autobiography. Among the first books he read as a child figured Las mil y una noches. See Rubén Darío, Autobiografía. España contemporánea (Crónicas y retratos literarios). (México D.F.: Porrúa, 1999) 6.
mineral export economy, in Andalusia foreign mining activity was far from having positive spin-offs for the local area, due largely to decadent and often absent wealth owners (Harvey and Taylor 262). Darío’s apparent misgivings regarding the viability of a cosmopolitan outlook in the south stem from two factors: firstly, from the fact that its ideals emanate from the Anglo-Saxon Other of Iberoamérica and, secondly, because the cultural diversity of Andalusia, as an arena for contemplation of the exotic, appears threatened by the view that posits cosmopolitanism as a force that eventually causes a region’s cultural homogenisation.

How, then, is Darío’s apparently contradictory stance regarding modernisation to be accounted for? With a bow to Rodó’s Ariel, it is highly inconsistent that what he terms the “vulgaridad utilitaria de la universal civilización” (Tierras 73), which he witnesses in the south, fails even to surface in his chapters on Barcelona. Darío’s disparate images of progress in each of these regions are attributable to one crucial factor. While Catalonia can be seen to retain its agency in its journey towards cultural and economic modernity and preserve its cultural diversity, in Andalusia, modernisation, according to Darío’s account, is enacted upon the region from the outside, with little regard for safeguarding difference. The south is a space where its inhabitants do not actively pursue the cosmopolitan ideal to seek out affinities with the foreign; the foreign, in the form of British enterprise, has come to the south. Rather than an ideal that is pursued, cosmopolitanism has forcibly arrived, along with its perceived detrimental effects. In this sense, what emerge are notions of imperialism and colonisation rather than cosmopolitanism in Andalusia, where, as Charles Harvey and Peter Taylor affirm, the drive for economic change was weak, enabling foreign interests to “stifle local initiative and exploit natural resources in an ‘imperialistic’ fashion” (260).  

As such, “cosmopolitanism” in Andalusia, created by the foreign from the outside, signifies the demise of tradition and

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10 According to Charles Harvey and Peter Taylor, due to the ineffectiveness of foreign mining interests to promote economic growth in Andalusia, their relative “insularity” created the phenomenon of “enclave development” whereby foreign companies, as virtual colonisers, employed thousands of local workers, managed local politics, and ran local towns as “company towns in a distinctly paternalistic fashion.” The most obvious example of such an enclave had been created by the Rio Tinto Mining Company in the province of Huelva in the early 1900s. See Charles Harvey and Peter Taylor, “Mineral Wealth and Economic Development: Foreign Direct Investment in Spain, 1851-1913.” The Economic Development of Spain since 1870, ed. Pablo Martín-Aceña and James Simpson (Aldershot: Elgar, 1995) 263-64.
diversity: "Las altas damas desdeñan ya la mantilla. No se encuentra una maja sino en cromos. Los hombres quieren, por su parte, parecer ingleses, como los elegantes de todos lugares. El pueblo bajo no tiene sino vagos restos de las tradicionales maneras" (Tierras 67).

The presence of British commercial enterprise in Andalusia foregrounds a distinct area of contention for Spanish intellectuals debating the nation’s regeneration around the turn of the twentieth century: Europeanisation. One advocate of Spain’s need to look to Europe was influential thinker, José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955). Writing in 1910 in favour of Spain’s closer contact with the allegedly more advanced nations of northern Europe, Ortega notes the urgent need to recreate Spain while affirming that its re-formation can only ever be made viable if Spain is first seen as “una tarea a cumplir, un problema a resolver, un deber” (“La pedagogía” 506). For Ortega, a passive, misguided patriotism that treats the nation as “la condensación del pasado y como el conjunto de las cosas gratas que el presente de la tierra en que nacemos nos ofrece,” exemplified in such aspects as the focus on past glories or the unique beauty of the natural landscape (505), is inadequate for Spain’s reconstruction. Only patriotism of “pura acción sin descanso” can facilitate a new and improved Spain by imagining the nation as a living space that must be forged in the present for future generations. Consequently, as a present-day nation, Spain must be seen to be non-existent, a work in the process of being created (Ortega y Gasset, “La pedagogía” 506, 504).

Once the idea of Spain as a non-existent nation in the process of formation has been firmly established, it is Ortega’s belief that Spain’s social transformation is dependent on education and developing in its citizens an active political consciousness. As Ortega states, “[e]l español necesita, pues, ser antes que nada político,” which, for him, is a step towards his notion of an active patriotism: “[P]olítica es acción . . . es ir de un lugar a otro, es dar un paso, y un paso exige una dirección que vaya recta hasta lo infinito” (“La pedagogía” 507). Educating the masses is similarly active in that it constitutes a social process of transforming reality by converting one entity into something better (508). Therein lies the importance, for Ortega, of pedagogy as a science for the transformation of society:
Si educación es transformación de una realidad en el sentido de cierta idea mejor que poseemos y la educación no ha de ser sino social, tendremos que la pedagogía es la ciencia de transformar las sociedades. Antes llamamos a esto política: he aquí, pues, que la política se ha hecho para nosotros pedagogía social y el problema español un problema pedagógico. (515)

Santos Juliá notes that the notion of Spain’s inexistence, as theorised by Ortega, can be attributed to the nation’s distinct lack of a scientific tradition, the absence of which is a defining factor for Spain’s so-called inferiority vis-à-vis Europe (145). Consequently, Ortega sees the recovery of Spain’s cultural tradition as explicitly dependent on the nation’s advancement in not only the creative arts but, especially, science: “Cultura es labor, producción de las cosas humanas; es hacer ciencia, hacer moral, hacer arte. Cuando hablamos de mayor o menor cultura queremos decir mayor o menor capacidad de producir cosas humanas, de trabajo. . . . Los españoles—ésta es nuestra grave maldición—hemos perdido la tradición cultural” (“La pedagogía” 516). Indeed, for Ortega, the realignment of Spain’s gaze towards Europe was to be paramount for the formation of the new nation; the democratic tradition of a community of individual workers sharing a common soul and ideal was, for him, a uniquely European tradition (520). Thus, drawing on the notion of national regeneration, a theme at the centre of the debate concerning the problem of Spain for the so-called Generation of 1898, Ortega proclaims the role of Europe in resolving Spain’s social and cultural deficiencies as follows: “Regeneración es el deseo; europeización es el medio de satisfacerlo. . . . España [es] el problema y Europa la solución” (521).

Nevertheless, for Miguel de Unamuno, neither cultural traditions nor the cult of European science had any significant bearing on the formation of the Spanish spirit in the first decade of the twentieth century. In his article, “Sobre la europeización,” published in 1906 for La España Moderna, Unamuno enters into the debate concerning the role of Europe in reimagining Spain after 1898. There he explicitly questions the need for Europeanisation, the ideal endorsed four years later by Ortega. Without denying the necessity for the nation’s
transformation, Unamuno is unconvinced that either modern European culture or its scientific traditions can be taken as a template for the regeneration of the Spanish spirit: “Hay modos de acrecentar el espíritu, de elevarlo, de ensancharlo, de ennoblcerlo, de divinizarlo, sin acudir a los medios de esa cultura [europea]. Podemos, creo, cultivar nuestra sabiduría sin tomar la ciencia más que como un medio para ello, y con las debidas precauciones para que no nos corrompa el espíritu” (“Europeización” 1111). Rather than the solution of Spain’s Europeanisation proposed by Ortega, for Unamuno, Spain will redefine and elevate its spirit as a means toward national renewal through first imposing its spirit upon Europe. Thereafter, through an active atmosphere of intercultural exchange, any subsequent instances of europeización that may be of later benefit to Spain are made more palatable:

Tengo la profunda convicción de que la verdadera y honda europeización de España, es decir, nuestra digestión de aquella parte de espíritu europeo que pueda hacerse espíritu nuestro, no empezará hasta que tratemos de imponernos en el orden espiritual de Europa, de hacerles tragar lo nuestro, lo genuinamente nuestro, a cambio de lo suyo, hasta que no tratemos de españolarizar a Europa. (1124)

However, referring directly to Unamuno’s article, Ortega misreads his intentions when he states that, in rejecting the viability of europeización, Unamuno would rather see Spain look towards Africa as a means of national regeneration.11 Unamuno does not actively pursue the Africanisation of Spain as an option to solve Spain’s alleged crisis of identity. Rather, Africa merely serves as an example that questions the one-sided focus of Peninsular intellectuals, such as Ortega, intent on promoting Europe as the sole saviour of Spain’s social and cultural ills.12

12 During an intense period of self-examination of Spain’s national conscience, within which daily intellectual debate centred on the need to Europeanise and to modernise Spain, in this article Unamuno merely enquires, why Europe? Why be modern?: ¿[P]or qué no hemos de decir: ‘Hay que africanizarse a la antigua’ o ‘hay que anticuarse a la africana?’” Further questioning the focus of Europe-centred intellectuals, Unamuno, in response to
In the early twentieth century, then, Spain’s Europeanisation was but one proposal among several that aimed to effect Spain’s rebirth so that it might assume a more active and influential role in the modern world. Apart from Europe and Africa, the former Latin American colonies also attracted the attention of many, including Unamuno. Unamuno’s initial contact with the Americas occurred by way of his childhood imaginings of Mexico. As a young man his father had emigrated to Tepic, near Mexico’s Pacific Coast, where he had pursued his fortune before returning to the Basque Country. For the young Unamuno, the son of an “indiano,” the books and souvenirs that his father had brought back with him, not to mention the tales of his experiences, made tangible the liberal Mexico of Benito Juárez in the mid-nineteenth century and also recreated for him that nation’s rich pre-Columbian past.  

From these early beginnings Unamuno’s interest in the sociocultural life of Spain’s former American colonies only grew stronger. Later, as an intellectual, teacher, poet, novelist, and literary critic, Unamuno’s cultural intimacy with Latin America intensified. As Manuel García Blanco has affirmed, Unamuno’s persistent presence within transatlantic cultural circles and the intercontinental dialogue that, after 1898, increasingly linked Latin America to the Peninsula, was cultivated through a variety of channels: he was an incessant reader of Latin American literature, as well as of journals and newspapers, such as Buenos Aires’ La Nación and Caras y caretas, for which he became a critic and regular contributor; he wrote literary reviews of Latin American texts for the Madrid journal, La lectura; he formed long-lasting friendships with Latin America’s foremost intellectuals and writers, many of whom he met during their visits to Spain; and he was also a would-be, albeit frustrated, traveller to the


13 For Unamuno’s own insight into the impact that his father’s Mexican experiences had on him as a child, see Miguel de Unamuno, “Mi visión primera de México.” 1907. De mi vida, Vol. 10 of Obras completas, ed. Manuel García Blanco. 2nd ed. (Madrid: Afrodisio Aguado, 1958) 144-48.
Americas, namely to Argentina, although each attempt to make the transatlantic crossing had been thwarted (García Blanco 8).

As a result, in contrast to Darío’s reflections on Spain, Unamuno’s accounts, specifically focused on Argentina but covering a raft of Latin American themes, were written without ever having set foot in the Americas. For Unamuno, the most productive approach with which to attempt an analysis of any country is, he contends, through indirect channels: “[P]ara escribir sobre un país, lo mejor es no haber estado en él . . . Al que vive en un país, los árboles le impiden ver el bosque” (“El resorte” 409). However, I doubt that those who never journey to any given location are able, as a result, to describe that place and its peoples any better for not having been a first-hand witness. Unamuno’s belief here concerning his approach to other cultures makes a mockery of such theoretical approaches as “participant observation” in the field of anthropology. I suggest, then, that to compensate for him never having travelled to the Americas, he must embellish and promote his own worth as a commentator on Latin America from a distance.

Thus, while Darío is physically mobile, Unamuno conveys an impression of intellectual mobility by “thinking Argentina” from within the national borders of his homeland. In this way, he is at the same time “here” and “there” and thus can be seen to corroborate the ideal of cosmopolitanism as expressed by Pollock, for whom manifestations of cosmopolitanism surface as “ways of living at home abroad or abroad at home—ways of inhabiting multiple places at once, of being different beings simultaneously” (11). Unamuno himself notes this same capacity when he affirms his interest in the events of all of the Americas, labelling this simultaneity as his “incurable plurilateralidad de atención, este espíritu curioso por todo lo que en todas partes pasa” (“Argentinidad” 812).

The inherent characteristic of cosmopolitanism to draw its allegiance simultaneously from multiple points of reference outside national boundaries is exemplified in Unamuno’s

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14 It was not for want of opportunities that Unamuno never went to Latin America. Invitations were forthcoming and initial plans had been made for him to visit Argentina in 1910, for the centenary of the “Revolución de Mayo”; in 1916, for the third anniversary of the death of Cervantes; and in 1922 and again in 1936. Each time, however, these plans were never realised. See Manuel García Blanco, América y Unamuno (Madrid: Gredos, 1964) 10-14.
self-proclaimed “plurilateralidad de atención.” The tendency that Unamuno has to want to be informed from all sides also propels in him a desire to study Danish and Romanian, so as to seek access to writers and narratives in these languages (“Argentinidad” 812). Unamuno’s foreign language learning exemplifies Hannerz’s views on cosmopolitanism as a means of negotiating between systems of meaning (239). Indeed, for Unamuno, reading, study and reflection constitute the means by which to facilitate his access to Argentina. However, as Unamuno takes part in two or more cultures at once, he is only ever partially integrated into any one of these; as Jonathan Friedman claims, “the cosmopolitan can only play roles, participate superficially in other people’s realities,” and, as such, cosmopolitans are “participating in many worlds, without becoming part of them” (204). Thus, Unamuno does not form part of the Argentine reality through direct contact. Writing Argentina from Spain, he is always at a comfortable distance from the Other that he strives to textualise.

Just as Darío professed to being informed from all angles in Madrid for his articles for La Nación, Unamuno’s opening address to the reading public of this same daily in Temas argentinos provides evidence that his views on Argentina derive from comparably mobile perspectives. He maintains that they are not restricted to any one vantage point and actually celebrate diversity: “Y ahora—me diréis—¿de qué vas a hablarnos? Ya lo iréis viendo. Mas puedo anticiparos que de todo: de política, de literatura, de costumbres, mas sobre todo de cuestiones culturales. Y hasta de religiosas, que éste es mi flaco” (20-21). However, more than discussing an eclectic assortment of themes for his Latin American readership, his purpose in Temas argentinos is threefold: firstly, to contribute to overcoming Spain and Latin America’s mutual ignorance of each other; secondly, to give a boost to what he sees as the fledgling formation of a real sense of cultural community among the Spanish-speaking nations; and thirdly, to offer the virtues of what he calls “la labor individual” for building this sense of transatlantic union. With his promotion of the work of the individual, he thus rejects the institutionalised, bureaucratic approach to securing ties between Spain and its former colonies of such committees as the Unión Iberoamericana, since he considers that individual
efforts are more effective: “En nuestra casta, todas las obras más fecundas y más duraderas las ha hecho un individuo aislado” (Temas 18-20).

Although I have alluded to a certain correlation between Unamuno’s imaginings of Argentina and the ideals of cosmopolitanism, distinct contradictions arise, as I will reveal. It is his stance against cosmopolitan sentiments, when these entail a search for influences and models for identity outside the Ibero-American cultural community, that feeds his contempt for the cosmopolitan vision and characterises his approach to the Argentine sociocultural context. Rather than searching for indications of diversity, Unamuno pursues examples of common ground between Spain and the Americas.

In this respect, previous analyses of Unamuno’s relationship with Spain’s former colonies have tended to draw attention to the idea that, for him, what essentially governs the imaginative union of the Ibero-American space is their so-called common spirit. Consequently, there are those who have insisted on the parallels between Unamuno’s vision of the Americas and that upheld by Gárate in Idearium español, which proclaims that Spain’s mission is to preside over Iberoamérica as an intellectual and spiritual confederation. According to Julio César Chaves, Unamuno realised, like Gárate, that Spain’s cultural and spiritual reemergence depended upon its access to wider spheres of influence. Through renewed contact with the rest of the Spanish-speaking world, Spain would cement its place universally as a creator and disperser of cultural and spiritual values because “una España encerrada dentro de sus límites nacionales no tendría eco en el concierto universal” (13). For Chaves, the basis upon which Unamuno sought to ensure Spain’s universality, and recreate a lost sense of empire in the process, was the commonly held Castilian language (13).15 This argument has been taken up more recently by Virginia Santos-Rivero, who has critically explored Unamuno’s conception of Hispanidad, which, she argues, harnessing Anderson’s thesis on the origin and spread of

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15 Another scholar who has underscored the similarities between Unamuno and Gárate’s stance vis-à-vis Latin America is Emilia de Zuleta, “Unamuno desde América: Itinerario de una recepción,” Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos 440-441 (1987): 102.
nationalism, imagines the Spanish-speaking peoples as a cohesive community based on the sharing of values, ideals, language and history (Santos-Rivero 9, 35).

According to García Blanco, it was Unamuno who had coined the term *Hispanidad* in 1907 (19-20). Twenty years later it reappeared as the title and theme of an article that Unamuno wrote in Hendaye in 1927 for the Buenos Aires journal *Síntesis*, during his self-imposed exile in France because of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. There his explanation of *Hispanidad* (as opposed to *Españolidad*) describes the concept as a means for conceiving of the Iberian Peninsula as a single unified entity, in much the same way as it had been regarded as Hispania under Roman rule. According to Unamuno, Iberia’s unification through *Hispanidad* was not merely geographical. Instead, it encompassed the understanding that the region also allegedly shares a common history, and thus a common spirit. What is more, he asserts, the notion is inclusive of all the diverse peoples that inhabit the Peninsula, for it is these distinct “razas espirituales” that have forged Iberia’s unique soul (“Hispanidad” 649).

What is at stake in Unamuno’s theory of *Hispanidad*, I propose, is the problematic created by his resolve to locate a space for common ground rather than celebrate the plurality of differences on the Peninsula and the autonomous will of the regional communities. As a consequence, while Unamuno acknowledges diversity, which, for him, is a necessary corollary to unity, the Peninsula’s contrasts and contradictions are homogenised by the concept of a singular, all-encompassing discourse of *Hispanidad*: “Y quiero decir con Hispanidad una categoría histórica, por lo tanto espiritual, que ha hecho, en unidad, el alma de un territorio con sus contrastes y contradicciones interiores. Porque no hay unidad viva si no encierra contraposiciones íntimas, luchas intestinas” (“Hispanidad” 649-50).

When Unamuno transplants his version of *Hispanidad*, as a theory of unity in diversity, to the Americas, he not only extends to the former colonies the supposed qualities of the unique “raza espiritual” that he sees in the Iberian Peninsula. He also broadens the geographical space of his homogenising discourse. Unamuno’s *Hispanidad* now envisages, effectively, as a uniform whole, an array of diverse Latin American cultures gathered together
fraternally under the umbrella of their imagined common spiritual inheritance: “Ese patrimonio [espiritual], en cuanto queda, es comunal; lo disfrutamos en común con las naciones americanas hermanas—no hijas—de lengua de la nuestra” (“Hermandad” 554). Accordingly, Unamuno’s faith in the idea of an Ibero-American union, grounded in the notions of a common spirit, culture, and language, is more abstract than Darío’s vision, and thus a less tangible means for gauging impressions of unity. For Unamuno, the Castilian language, as “la sangre del espíritu,” is the means by which the worldwide community of Spanish speakers is able to assert itself as a collectivity: “Cuando . . . sentimos la necesidad vital de asegurar y consolidar nuestras sendas personalidades colectivas y comunes, nos vemos forjados a fundarlas sobre una Interpopular hispánica, sobre una hispanidad común. Y su asiento es el habla común” (“Comunidad” 953). In contrast, Darío’s hope for Iberoamérica, imagined as an enlarged Spain (“La Grande España”), is radicated in a sense of Peninsular-Latin American communion based on the mutual quest for modernity by embracing outside influences, respect for cultural diversity, and the identification of a common threat.  

However, the dubious nature of Unamuno’s claim to unity through a shared language surfaces when he reflects on the fact that Castilian is a hegemonic language of empire imposed upon speakers of other languages not only on the Peninsula but in other parts of the world through colonisation. Unity through imposition is always a contrived sense of union, not a mutual decision made among equals. Unamuno makes these hegemonic aspirations clear as he considers what he deems the necessary adoption of Castilian, as a so-called language of culture, in his native Basque Country: “[L]a adopción por mi pueblo de un idioma de cultura es el único medio para llevar a la cultura común nuestro espíritu y perpetuarlo en ella. . . . [y] para imponer nuestro sentido a los demás pueblos de lengua castellana primero, y a través de

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16 One commentator has noted that Darío’s journeys to Spain, and the resulting texts, not only display evidence of a shared culture but act as reminders to Spaniards that their nation forms an intimate part of Latin American culture. See Sergio Ramírez, “En el rincón de un quicio oscuro,” prólogo, España contemporánea, by Rubén Darío. (Madrid: Alfaguara/Santillana, 1998) 28. For another scholar, it was Darío’s call for an integration of Spanish-speaking nations at the beginning of the twentieth century, driven by their shared language, faith, ideals and loyalty, that guided the actions of the next four decades, during which time Spain and Latin America strove towards fraternal cooperation and mutual understanding. See Carlos Seco Serrano, “Rubén Darío y el 98,” España: Cambio de siglo (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2000) 70.
ellos, a la vida toda histórica de la Humanidad” (“La crisis actual” 947). Even more contentious, perhaps, is Unamuno’s belief in the capacity of the shared Castilian language not only to unite a variety of distinct cultural communities but as a force for the assimilation of their differences, for it is his conviction that “en pueblos que se comunican unos con otros en el mismo idioma, este comercio mutuo los asimila entre sí” (“Comunidad” 955).

In part, similar ideas concerning notions of a common culture and language are evident in Kwame Anthony Appiah’s revised reflections on the historic idea of cosmopolitanism, and the degree to which its ideals can be made compatible with a deep sense of patriotism. In his critical reaction to Nussbaum’s call for unmodified acceptance of the cosmopolitanism of the Stoics, as a basis for revising the United States’ education system and as an antidote for that nation’s allegedly misguided, self-centred nationalism, he offers instead, as an alternative, the ideals of what he calls a “cosmopolitan patriotism,” or a “rooted cosmopolitanism” (91). Taking the US as his focus, key to Appiah’s argument are his musings over the role and importance of a “common culture” for national identity there. One model for a national culture, he remarks, is the “tribal fantasy” of the traditional society. In such a model, shared beliefs, values, signs, symbols and a single language, all of which are “socially transmitted,” provide evidence of a common culture. Its members can thus be seen “to participate in a complex set of mutual expectations and understandings” (99). Yet, the presence of a common culture in a given community does not necessarily require that all members hold these values and beliefs. What is needed, Appiah asserts, is that, rather than actively practising them, each individual acknowledge that those values and beliefs are widely held within the greater community. Pivotal to the idea of harmony in Appiah’s model is the consideration that, despite outside influence from other foreign values and faiths, the common culture always makes up the majority and holds the greatest impact, which enables the population to think of themselves as a collective (Appiah 99-100).

The question begs asking whether something akin to Appiah’s theories on a common culture can be applied to Iberoamérica, where Unamuno would see a common culture as
defined by *Hispanidad*. Although it may be argued that there is a common culture that is largely shared within this space, a culture that speaks Castilian and is Roman Catholic, it is more important to ask whether or not members of this cultural community are, in the terms laid out by Appiah, centred on a shared culture, and so think of themselves as one. Just as Appiah rejects the idea of a centring common culture in the United States of the late twentieth century, due to its multilingualism, its lack of a common religion, and its inter-state diversity (100), I argue that the people of the Ibero-American community fail to be centred on a shared Hispanic culture. The Ibero-American space of the early 1900s, during which time Unamuno was developing his ideas on *Hispanidad*, was, as it is today, a multilingual arena. Not only were Castilian and Portuguese spoken, the languages of empire, but a vast number of indigenous languages, not to mention the plurality of languages that were asserting their presence on the Iberian Peninsula itself: Catalan, Gallego and Euskera. Complicating matters further is Unamuno’s focus on Argentina and, in particular, that nation’s capital city. As a settler society where European immigration has played a decisive role in rethinking Argentine national identity, the plurality of cultures there constitutes a distinct threat to *Hispanidad*. What is more, central to my contention that a common culture fails to centre the inhabitants of *Iberoamérica* is their overwhelming degree of mutual ignorance, underscored by both Darío and Unamuno. Consequently, I suggest that Unamuno’s version of *Hispanidad* constitutes a utopian attempt on his part to envisage the union of *Iberoamérica*.  

In fact, owing to his will to locate the degree of shared ground that supposedly unites *Iberoamérica*, irrespective of its diversity, Unamuno can be thought of more as a universalist than a cosmopolitan. In an article exploring the universal roles of art and literature, Unamuno extols the principles of universality and the universal ideal, of the type that confronts differences head-on by calling for their integration, affirming ”[u]niversidad, sí, pero la rica universalidad de integración, la que brota del concurso y choque de las diferencias” (“Arte”

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17 While I doubt the existence of a common, unifying culture across Ibero-America, due largely to Spain’s role as coloniser, I suggest that a more viable potential exists in imagining a shared culture in Latin America. Indeed, Latin American intellectuals, such as Martí, Rodó, Manuel Ugarte and Eduardo Galeano, have long sought to unite the continent based on its shared experience of European colonisation and United States neoimperialism.
As such, his attitude lends support to the idea that these two terms, universalism and cosmopolitanism, are best thought of as being in opposition to one another, as Hollinger explains: “We can distinguish between a universalist will to find common ground and a cosmopolitan will to engage human diversity. For cosmopolitans, the diversity of humankind is a fact; for universalists it is a problem” (231).18

The conflict between these two terms surfaces clearly in an article that Unamuno addresses to “un porteño cosmopolita.” The article is Unamuno’s response to a letter sent to him by a Buenos Aires resident. In his letter the porteño claims that the spirit of patriotism is at odds with the cosmopolitan spirit, in much the same way that Nussbaum elaborated what are, for her, the tensions between a national and cosmopolitan consciousness. According to Unamuno, cosmopolitanism and universalism, if not complete opposites, express divergent ideas. To summarise each of their points of view, it is the belief of the porteño, in Unamuno’s words, that the spirit of patriotism impedes so-called universal brotherhood. Rather than bringing the similarities of humanity into view, national borders and differences are only emphasised. In contrast, for Unamuno, the opposite holds true: love for the nation is a preparatory first step towards the love of all humankind (“Universalidad” 421).

However, it would be wrong to assume that what drives Unamuno’s praise of universality, or a Stoic-inspired view of cosmopolitanism, are misgivings similar to those affirmed by Nussbaum regarding the worth of the patriotism of the narrow nationalist. Unamuno is deeply suspicious of what he perceives is the selfish nature of the cosmopolitan figure. For him, the cosmopolitan, living in the anonymity provided by the modern city, contributes to the fragmented spirits of the diverse, isolated individuals therein:

Cosmopolitismo . . . viene de cosmópolis, que equivale a ciudad-mundo o como hoy se diría ciudad mundial, y son cosmópolis aquellas ciudades en que vienen

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18 David Hollinger notes that cosmopolitanism and universalism are regarded as synonyms by Martha Nussbaum, due to her adoption of the ancients’ understanding of cosmopolitanism with its universal scope (“Not Universalists” 231). Bruce Robbins has pointed out that, more recently, “philosophical arguments in favor of universalism have returned with a vengeance, bringing with them renewed advocacy of cosmopolitanism in the older sense.” See Bruce Robbins, “Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism,” Introduction Part I, Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation, ed. Pheng Cheah and Robbins (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1998) 2.
For Unamuno, the cosmopolitan is also a wayward figure. Fuelling his mistrust is the figure’s apparent evasion of a sense of place and the rejection of a search for roots and traditions. According to him, cosmopolitans are those “sin hogar, ni patria, cuya vida es jugar, viajar, no por amor [a] todos los lugares, sino por aversión a cada uno de ellos—pues el que viaja demasiado, más que conocer lugares nuevos es que huye de aquel en que está” (“Universalidad” 427).

Unamuno’s aversion to the cosmopolitan sensibility is a view not too dissimilar to the argument of the overzealous nationalist, for whom the cosmopolitan’s rootless nature, devoid of ties to a place and a people, poses a distinct threat to national culture and traditions (Carew Hunt 36). In Nussbaum’s promotion of cosmopolitanism as a universal ideal, the narrow focus that she sees as inherent in nationalist ideology renders nationalism “morally questionable” and an “irrelevant characteristic” (5). Unlike Nussbaum, Appiah insists on the viability of the cosmopolitan figure as a patriot and, similarly, the capacity of the latter to accept the wider affiliations called for by cosmopolitanism. In suggesting their compatibility, he rejects the previously held assumption that they are opposites with inherently conflicting principles. His revisions, Hollinger notes, constitute modifications to the historical perception of cosmopolitanism, with its universalist overtones. Consequently, they represent examples of the “new cosmopolitanism,” which aims to correct the imbalance between universalists and nationalists, with a view to locating a more accommodating middle ground (Hollinger 230).

According to Appiah, the cosmopolitan patriot appreciates and recognises diversity, while affirming the autonomy of others to practice their devotion to a particular place and people. “The cosmopolitan patriot can entertain the possibility of a world in which everyone is
a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of his or her own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different, places that are home to other, different, people” (91). Thus, the liberal cosmopolitan that Appiah supports would shudder at the mere prospect of humanity hinting at forming a global, homogeneous culture. The ideal, he suggests, is not only that people be free to take their diverse roots with them but also to celebrate their liberty “to elect the local forms of human life within which they will live” (94-95).

Unamuno is far from embracing this ideal of the new cosmopolitanism in his treatment of Argentina. It is his conviction that, in their exaggerated admiration of Europe, Argentina’s intellectuals, such as Leopoldo Lugones and Bunge in his text Nuestra América, are forsaking their own cultural traditions. Consequently, they also represent threats to the sort of transatlantic union that Unamuno’s theory of Hispanidad calls for. Their focus on European, and particularly French, traditions is a pursuit that will not bear fruit, Unamuno affirms, as the French spirit has never been able to penetrate the so-called essence of the Spanish-speaking peoples, let alone the Argentine soul (“El resorte” 411).

For Unamuno, the cosmopolitan ideal of actively seeking out diverse cultural traditions as a means of identity formation elsewhere, and looking abroad for foreign influence and affinities, are betrayals of the local space. Accordingly, in his essay entitled “Sobre la argentinidad,” in response to Rojas’ contemplation of the same, Unamuno reflects upon the supposedly innate spiritual qualities of the Argentine people. There, Unamuno’s suspicion of the cosmopolitan quest for the foreign, not only in Argentina but also in his homeland, is noted as a constant struggle: “[O]s diré que la argentinidad me interesa porque mi batalla es que cada cual, hombre o pueblo, sea él y no otro, y me interesa además como español recalcitrante y preocupado de mantener aquí la españolidad” (“Argentinidad” 814). It is especially pertinent that Unamuno’s comments are levelled at Argentina and not any other Latin American nation. He singles out Argentina, I contend, precisely because it is that nation that most threatens to define itself through the Other. Unamuno not only questions its
cosmopolitan affinities with the cultural traditions of Europe and its recourse to foreign models for cultural, scientific and industrial advancement. He also notes the perceived disruption to a sense of “argentinidad” posed by floods of European immigration, which rapidly altered the sociocultural fabric of the nation at the turn of the twentieth century. As a consequence of these factors, Argentina represents a distinct threat to a single transatlantic identity imagined under the rubric of Hispanidad.

Like Darío, Unamuno professes a deep interest in “las cosas de toda América,” as well as in European literatures and cultures (“Argentinidad” 812). However, he is quick to qualify his attraction to all aspects of Latin American life, since it is only those who remain true to their traditions and roots that he reveres: “Y de cada país me interesan los que más del país son, los más castizos, los más propios” (812); for him, “castizo” signifies a sense of purity devoid of contact with foreign elements (En torno 27). Such a stance is also evident in his positive review of the thesis posited in Rojas’ La restauración nacionalista (1909). There Rojas’ aim was to consolidate a cohesive sense of Argentine national identity as a basis for reforming the nation’s education system. When reasserting the importance for nation-building of alleged cultural and spiritual authenticity, Unamuno reiterates his misgivings regarding the role of cosmopolitanism and, particularly, the cosmopolitan face of Buenos Aires, for forging a consistent, uniform sense of nationhood in Argentina:

He de repetir una vez más lo que ya he escrito varias veces, y es que cuanto más de su tiempo y de su país es uno, más es de los tiempos y de los países todos y que el llamado cosmopolitismo es lo que más se opone a la verdadera universalidad.

El tan decantado cosmopolitismo bonaerense creo sea el mayor obstáculo para la universalización de la patria argentina. (“Educación” 803-04)

In this way, Unamuno, writing from the perspective of the postimperial nation, aims to affirm and defend Spain’s own casticismo during a period of enormous loss following the so-called Disaster by seeking out and prizing “lo más castizo” in the Americas. Conversely, Darío,
writing from within the *Madre Patria* but from a postcolonial vantage point, is more open to embracing diversity, as a cosmopolitan figure representing the equally cosmopolitan nation of Argentina. That said, Darío does appear especially guarded over the threat of foreign, cosmopolitan influences in Andalusia, where he laments the increasing loss of local cultural forms due to the rampant invasion of English commercialism. Indeed, I would argue that a similar need to safeguard local cultural forms in Argentina prompts Unamuno’s preference for “los más indígenas” and “los más propios” (“Argentinidad” 812); that is, those least tainted by contact with the foreign. However, in so doing, he rejects the autonomy of Argentine individuals to elect their own affinities and means for envisaging and forging their identities.

Beneath the fluid, fragmented surface of modern, cosmopolitan cities, Unamuno notes, lies the deeply rooted tradition of the people: “Por supuesto, por debajo de estas cosmópolis, de estas ciudades de aluvión y azar, hay siempre un pueblo con raíces de tradición más o menos larga” (“Universalidad” 422). The image of the disparities between a city’s surface and its profound interior depths recalls Unamuno’s concept of *intrahistoria*, as theorised in his text *En torno al casticismo* (1895). There, two different angles from which to view two opposing histories are described using the metaphor of the sea: the official, superficial, history of a people is that visible on the thin surface and represented in the print media, while what resides in the dark, unexplored depths constitutes the *intrahistoria*, or eternal tradition of a people (*En torno* 41-42). Similar ideas, I posit, are transplanted to Argentina’s national space, where Unamuno contends that, by remaining faithful to this eternal tradition or uncontaminated “castizo,” the cultural authenticity and purity provided by seclusion from outside influence will ensure that nation’s greater universality. In effect, what Unamuno calls for is a rejection of the cosmopolitan ideal in favour of an intense parochialism. Somewhat paradoxically, rather than seek recourse to multiple points of reference outside the nation, a sense of rooted patriotism will ensure a universal appeal. Unamuno makes this point apparent when he affirms the capacity of everyday events of the local space, when narrated, to transcend their immediate surrounds and become global: “Un hombre genial puede escribir
una obra de historia universal y secular sin más que contar los chismes y rencillas y sucesos de la aldea en que vive” (“Universalidad” 424).

It is for such reasons that Unamuno urges the “porteño cosmopolita” of Buenos Aires, previously mentioned, to abandon cosmopolitanism, as a means of attaining universal appeal. Instead, figuratively, Unamuno draws on an image of cultivation of the local land to insist on an alternative pursuit: that of first tending to those crops that are best grown at home. A well-nurtured crop, he suggests, will then have an export market abroad. I read this analogy as Unamuno’s request that the porteño first promote local culture and tradition because, if cultural models are sourced from outside, as is the tendency of the cosmopolitan, what will be harvested is a manufactured product, unnatural and artificial: “Déjese usted, pues, de todas esas cosas y cultive su huerto, que si usted consigue criar en él frutas jugosas y exquisitas, ellas correrán mundo. Y cultive las frutas que ese huerto según su tierra y su cielo da. Porque todo lo demás es cultivo de estufa” (“Universalidad” 427).

Another figure to stress the early twentieth-century predisposition of the modern subject to embrace the cosmopolitan view was Mexican writer, intellectual and diplomat, Reyes. An article entitled “El curioso parlante,” the pseudonym for nineteenth-century writer Ramón de Mesonero Romanos (1803-1882), provides Reyes with the occasion to address, in accord with Unamuno, what he saw as the modern inclination to relinquish the local space in favour of the cosmopolitan focus on what lay beyond: “Hoy todos somos cosmopolitas. Estamos . . . en todas partes, menos en la ciudad que habitamos, para la que ya no tenemos ojos” (Vísperas 53). In contrast, Reyes remarks that, as the author of Guía de Madrid (1831), Mesonero Romanos’ allegiance was to his native Madrid. By comparing the modern subject with a propensity for the cosmopolitan outlook to Mesonero Romanos, as “el curioso parlante,” Reyes’ point is to stress the modern subject’s lack of a similar curiosity about his immediate environment: “Saben que hay causas, productos y seres sociales; pero nunca saben lo que sabía Mesonero Romanos: que su barbero se llama Pedro Correa y es natural de Parla, tiene veintidós años, y su padre era sacristán del pueblo. No son curiosos” (54).
However, there are two curiosities at play here, for it would be wrong to charge the cosmopolitan with a lack of inquisitiveness. Nevertheless, in Reyes’ brief article, curiosity at home is prized above curiosity abroad. As such, the modern subject is seen to be unobservant of, and unreceptive to, local detail.

Mention of Reyes’ article is important, as it serves to frame a context for his theories on transatlantic relations between Spain and Latin America. Ironically, in this regard, it is not curiosity abroad that bears the brunt of Reyes’ criticism, as it does above. For him, unlike “el curioso parlante,” Peninsular intellectuals, particularly those of the so-called Generation of 1898, involved themselves too much in the local detail of the Castilian interior instead of turning their attention towards the Americas. Although Reyes affirms Spain’s lack of self-belief and its self-absorbed attitude during the aftermath of the Disaster, he contends that the stance of the 1898 writers only exacerbated the image of an enclosed Spain and thus perpetuated what was deemed its national problem. Just as Darío had called for Spain to throw open the windows of the nation, in what was a cosmopolitan-fuelled attempt to steer Spain along a path toward modernity, Reyes desires a slightly different outcome, in the form of Spain’s reflection on Latin America:

La redentora “revisión” que data del 98, aunque combatía un mal de ensimismamiento, ha traído al fin otro mal del mismo linaje. Tanta introspección acusadora ha acabado por crear una atmósfera sofocante, de cuarto cerrado. No vendría mal abrir las ventanas. No vendría mal sustituir, a la curiosidad por esta intriguilla o aquella maniobra interior . . . la racha vivificadora de un imperioso recuerdo que representa, como decía Ortega y Gasset, el mayor deber y el mayor honor de España. No vendría mal pensar en América. (“Discusiones” 568)19

19 Ortega y Gasset was driven to reflect upon Spain’s role in the Americas when, in 1915, at the height of the Mexican Revolution, Mexico’s President, General Venustiano Carranza, expelled Spain’s diplomatic representation from Mexico. Ortega hoped that Carranza’s scornful actions would serve a swift blow to Spain’s national pride and that, in Spain, they would produce the sort of revived patriotic reaction that would remind Spaniards that not only was their nation a work in progress, requiring hard work and effort to sustain, but also that, consequently, a
If it was Reyes’ desire that Spain begin to think about Latin America, a drastic course of action must first serve to efface the mutual misunderstandings that, up until then, Reyes saw as characterising Peninsular-Latin American relations. Like Darío and Unamuno, Reyes critiques the deplorable state of mutual ignorance between Europe and Latin America. Indeed, each side is guilty of fabricating legends and fables that grossly distort the image each has of other. The proliferation of these absurdities, he notes can be seen in the fact that Latin America believes that Spain’s exports consist solely of priests and bullfighters. In contrast, Europe’s vision of the Americas imagines a land where all nations are small tropical islands populated by brightly coloured parrots and black inhabitants ("Leyenda" 338-41).

In addition to lamenting a mutual lack of knowledge, in a 1919 essay entitled “Sobre una epidemia retórica,” and in a similar fashion to Darío and Unamuno, Reyes casts a critical eye over the varied campaigns championing hispanoamericanismo. What irked him was the failure of these initiatives to bridge the cultural gulf that he saw as dividing the former Madre Patria from its ex-colonies through, to cite one instance, such erroneous means as the centennial celebrations or “fiestas de la Raza.” As his title indicates, he rejects these campaigns, viewing them purely as outbreaks of a misguided, empty rhetoric ("Epidemia" 348-49). Instead of falling victim to these contrived attempts at fraternity, Reyes suggests an alternative. However, his solution, the ideal pursuit of a common life, is not only vague and abstract but equally empty: “No: dejémonos de campañas verbales, y hagamos—de acuerdo y tan juntos como sea posible—la común campaña de la vida” (351).

Without further explanation on Reyes’ part, it is virtually impossible to gauge with any certainty what this common life entails. If he is pointing to the notion of a shared existence based on the perception of common Ibero-American ideals, then what must be determined is exactly what these are and who is to establish them as shared ideals. Will the sort of

renewed image of Latin America would emerge in Spain’s social imaginary, reminding Spain of its duties and responsibilities there: "Esta bocanada de desprecio que nos llega del golfo mejicano conviene que nos llegue bien adentro para ver si da tensión a nuestras almas, para ver si nos recuerda que es América el mayor deber y el mayor honor que queda en nuestra vida.” See José Ortega y Gasset, “Nueva España contra vieja España.” 1915. Escritos políticos I (1908-1921), Vol. 10 of Obras completas. (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1969) 283.
transatlantic union that Reyes calls for be anything akin to the trilogy of factors that Darío
deems necessary for the future unity of *Iberoamérica*: the shared pursuit of modernity,
respect for cultural diversity, and the othering of the United States as the common enemy?
One thing is evident, however. Reyes is adamant that the multiple, neoinperialist threats by
the United States to encroach upon Latin America must be seen by Spain as equally wounding
to its sovereignty. Therefore, it is imperative that the Spanish press publish timely articles,
"entre protestas y alarmas," denouncing US actions in such places as Mexico, Santo Domingo
and Venezuela. Only then, Reyes asserts, through constant repetition of Latin America’s
vulnerable predicament in Spain’s social imaginary, will Spain recover its misplaced Latin
American sensibility: “Que España aprenda a dolerse de los males hispanoamericanos,
repitiéndose a sí misma, hasta la saciedad, que se duele de ellos. Así se resucita la
sensibilidad perdida. Así se educa al pueblo para su misión principal: hablándole, hablándole
de ella incesantemente” (“Discusiones” 569).

While Reyes’ imaginings of transatlantic unity are aligned, in part, with those of Darío,
they can also be seen to affirm degrees of common ground similar with those proclaimed by
Unamuno from beneath the banner of *Hispanidad*. At the same time that he laments the
epidemic of rhetorical campaigns to strengthen transatlantic ties, he alludes to the issue of a
common language shared between Spain and its former colonies: “Y no se ha dicho, a todo
esto, lo único que había que decir: que América es muy distinta de España, pero que es, en la
tierra, lo que más se parece a España; que donde todos hablan ya en francés o inglés, sólo
nosotros nos hemos quedado hablando español!” (“Epidemia” 350).

If there is to be anything reminiscent of a viable option for a centring common culture
to unite the Ibero-American space, I suggest that Darío’s goals of an intellectual union based
on the pursuit of modernity and the cosmopolitan respect for cultural diversity are not only
more practicable options, they also avoid the abstract nature of Unamuno’s *Hispanidad*.
Darío’s proposals are not without contradiction, however. His cosmopolitanism is
compromised, since he fails to extend to Peninsular women, for example, the same
cosmopolitan autonomy to consider foreign influences and choose their own means for identity formation; in this case, in the realm of fashion. Similarly contradictory is Darío’s representation of Andalusia, where he not so much praises that region’s foreign cosmopolitan influence as denounce the presence of British commercial enterprise there as an example of economic imperialism quashing local culture. While he emphatically praises Catalonia’s quest to modernise, he takes issue with what could be seen as a foreign-led path toward modernity in the south. Ironically, rather than seek out a means of industrialisation that is even locally led, Darío would have Andalusia retain its exotic association with Africa and the East. In what can be seen as an act of cultural colonisation on his part, in so doing he thus strips from that region its autonomy to chart a different cultural and historical course to that prescribed in such texts as the travel accounts of the nineteenth-century French Romantics.

As far as Unamuno’s theory of *Hispanidad* is concerned, claims of a common language that would take precedence over others, together with the vague notion of a common spirit, merely serve to transfer a disguised version of Spain’s past hegemonic aspirations into the postcolonial/postimperial arena, in an attempt to revive Spain’s lost cultural prestige. As I have argued, it was the desire of Darío, Unamuno, and Reyes that post-1898 Spain recognise the need to turn towards Latin America and renew interest in the former colonies. However, Latin American intellectuals doubted whether the so-called New World could re-enter Spain’s social imaginary free from any inclination on Spain’s part to base its actions on a renewed sense of imperial ambition. For one, Reyes at least offers his views as to the outcome should Spain be able to achieve this goal, contending that Spain would return to occupy centre-stage as the world’s moral superpower: “El día en que España se interese por la suerte de las repúblicas americanas—cuando ya interesarse por ellas no significa ninguna ambición imperialista—, España vendrá a ser el centro de un poder moral . . . devolviéndole su puesto en la consideración política del mundo” (“Discusiones” 568). In fact, for Reyes, Spain’s ability to take the moral high ground has a positive spin-off for the Latin American nations, making all the more possible there a sense of mutual understanding and fraternal conviviality: "[S]erá
un bien para todas las repúblicas americanas que, a través de España, pueden entenderse y reconocerse fraternales” (“Discusiones” 568).

Thus, as a moraliser that does not seek hegemony in the Americas, Spain would be seen to set a precedent and occupy a unique position. In an age when European and North American imperialism and territorial expansion on a scale never before seen was the rule, the idea that one nation could approach another with a view towards fraternal union among equals was virtually unheard of. What is more, when one of these nations is an ex-Metropolis looking to forge ties with its former colonies, now independent, renewed claims of unity become difficult to isolate from the suspicion of ulterior imperialistic motives. Indeed, in Part Two I trace representations of Latin America by Peninsular writers Blasco Ibáñez and Albiñana Sanz, with a view to exploring further the problematic involved in imagining a degree of fraternity and resorting to Spain’s imperial history in the Americas to promote national regeneration back home.
Part Two

“Race,” Revolution, and the Convivial Culture of Consent:
Argentina and Mexico through the Eyes of
Vicente Blasco Ibáñez and José María Albiñana Sanz

“La verdad verdadera es que la América es hoy para los más de los españoles un país de refugio... ¡Ah!, si el que esto escribe fuese más joven y no estuviese prendido al suelo de esta vieja España por raíces de hábitos de necesidad, habría ido ya. Y habría ido en busca de España, de su España, que no encuentra aquí, a buscar algo siquiera de lo que aquí pudo haber llegado a ser. ¿Pudo?”
(Unamuno, “La otra” 937-38)

“¿Por qué vinimos a Europa? En América, el hombre significa algo; es una fuerza, una garantía...; se lucha, sí, pero con primitiva fiera; cae uno y puede volver a levantarse; pero en esta sociedad vieja, la posición es todo; el hombre, nada... Por eso allí el dinero da triunfos, y aquí desastres... Pueblos de historia, de tradición; tierras viejas, donde sólo cabe, como en las ciudades sepultadas de la antigüedad, la excavación, no las plantaciones de nueva vegetación y savia vigorosa.”
(Benavente 344-45)

In stark contrast to Spain’s rapid imperial decline at the end of the nineteenth century was the swift ascent of the United States and Northern European nations. During this same period they began flexing their imperial might in the scramble to carve up the rest of the as yet “unclaimed” regions of the globe. For Raymond Carr, the loss of Cuba left a visible scar on Spain’s national psyche (387). Serving to undermine further Spanish national identity was the belief, grounded in northern European notions concerning geographical determinism and Social Darwinism, that the loss of Spain’s last overseas dominions could be interpreted as a logical and inevitable outcome of its so-called national and racial inferiority (Álvarez Junco, “History” 75). What strengthened this idea of nationhood as ethnically defined was the nineteenth-century faith in the notion of “race” as a social science, since Eric Hobsbawm notes that it was from 1880 to 1914 that ethnicity, along with language, was primarily adopted as the most essential criterion for potential nationhood (Nations 102, 107-08). Intimately bound to notions of “race,” then, Spain’s definitive loss of empire quashed the nineteenth-century fiction, commonly held in the Spanish imaginary, that an innate characteristic of its national identity was its imperial calling. It also dispelled the belief that,
Unlike the new powers, Spain’s empire was inherently stronger, as it was allegedly based on cultural, spiritual and, above all, racial ties (Balfour, “The Lion” 107).

Across the Atlantic, Argentina’s elites, inspired by European racial theories, had also been concerned with the correlation between “race” and national identity. For several decades, they had been contemplating what they believed was the racial inferiority of their nation’s indigenous and black populations, as Helg affirms that these were seen as threats to Argentine civilisation (37, 44). The implementation of “whitening strategies” to curb this perceived racial “contamination” had largely succeeded by the turn of the twentieth century. Wars of extermination against indigenous populations and initiatives to promote mass European immigration to Argentina had forged a largely “white,” Europeanised nation (38).

Against this sociocultural backdrop of European immigration to Argentina, and within this climate of overt international criticism of Spain as an inferior imperial “has been,” Blasco Ibáñez left Lisbon in May 1909 en route to Argentina as part of a seven-month conference tour in which he gave more than 120 lectures across Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Paraguay. Momentum for the journey had been gathered through Blasco Ibáñez’s contact in Europe with notable figures from the Southern Cone; namely, Luis Sáenz Peña, former President of Argentina (1892-1895) and later its ambassador to Spain; Figueroa Lovain, Chile’s foreign representative; and Agustín Coello, former President of the Banco Español de Río de la Plata. Indeed, it was Emilio Mitre, director of La Nación, while dining with Blasco Ibáñez in Paris’ Chateau-Madrid, who was said to have proposed that he undertake a tour of Argentina (León Roca 61). Impetus did not stem solely from the Americas, however. In a spirit similar to the Peninsular regenerationists’ ideal of a transatlantic fraternal union, Blasco Ibáñez himself expressed a desire to see a greater sense of community and understanding between Spain and Latin America’s writers (Martínez de Sánchez 25-26). Further motivation for the tour, and a consistent theme in his conferences, also derived from his efforts to correct the image of
Spain promoted in Latin America by the Black Legend and represent, instead, an intellectual Spain embracing unreservedly the early twentieth-century’s pursuit of progress (42).¹

Striking similarities can be seen to unite Altamira’s purpose of offsetting the claims of the Black Legend in such texts as Psicología del pueblo español and Blasco Ibáñez’s tour of the Americas. In fact, the Valencian’s experience in Argentina coincided with Altamira’s own conference tour of Latin America, during which time he championed his desire for more intimate transatlantic cultural ties via the ideals of hispanoamericanismo. Nevertheless, it was not only Blasco Ibáñez’s project in Argentina to portray his homeland in a better light. One of his primary objectives, and one of the focal points of my analysis in Part Two, was to exalt in Spain’s sociocultural imaginary a utopian vision of a modern, democratic Argentina, as an alternative to what he saw in Europe as the failings of Old World determinism. Blasco Ibáñez was a firm believer in the ideals of a republic and ardent critic of the Spanish monarchy, ideas that will be developed shortly. Indeed, Rafael Corbalán has pointed out that, such was his conviction that Spain become a federal republic, that he saw in the United States a model for Spain’s political future (15). However, recourse to the US as a model, perceived as a threat to Spain’s desire for cultural hegemony, was impracticable because it flew in the face of Peninsular regenerationists intent on quashing the Black Legend’s claims of Spain’s so-called decadence by looking to its former colonies. Hence, Blasco Ibáñez’s consideration of Argentina marries his political convictions with an embrace of the ex-colonies, showcasing that nation’s progress and prosperity, and its political structure as a federal republic, as a more viable model for Spain to follow.

The promotional mouthpiece for this imagined utopia was Blasco Ibáñez’s Argentina y sus grandezas (1910), which can be seen as a history, geography and travel narrative in one.

¹ Blasco Ibáñez’s second conference in Buenos Aires in June 1909 was entitled “La Leyenda Negra de España.” In it he attacked the Legend’s two primary contentions: that Spain has never had a strong scientific tradition, and that Spain was a cruel and destructive coloniser of the Americas. In addition to challenging these claims, Blasco Ibáñez affirms that Spain’s so-called decadence only affected the nation between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries and that, in the first decade of the twentieth, Spain is well on the path towards progress. See Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, “Conferencias de Buenos Aires: La Leyenda Negra de España.” 1909. Vol. 4 of Obras completas (Madrid: Aguilar, 1977) 1191.
Considering its unbiased praise, it is not coincidental that it was published in the same year as Argentina’s centenary celebrations of independence. Written in Spain in the first half of 1910 from impressions gathered during his lecture tour, Argentina y sus grandezas is a massive tome of some 760 large-format pages complete with maps, photos and illustrations. Given that he wrote such a substantial volume in just seven months, the sheer breadth of the material covered is staggering. There Blasco Ibáñez extensively describes each of the nation’s provinces and territories and everything from their various climates, flora and fauna, to Argentina’s colonial history, its agriculture, politics, literature, education, and its advances in transportation and industry. However, on isolating a few unifying ideas, what surface as the text’s central themes are notions of “race,” immigration, and colonisation.

Due to what Blasco Ibáñez deems is Argentina’s assimilatory potency and newly forged racial homogeneity, Argentina had provided a social and cultural space conducive to the successful relocation of Europe’s demoralised and downtrodden working classes, for whom work, according to Blasco Ibáñez, is “una esclavitud penosa, ingrata, degradadora, de la que [uno] quiere librarse para siempre” (Argentina 16). He also is harshly critical of the static fatalism of the Old World when he asserts that there exists in Europe “[una] falta absoluta de esperanza de mejoramiento . . . y por encima de todo esto el fatalismo social del mundo viejo, que marca al pobre desde que nace, condenándolo á permanecer eternamente abajo” (16). His reference to a tired Old World is key, for while Helg affirms that in the 1880s Sarmiento saw Argentina’s progress in Anglo-Saxon immigration (40), Blasco Ibáñez’s Argentina y sus grandezas proclaims that the Latin “race,” reconfigured as a new breed of Old World conquistador from working-class origins, would reaffirm Spain’s lost prestige in the Americas after 1898. Hence, as one commentator notes, it was Blasco Ibáñez’s belief that “la América hispana, y especialmente la Argentina, debía poblarse de españoles para conservar la lengua y la raza. Veía a los inmigrantes que llegaban, como si fueran nuevos conquistadores” (Martínez de Sánchez 90).
If “whitening strategies” provided the means for racial homogenisation in Argentina, the relative racial homogeneity of Mexico was pronounced through the discourse of mestizaje. This theory claims that present-day distinctions based on “race” in Latin America have become meaningless, as a consequence of the extent to which a process of both cultural and genetic intermixture has resulted in the continent’s distinct racial uniformity (Tilley 54). One of the areas where this doctrine took shape with most impact was in 1920s’ Mexico, where the product of this amalgamation, the mestizo, was seen as “neither Indian nor European, but quintessentially Mexican” (Knight 85). Through the doctrine of mestizaje it was thought that the mestizo would make up Mexico’s dominant ethnic element, and that this ethnic monopoly would proclaim a new nationalism, stimulating demographic growth without the need to rely on immigration, as in the Argentine case. Consequently, a “nationality” with its own unique patriotism would form (85). Contrasting views of the mestizo, however, would be voiced by Blasco Ibáñez during this period following his visit to Mexico in 1920. For him, the mestizo was seen as a distinct hindrance in Mexico to the sort of modern nation-building process that he had witnessed and looked upon favourably a decade earlier in Argentina, and where the role of the European immigrant was vital.

Yet prior to the theory of mestizaje, a far more welcoming attitude towards foreign immigration in Mexico had been characteristic of the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911). It was then, born of Social Darwinism’s belief in the superiority of the white European, that Porfirian policymakers sought to attract foreign immigrants to facilitate a process of national modernisation (Knight 78). However, opposition to the Díaz regime and his imminent re-election erupted in 1910 in the form of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). Over and above a modest call for political change, a violent popular struggle exploded upon the Mexican landscape, initiated by the masses and calling for a total overhaul of society through dramatic social and economic reforms. As John Womack Jr. has remarked, necessary for the Revolution to succeed were the widespread destruction of national infrastructure, the ruination of business and complete antagonism towards the United States, as a capitalist threat to
Mexican sovereignty. When these measures were fulfilled, and the popular struggle ended in 1917 with the proclamation of a new revolutionary constitution, the real champions of the people were the Revolution’s leaders (Womack Jr. 125).

It was during a period of intense faith in the cult of *mestizaje* that Spanish medical doctor, writer and political figure José María Albiñana Sanz lived in Mexico from 1921 to 1927 and wrote *Bajo el cielo mejicano* (1930). Due in large part to the ideals of *mestizaje* and the proponents of Indianism, a more extreme, militant, anti-foreign, and particularly anti-Spanish form of *mestizaje*, feelings of disrespect, intolerance and anxiety characterise Albiñana Sanz’s imaginings of Mexico, facilitating his criticisms of the nation’s indigenous nationalism of the 1920s as morbid, gruesome and grotesque. It was also within the setting of post-revolution in Mexico that Blasco Ibáñez returned to consider Latin America in *El militarismo mejicano* (1920). For him, due to its geographical location on the doorstep of the United States and hostility to that nation and its capitalist investment in Mexico, violent, revolutionary Mexico is the “escaparate” or shop-window through which the entire Spanish-speaking world is perceived. Consequently, unlike his praise for the example provided by a modern, progress-driven Argentina receptive to foreign influence and immigration, in Blasco Ibáñez’s account, Mexico and the *mestizo* allegedly offer a detrimental representation of Ibero-American identity to the West.

In Part Two I explore how an analysis of Blasco Ibáñez’s *Argentina y sus grandezas* and *El militarismo mejicano*, and Albiñana Sanz’s *Bajo el cielo mejicano*, illuminates a period of exchange between Spain, Mexico and Argentina. Notions of racial difference are critical to the discourses of both writers. As such, through their visions of Latin America can be discerned the interrelationships between their thinking in terms of “race,” ethnicity, class and nationalism, as each writer considers the tentative formations of transcultural affiliations, or lack thereof, among these nations. My objective is to trace the potential of early twentieth-century Peninsular discourse to imagine, and therefore create a knowledge, of postcolonial Argentina and Mexico that does not recur to Spain’s past imperialist mission in the Americas.
Studying the relationship between Britain’s imperial past and its multicultural present, Gilroy has characterised this same tendency as the worrying ability of colonial history and memory to resurface in the form of “imperialist nostalgia,” by “reinflating imperial myths and instrumentalizing imperial history” (Empire 3). On the occasions when so-called imperialist nostalgia is indeed revived in my writers’ narratives, I foreground the obstacles that have created these less than accommodating environments, thus throwing into doubt the ideals of Ibero-American unity being proclaimed from the Peninsula by the likes of Altamira.

Gilroy’s analysis of contemporary, multicultural Britain, and its relationship with its imperial past, provides a valuable lens through which to initiate an approach to these writers and their texts. The usefulness of Gilroy’s analysis lies in his distinction between identity and identification, from which he derives his concept of “conviviality.” For Gilroy, the term “conviviality” distances itself from the ambiguous use of “identity” as a tool for considering “race” and ethnicity: “The radical openness that brings conviviality alive makes a nonsense of closed, fixed, and reified identity and turns attention toward the always-unpredictable mechanisms of identification” (Empire xi). Gilroy quickly points out, though, that the workings of conviviality do not describe spaces in which an atmosphere of tolerance has won out over the pervasive forces of racism. Rather, the spaces where conviviality thrives are distinct settings in which cultural and personal interactions have become newly defined “in the absence of any strong belief in absolute or integral races” (Empire xi).

A feature of urban spaces in postcolonial cities the world over, Gilroy’s concept of “conviviality” makes explicit reference to Britain’s postimperial, multicultural present, in which processes of “cohabitation and interaction” between diverse ethnicities are normal features of British daily life (xi). However, rather than trace a convivial culture born of the physical cohabitation among postcolonial migrants in the ex-Metropolis, as Gilroy does, my aim is to ascertain the potential for envisaging an environment of cultural conviviality in Ibero-America.

2 Gilroy’s aim is for Britain’s “buried” imperial history to become unearthed as a tool for understanding the future of contemporary British multiculturalism, which is “prefigured everywhere in the ordinary experiences of contact, cooperation, and conflict across the supposedly impermeable boundaries of race, culture, identity, and ethnicity.” See Paul Gilroy, After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture? (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004) viii.
not only in its urban spaces but also in its discursive realms. With regard to Blasco Ibáñez and Albiñana Sanz’s contact with Argentina and Mexico, my purpose is not to judge the degree of conviviality that may or may not exist on a personal level and that derives from the writers’ coexistence alongside Argentineans and Mexicans. Instead, my concern is to outline how they imagine a postcolonial/postimperial convivial culture that is conducive to a sense of Spanish-Latin American fraternity. Conversely, I will also to attend to instances when convivial culture is imagined as inconceivable and its failure signals the re-emergence of imperial discourse. Largely prompting such instances are the occasions when inscriptions based on differences attributable to “race” disrupt the so-called shared vision of unity and cultural homogeneity that hispanoamericanismo claimed to uphold.

While, for Gilroy, it is a general belief in the absence of essential races that defines the later twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries, during the period applicable to Part Two (1910-1930) nation construction was largely perceived in essentialist terms and ethnic uniformities. Such was the correlation between notions of ethnicity and nationalism that the practice of using the terms “nation” and “race” as interchangeable synonyms was widespread and commonly accepted, with virtually no distinction made between what constituted “racial” and “national” character (Hobsbawm, *Nations* 108). The idea of ethnically uniform nations carried over into the post-World War I era, with the principle that national, ethnic and linguistic borders should coincide with state frontiers, as set out in 1919 in the Treaty of Versailles. The shortcomings of such ideals for what was essentially the ethnic and linguistic homogenisation of Europe’s nations resulted in efforts to expel those ethnic minorities that did not fit neatly within these newly defined frontiers (*Nations* 132-33).

Such ideas of national homogeneity are certainly evident, as will be discussed, in Albiñana Sanz’s treatment of Mexico, where he contemplates “race,” ethnicity and nationhood. In this instance, the above-mentioned criteria for nation formation, developed in Europe, are transplanted to a non-European environment. The views of Mexico held by Albiñana Sanz are therefore intimately bound to notions of racial and linguistic uniformity as the principal
markers of national belonging. This does not mean, however, that Gilroy’s idea of conviviality, which emerges from an absence of strong beliefs in integral races, cannot serve a purpose here. Analysing the spaces of convivencia, or their lack, between Albiñana Sanz and Mexico during the 1920s serves to highlight the tensions and obstacles that need to be overcome if the potential for convivial culture in the Ibero-American arena is to be located at all. In this respect, obstacles serve a distinct purpose. They heighten, and make even more resounding, those instances in which strong cross-cultural affinities and identifications of common bonds, as made by writers like Blasco Ibáñez, are indeed celebrated.

In contrast to Albiñana Sanz, a belief in the synonymous interchangeability of “nation” and “race” is notably absent as Blasco Ibáñez contemplates Argentina. Addressing the public of Buenos Aires in his first conference in the Argentine capital in 1909, the writer promotes the idea that Spain, as a Melting Pot, is not comprised of an essential “race.” He affirms that patria is not “un territorio bordeado con líneas fronterizas” nor simply “una bandera.” Neither is it defined on racial terms: “[N]o es la raza—; España es un hervidero de razas; vosotros también lo sois.” On the contrary, it is something far less tangible and in a constant state of dynamic fluidity: “Es algo ideal, algo alado, algo que siempre flota en el ambiente y nunca se condensa de un modo definitivo” (“Conferencias: La Argentina” 1187).

For Blasco Ibáñez, an initial, overarching obstacle for Europe’s perception of Latin America is its basic ignorance of the continent. Although he refutes the notion that a nation is intimately bound to the idea of “race,” Blasco Ibáñez devotes an entire chapter of Argentina y sus grandezas to Argentina’s ethnographic makeup, simply entitled “La raza.” There he acknowledges and critiques Europe’s blinkered vision of ethnic and social geography, which leads Europe to imagine the Americas as a borderless, racially porous, monolithic construction “en conjunto, sin distinguir nacionalidades” (Argentina 75). Consequently, Europe establishes a distinct perception of Latin America’s homogeneity in accordance with ideas of “race;” for, as Blasco Ibáñez affirms of South America, “no pueden los europeos imaginársela sin el negro” (75). Ironically, Vasconcelos would later echo sentiments similar to those of Europe’s
cultural imaginary and proclaim the ethnic homogenisation of Latin America, affirming that “constituimos la más homogénea de todas las razas que ocupan una vasta extensión del planeta” (Hispanoamérica 18-19). However, rather than a cause for derision, Vasconcelos saw Latin America’s ethnic homogeneity as positive, since it had been uniquely constructed out of a heterogeneous cultural reality through a process of equal amalgamations of Latin America’s various ethnicities. As such, its resulting ethnic uniformity, born of diverse elements, served to offset the increasingly aggressive nature of European nationalisms in the 1930s, which were based on an alleged sense of racial purity and were hostile to the idea of ethnic mixing.

Of critical importance is Blasco Ibáñez’s allusion to the South American continent as an “imagined” space invented by Europe, a space where the black African is omnipresent. Such a notion of imagining an Other is linked to Edward Said’s foundational claim, laid down in his 1978 text Orientalism, that the Orient was an invention of the European consciousness (1). In essence, what is at stake for Said are issues of power over Europe’s Other, the East, with Said stating that Orientalism constitutes “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (3). However, rather than strictly pertaining to Europe’s imaginative construction of the Orient, the wider scope of the theory posits that Orientalism, as a discursive construct with geopolitical ends, sought control over, and manipulation of, alternative and uniquely different worlds (12). It is in this sense that Lou Charnon-Deutsch contends that the term is a misnomer, stating that its principles may be applied to an analysis of the ways in which Europe has attempted to exercise undue influence over other parts of the world besides the Orient, including Latin America (Charnon-Deutsch 251-52).

Comparable to the Orientalist quest to control an Other, Blasco Ibáñez seeks to evoke and manipulate a vision of Argentina conducive to his aim of promoting that nation as modern and Europeanised. However, he does not so much orientalise Argentina with a view to dominate on account of perceived differences, as Said’s theory posits in relation to the East, as he imagines sameness by portraying Argentina as a Westernised nation. Rather than denigrate the Other, as Orientalist discourse seeks to do, Argentina is accepted as a worthy
point of reference. In doing so, his treatment of Argentina’s indigenous peoples and black populations is rendered highly problematic. It is not surprising, then, that Blasco Ibáñez is quick to correct Europe’s imaginative “blackening” of Latin America based on the West’s social and ethnic ignorance, stating that Argentina lacks the black populations that are more prominent in northern regions of Latin America (Argentina 75). Indeed, asserting that there are more “caras de ébano barnizado” to be seen in Spain, Paris or London than in Argentina, Blasco Ibáñez remarks on the minimal presence of peoples of African descent in Buenos Aires, where he has only counted “hasta seis ú ocho.” Moreover, with an air of reassurance, he claims that their presence is largely decorative:

Los legisladores argentinos y algunos ministerios se pagan el capricho de tener á su servicio los únicos negros de la República. Estos individuos, cuya faz obscura resalta decorativamente sobre la levita galoneada de oro, y cierto negro mendigo procedente de una isla portuguesa, muy popular en la ciudad de Corrientes, son los únicos individuos de raza africana que he encontrado en la República del Plata. (Argentina 75)

Neither do the indigenous peoples of Argentina pose a threat for Blasco Ibáñez, who dismisses them as analogous to “el gitano vagabundo que recorre el centro de Europa” (83). He then proceeds to distinguish between the Indians “de a pie” and those “de a caballo.” The former, although “refractario á la vida moderna,” have never hindered the pursuit of progress and civilisation (80). Conversely, the latter, described as a “nube de langosta humana [que] infectase las llanuras” during the nineteenth century, had to be eliminated for “el avance de la raza blanca” (79). Now, Blasco Ibáñez notes, the indigenous presence in Argentina is seen to have significance only in regard to the nation’s ethnographic foundations. He therefore represents the indigenous peoples in terms of a virtually empty construction site upon which the Argentine nation has subsequently thrived, due to European racial superiority: “La raza india tiene gran importancia en el pasado etnográfico de la república. Es á modo del solar sobre el cual han edificado los blancos la actual nación argentina” (76). If there is to be a
discernible culture of conviviality for Blasco Ibáñez in Argentina that is conducive to feelings of Peninsular-Argentine fraternity, then this culture is radicated not only in the notion of racial homogeneity in order that Argentina may appear to coexist on a cultural level equivalent to that of Spain. It is also dependent upon an environment where both peace and a favourable outlook towards foreign immigration and investment can be seen to flourish. Looking towards the Southern Cone from the upheaval of post-revolutionary Mexico in 1920, Blasco Ibáñez makes his stance towards Argentina clear: “Además, todos son blancos (no lo olviden), no piensan en revoluciones y atraen a los extranjeros para que compartan con ellos la fortuna” (El militarismo 199).

Nevertheless, while Argentina’s progress and prosperity is perceived as owed to the “blancos,” it is not due to the fact that Argentina itself is inherently “European,” since Europe’s “viejas naciones” are highly criticised by Blasco Ibáñez for being “cargadas de defectos” (“Conferencias: La Argentina” 1184). Aside from his aim to have Argentina y sus grandezas read in Europe as a didactic tool, to make known the rapid advances of the Argentine nation and dispel European ignorance of South America, Blasco Ibáñez’s opening address to readers makes evident his critical attitude towards Europe:

Yo quisiera con este libro gritar á Europa:

"Cesa de admirarte. En el mundo hay algo más que tú.
Mira por encima del Océano y contemplarás los fulgores de alba de un nuevo día que empieza, los primeros esfuerzos de la Humanidad de mañana, los vigorosos latidos del embrión del porvenir.” (Argentina 7)

Not only is this utterance an affirmation of the writer’s disdain for Europe’s self-proclaimed superiority. It is also a veiled introduction to the transformational abilities of Argentina, which Blasco Ibáñez perceives as highly positive. Thus, it is not possible for Argentina to be read simply as Europe transplanted to the postcolonial New World.

It is during the journey from Europe to Argentina that the transformation to a supposed material betterment and transcendence of the static, Old World begins to occur.
Blasco Ibáñez describes the European immigrants’ virtual rebirth en route to Buenos Aires as follows: “El hombre del viejo mundo desaparece. Cada singladura se lleva algo de su antiguo sér. Van desprendiéndose de su ánimo las timideces y resignaciones de la educación tradicional. Son á modo de escamas del primitivo organismo que se despegan de la piel y caen al agua. Cada día pierde una. Cuando llegue al término de su viaje, será otro” (Argentina 29). In many ways his depiction of the Atlantic Ocean here can be seen as analogous to Gilroy’s analysis of the black Atlantic in relation to the diaspora into Europe of black artists, writers, poets and intellectuals. Gilroy notes that some of these intellectuals effectively challenged notions of fixed identities based on “race” or nationality by describing what was their “rebirth” as a result of contact with Europe. Therefore, the black Atlantic, for Gilroy, constitutes a space in which a discourse was developed that expressed “a desire to escape the restrictive bonds of ethnicity, national identification, and sometimes even ‘race’ itself” (Atlantic 19).³

A strikingly similar evocation of the Atlantic Ocean, where prescribed identities based on ideas of nation and “race” lose their significance, surfaces in Blasco Ibáñez’s well-known novel Los cuatro jinetes del apocalipsis (1916). During the transatlantic crossing on a German vessel that takes passengers from Buenos Aires to Europe just prior to the outbreak of World War I, the narrator, almost anticipating the coming conflict, describes a utopian space for the optimistic vision of a future society in which national and racial antagonisms are non-existent: “Hasta en el transatlántico, el pequeño mundo de pasajeros de las más diversas nacionalidades parecía un fragmento de la sociedad futura implantado como ensayo en los

³ It is not only the Atlantic Ocean that assumes the role of a transformative space while Blasco Ibáñez is en route to Argentina. An arena for metamorphosis, linked to Argentina, is also foregrounded in Blasco Ibáñez’s novel La tierra de todos (1922). There the assimilatory potency of the Patagonian plains is a theme that emerges, as the writer juxtaposes a withered Old World with the possibilities of transcendence in the New: “[E]l desierto parece dar un baño de energía, que purifica y transforma a los hombres fugitivos del viejo mundo, preparándolos para una nueva existencia.” See Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, La tierra de todos (Espigas de Llobregat: Plaza & Janes, 1979) 57. For an analysis of the relationship between Blasco Ibáñez’s fiction and his real life experiences in Patagonia, see Gloria Siracusa, Lorena Pacheco and Evelyn Klein, “Vicente Blasco Ibáñez: Utopía de la huerta valenciana en Patagonia,” Actas del XIV Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, III: Literatura española, siglos XVIII-XX; ed. Isaias Lerner, Robert Nival, and Alejandro Alonso (Newark, DE: Cuesta, 2004) 561-68.
tiempos presentes, un boceto del mundo del porvenir, sin fronteras ni antagonismos de razas” (Cuatro 15).

In contrast, in *Argentina y sus grandezas*, the transformation that occurs during the sea passage from Old World to New, and thus in reverse to the diaspora charted by Gilroy, may be more accurately seen as a rebirth in terms of sloughing off deterministic notions of class, rather than an account of the immigrants’ desire to escape the restrictions of ethnic, racial, and national bonds. The possibilities of defying the overly deterministic constructions of class while en route to Buenos Aires can be best understood through Blasco Ibáñez’s image of the Argentine capital as the most recent in a long line of “ciudades esperanza” (14) that, for centuries, have captivated the imaginations of those desiring to gain wealth and improve their conditions. Unlike these other historic locations, however, the acquisition of wealth in Buenos Aires does not demand the discovery of precious metals. For Blasco Ibáñez, Buenos Aires exists as a site in which hard work and the abundance of employment opportunities provide the impetus to supersede Old-World restrictions of class-bound identity: “Hoy hasta los más ilusos saben que la conquista de la riqueza supone esfuerzo, y Buenos Aires, á través de las más optimistas fantasías, aparece como un El Dorado del trabajo” (Argentina 16).

Argentina as transformative space facilitates this ascension of class through the immigrants’ activities in either agriculture or commerce. Nevertheless, pursuits carried out within each of these sectors are couched in terms that conjure up images of Argentina’s re-colonisation. Such tropes are exemplified in the description of the nation as the contemporary “El Dorado,” in which the colonial New World’s abundance of gold has been replaced with great expanses of “rebaños infinitos” and “suelos de maravillosa fecundidad, que sólo hay que abrirlos con el surco para que surja al momento, en forma de espléndidas cosechas” (16). Even more reminiscent of Spain’s imperial past are the allusions made to the re-colonisation of Argentina not in the fields, but in business, behind counters and desks, as recent Spanish

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4 The writer compares Buenos Aires with such historic sites of intellectual and monetary wealth as Athens, Rome, Baghdad, Toledo, Potosí and California, which have all now fallen by the wayside as “recuerdos históricos, rótulos sonoros de ilusiones muertas, de esperanzas hechas polvo” (Argentina 14-16).
immigrants echo the will and desire for upward social mobility characteristic of the first conquistadors: “[E]spañoles en quienes resucita el atávico aventurerismo de la raza . . . van al Nuevo Mundo á conquistar una fortuna con el lápiz detrás de la oreja, como fueron sus ascendientes con la espada al cinto” (20). Consequently, the imagined constructions of the Atlantic passage, Argentina, and in particular Buenos Aires, as locations where immigrants who “desean cambiar de medio” can do so unhindered, as discussed above, forms the first of two unifying images of Argentina for Blasco Ibáñez (Argentina 14).

The second of Blasco Ibáñez’s unifying constructions of Argentina, that of the nation as a Melting Pot, relies on the dissolution of racial characteristics deemed inherent and immutable in a particular ethnic group. Defiance of an Old-World identity governed according to the strictures of class is given more subtle nuances by Blasco Ibáñez’s abundant representations of immigrants who sever definitively the bonds of “race” and nationality that tie them to Europe and other locations of origin. As Gerda Lerner has asserted, class and “race,” together with ethnicity and gender, cannot be adequately understood as mutually exclusive entities: “[G]ender, class and race are not separate categories, but different aspects of systems of hierarchy and dominance. They are interdependent, interrelated and inseparable, in both their origin and their continuing function” (153).

Nowhere is the idea of discarding the layers of identity defined by “race” and national belonging more pronounced than in Blasco Ibáñez’s views on the assimilatory potency of Argentina vis-à-vis the tendencies toward isolation and self-segregation characteristic of the Jewish “race,” a nation defined by religious affiliation. For Blasco Ibáñez, the uniqueness of Argentina lies in the nation’s ability to provide a regenerative space within which even the self-exclusionary practices of the Jewish community and their faithful adherence to a traditional past can be overcome: “Argentina es el único país del mundo que vence esta

5 While the theme of discarding ties in this way is prevalent in the travel chronicle Argentina y sus grandezas, it is also highly apparent in the novel La tierra de todos (1922), in which Robledo affirms the transformational potency of Argentina as utopia in terms of “race” and nationality: “Todas las diferencias de nacionalidad, de casta y de nacimiento desaparecen. Allá sólo hay hombres. La tierra donde yo vivo es... la tierra de todos.” See Blasco Ibáñez, Tierra 57.
tendencia al aislamiento del judío, y le hace despegarse de su adhesión al pasado” (*Argentina* 100). Consequently, the severance of former “racial” and national ties becomes inevitable: “Á la segunda generación apenas quedará visible el origen israelita. La familia será argentina, disolviéndose sus condiciones de raza en la enorme fusión nacional” (100). Nevertheless, I suggest that Blasco Ibáñez’s notion of national fusion is not predicated on the amalgamation of all Argentina’s ethnicities. While including and prizing the European and even the Jew, the black and indigenous elements are notably absent.

According to Sollors, a North American discourse that evokes a process of “melting” used in an ethnic sense was first uttered in J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer*, published in 1782 (75). Upon answering his own question of what is this new American man, who was originally from Europe but was now neither European nor a descendant of the Old World, Crèvecoeur affirms that “[h]e becomes American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater” (46). In so doing, Crèvecoeur engenders the North American landscape as female and associates American national belonging with “images of continental sexual procreation and birth” (Sollors 76). Such an image of rebirth is echoed in Blasco Ibáñez’s description of the new immigrant to Argentina, who, upon arrival, “será otro” (*Argentina* 29).

Paralleling Crèvecoeur’s northern landscape engendered as female, in “Con rumbo á la esperanza,” the opening chapter of *Argentina y sus grandezas*, Blasco Ibáñez feminises Buenos Aires through the image of the mother. Here, it is relevant that the metaphor of the Argentine capital as mother is replete with references to republican authority and governance, which are connoted by the purple of the Republican flag, indicative of its political ideals of freedom and fraternity:

[B]añada por la luz verde de la esperanza, [es] una mujer majestuosa, pero de esbeltez juvenil, sin la pesadez imponente de la matrona; una mujer blanca y

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6 A European immigrant to North America in 1759, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur states in “What is an American?,” the third letter from this text, that it is in America that “individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.” See Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *The Divided Loyalist: Crèvecoeur’s America*, ed. Marcus Cunliffe (London: Folio Society, 1978) 46.
azul como las vírgenes soñadas por Murillo, con el purpúreo tocado, signo de libertad, sobre la suelta cabellera; una mujer que sonríe abriendo en cruz los brazos amorosos y deja caer desde su altura de montaña palabras que revolotean como pétalos de rosa y mariposas de oro. (Argentina 20)

Blasco Ibáñez’s image of the youthful mother epitomises the immigrants’ desire for freedom from the rigid constraints of an over-populated Old World. “[S]in distinción de razas y clases” (20), she calls them to the ports of Buenos Aires, in a virtual echo of the words proclaimed by New York’s Lady Liberty, described in Emma Lazarus’ sonnet, “The New Colossus,” as “The Mother of Exiles”: “Venid á mí, los que tenéis hambre de pan y sed de libertad. Venid á mí, los que llegasteis tarde á un mundo demasiado repleto. Mi hogar es grande; mi casa no la construyó el egoísmo. Está abierta á todas las razas de la tierra, á todos los hombres de buena voluntad” (Blasco Ibáñez, Argentina 20).

In this way, Blasco Ibáñez details the European immigrants’ voyage by sea to Buenos Aires, distinguishing clearly between the old, tired, self-centred world left behind and the new, welcoming, and apparently non-judgemental destination that waits on the horizon. Buenos Aires, and by extension the whole Argentine nation, is represented by Blasco Ibáñez as open not only to all the races of the earth, but also to those “razas sin patria y los pueblos que empiezan á dudar de la que tienen por no encontrar en su seno más que pobrezas y opresiones” (19). The poor, oppressed, wandering masses that cannot lay claim to a clearly

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7 In this image of the majestic, youthful woman of pale complexion, purple mantle and loose, free-flowing hair is an unmistakable reference to Marianne as the symbol of reason, liberty, and the ideals of the French Republic depicted in Eugene Delacroix’s Liberty Leading the People (1830). At the turn of the twentieth century in Spain and during the Second Republic (1931-1939), posters offering similar images of a feminine Republic leading the people were typical of Republican propaganda. For examples, see Jordi Carulla and Arnau Carulla, La guerra civil en 2000 carteles: República, guerra civil, posguerra, 2 vols. (Barcelona: Postermil, 1997) 89-91, 102-07.

8 Emma Lazarus’ sonnet, “The New Colossus” written in 1883, was donated for an auction to raise funds for the construction of a pedestal for Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi’s monument, Liberty Enlightening the World, which was to be France’s gift to the United States. A decade later, in 1903, the poem was emblazoned on a plaque and mounted on the pedestal of this monument, more commonly known as The Statue of Liberty. See Esther Schor, Emma Lazarus (NY: Schocken, 2006) 185-91, 249.

9 Although not copied here in its entirety, the following four lines of Lazarus’ “The New Colossus” suggest a tangible relationship to Blasco Ibáñez’s project in Argentina: “’Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!’ cries she / With silent lips. ‘Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, / The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.’” Esther Schor notes that “[d]uring its brief stint in the limelight, the sonnet identified the statue’s mission—and by extension that of America—as the provision of refuge for the oppressed.” See Schor, 189, 191.
defined sense of belonging in the Old World—what are essentially Lazarus’ “wretched refuse” of Europe’s “teeming shore” (qtd. in Schor 189)—will all find sustenance, peace and well-being in Buenos Aires, refigured as a “moderna Sión para todos los que ansían paz, trabajo y bienestar” (19). In evoking the image of Zion, the land of Israel, as the safe spiritual and literal homeland of the world’s perpetually displaced wanderers, the Jews, Blasco Ibáñez’s intention to promote Buenos Aires as the new “ciudad-esperanza” for a disoriented Europe is undeniable.¹⁰

Jewish presence and survival in the Americas are also themes taken up by English Jew and dramatist Israel Zangwill (1864-1926). His stage play *The Melting Pot*, first performed in the US in 1908 just two years prior to the publication of Blasco Ibáñez’s *Argentina y sus grandezas*, combines in a more contemporary setting the themes of “melting” and “race” first conceived of in Crèvecoeur’s letters. According to Sollors, it was Zangwill’s *The Melting Pot* that developed what social and political theory had failed to articulate: a uniquely American discourse focused on ethnicity and immigration (66). Centred on the life of a Jewish family in New York, the plot is constructed around the young composer David Quixano, himself a Jew, and the obstacles that he encounters as a consequence of his love for Vera Revendal, the daughter of an anti-Semite. As the drama unfolds, David learns that it is Vera’s father who had been responsible for the pogrom that resulted in the violent deaths of David’s parents and brother. However, despite this conflict, it is the “persistent vision of America as God’s melting pot” that enables David to overcome the barriers that would, in most cases, spell the end for any hope of a successful union between two people(s) (Sollors 68).

Sollors argues that Zangwill incorporates into his drama images of “melting” that accrue from three distinct sources: the melting through love that results from the union of David and Vera; the melting of souls through David’s original composition, “An American

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¹⁰ One of Darío’s last major poetic works, “Canto a la Argentina (1910),” published in 1914, lends further weight to imaginings of early twentieth-century Buenos Aires and Argentina as a modern-day Zion and sanctuary for the dispossessed: 

Symphony”; and the melting of seasons through the unfolding of the plot from its wintry opening to its closing act, set at the height of summer. Each of these literary devices is exposed as a means to add layers to, and complement, the work’s overall thematic device, that of the ethnic crucible (69).

Similarities between Zangwill’s New York narrative and Blasco Ibáñez’s Argentine discourse are apparent, since, through images of “melting,” both espouse a new convivial culture of consent, rejecting descent-centred narratives of birth and belonging derived from old-world rigidity and tradition. Although the themes of love and intermarriage are not central to Argentina y sus grandezas in the same way as in Zangwill’s drama, Blasco Ibáñez does make strong use of natural symbolism to emphasise the theme of an intermingling or entwining of peoples that is at once consensual and desirable.  

For Blasco Ibáñez, the “fuerza asimilatoria” of Argentina is best illustrated through the image of the Argentine nation as a “sea,” into which European immigration falls as metaphorical “rain,” to dissolve “naturally” racial differences in Argentina. So evident is the process of “melting” in this description that what remains with the greatest potency, just as it would in the natural world, is the vast expanse of the sea, representative of Argentina, with the rain of immigration having left no trace as it comes into contact with its surface: “La Argentina es un mar, y la emigración es la lluvia que se vuelca en él. Sean como sean el color y el sabor de los raudales que caen de lo alto, se desvanecen inmediatamente al confundirse con la gran masa que los recibe” (86). Even the most significant waves of immigration, those of the Spanish and Italians, are naturalised by Blasco Ibáñez, not as impotent “rain” but as more potent “ríos caudalosos” that empty themselves into the Argentine nation or “océano,” to tinge it with their positive influences: “[L]o tiñen con su color y le comunican su dulzura, en

11 While not a critical focus for Blasco Ibáñez’s project in Argentina, a brief allusion to intermarriage (and the resulting linguistic influences that this new environment of cultural exchange facilitates) is provided when the writer describes a hypothetical visit to a modern Argentine estancia: “El dueño de la casa es algunas veces más fuerte en idiomas que el visitante, a pesar de vivir en el campo y no preocuparse de estudios. El país, con su cosmopolitismo le ha servido de maestro. El padre era inglés, la madre argentina, su esposa hija de franceses; un tío suyo, casado con una hermana (sic) de su madre, era español; otro era italiano; las niñas hablan alemán y tienen una institutriz germánica que dirige la casa” (Argentina 127).
un amplio circuito” (86). Nevertheless, despite their apparent prominence, Blasco Ibáñez insists that the resultant presence of the Spanish and Italians is no greater than that of any other immigrant group taken into the figurative bosom of the new nation: “Pero la nación argentina ya hemos dicho que es semejante al mar, y por impetuosas que sean las corrientes inmigratorias, terminan perdiéndose en su seno, como la irrupción de los ríos acaba por disolverse en la inmensidad azul” (86).

Evident in such images of “melting” or dissolution is a process that proclaims a total loss of all traces of belonging that identified these immigrants with Europe. What is created as a result of this fusion is something completely new. Thus, the joining of distinct elements to form an original entity epitomises the function of the alchemical and metallurgical melting pot, which, for Blasco Ibáñez, is Argentina itself: “Su pueblo es un fundente, como esos líquidos de la Química que disgregan diversos cuerpos para juntarlos y solidificarlos, formando uno nuevo y distinto. Todo el que llega experimenta el encanto de la atracción, y por original y vigorosa que sea su individualidad, ésta se transfigura, adaptándose al nuevo medio” (Argentina 86).

At the same time that Blasco Ibáñez argues in favour of Argentina as a transformative space, extolling the nation as a potent Melting Pot that dissolves and recreates ethnic identities, a contradiction arises, which revolves around the potentiality for Spain’s former greatness to resurface in the rapid advances made by Argentina. In fact, directly addressing Spanish immigrants as twentieth-century conquistadors, one of the most resounding images to derive from his conference tour of Argentina was not so much the grandeur of Buenos Aires, as a model of progress, but the hard-working Spaniards who had emigrated, thought of by him as “el espectáculo de la colectividad de mi patria, presentándose como modelo de laboriosidad” (“Conferencias: La madre” 1246). According to Blasco Ibáñez, the mission of the Peninsular immigrants is to maintain “el prestigio de España en América, para que aquí [en Argentina] donde vienen todos los hombres del mundo, el nombre de España no se extinga” (1246). It is therefore apparent that, despite positive allusions to ethnic melting, dissolving
For Blasco Ibáñez, Spain’s need for rejuvenation in Argentina cannot be attributed to those factors to which Spain’s detractors point in criticism of Spain’s imperial history, such as its so-called decadence or religious intolerance, for, in his opinion, no imperial power can be eternally great (”Conferencias: La Argentina“ 1187-88). Rather, he contends that Spain’s fall from imperial glory was an inevitable outcome from having given birth to the eighteen Latin American colonies, as “hijos,” within a short space of time (1188). The potential for Spain’s rejuvenation in Argentina can be realised due to Blasco Ibáñez’s belief that its national identity is not confined to its political borders. Instead, reflecting utopian ideals, the writer notes: “España no es solamente el territorio encerrado por sus fronteras . . . España es una manifestación del alma humana, que encarna una raza, la raza española, toda la inmensa raza que tiene la misma sangre y el mismo idioma. Creemos que España es una concreción de la Humanidad” (”Conferencias: La madre“ 1255). As Peninsular identity is seen to extend beyond the borders of the nation-state, progress in Argentina, in the wider Ibero-American “family,” is figured as a triumph of this transatlantic identity, enabling Spain to begin a new chapter in its history: “[C]uando notamos manifestarse el progreso en una nación de nuestra familia nos alegramos y queremos que la raza española esparcida por el mundo sea grande, al lado o detrás del Atlántico, queremos en todas partes la grandeza de España” (1255). At the same time that the image and grandeur of Spain is upheld in the figure of the Peninsular immigrant, essentially undermining the central premise of Argentina as ethnic Melting Pot, the theme of transformation anew reappears in the re-creation of Spain’s former glory, imagined in the form of a transatlantic Ibero-American identity.

However, these contradictions aside, so consistent are Blasco Ibáñez’s imaginings of Argentina, based on the assimilatory properties of the Melting Pot, that this metaphor forms a principal trope for his descriptions of Argentina. To a certain degree, this image appears as a monolithic construction and homogenising discourse that works to dispel notions of diversity and re-creation, it is also Blasco Ibáñez’s desire to see the Spanish presence in Argentina impervious to these alchemic forces of attraction in its new environment.
and difference within Argentina, and with them, any evidence of counter discourses. Indeed, an absence of counter discourses in Said’s theory of Orientalism has received criticism by Dennis Porter. Crucial to Porter’s argument is Said’s inability to reconcile the incompatibility of Michel Foucault’s discourse theory with Antonio Gramsci’s notion of hegemony. For Porter, Said fails to consider Gramsci’s idea that existing power relations are reproduced by consensus rather than by force. What is more, Porter continues, Said does not consider Gramsci’s idea of hegemony as process, in which “power relations are continually reasserted, challenged, [and] modified” (151-52). On the one hand, this failure accounts for Said’s incapacity to offer what Said himself sees as much-needed alternatives to Orientalist discourse, which would seek to provide a knowledge, rather than an ideology, of the Orient without resorting to repression and coercion to do so (Porter 151). On the other hand, the reason why Said can so easily testify to what he sees as a unified and coherent Western discourse on the East that spans the last two thousand years, a claim that, for Porter, makes a mockery of history, can be attributed to Said’s lack of attention to the notion that power is exerted through continual processes of negotiation. Just as there is a distinct lack of counter-hegemonic voices in Said’s Orientalism (Porter 152-53), so too in Blasco Ibáñez’s discourse on Argentina there is a marked absence of narratives of belonging and identification proclaimed from the margins, from the indigenous, immigrant and black quarters. Similarly absent are those voices that oppose Argentina’s “whitening strategies” of mass European immigration.

Regarding the idea of a counter-discourse to Argentine immigration policy and social unrest, it was as immigrants brought with them Europe’s emerging anarchist and socialist ideologies that Argentina’s landed elite began to blame policymakers for their “faulty political and ethnic selection,” seen to result in striking workers and general tension in society.

12 Dennis Porter questions Edward Said’s criticism of the West’s uniformity and continuity of representation in its discourses on the Orient as follows: “[C]an one ever speak of a unified Western discourse even at a specific historical moment let alone across centuries of historical change? At the very least shouldn’t one speak of a variety of national and class discourses that give rise to all manner of overdetermined cultural products?” See Dennis Porter, “Orientalism and Its Problems,” Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (NY: Columbia UP, 1994) 154.
Furthermore, immigrants were held responsible for the growing problems of prostitution, vagrancy and alcoholism. Consequently, as Helg explains, new laws in the first decade of the twentieth century sought to restrict the immigration of "undesirable elements’ and allowed the expulsion of foreign ‘agitators,’” while on a cultural level, “[n]ovels and plays popularized a negative image of the immigrant: a parasite living at the expense of the Argentineans, a dishonest tradesman, or a pimp” (Helg 45-46). Contrary to what Blasco Ibáñez would have Europe believe, then, the process of immigrant “melting” did not occur at the rate anticipated, nor was intermarriage between the new arrivals and those Argentineans firmly established in the country as widespread as expected. The naturalisation process of newly arrived immigrants was often hindered by their tendency to segregate themselves into isolated communities, forming their own schools, hospitals, and banks, and resulting in a situation that provoked anxiety among those Argentineans who already had firm ties to the nation (Helg 45).

Unlike Blasco Ibáñez’s turn-of-the-century novels set in Spain, such as La catedral (1903), La bodega (1905), and La horda (1905), all of which were preoccupied with Spain’s social dilemmas, Argentina y sus grandezas does not provide a mouthpiece for any counter-hegemonic discourse that professes alternative forms of belonging in the nation as a reaction to Argentina’s social crises or immigration policies. Hence, Blasco Ibáñez’s narrative on Argentina creates a utopian illusion of convivial culture. It would appear that, in this text, conviviality can only be made credible through constructing an image of Argentina based on an imaginary equality that glosses over the nation’s social ills and disregards Argentina’s black and indigenous ethnicities. While Blasco Ibáñez does acknowledge Argentina’s diversity, his authoritative voice refers to the indigenous peoples in Darwinian terms, as a primitive humanity. Furthermore, from within this contrived continuity and uniformity of representation based on the Melting Pot theme, a homogenising discourse emerges that affirms the supposed equality of all Argentineans, thus neutralising disparity and difference in Argentina
that would have otherwise complicated a positive vision of its dynamic construction as a "modern" republic:

El viajero . . . no puede menos de sonreír ante los contrastes que ofrece este animoso pueblo, todavía en formación. El mismo suelo argentino mantiene la capital federal con sus hermosos edificios y sus numerosas vías férreas, y estas torderías de cañas secas, donde se amontona una humanidad primitiva, falta de escrúpulos, inocente y colérica, como si no hubiera salido aún de la edad infantil. La bandera azul y blanca cubre por igual todo el territorio. (Blasco Ibáñez, Argentina 82)

The alleged equality of all Argentineans beneath their national flag brings to the fore Blasco Ibáñez’s ardent, long-held belief in the validity of the political ideals of a federal republic. Here, however, this view may be contested since, although the political ideology of federal republicanism prizes a philosophy of unity in diversity, the indigenous are reduced to a state of infancy, in accordance with the familiar construct of imperial discourse used render postcolonial societies as Other. Indeed, Spain in the first decade of the twentieth century saw the rise of a new, radical form of republicanism, finding its greatest traction in the urban centres, where it was largely led by Alejandro Lerroux in Barcelona and Blasco Ibáñez in his native Valencia. Aside from the general aims of a more traditional republicanism to seek liberation from traditional centres of power, like the Monarchy, the Church and the oligarchy, their radical stance sought to mobilise the masses, incorporate them into official politics, and narrow what was perceived as the gaping divide between political leaders and their communities (Suárez Cortina 57-58).

In Valencia the movement of radical republicanism initiated under Blasco Ibáñez came to be known as blasquismo, through which he and his supporters looked to inspire revolutionary action on a city-wide scale, as a precursor to a much-desired national revolution

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13 Bill Ashcroft points out that the myth of the postcolonial society imagined as a child is a powerful trope of imperial discourse, and that those who affiliate with hegemonic culture, "continually reproduce the representation of the subject as the child of empire." See Bill Ashcroft, On Post-Colonial Futures: Transformations of Colonial Culture (London: Continuum, 2001) 47.
(Reig 396). In fact, the goal of his radical republican stance, I suggest, would be intimately related to what he later would admire as he travelled through Argentina: the pursuit of progress, modernity, and the aspirations of the modern republican subject. According to Ramiro Reig, it was the aim of the Valencian revolution to unite “todos los valencianos amantes del progreso, deseosos de convertir a Valencia en una ciudad moderna” (403). Aside from plans to improve the city’s infrastructure and modifying those already in existence, the “blasquistas” also wished to develop the city’s public services. A new abattoir was built, the network of pipelines for drinking water was extended, and emergency medical facilities and a centre for breastfeeding mothers were constructed—all framed in the public imaginary as wonders of modernity and symbols of progress built specifically for the masses (Reig 408).

Indeed, as Manuel Suárez Cortina notes, in its embrace of progress and initiation of social reform, the sort of radical republicanism endorsed by Blasco Ibáñez and his followers became the first expression of a discourse of modernisation to emerge from a republican standpoint (60).

Together with his creative literary pursuits, Blasco Ibáñez’s faith in a federal republic as a political ideal was instilled in him early. In 1885, at eighteen, he became President of the Juventudes Republicanas Federales de Valencia, drawing him into a close and influential relationship with Catalan intellectual and Federalist Republican politician, Francesc Pi y Margall (1824-1901). In 1889 he founded the short-lived republican journal, La Bandera Federal (León Roca 18, 20-21). Five years later, in 1894, he inaugurated another newspaper for voicing the aspirations of this new radical republicanism: El Pueblo. During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, he wrote and published incessantly on the goals of blasquismo. A regular speaker at the many republican gatherings organised in and around Valencia, in 1898 he founded the republican political party Fusión Republicana, which, in the next municipal elections, gained a majority vote, announcing the formal arrival of blasquismo to local politics. It is not coincidental that, also at this time, Blasco Ibáñez published the series of novels previously mentioned that explored issues concerning Spain’s social inequalities. However, the
flipside to his fervent radicalism, outspoken nature, and intent to agitate public opinion, was his constant harassment by the authorities. Not for the first time, he was incarcerated in 1898 on a charge of having provoked a disturbance during his protest against Spain’s war with Cuba and escaped two assassination attempts. In 1908, fed up with the constant attacks and conflict with the law, and anxious to dedicate himself full-time to a literary career, he abandoned a life in politics, at which time his gaze turned towards Argentina. It was not until the 1920s that politics came to the fore once more, if only through his political pieces written while in voluntary exile in France, re-emphasising the ideal of federalism while at the same time levelling a venomous attack against the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (Reig 398-99).

For Blasco Ibáñez, that dictatorship and the reign of Alfonso XIII (1886-1931) converted Spain into “una nación que vive secuestrada” (“Una nación” 861). In keeping with a republican stance, his attacks on authoritarianism and the monarchy exemplify a republican concept of liberty. Indeed, as Steven Slaughter notes, the idea of freedom from authoritarianism is a distinct characteristic of the neo-Roman strand of republicanism, which establishes liberty “as a civic achievement that requires an institutionalised context where citizens are free from subordination or domination” (89). It is within this general climate of liberty under republicanism that a sense of solidarity may be envisaged extended as a commitment to others, based on citizenship. As such, rather than any form of association based on religion, culture or ethnicity, it constitutes a practical and political unity (Andronache 110). Notwithstanding, in Blasco Ibáñez’s case, the role of ethnicity is important, for it is as a consequence of his acknowledgment of Spain’s own ethnic diversity that he sees the nation’s future as a federal republic: “España, por la conformación de su suelo, por su historia y por la diversidad de sus razas, debe ser una nación federal” (“Lo que será” 946). Therefore, it is Blasco Ibáñez’s view that a model of unity in diversity, proclaimed through the recognition by

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14 In 1902, having turned sixteen years of age, Alfonso XIII assumed control over the Spanish state.

federal republicanism of regional autonomy in Spain, would end calls for regional separatism, voiced in opposition to the lack of individual liberties under the Restoration monarchy (945).

The ideal of solidarity based on these interconnected terms of federal republicanism, unity in diversity and rejection of the monarchy, provides Blasco Ibáñez with his model for a Peninsular-Latin American consensual culture of fraternity. Writing in 1925, during Spain’s war with Morocco, he singles out for criticism the reign of Alfonso XIII. Not only is it a monarchy that seeks the forceful acquisition of empire, as in the Middle Ages, but it is the only monarchy within the Spanish-speaking world. As such, he notes that a common culture of transatlantic Ibero-American understanding can never be brought to fruition, since it is only through a peaceful sense of republican brotherhood in the Spanish-speaking world that this goal may be realised:

Una República española penetraría directamente, sin esfuerzo alguno, en el corazón de sus hermanas de América, sin necesitar ceremonias de encargo, vanas pompas oficiales y demás mentiras que presenciamos actualmente para disfrazar una unión imposible entre el bisnieto de Fernando VII y los bisnietos de los españoles de América que se emanciparon para siempre de los fatales reyes de Madrid. (“Lo que será” 954).

Despite Blasco Ibáñez’s utopian ideals of an “España inmensa . . . sin reyes [y] gobernada por el espíritu, donde cada pueblo guardará su gobierno propio y su independencia” (955), a contradiction arises that goes unresolved in his narrative. While his acceptance of racial diversity, both in Spain and Latin America, underscores his positivity towards federal republicanism, marginal ethnicities, as has been discussed, are either spoken for, not heard at all, or their pluralities are dissolved through the writer’s discourse on Argentina’s assimilatory power and the trope of the nation as crucible. Thus, indigenous and black agency is not given expression in the construction of a Peninsular-Latin American fraternal community. Nor does Blasco Ibáñez’s narrative acknowledge the “undesirable” flipside to mass European immigration to Argentina, such as inter-ethnic tension, forced or
voluntary segregation, unemployment, crime and prostitution. The rhetoric of the Melting Pot that proclaims Argentina’s homogeneity, and hence, equality, effectively silences certain immigrants as a negative image of alterity, rather than representing them positively for a unity-in-diversity model of national belonging.

For Blasco Ibáñez, the source of Argentina’s Melting-Pot potency is the school, a notion that recalls Etienne Balibar’s idea of the school as “the principal institution which produces ethnicity as linguistic community” (“The Nation” 98). Blasco Ibáñez notes that it is in the national education system that patriotism is promoted and “races” are fused: “Argentina tiene á su disposición, en perpetuo funcionamiento, un crisol que funde las distintas razas que llegan á ella, extrayendo de esta amalgama colossal un pueblo de vibrante patriotismo. Este crisol es la escuela” (Argentina 86). In identifying Argentina’s education system, Blasco Ibáñez also highlights its principal protagonists, or what could also be called the first “results” from this “racial melting”: the Argentine youth. An association of the trope of the Melting Pot with youthfulness is well documented, given that melting pots were the vehicles through which alchemists searched for eternal youth. Moreover, both the Melting Pot and the fountain of youth articulate a classical yearning to relive a golden age of splendour long past (Sollors 80). Such interrelated themes are apparent in the section from Argentina y sus grandezas entitled “La Argentina de mañana,” where Blasco Ibáñez explicitly links the quest to return to a past era of classical grandeur with the “young” Argentine nation.

The classical era that Blasco Ibáñez seeks to recover is that of the grandeur of Greek and Roman antiquity. Rather than arguing for a comparable empire in the Spanish-speaking world, it is the status of these classical empires as Republics that the writer holds in highest esteem. The Ibero-American arena is imagined by Blasco Ibáñez as a moral and industrial empire based on federal republicanism with Argentina as its leading example. The form of empire sought is more inclusive than were the empires of either Greece or Rome, with Blasco

16 Blasco Ibáñez establishes the link between Rome and Buenos Aires when he exclaims: “¡Quién sabe si Buenos Aires es la Roma futura de un mundo nuevo... Como la capital antigua, [Buenos Aires] abre sus puertas á todos los hombres y todos los dioses; su ambiente de libertad acepta sin resistencia todas las ideas y todas las actividades” (Argentina 499).
Ibáñez noting that the Greeks failed to include “el meteco,” or those foreigners who had established themselves in Athens, while the Romans had excluded “el bárbaro” ("Conferencias: La Argentina" 1189). As he recounts the passing down of the torch of civilisation through the ages from one enlightened city or nation to the next, from Athens to Rome, Byzantium to Florence, and then on to Spain, Portugal and France, he pauses to contemplate the weary flame’s uncertain future. Countering the exuberance and youthfulness of the embryonic Argentine nation, the hands of the Old World that currently sustain the torch “tiemblan con un temblor de senectud” (Argentina 500). What is needed, Blasco Ibáñez affirms, is the transference of the torch of civilisation to a worthy successor, who can only be found on the other side of the Atlantic: “Y al otro lado del Océano extiende sus brazos un efebo latino, la frente iluminada por las más nobles ilusiones, los músculos vigorosos é hinchados por la savia acumulada de la juventud. Él tomará la antorcha. Su ágil mocedad reanudará la carrera, iluminando de nuevo al mundo con los fulgores del genio latino” (500). Implicit in this process of transference is a dual purpose: on the one hand, it proclaims Argentina’s emergence as the new recipient of civilisation’s flame; on the other, the passing down of the torch of civilisation to an explicitly Latin youth in Argentina alludes to a more inclusive form of empire than in Greece or Rome, but also affirms an exclusionary desire for the rejuvenation of the New World to be effected by a Latin Europe.

Such was the level of praise lauded upon Argentina in Argentina y sus grandezas that Blasco Ibáñez was granted a concession of land by the Argentine government under President José Figueroa Alcorta (1906-1910) (Cardwell 57). In fact, as Ana María Martínez de Sánchez points out, Blasco Ibáñez was actually granted two tracts, one in the south near Neuquén on the banks of the Río Negro, which he named “Colonia Cervantes”; the other, situated along

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17 A similar idea of the Americas (in this case, North America) as the final destination for the fledgling pursuits of progress and civilisation begun elsewhere in the world is affirmed in Crèvecoeur’s third letter: “Americans are the western pilgrims who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry which began long since in the East; they will finish the great circle.” See Crèvecoeur 46.

18 Sollors asserts that “the visualization of the process of transformation [inherent in a search for eternal youth and a return to a golden age] also is parallel for American rebirth and European rejuvenation fantasies.” See Werner Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture (NY: Oxford UP, 1986) 80.
the Río Paraná in the north near Corrientes, he called “Nueva Valencia.” From 1908 to 1914 he gave up his life as a novelist, with the intention of exploring the potential of fruit and vegetable production as a means of achieving wealth (Martínez de Sánchez 99). As he himself notes in his 1923 prologue to Los muertos mandan (1909): “El conferenciante se convirtió, sin saber cómo, en colonizador del desierto, en jinete de la llanura patagónica” (283). Upon his return to Spain in December 1910, Blasco Ibáñez personally chose a select number of Valencians who, as “colonos,” would emigrate to Argentina and work the land with him as settlers (102). According to Martínez de Sánchez, the Spanish Press spoke of Blasco Ibáñez’s colonising mission in Argentina as a “refugio para gente joven que necesita trabajo,” in large part due to the economic uncertainties affecting not only Valencia but the rest of Spain and, indeed, Europe in general (106). Although by 1913 his dream of becoming rich had fallen through, as he was faced with increasing economic hardships and was thus forced to put both land holdings up for sale, what is worthy of note is that the Argentina described in Argentina y sus grandezas, as a haven for Europe’s neglected working classes, did not remain as a text to be read but became a real refuge.

A decade after the publication of Argentina y sus grandezas, Blasco Ibáñez returned to contemplate Latin America in a work of non-fiction with El militarismo mejicano. While he was being granted land concessions in Argentina, Mexican peasants were having theirs taken away. Not only was his stay in Mexico in March and April of 1920 an experience of geographical relocation, also dramatically altered are his imaginings of the potential viability of Peninsular-Latin American convivial culture. Blasco Ibáñez was a first-hand witness to Mexico and the tensions ensuing from the Revolution. Writing from a privileged vantage point in terms of his own class, “race” and gender, in El militarismo mejicano he expresses his outright condemnation of the violence, destruction and the so-called governments of self-interested, pistol-wielding generals, defined by him as “rústicos jinetes, expertos en la ciencia del machete,” rather than constitutive of enlightened, civil leaders of high moral standing (El militarismo 138). Thus, Blasco Ibáñez’s fervent admiration for Argentina’s advances and
progress as the Melting Pot for the new Latin race, espoused a decade earlier, could not be
more in contrast to his vehement attack on Mexican society. What he makes explicit
throughout this text is that it is Mexico’s militarism that has cast an uncomplimentary light not
only over that nation, but also over the whole of the Spanish-speaking world. Implicit in his
critique of this militarism is the link between revolutionary violence and the ideological and
ethnographic make-up of the Mexican populace. For Blasco Ibáñez, it is the connections that
he draws between “race” and violence in Mexico that reveal a detrimental image of Ibero-
American identity to the United States and Europe.

The allure of “race” was one of the initial impulses for Blasco Ibáñez’s visit to Mexico.
The writer sought to gather impressions of the country for a new novel, El águila y la
serpiente, which was to be set in Mexico and would make up one of the works in a series
entitled “novelas de la raza” (Gascó Contell 205). However, when he returned to New York in
May 1920, his pursuit of a work of fiction on Mexico and Mexican society was halted in favour
of more journalistic endeavours, which saw him produce commissioned articles covering the
Mexican Revolution for what, in his opinion, was a misguided United States press. Although
initially hesitant to take up this offer from the North American newspapers, given his desire to
preserve his first impressions of Mexico for El águila y la serpiente, Blasco Ibáñez’s reluctance
was overcome by his overwhelming impulse to report “objectively” on the Mexican situation
and the first social revolution of its kind. These articles were later collected and published in
book form under the title El militarismo mejicano.

The importance of this decision is reflected in the five pages that Blasco Ibáñez offers
as justification for effecting this change in literary direction, from what would have been the
novelist’s subjective impressions in El águila y la serpiente, to the supposed objectivity of
journalism and the work of the foreign correspondent in El militarismo mejicano. Blasco
Ibáñez considered that he could be of service to the Mexican people by assisting in the
pursuit of civil government in Mexico. He also sought to denounce the overly militaristic
generals, would-be generals and revolutionaries, and to expose the immorality of the recent
overthrow of Venustiano Carranza’s presidency in May 1920. Furthermore, the wish to correct
the ill-informed US press came about because he was witness to an abundance of
contradictory and poorly translated reports on the Mexican Revolution that had been
circulating among the North American reading public as a result of suspended
communications between Mexico and the United States. For Blasco Ibáñez, the
misunderstanding between the two nations was due, in part, to the ignorance of US
journalists unable to comprehend the Mexican situation: “Era natural que resultasen así, por
desconocer sus autores la historia de Méjico, los antecedentes políticos de dicho país, sus
condiciones etnológicas, su idioma, etc.” (El militarismo 9, 8-12). Conversely, as a Spanish
speaker and an “insider” within the Hispanic world, Blasco Ibáñez was perceived by the US
press as apparently occupying a privileged position from which to offer his views on Mexico,
its people and its revolution.

Such was Blasco Ibáñez’s pursuit of journalistic integrity and objectivity that, sensing a
backlash from those Mexicans who would be unsympathetic to what was later to become his
unavoidable and explicit critique of the Revolution, he began to shy away from the banquets
and official demonstrations of fraternity and “simpatía popular” granted to him by national
dignitaries: “Así como fui avanzando en el examen del país, aumentó mi tristeza, se
esfumaron mis optimismos, y empecé a rehuir los banquetes . . . Tenía la convicción de que
mi conciencia me obligaría, más o menos pronto, a decir la verdad” (El militarismo 18).
Instead of these rather orchestrated shows of Peninsular-Mexican conviviality, it was Blasco
Ibáñez’s purpose to extend the hand of sympathy and Ibero-American fraternity through
alternative channels. It would have been easy, he declares, to have deceived the Mexican
public by adhering to the propaganda of the Revolution, thus glossing over with rose-tinted
glasses Mexico’s social and political turmoil (17). For Blasco Ibáñez, fraternity, solidarity and
convivial culture were to be found in honesty, voiced within a discourse that claimed to offer a
truthful denouncement of the Revolution and of Mexico’s “desorientada vanidad nacional”
(18). This gesture of integrity would constitute, in his opinion, the most heartfelt manner in
which to offer his (and Spain’s) wish for Mexico’s future progress as a civil nation, even though this “truth” would at first inflict a painful blow to Mexican national pride:

¿No es la mayor de las ingratiitudes pagar con mentiras una buena acogida, contribuyendo a mantener en el error a los que necesitan que les abran los ojos? ¿No es más noble manifestar el agradecimiento con la advertencia franca, aunque esta advertencia duela en el primer momento, ya que a la larga acaba por ser apreciada como la mejor prueba de amistad...? (*El militarismo* 18)

Although Blasco Ibáñez had anticipated objections, or what he called the “protesta irracional de los simples” (18), to his reproach of the Revolution, he was less prepared when, criticised by the Mexican public for receiving subsidies from the United States for his articles, these objections took on the nature of a personal attack against him. Responding to this criticism by way of an extensive footnote in *El militarismo mejicano*, Blasco Ibáñez states that lashing out in this way can be attributed to the Mexican public’s feelings of jealousy rather than to outright anger (14). Regardless of the motives, however, what is undeniable is the profound impact these personal attacks had on the potentiality for imagining a space ripe for Peninsular-Mexican convivial culture. According to Emilio Gascó Contell, Blasco Ibáñez viewed the Mexican people in highly positive terms. Nevertheless, he was so offended by the Mexican public’s criticism of him, and on what was his attempt to extend the hand of solidarity that, by way of revenge, he did not finish his Mexican novel *El águila y la serpiente*, a text that was to look with favour upon Mexico. Not only was this work not published, but Blasco Ibáñez would not write another word about Mexico, “ni en bien ni en mal” (Gascó Contell 209).

According to Ernest Rehder, the articles that make up *El militarismo mejicano* not only offer a clear illustration of Blasco Ibáñez’s favourable view towards foreign influence in

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19 Blasco Ibáñez’s biographer, Emilio Gascó Contell, comments on the nature of the Mexican public’s reaction to the writer following the publication of *El militarismo mejicano*: “Blasco Ibáñez no tuvo otros móviles que los de una honrada protesta de buen latino contra los macheteros mejicanos . . . Pero en Méjico se desató una campaña de la más extremada violencia contra el novelista, acusándole, entre otras cosas, de haberse puesto a sueldo de los yanquis.” See Emilio Gascó Contell, *Genio y figura de Blasco Ibáñez* (Madrid: Afrodisio Aguado, 1967) 207.
Mexico. They also reveal the writer’s distinct racist perspective: “[S]on pro-extranjerizantes y además demuestran una notable tendencia racista” (235). That said, Rehder strengthens his standpoint still further when he affirms that *El militarismo mejicano* demonstrates that the narrator’s racism is more than just a mere “tendency.” Although considered by many a symbol of progressive republicanism in Spain, Blasco Ibáñez, in Rehder’s explicit opinion, upholds a view on Mexico in racial terms “que es casi igual al de cualquier fascista europeo: las razas blancas, por ser superiores en todos los aspectos significantes de la vida, deben mandar sobre las de tez oscura” (237-38). While there is textual evidence to support this idea, by exploring notions pertaining to “race” in more depth, I would argue that it is problematic to offer such a seemingly clear-cut categorisation of Blasco Ibáñez and his writings on Mexico.

If, in Rehder’s use of the term, the concept of fascism is taken to mean a doctrine of authoritarian political leadership based on violent nationalism, oppression, coercion and militarism, then his assertion faces immediate resistance. It is precisely an outright attack on militarism in Mexico, seen as analogous to that in Germany, that is Blasco Ibáñez’s prime concern: “He combatido con saña al militarismo alemán, enemigo de la tranquilidad del mundo; ¿por qué iba yo a respetar al militarismo mejicano, ese militarismo zafio y feroz, de generales de pistola?” (24). Furthermore, what remains unchallenged in Rehder’s affirmation is whether Blasco Ibáñez was of the opinion that belonging to the “white races” implied automatic domination over those of “dark skin.” Also lacking is the evidence needed to conclude unequivocally, as Rehder does, that Blasco Ibáñez supported the idea that, “in all significant aspects of life,” the “white races” are superior to the “dark.” Put simply, the question begs asking whether Blasco Ibáñez adheres to the idea that there exists an explicit racial hierarchy.

According to David Theo Goldberg, the formulation of a discourse that centred on classification, order and hierarchy was one of the essential elements for the coherence of the

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20 Blasco Ibáñez reaffirms his antimilitarism later in the text by asking: “¿Por qué voy a transigir con el militarismo mejicano, más grotesco e irracional que el germánico?” (*El militarismo* 149). This assertion echoes his explicit intention in writing these articles, which is stated firmly in the text’s introduction: “[A]l militarismo mejicano . . . deseo hacer a éste todo el daño que pueda” (19).
racist project. What began in the eighteenth century as a classification of natural history under the discipline of biology came to encompass social relations and the human form. Humans were ordered according to what were perceived to be inherited or environmentally forged differences in the natural characteristics of each “race.” Prefigured as natural and objective, racial ordering was considered rational and carried with it the implication of a subsequent hierarchy, based on physical differences and alleged differences in morality. It was this melding of rationality and science that came to define the manner in which Europeans represented otherness. Based on “natural” differences, what was created within this racial order was a “ladder of command,” which was used to justify the rule by the “higher racial orders” over those on the order’s lower rungs, and to justify the former’s categorisation of the latter as animals (Goldberg 301-03). In this respect, a closer analysis of the theories concerning “race,” racism, and racial thinking allows for a more nuanced avenue of inquiry that avoids the overly simplistic and limiting definition of Blasco Ibáñez as merely another “fascist European” in Mexico.

Rehder claims that Blasco Ibáñez’s belief in “white” racial superiority derives from the writer’s highly positive attitude towards the progressive, civilised nations of the Southern Cone and Brazil vis-à-vis his negative stance in relation to Mexico (237). As has been shown in the analysis of Argentina y sus grandezas, there is no denying the praise that Blasco Ibáñez bestows on Argentina as a site of progress due to European immigration. Besides Argentina, in El militarismo mejicano Chile, Uruguay and Brazil also receive positive attention from him as progressive, civilised nations, and for their economic advances in agriculture and industry. In responding to the reaction by the Mexican public to his inclusion of Brazil, due to its large black population, what is evident in Blasco Ibáñez’s comments is not his negative bias toward certain “races” as defined physically, but rather a positive privileging of ideological differences: “No importa que la mayoría de la población sea de una raza o de otra. Lo interesante es la raza y la cultura de los que la dirigen. Y el Brasil ha sido gobernado siempre por una minoría de personas inteligentíísimas y de mentalidad internacional” (200). Again,
when he expresses his desire for civil government in Mexico in the introduction to the text, Blasco Ibáñez “racialises” this “international mentality.” However, as before, such a statement is premised not so much on “race” as a supposed biological construct, but on the economic and cultural ability to travel, think and perceive beyond national borders and, in so doing, benefit from contact with others: “Deseo un México verdaderamente moderno, dirigido por hombres civiles y cultos, de los que han viajado y tienen mentalidad de blanco” (26).

Considering the writer’s views on the effective leadership of a nation, the question arises as to whether Blasco Ibáñez differentiates between Mexico and the Southern Cone on the basis of perceived racial differences or on the alleged morals and ideologies represented as particular to each person. On the one hand, Mexico is depicted as an insular, introspective nation that looks with disfavour upon immigration and external relations: “No he visto ningún pueblo en toda la tierra más refractario al extranjero, más pronto al salvajismo en las relaciones internacionales” (189). What is noteworthy in this regard is that, in Blasco Ibáñez’s opinion, the tendency in modern Mexico to repel the presence and influence of the foreign is a characteristic inherited from the nation’s indigenous peoples: “Méjico es un país que ha heredado de los indios una tendencia a odjar al extranjero, a huir de él con una retractibilidad irresistible, o a hostilarle, si es que puede” (127). This attitude of resistance to the foreign, Blasco Ibáñez continues, not only characterises the indigenous peoples, but also Mexico’s leaders and revolutionaries, as each group sees in the foreigner the threat of their potential exploitation (190). On the other hand, evidence abounds, Blasco Ibáñez surmises, that the progress of the Southern Cone and Brazil can be attributed to a more global outlook that embraces the contributions that immigrants, themselves the exploited element, have made to their nations: “Saben que el explotado en último término es éste [el extranjero], pues deja en el país sus capitales o su trabajo y casi siempre su sangre. El extranjero se queda unido a la tierra como un elemento de orden y de trabajo, y además da sus hijos” (191).

Nevertheless, Blasco Ibáñez also locates physical differences inscribed upon bodies through skin colour. As a counterbalance to his privileging the “white” mentality, a prime
target for his critical stance toward Mexico, in addition to its militarism, is its *mestizo* population, which, in terms of size, heavily outweighs the “blancos.” More so than the indigenous, the *mestizo* bears the brunt of the writer’s criticism due to his evaluation that, while the “indio verdaderamente puro es pasivo y representa un papel de comparsa,” the one to be feared is the *mestizo*, who, he states, has inherited “todos los apetitos y las malas pasiones de las dos razas de que procede, sin ninguna de sus virtudes” (139). Consequently, Blasco Ibáñez’s use of the term “blancos” to refer to the progressive, industrious inhabitants of the Southern Cone finds its counterbalance in the “indigenous” label used to describe the majority of Mexico’s population, with all the connotations that this term evokes in terms of skin tone:

[E]n Méjico se diferencia mucho de algunas de éstas [otras repúblicas de América] en lo que se refiere a composición étnica. En las repúblicas hispanoamericanas más progresivas domina el elemento blanco y éste tiene la dirección de los negocios públicos. En Méjico son tantos los indígenas y tan pocos los blancos, que bien puede decirse que éstos resultan esclavos de los otros, gracias a las revoluciones. (*El militarismo* 139)

Here, ideological distinctions become collapsed onto racial features through the allusion to skin colour, revealing how “race” itself is an ideological construction. While I doubt, contrary to Rehder, that Blasco Ibáñez’s project in Mexico is to uphold a model of racial hierarchy defined by physical differences, such an inscription of immutable physical and character differences upon people in terms of “race” does provide evidence of what Paul Spickard calls “the racial moment.” Upon utterance, this “moment” speaks implicitly and necessarily in terms relating to issues of dominance, as “race is about power and it is written on the body” (12).

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21 Besides noting differences in skin colour across the Latin American continent from the Southern Cone to Mexico, Blasco Ibáñez makes these physical disparities even more emphatic when he adopts this same model of polarities to describe oppositions within Mexico itself: “Hay menos de dos millones de blancos frente a trece o catorce millones de gente cobriza, entre indios y mestizos” (*El militarismo* 139).

22 Gerda Lerner makes this same assertion when she notes that “[t]he characteristics that distinguish a white woman from a black woman may be visible to the naked eye, but they become significant only in a system in which difference is used to justify dominance.” Furthermore, one of the basic principles that Lerner reminds
Spickard contends that “racialising” in this way “is accompanied by at least an attempt by one group to exert power over the other, or to highlight its own disempowerment” (12).

By fusing both ideological and physical differences upon the Mexican people, I suggest that Blasco Ibáñez pronounces these “racial moments” in reaction to an immediate sense of disempowerment at being unable to foresee the leadership of Mexico uphold the virtues of the global mentality that he considers intrinsic to the governments of Brazil and the Southern Cone. Militarism renders civil rule in Mexico futile, a project that Blasco Ibáñez deems essential for Mexico’s progress and prosperity. His disempowerment can also connote the loss of discursive hegemony in Blasco Ibáñez’s narrative, which, in turn, works against the claim of uniformity and continuity of representation typical of an Orientalist stance. Blasco Ibáñez announces the differences of the Mexican in terms of physicality and ideology. By underscoring the political otherness of the mestizo, he thus positions himself, and those similarly “civilised” with a so-called white mentality, on a hierarchical model vis-à-vis the mestizo as Other.

For Blasco Ibáñez, Mexico, the “escaparat de la América Latina” for the Western world, plays a crucial role in the representation of Ibero-American identity (El militarismo 195). However, due to Mexico’s violent revolution, this showcase is now “lleno de horrores” (195); it offers not only to the US but also to England and France, the three most influential imperial nations, a false and damaging vision of this identity, perceived as representative of a so-called “humanidad inferior” (202). Consequently, Blasco Ibáñez’s political othering of Mexico can be seen as a reaction against such a vision. If, for Blasco Ibáñez, the grandeur of Spain can be positively salvaged, albeit indirectly, through the advances made by Argentina as an extension of the Spanish “race,” then revolutionary Mexico, the “escaparate” that draws

readers of is that “[i]t is not ‘difference’ that is the problem. It is dominance justified by appeals to constructed differences that is the problem.” See Gerda Lerner, Why History Matters: Life and Thought (New York: Oxford UP, 1997) 149, 198.

23 A similar conclusion was initially reached in Porter’s analysis of Lawrence’s The Seven Pillars of Wisdom. However, Porter notes that if a re-reading of Lawrence’s text could show it as “fissured with doubt and contradiction, it will confirm how under certain conditions Orientalist discourse, far from being monolithic, allows counter-hegemonic voices to be heard within it.” See Porter 155.
the attention of the West away from the Southern Cone, stands as a huge obstacle in the hoped-for revival of Peninsular glory. Offering Argentina, Chile and Uruguay as examples of progress and prosperity to the new imperial powers as a counterbalance to Mexico’s militarism cannot correct the West’s underestimation of Hispanic identity (26). It would appear, therefore, that geographical location carries sufficient weight for the violence of Mexico’s conflict to form the overarching image of Ibero-American identity for the West: "[C]onsiguen [esos generales de pistola] que en los Estados Unidos, en Inglaterra y en Francia . . . nos desprecien a todos los que hablamos español, creyendo que el pobre Méjico de la revolución y las demás naciones latinoamericanas son la misma cosa" (27).

If faith in the ideals of a republic informs Blasco Ibáñez’s imaginings of Argentina and Mexico, then standing in stark contrast is Albiñana Sanz’s militant authoritarianism. Like Blasco Ibáñez, Albiñana Sanz hailed from the province of Valencia.24 After studying medicine at the University of Valencia, where he enrolled in 1899, he moved to Madrid, where he specialised in neurology and undertook studies in law, philosophy and literature. In 1915 he completed his doctorate with a thesis entitled Concepto de la Medicina Histórica. It was during World War I that Albiñana Sanz found a new vocation teaching at the Medical School at the Universidad Central de Madrid, where he gained certain repute as a specialist in the history of medicine. However, after not having been granted a professorship there, he began to see no immediate prospects for himself in Spain. According to Julio Gil Pecharromán, Albiñana Sanz’s failure to gain this position occurred at a crucial moment in his life. Not only would it have been an enormous blow to his self confidence for a man approaching forty but it also came at a time when his influence in the health sector was beginning to wane (25-26). It was at this point that Albiñana Sanz decided to change tack completely. Given that a friend of his who had emigrated to Mexico and was doing well there had written to him some time prior inviting him to visit, Albiñana Sanz judged it an appropriate time to accept the invitation. Deciding

24 For the only text that provides substantial biographical information on José María Albiñana Sanz, see Julio Gil Pecharromán, "Sobre España inmortal, sólo Dios": José María Albiñana Sanz y el Partido Nacionalista Español (1930-1937) (Madrid: UNED, 2000).
that better prospects awaited him in the Americas, he left Valencia for Mexico in June 1921, where, in addition to studying first-hand Mexican folklore and indigenous medical practices, along with his literary and journalistic pursuits, he set up a clinic in Mexico City for the treatment of neurological disease (Gil Pecharromán 26-28).

However, what is noteworthy about the life of Albiñana Sanz was his political ideology. After a period in which he upheld a rather liberal, anticlerical stance as a member of the Juventud Liberal Democrática, his political sympathies went in completely the opposite direction. He became, according to Eduardo Connolly, “uno de los principales baluartes de la extrema derecha en la España republicana” (3). For Gil Pecharromán, what was effectively his political about-face could be attributed largely to his growing sense of a Spanish Nationalist sentiment during his seven-year period of voluntary exile in Mexico between 1921 and 1927. Five principal factors contributed to this political shift: his frustration at the political system of the Restoration; the sort of nostalgic yearnings for the Spain he left behind, characteristic of many who emigrate; the critical diatribes in Mexico of Peninsular republican politicians showing their disdain for the monarchy and the general state of Spain; the increasing threat to Spanish business interests in Mexico during the presidency of Plutarco Elías Calles (1924-1928); and the vehemently anticlerical posture of Mexico’s revolutionary government (29-30). Additional reasons for the changes in Albiñana Sanz’s political stance can also be explained by the fact that it was in Mexico that he was able to observe directly Spain’s legacy in the Americas, and where he was able to locate what he perceived as “lo español y lo católico.” It was the pervasiveness and the increasing militancy of Albiñana Sanz’s nationalist sentiments, manifested in articles and propaganda written for the ABC to revindicate Spain’s imperial prestige in the Americas, that eventually resulted in his expulsion from Mexico in 1927 (Connolly 3-4).

The controversy surrounding his writings in and about Mexico, and his political life in the 1920s, carried over into the new decade in Spain. Following the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1931, Spain went against the tide of authoritarian nationalism that
characterised much of the rest of Europe. Counteracting the emergent liberal democracy in Spain, however, were two new expressions of militant nationalism. The first was the Unión Monárquica Nacional (UMN), founded in April 1930 by those supporters of the exiled former dictator, Primo de Rivera, which aimed to revive the old dictatorship’s motto of “España, Una, Grande e Indivisible.” The second was the much smaller Partido Nacionalista Español (PNE), formed in the same month by Albiñana Sanz. According to Stanley Payne, the PNE shared with the UMN a similar radical right-wing ideology, in that it proclaimed a “strong monarchism based on outright authoritarian rule.” It also sought the glorification of Spanish historic ideology and Spanish Catholicism (Fascism 42). Along with the UMN, Albiñana Sanz’s party largely based itself on the example set by Italian Fascism, which espoused a rhetoric of heroism and violence proclaimed during mass meetings of supporters (Fascism 43).

Albiñana Sanz’s PNE, however, never achieved the same following as the more potent UMN, and he was largely ignored and discredited from the very beginning. His party’s only significant element, Payne points out, was the organisation of its militant “street brawlers,” the "Legionarios de Albiñana" (Falange 10). With the rise of Hitler in Germany in 1933, a new interest in fascist politics was heralded in Spain, and with it, Albiñana Sanz’s formal proclamation of the PNE’s fascist identity (Fascism 77). In the same year, this explicit stance in support of fascism saw him exiled by the fledgling republican regime to Las Hurdes, the remote region in Extremadura, from where he issued a manifesto entitled Hacia la nueva España: El fascismo triunfante, which, Payne notes, failed to convince its readership (Fascism 78).

Although the convictions and ideologies of Albiñana Sanz had a hand in the formal emergence of Spanish fascism, Ricardo Pérez Montfort affirms that his vision was also characteristic of the “hispanismo conservador del momento” (Hispanismo y Falange 80). It was the apparent “authority” gained as a result of the period he spent in Mexico that saw

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25 This militant group of youths was also known as the "Legionarios de España." See Julio Rodríguez-Puértolas, Literatura fascista española, vol. 1 (Madrid: Akal, 1986) 84.
Albiñana Sanz formulate his principles of Peninsular “superiority” vis-à-vis Mexico’s indigenous population. By extension, this hierarchical positioning provided evidence of his efforts to revive the honour and glory of Spanish imperialism. The motive for Albiñana Sanz’s ideological stance, according to Pérez Montfort, was that it served as a means through which he could feed and stimulate his own nascent sense of Spanish nationalism (*Hispanismo y Falange* 80-81).

These issues of Peninsular superiority and militant nationalist sentiment in defence of Spain, standpoints that informed Albiñana Sanz’s sense of Hispanic identity, are expressed in the travel narrative *Bajo el cielo mejicano: Sensaciones y comento*s (1930). According to Julio Rodríguez-Puértolas, this text is deserving of critical attention in any study that seeks to trace seriously the history of twentieth-century Spanish ideological imperialism (85). Yet it would appear that, in defending Spain, it was not Albiñana Sanz’s explicit intention to espouse such an overtly critical stance in relation to Mexico from the outset. Its author also wanted to offer insights into the nation’s folklore and national psyche (*Cielo* 7). Moreover, addressing the reader directly in the text’s prologue, he makes his initial feelings regarding Mexico clear. Rather than a critique of Mexican society and culture, he attends to a shared, common culture of conviviality and kinship, which he has seen develop between himself and Mexico over several years: “Si el lector espera ver en este volumen una diatriba contra la República Mejicana, cierre el libro, que no le interesa. Cuando se ha vivido largos años en un país hermano, comiendo el pan de sus campos, comulgando espiritualmente con sus hijos y sufriendo sus mismos dolores, no hay derecho a corresponderle con una tempestad de prosa enojada” (7).

Such allusions to conviviality between the writer and Mexico essentially inscribe what is a convivial culture on an intimate, personal level. In 1921, Albiñana Sanz addressed the Ateneo in Madrid where he gave a lecture prior to his departure for Mexico, entitled *La situación de México vista desde España*. In it he emphasises the apathetic attitude of Spain towards building Peninsular-Spanish American fraternity through the rhetoric of its “suspiradas
aproximaciones.” Including himself in this group, he notes that it is the Spanish intellectuals themselves who are responsible for this apathy; while they are attentive to Spain’s internal politics, “no nos preocupamos de mantener con nuestros hermanos del continente americano aquellas relaciones de afecto, aquellas corrientes de cordialidad, aquella comunión espiritual que demandan la unidad de origen y el esplendor de la raza” (5-6). While living in Mexico, Albiñana Sanz, like Blasco Ibáñez, appears critical of the more formal initiatives designed to strengthen transatlantic ties between Spain and Mexico, which, in his view, do not comprehend the reality of the situation and contribute to Mexico’s continued ignorance of Spain. More than such initiatives, the writer notes the importance of the diffusion of Mexican music throughout the world for the “acercamiento hispano-americano . . . esos pedantes americanistas . . . sólo se mueven por afán de exhibición, sin haber visto, ni en el mapa, los pueblos cuyos problemas ignoran” (Cielo 105). Thus, rather than an outright attack, in Bajo el cielo mejicano Albiñana Sanz seeks to analyse the depths and paradoxes of the Mexican soul, to contrast centuries-old traditions with modern life, and, most intriguingly and contradictorily of all, to explore “la gracia del indio ingenuo” (7).

Notwithstanding, Albiñana Sanz renders the viability of Peninsular-Mexican conviviality as highly problematic, for reasons that I will now analyse in greater depth. However positive Albiñana Sanz may at first appear of the Mexican people and of Peninsular-Mexican convivial culture, as evidenced in his prologue, and despite his declared frame of mind in writing the text as “francamente conciliador,” his patriotic duty to Spain and to what he considers historical truth are overwhelmingly evident. Hence, any remarks made in honour of Mexico

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26 Albiñana Sanz draws on an incident at the inauguration of a local gaming hall to emphasise America’s ignorance of Spain. When the inauguration proceeds in the form of a Catholic blessing of the casino, presided over by the local clergy and punctuated by the click of billiard balls and the murmurings of the gamblers, the writer is struck speechless. In admiration of the ceremony, two women born in Mexico to Spanish parents proclaim: “¡Oh la España católica y piadosa!” Upon turning to the writer they ask him: “Diga usted doctor: ¿no está usted entusiasmado con este espectáculo tan español?” The writer’s response is testament to his disgust: “Esto ha sido una mascarada ridícula. En España no se acostumbra bendecir ningún Casino de juego.” See José María Albiñana Sanz, Bajo el cielo mejicano. (Sensaciones y comentos). (Madrid: Compañía Ibero-Americana de Publicaciones, 1930) 38-39. In citing a similar example in which a priest performs a ceremony blessing a new local taberna, the writer is highly critical of the fact that “[n]adie sabe nada de nada. No hay un solo centro de convivencia cultural” (40). Moreover, his criticism is levelled at the Latin American nations in general, and at Spanish immigrants in particular, although he is receptive to the minority who do recognise that, across the Atlantic there exists a Spain “solemne, poseedora de altísimos valores espirituales. . . . la gran masa de las naciones hispánicas, incluyendo a los mismos españoles trasplantados, ignoran la significación cultural de la España contemporánea” (41-42).
and its people and culture are superficial rhetoric, since Albiñana Sanz saw nothing of value in Mexican culture that could maintain a convivial culture between Spain and Mexico. Indeed, in his prologue he explains his express need to justify his reasons for passing judgement, later in the narrative, on pervasive Mexican sentiments that threaten to debase Spain’s imperial prestige: “Son comentarios exigidos por el deber patriótico. Mucho quiero a Méjico, pero amo más a España, y no he de consentir que un nacionalismo morboso pretendan menoscabar la gloria de mi Patria” (8).

Specifying a “conciliatory” purpose for the writing of Bajo el cielo mejicano would have attested to the promotion of a sort of transatlantic reconciliation, or to an effort to pacify conflict and thus re-establish degrees of solidarity between Spain and Mexico; in essence, to advance the possibilities of a convivial culture of consent. However, it is Albiñana Sanz’s antagonistic attitude towards Mexico’s so-called “nacionalismo morboso,” which he attributes to the nation’s problematic indigeneity, that acts to the detriment of the viability of this consenting culture, because he turns the so-called “indio ingenuo” into a demonised Other based on perceived racial and class differences. Therefore, it is essentially the issues concerning “race,” class, and indigenous nationalism in Mexico that Albiñana Sanz considers hinder Peninsular-Mexican conviviality, as for him, “Méjico, con sus doce millones de indios ancestrales, es un misterio para el sociólogo y un problema para la Antropología” (6).

Albiñana Sanz perceives Mexican identity to be based on two conflicting narratives of racial descent, from the Indian and from the conquistador, that have escaped definitive reconciliation: “Los mejicanos, por mucha independencia de que quieran blasonar, no tienen más que este dilema: o se conforman con descender del indio, o son descendientes de los conquistadores” (8). By declaring racial descendancy to be a matter of resignation to either one or the other—“se conforman”—he embraces the marker of ethnicity, which, for Lerner, establishes an arbitrary affiliation through cultural and historical characteristics. Unlike “race,” markers of ethnicity are not defined by physical properties, but are fluid identifications that
can be taken up, altered, and rejected at will. Nevertheless, once attached, the ethnic "label" is linked to a “mental construct” that carries with it certain behavioural expectations that at once define and affect those marked by it (Lerner 149-50). Albiñana Sanz’s standpoint on the desirability of the homogeneity of Mexican ethnicity (either Spanish or indigenous) does not allow for an intermediate, hybrid space of identification that could recognise equally both the indigenous and Peninsular elements. Thus, Lerner’s theory on the stigmas attached to the label of ethnicity appears corroborated in the following statement by Albiñana Sanz: “Si aceptan sus aborígenes, tienen que aceptar también todos sus estigmas étnicos. Si reconocen la ascendencia española, tienen el deber de respetar a España” (8-9).

In Bajo el cielo mejicano Albiñana Sanz frequently criticises Mexico for opting either to devalue its Spanish heritage or not to recognise it altogether, thus forming the elements of what he sees as a form of Mexican nationalism that is detrimental to Spain’s alleged prestige. However, prior to leaving for Mexico, in his aforementioned address at the Madrid Ateneo, he expresses a contrasting view, claiming that despite foreign initiatives to “desespañolizar América,” Mexico’s reaction to such programmes is to reaffirm its common bonds with Spain: “¿Y cómo responde Méjico a esta propaganda de alejamiento patrio? ¡Pues abrazándose cada vez con más cariño a la tradición hispana!” (La situación 15). Yet Albiñana Sanz’s first-hand experience proved the contrary to be true. A process of “desespañolización” was seen to issue a direct challenge to Mexico’s Peninsular history, offering in its place alternative means for envisaging a process of nation formation in Mexico. So prevalent was Mexico’s tendency to disparage its Spanish past that Albiñana Sanz devotes an entire chapter, entitled “Nacionalismo grotesco,” in consideration of Mexico’s disdain for, or outright rejection of, its Spanish heritage. Such attitudes are exposed as he contemplates a literary competition

27 Further on the theoretical distinctions between “race” and ethnicity, Paul Spickard notes that, in the view of the pseudoscientists, “race is about biology, genes, phenotype, the body. It is physical, inherited, and immutable.” They also consider that, in addition to distinctions made between skin colour, hair texture, nose shape and the like, “race” is also concerned with people’s behavioural and character qualities, which, like skin colour, cannot be erased. In contrast, Spickard notes that ethnicity charts differences according to “cultural or national divisions, such as language, citizenship, religion, child-rearing practices, food habits, clothing and so forth. Ethnic differences, in this way of thinking, are mutable. Ethnicity derives from an ancestral group, but it can be changed by changing behavior.” See Paul Spickard, “Race and Nation, Identity and Power: Thinking Comparatively about Ethnic Systems,” Race and Nation: Ethnic Systems in the Modern World, ed. Spickard (NY: Routledge, 2005) 11.
organised for students by a popular Mexican daily. The student with the winning composition, which, for Albiñana Sanz, conveyed the ideology characteristic of Mexico’s “nueva generación, rabiosamente nacionalista, de un nacionalismo hispanófobo y grotesco” (195), was to receive a trip to Europe. This is ironic, for in its contemplation of a reversal of imperial European history, the essay formulates a counter-hegemonic discourse that disqualifies European culture and strips Spain of its imperial esteem. Re-telling the Conquest of Mexico by Hernán Cortés, the essay proclaims that the real reason Cortés burnt his ships before the march to Tenochtitlán was that he feared that the indigenous would take to the seas in the conquest of Spain.

Such a rejection of Spanish cultural influence in favour of reviving indigenous traditions was typical of the ideological movement known as “Indianism,” whose radical voice began to be heard after 1910 (Knight 81). Perceived as “cultural extremists,” those who aligned themselves with these ideas saw in the history of the Mexican nation not a voluntary blending of cultures and “races”—a mestizo nation—but a forced imposition of European culture upon what had been indigenous autonomy. As the effects of this imposition were still being criticised vehemently throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century, the necessary response was to rid Mexico of foreign influence and carry out the nation’s re-education based on indigenous practices and traditions (Friedlander 159). If one of Albiñana Sanz’s initial purposes was to describe “la gracia del indio ingenuo” (7), in contrast, his reaction to the outwardly “Indianist” perspective of this student’s essay reveals his explicit derision, describing the indigenous as hardly fit to be considered human subjects: “[E]stos seres inanimados, estas muchedumbres ignoras, estos despojos dolientes de una humanidad melancólica, que al cabo de cuatro siglos no saben ni vestirse y van descalzos y medio encueros, (sic) como en los tiempos selváticos de Moctezuma, ¡son los que Cortés ‘temía’ que conquistaran a España!” (196-97).

28 Synonymous with greed and imperial violence in Mexico, Cortés’ name is again invoked by Albiñana Sanz in another illustration of the nation’s so-called grotesque nationalist sentiment. The writer describes what is, in his view, the regrettable issuing of a Mexican national stamp. The stamp depicts the torture, ordered by Cortés, of
A form of education in Mexico that is premised on a revival of indigeneity as opposed to recognition of Spain’s so-called civilising mission in the Americas, is as much of a deterrent to Peninsular-Mexican convivial culture for Albiñana Sanz as it is for Blasco Ibáñez. A similar criticism to that levelled by Albiñana Sanz at Mexico’s “nacionalismo hispanófobo” and indigenous-focused education can be found in Blasco Ibáñez’s comments concerning these very same features: “[T]odavía el vulgo, influenciado por una perversa educación, diviniza al azteca antropófago sacador de corazones, atribuyéndole todas las virtudes históricas, y execra al español, que implantó en el país la civilización cristiana” (El militarismo 148-49). If then, for Blasco Ibáñez, education and the school epitomise the Melting Pot in Argentina as the location of identity formation and a facilitator of convivial culture, in Mexico education is deemed highly problematic by both writers.

In contrast to the nation-building initiatives implemented through indigenismo, largely an elite intellectual movement that sought the peaceful, non-coercive integration of the indigenous population into mainstream society, “Indianism,” as has been noted, proclaimed to throw off the yoke of Spanish ideological imperialism. One of the ways it tried to effect this process was through romanticising indigenous history and culture (Knight 80-81). In citing the desire of those who wished to revive in Mexico “El Día del Sol,” the Aztec celebration in honour of the “Astro-King,” Albiñana Sanz paradoxically gives a voice to sympathisers of the Indianist movement. Rejecting notions of a Mexican identity forged either through hybridity or through mestizaje, the author of an article in praise of this celebration, cited by Albiñana Sanz, states that what is important is that “nos ‘aztequicemos,’ que reneguemos de la cultura europea, sobre todo de la española” (qtd. in Cielo 203). By reproducing parts of this pro-

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Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec king, who apparently had his feet dipped in oil and then burnt over a slow flame. Albiñana Sanz is highly critical of this image, for, as it circulates, it serves as a constant reminder to millions of Mexicans at home and overseas of their disdain for Mexico’s Peninsular past (Cielo 201). Furthermore, with more than a hint of sarcasm directed towards initiatives to strengthen cultural ties between Spain and Latin America, the writer notes that “[e]n estos tiempos de líricas ‘aproximaciones raciales’ la propagación de dicho timbre no puede ser más oportuna” (201). In mockery of Mexico’s new stamp, he goes on to question hypothetically the viability of strengthening ties between Spain and France, based on the former designing a stamp that depicts the French firing squad assasinating those Spaniards involved in the Madrid revolt of 2 May 1808. In so doing, Albiñana Sanz assumes, quite wrongly, that, in issuing the stamp in the first place, it was Mexico’s express intention to foster greater cultural understanding between Mexico and Spain.
Indianism article written for the Mexican newspaper, *Excelsior*, Albiñana Sanz at least provides evidence of contesting discourses of Mexican nationhood.  

The Indianist attitude expressed in the newspaper article demonstrates what for Knight constitutes “reverse racism”; that is to say, an anti-white or anti-European stance. In its overturning of the racial hierarchical order, it is the Indian or mestizo who is seen to occupy a position of superiority over the white (87). Manifestations of a uniform “reverse racism” during movements toward decolonisation were, according to Anderson, largely difficult to locate during the colonial era (153), an opinion confirmed by Balibar’s re-reading of Anderson’s text. However, Balibar does attest to “devastating racisms” that occur “between ‘nations,’ ‘ethnic groups’ and ‘communities,’” which constitute counter-hegemonic racisms that ultimately confirm white supremacists’ belief in “the old idea that three-quarters of humanity are incapable of governing themselves,” and that continue to feed the stereotypes of white racism (Balibar, “Racism and Nationalism” 44). The tendencies and effects of “reverse-racism” are noted by Albiñana Sanz in *Bajo el cielo mejicano*, when, in his description of the revolutionary Indians, he affirms: “Odian a los blancos, a quienes llaman yoris, y su afán por conseguir un arma es para luchar contra ellos” (30). Balibar’s theories are confirmed when, in *Bajo el cielo mejicano*, the threatened upsetting of a former order of racial hierarchy leads Albiñana Sanz to deem Mexico completely ungovernable and label it as “el país de los generales” (21), marked by the “disease” of revolution: “[E]l estado revolucionario es casi endémico” (15).

These criticisms contradict Albiñana Sanz’s views prior to his leaving for Mexico, when it was apparent that he had been highly positive of Mexico’s revolution. It may be said, then, that the writer’s acknowledgement of “reverse-racism,” evidenced from a period of intimate contact with Mexico, may account for this change of opinion. Affirming the benefits of

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29 Further evidence is given of the Indianists’ mission to reclaim Aztec culture through a lengthier citation of the article printed in *Excelsior*: “En México, querámoslo o no lo queramos, sólo existen dos ascendencias raciales dignas de tomarse en consideración: la ibérica y la indígena. . . . Forzosamente tenemos que contentarnos con el azteca o con el español. Pero como este último es el representante de una filosofía y de una religión que a todo trance pretendemos abolir, preferimos la cultura (?) indígena y nos declaramos hasta idólatras, recitando la oración del ejido, la oración del maíz y el himno al Sol” (Cielo 205).
revolutions as a source of positive change, including in Spain, he is also adamant that Mexico’s prolonged state of violence should not be equated with its representation as inferior: “[N]o porque nuestra hermana Méjico se encuentre con frecuencia agitada vamos a afirmar que es un pueblo inferior . . . La fiebre revolucionaria, lejos de ser un síntoma de decadencia mejicana, es una verdadera fiebre de crecimiento” (La situación 11-12).

The criticism which Albiñana Sanz levels at the aforementioned Excelsior article, and the manner in which he responds in general to the Indianist standpoint on the Mexican national question, leads him to query the very direction of humanity itself: “¿Hacia dónde camina la Humanidad? ¿Adelante o atrás?” (202). The route towards progress in Western historiography follows a rectilinear model. Allegedly, only those propelled forward adhere to Western notions of the pursuit of enlightenment, progress and civilisation. It can be said, then, that for Albiñana Sanz, continuing on the linear path to progress as dictated by Western historiography and, at the same time, honouring an indigenous past, are mutually incompatible ventures. Commenting on the wish expressed in the article that Mexican culture return to its Aztec heritage, he proclaims the futility of reconciling progress with indigenous tradition. For him, such an endeavour is a betrayal of “scientific” civilisation itself and threatens its very existence:

[S]i una civilización se detiene en su marcha para imitar lo aborigen en vez de evolucionar hacia el progreso, constituirá fatalmente un peligro para ella y las civilizaciones paralelas.

El nacionalismo mejicano no debe inspirarse en la práctica sabeísta (sic) de sus ancestros; pretender resucitar el culto a los astros en una época en que la ciencia nos explica fácilmente sus secretos, es renunciar a todo aliento civilizador. (203)

Worthy of note in Albiñana Sanz’s reference to the perils of reviving indigenous culture and practices are his appeals to evolution and science. For him, these factors do most to explain the existence and success of civilised, progressive nations, while others linger behind
on the linear model of Western historiography. Also persistent in his writings is a reliance on a similar model of the evolutionary progress of Man. Nowhere is Albiñana Sanz more receptive to these ideas concerning science, evolution and progress than in his attempt to critique a piece in *El Universal*, Mexico’s national newspaper. It is the intention of its author, Eduardo Gómez de Baquero, to set out his definition of *hispanoamericanismo*,\(^{30}\) which is elaborated in terms of distinct commonalities rather than divisive differences: "El hispanoamericanismo es un sentimiento de raza o de familia, y un deseo o voluntad de cooperación, basado sobre un substratum de analogías y afinidades" (qtd. in *Cielo* 229).

Citing the work of Doctor Nicolás León in the field of Mexican ethnography, Albiñana Sanz notes that Gómez de Baquero’s mention of “race” is a misnomer, as more than thirty autonomous “races” inhabit Mexico. Equally noticeable for Albiñana Sanz is that, between these races, there is a complete lack of any sense of their solidarity as indigenous peoples (*Cielo* 232). Moreover, Albiñana Sanz describes the facial features of the majority of these “races” as mongoloid,\(^{31}\) adhering to the principles of the eugenics movement, which focused intently on the face to measure alleged racial worth according to human geometry.\(^{32}\) By attaching labels on the grounds of physical characteristics in this way, Albiñana Sanz’s descriptions corroborate Anne McClintock’s explanation of the correlation between the physical and the racial, in that "[t]he features of the face spelled out the character of the

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\(^{30}\) These articles were later collected and published in book form. See Eduardo Gómez de Baquero (Andrenio), *Nacionalismo e hispanismo y otros ensayos* (Madrid: Historia Nueva, 1928).

\(^{31}\) It is worth citing here Albiñana Sanz’s extensive listing of the facial features of Mexico’s indigenous peoples, the majority of which “presenta un tipo notoriamente mongolide. Cabeza pequeña, cara plana y redonda; ojos pequeños, hendidura palpebral estrecha y oblicua de abajo arriba y de dentro afuera; órbitas separadas y arco superciliar poco prominente; boca abierta, labios móviles, pómulos salientes y prognatismo inferior; oreja de pabellón pequeño, lisa, mal doblada, con frecuente carencia de lóbulo. Cuello corto” (*Cielo* 232).

\(^{32}\) As a social and scientific movement, eugenics was developed in 1883 by British scientist Francis Galton. It aimed to scientifically manage the hereditary makeup of the human species. Some saw in its goals an initiative towards the improvement of the human race. Others thought it a means of preserving the so-called purity of particular ethnic groups. While many cite the ethnic genocides perpetrated under Nazi Germany as an example of the science of eugenics in its most perverse, excessive manifestation, Nancy Leys Stepan affirms the need to address the majority of eugenics’ more “ordinary” social forms, such as deliberate social selection carried out through “involuntary surgical sterilization and genetic racism.” She also notes the disparate developments of European and Latin American eugenics, claiming, on the one hand, that after World War I, Europe was largely concerned with its own degeneration. On the other, she continues, eugenics was called upon in Latin America in the first half of the twentieth century to facilitate patriotism, thus aiming to promote a larger role for the continent in world affairs. See Nancy Leys Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics*: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991) 1-2, 6, 36.
race" (McClintock 50). Here, what serves to illuminate Albiñana Sanz’s notions regarding racial hierarchy, racism, and Mexico, is his background in the medical sciences and his position as a doctor specialising in neurology. It is thus through a scientific lens that he defines notions of nationhood, “race” and ethnic identity, since Albiñana Sanz confirms of the Mexican situation that “la realidad es innegable y la antropometría no falla” (231). Although Albiñana Sanz does not doubt the commendable attitude of those who, like Gómez de Baquero, would proclaim an encouraging spirit of Peninsular-Mexican fraternity, he warns against inventing notions of homogeneity in such an ethnically diverse space, especially considering that Mexico’s diverse groups have continued to ignore Spain’s cultural significance: "Bien está que poseamos todos un alentador espíritu de confraternidad; pero no prodiguemos el nombre de la Raza, tratando de incluir en ella muchedumbre de seres que en este lado del océano desconocen todavía—ial cabo de cuatro siglos!—la existencia de España” (231).

Just as racial plurality in Mexico is seen by Albiñana Sanz as a hindrance to Peninsular-Mexican convivial culture, so too is the nation’s linguistic heterogeneity. This claim is yet further evidence of his refusal to accept Gómez de Baquero’s take on hispanoamericanismo, for which the latter cites “la comunidad del idioma” as one of its most visible and influential characteristics (qtd. in Cielo 229). Both language and “race,” as Balibar has pointed out, work in tandem, providing the channels through which ethnicity, and the people as an autonomous unit, may be produced as a natural, organic image of veracity (“The Nation” 96). However, for Albiñana Sanz, language, as a tool, fails in its bid to provide the cohesive gel to bring about a common sense of Ibero-American identity based on his imaginings of Mexico. It is relevant that similar notions are also expressed by Blasco Ibáñez. For him, the Castilian language is not sufficient in itself to facilitate a culture of fraternity between Spain and Mexico, as he takes issue with Spanish being used as the linguistic vehicle for voicing the Mexican revolutionaries’ militaristic ambitions: “[E]l hecho de que una turba de guerrilleros que pesan mortalmente sobre el infeliz Méjico empleen para expresar sus egoísmos y sus ambiciones el mismo idioma que yo, no es motivo para que los defienda” (El militarismo 149).
While Blasco Ibáñez fails to point out the relationship between Mexico’s linguistic diversity and the viability of a Peninsular-Mexican culture respectful of alterity, it is largely the plethora of indigenous languages spoken in Mexico, as well as the corruption of *castellano* by foreign languages, that instil in Albiñana Sanz a sense of fatality with regard to the potential for imagining a Peninsular-Mexican convivial culture. By providing a detailed list of several language families and dialects, and by calling the *Escuela del Estudiante Indígena* “una Babel [de] gritos, gestos, monosílabos, [y] sonoridades extrañas” (234), Albiñana Sanz makes Other the indigenous peoples of Mexico through demonising their languages, evidenced in his description of the threatening language of the Zapotecs: “[E]l espantoso idioma zapoteco, jerga endemoniada” (190). In the same way that he singles out ethnic diversity, then, Albiñana Sanz’s references to the plurality of languages and the contamination of the Spanish language in Mexico provide proof of a perceived threat to Spain’s continued hegemonic ambitions in Latin America, proclaimed culturally through language. As signalled by Resina, the Spanish language served a crucial role in the postcolonial arena, as it constituted a primary means through which the goal of cultural hegemony could be pursued (161).

It appears obvious, then, that assertions of ethnocentricity and notions of Peninsular superiority are far more appealing to Albiñana Sanz than any attempt on his part to locate a distinct Peninsular-Mexican convivial culture. In what is his final response to the article by Gómez de Baquero, Albiñana Sanz also directs his comments to “los demás utopistas de la Raza” as he proceeds to dispel, with more than a hint of sarcasm, any illusions that they may have about the existence of the “layer” cited by Gómez de Baquero of commonly held affinities between Mexico and Spain: “En Méjico, el país teatro de las más bellas gestas

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33 Albiñana Sanz is equally critical not only of the sheer number of indigenous languages spoken in Mexico, but also of the influence of French and English on the Spanish spoken there: "El francés de Francia y el inglés de los Estados Unidos van desplazando, poco a poco, hermosos vocablos castellanos... en Méjico se aplica con propósito de sustitución. En España, el extranjerismo, pasa. En Méjico, permanence, agujereando el idioma” (*Cielo* 236). Corruption coupled with the presence of indigenous languages therefore leads Albiñana Sanz to a regrettable conclusion for Peninsular hegemony in the Americas: “[E]n Méjico, el idioma español está en minoría. Conclusión dolorosa para nuestra justificada vanidad nacional” (235).
conquistadoras de nuestros abuelos, no existe ese substratum de analogías internacionales que define el ilustre articulista” (Cielo 236).

As a point of difference to the notion of “layers” of commonalities evoked by Gómez de Baquero, Albiñana Sanz describes Mexican society in terms of “layers” of difference, to continue his project of criticising the disparities that detract from inter-national understanding. Deploying a natural and organic image of belonging, Albiñana Sanz offers an ethnographic cross-section of the Mexican populace, adopting, in his words, “la técnica de un corte geológico” (236). Just as Blasco Ibáñez “naturally” dissolves racial difference in Argentina through the symbol of the Melting Pot, Albiñana Sanz naturalises ethnic divisions in Mexico through references to geology. He thus identifies four “race”-defined layers of the population that are hierarchically organised, describing racial differences as being as natural as land formation itself:

1.° Una capa superficial, delgadísima, casi una película, de neoformación hispánica, que puede representarse por medio milímetro de espesor.

2.° Una capa criolla colonial de dos milímetros.

3.° Otra capa, de mestizaje en sus diversos grados: un metro.

4.° Una masa fundamental, milenaria, de toda la indiada vernácula: un kilómetro. (236-37)

Such a racial representation of the Mexican populace finds a distinct correlation with McClintock’s work on the family Tree of Man. McClintock analyses how social evolutionists developed a visual model that showed a hierarchy of “races” based on their relative positions on a tree, constructed around the metaphor of the family. They purported to condense the evolution of world history into a single, readable and “scientific” record, through what McClintock has called “panoptical time” and “anachronistic space.”

While charting progress,
the image also noted a hierarchy of decline. Those on the tree’s lower branches were deemed to be degenerative “races,” as a result of having either dwelt in differing climates and geographies, or due to the fact that they had developed in different “centers of creation” and, therefore, were “originally, naturally and inevitably degenerate.” Both theories came to the same conclusion: the lowest “races” on the tree were of a lower mental and moral worth, lacking the degrees of intelligence considered characteristic of the adult white man (McClintock 49). Albiñana Sanz’s image of classifying Mexico’s population in accordance with geological layers posits a similar argument in that, instead of the lowest branches, it is the lowest geological layer that represents racial degeneration.

Further evidence of Albiñana Sanz’s stance in relation to racial hierarchy and degeneracy is provided by his account of an expedition up the volcano Popocatepetl with a group of North American, French, and German tourists. During their ascent, the narrator compares their expedition to that of Hernán Cortés and the Spanish conquistadors, stating that the latter traversed the same volcano with bravery and ease, thus proving the Spaniards’ worth to the indigenous peoples. Four hours into the trek, Albiñana Sanz notes the fatigue of the German tourists. They decide to turn back to the valley, which provokes the disrespectful smirks of the French tourists, who, for the narrator, see in this abandonment of the journey “una manifiesta inferioridad de la raza teutona” (160). However, just five hundred metres further along it is the French who admit defeat at the hands of Popocatepetl, causing a similar response by the Americans. When asked by the Americans whether he too will be turning back on account of fatigue, Albiñana Sanz’s reply emphatically defends his alleged racial superiority and counteracts those discourses that depicted Spain, through its loss of empire, as a degenerative “race” itself: “Les respondí que era compatriota de los nueve conquistadores que subieron por vez primera al Popoc, que la raza no había degenerado, y que estaba dispuesto a llegar hasta el mismo cielo” (160).

exemplary figure that emerged was the evolutionary family Tree of Man.” See Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (NY: Routledge, 1995) 37.
Unlike Blasco Ibáñez’s imaginings of Argentina as Melting Pot, the geo-ethnic layers of “race” that Albiñana Sanz inscribes upon Mexican society do not possess the same alchemical capacities of fusion and re-creation. Rather, cast as naturally separate entities, these layers are resistant to melding, existing side by side but bereft of a sense of positive interaction and exchange. Blasco Ibáñez’s notion of creation anew through racial intermixture was also a feature developed in Vasconcelo’s work on ethnicity in Latin America: _La raza cósmica_ (1925). There Vasconcelos argued that the interbreeding of Latin America’s European immigrants with the black and indigenous populations had created within the continent a newly imagined homogeneous “race” that would serve as “the foundation for the next great stage of human history: a single united World” (Tilley 61). In what can be seen as a direct satirical response to Vasconcelos’ proposed thesis, Albiñana Sanz emphasises ideas of incompatible differences that would, for him, hinder the views expressed in _La raza cósmica_: “Estas diferencias no deben desalentar a los esforzados campeones de la Raza. Si consideran que con ella no hay bastante para constituir un mundo común imaginario, ahí está la Fraternidad Universal esperándolos con los brazos abiertos. Y puestos a soñar: ¡venga la Hermandad Cósmica!” (237).

Given that Mexico has favoured its indigenous origins, the criticism levelled at Mexico by Albiñana Sanz has turned _Bajo el cielo mejicano_ into what the writer assures readers in the prologue they would not find in his text: a diatribe attacking the Mexican Republic. Rather than explaining the folklore and national psyche of Mexico, Albiñana Sanz locates, and indeed fixates upon, the “mental constructs” alluded to by Lerner that form under the markers of ethnicity. In the case of Mexico, such constructs are developed under the ethnic marker of indigeneity. For Albiñana Sanz, the “estigmas étnicos” with which Mexico must contend derive from its having chosen its aboriginal origins over its Spanish heritage. Laziness, apathy, and alcoholism are examples of such generalised “stigmas,” which become immutably fixed upon the indigenous Mexican; in Mexico, Albiñana Sanz notes, “el indio es apático: un flojo, como dicen por acá. Come poco, pero trabaja menos” (64). What is more, he underscores their
tendency towards vice, highlighting the lengthy history of their culture of heavy drinking: “La tradición dipsómana de estos indígenas es milenaria” (65). In contrast, for Blasco Ibáñez, the indigenous peasant in Mexico does not shy away from hard work. Rather, he is a victim of abuse who lacks the material benefits that work should provide:

No le creáis un perezoso, no le creáis uno de esos soñadores incapaces de acción. El trabajador mejicano es inteligente y activo cuando se le facilitan los medios de trabajar bien y con provecho. Ese hombre no es más que un desengañado, un fatalista que se entrega a su desgracia. Lleva diez años derramando su sangre, de combate en combate, siempre por la libertad, y aún no ha visto la libertad. (El militarismo 132)

The masses of indigenous Mexicans, represented by Albiñana Sanz as “rebeldes a la civilización” (Cielo 232), can be thus seen to confirm McClintock’s notion of “anachronistic space.” This concept posits that “colonized people—like women and the working class in the metropolis—do not inhabit history proper but exist in a permanently anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire as anachronistic humans, atavistic, irrational, bereft of human agency—the living embodiment of the archaic ‘primitive’” (30). As so-called degeneratives who lack solidarity, the indigenous are seen to corrupt the Spanish language through foreign influences and their own indigenous languages, while remaining ignorant of Spain’s cultural importance. These criticisms constitute the divisive factors perceived by Albiñana Sanz to be detrimental to forging a collective sense of identity. Thus, for him, both a uniquely Mexican solidarity and that proclaimed in the form of a Peninsular-Mexican convivial culture are false hopes. Such a conviction is informed as much by his negative perception of ethnic and linguistic diversity, as by his reliance on the “knowledge” provided by science to explain racial progress and degeneration. In the face of problems attributed to Mexico’s ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity, as well as to the cited absence of solidarity, Albiñana Sanz affirms the need to assimilate forcefully or “aglutinar las razas indígenas para formar la unidad nacional, que todavía no está constituída” (233). Refuting the claim posited in Gómez de
Baquero's article, it is Albiñana Sanz’s view that “[e]n Méjico no existe ni puede existir un ‘sentimiento de raza o de familia’” (231). Divulged as a “great truth” in a similar manner to how a scientist would make known his or her findings following a period of extensive research, Albiñana Sanz has arrived at his hypothesis after “siete años de convivencia con las diversas gentes del país mejicano y un estudio preferente de sus condiciones étnicas y psicológicas.” As a result, he states, he has reached the “conocimiento científico de esta gran verdad” (231).

Uniquely indigenous narratives on the potentiality of nationhood and citizenship based on diversity, have, as Florencia Mallon notes, a long history in Latin America. Although their projects are far from complete, their discourses have largely been suppressed by initiatives offered by elites, who favour national “civilising” projects that would forge the idea of nation through a “unity-in-integration” scheme, or a “one-size-fits-all” solution to defining citizenship (287). Albiñana Sanz’s conclusion is not unlike such a solution. In his antagonistic attitude towards Mexico’s heterogeneity, he confirms the fears of the promoters of “civilising” versions of the nation, for whom, as Mallon remarks, “diversity becomes marked as a threat to national unity, to the viability of the national community as a whole” (287). Instead of allowing indigenous versions of national belonging to take root in Mexico, Albiñana Sanz believes, in accordance with a process of acculturation, that “[e]l mejor nacionalismo es continuar la magna obra de España, genitora de la nacionalidad, protegiendo a los indios, habilitándolos para figurar en la civilización” (197-98).

As a solution to the recovery of Spain’s prestige, and a method through which Mexico’s problematic diversity may be “managed,” Albiñana Sanz advocates a cultural and spiritual penetration by Spain into the Americas not unlike the call of the Peninsular regenerationists after 1898: “Ya que la reconquista material de América es imposible para España, porque así lo tiene decretado el determinismo histórico, empréndase de una vez la verdadera obra de compenetración espiritual” (241-42). One of the means to effect this penetrative process is through the inauguration in Spain of a uniquely “Spanish-American
University” and the hegemonic imposition of Peninsular Spanish culture. Mexico’s ignorance of Spain’s cultural glory, and the prejudices that damage the prestige of the former Metropolis are, in Albiñana Sanz’s opinion, largely perpetuated by those Spanish immigrants who, ignorant themselves of Spain’s cultural achievements, express contempt for the nation that they left behind (Cielo 36). Thus, Spain’s cultural penetration is a means by which this alleged nescience may be rectified. For Albiñana Sanz, the “lesser” intellect of the Indian corrupts the morality of newly arrived Peninsular immigrants to Mexico, thus contributing to the nation’s ignorance of Spanish culture. Instead of seeking to improve the education of the indigenous, Albiñana Sanz calls for the inauguration of this “Spanish-American University” as a means of re-educating those immigrating, who will play a pivotal role in the future promotion of Spain’s cultural hegemony:

Consequently, for Albiñana Sanz, convivial culture depends on Mexico’s recognition of Spain’s cultural and spiritual significance as the progenitor of progressive civilisation in the Americas. Like the metaphor of the Melting Pot for Blasco Ibáñez, with its hegemonic capacity
to provide a homogenising discourse of belonging in Argentina, the potential for a Peninsular-Mexican convivial culture in Albiñana Sanz’s text is dependent on an equally homogenising discourse in Mexico. As neither praise for Spain’s cultural esteem nor faith in the uniformity of ethnicity in Mexico is forthcoming due to the latter’s much criticised ethnic diversity, envisioning a Peninsular-Latin American convivial culture through Mexico is inconceivable, allowing renewed imperial desires and a discourse of dominance to reappear in Albiñana Sanz’s Mexican narrative.

Conversely, in comparison with Albiñana Sanz, the firm stamp of Spain’s hegemonic authority over the Indian, although not absent, is certainly less discernible in Blasco Ibáñez’s writings on Mexico. Blasco Ibáñez is highly critical of the lack of any national initiatives that would effectively integrate the indigenous populations into society, assisting them to form an integral part of Mexican daily life: "No es que yo crea al indio un elemento despreciable; pero ¿qué han hecho ustedes por él? Ha sido robado y maltratado en cien años de independencia tal vez más que en los tres siglos de rutinaria administración española" (El militarismo 203). For this reason, it is through educating the indigenous populations that a crucial step toward civility in Mexico may be initiated: “[A]l pobre indígena . . . nadie ha enseñado el camino de la escuela . . . y su malicia de campesino le enseña que en México no es leyendo libros como los hombres se hacen poderosos y gobiernan a los otros, sino montados en un jaco . . . el rifle a un costado y el machete colgado del puño” (El militarismo 180-81).35

With regard to his earlier remarks, here Blasco Ibáñez’s empathy towards the plight of Mexico’s indigenous peoples is evidence of the inconsistent nature with which he imagines Latin America’s indigenous populations. In Argentina he disregards the presence of that nation’s indigenous peoples in an effort to provide a tired Europe with a representation of a progress-driven Argentina that is unhindered by how the European social imaginary has portrayed Latin America as a “black” continent; that is, largely inhabited by marginal subjects.

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35 The importance of educating the indigenous peoples is re-emphasised later in Blasco Ibáñez’s text: “[L]os revolucionarios lo exterminaron [el indio] en grandes masas al llevarlo a pelear por cosas que no entiende, y ningún partido le hizo conocer el camino de la escuela. Tal vez sean algo esos indios cuando la nación se vea próspera; pero ahora no pasan de ser eternos comparsas de todos los engaños políticos” (El militarismo 203-04).
The lack of a visible indigenous presence in Argentina in Blasco Ibáñez’s text, an aspect that he finds highly positive, is in stark contrast to his treatment of Mexico. There, aside from those whom he depicts playing the role of the voiceless “comparsa” (*El militarismo* 139), the masses of indigenous are seen as vehemently resistant to foreign influence, which, for Blasco Ibáñez, casts Mexico in a hostile light vis-à-vis Argentina. However, Mexico’s indigenous are also imagined as active and intelligent, fighting for their individual and collective freedoms and against their manipulation by those in positions of power (132). Indeed, as noted above, Blasco Ibáñez calls for their access to education so that they too might be taught to lead and, in turn, become valued members of society. Nevertheless, it is an education as he deems it appropriate, since he rejects indigenous-focused education initiatives that exalt Aztec traditions while denigrating Spain’s legacy in the Americas.

Instead of Vasconcelos’s claim of cultural uniformity in Latin America, for Albiñana Sanz it is precisely the diversity of Mexico’s ethnic and linguistic makeup that renders problematic all attempts to revive Spain’s cultural hegemony in the region. Similarly, with regard to Blasco Ibáñez, the inherently troubled *mestizo* is far from constituting the so-called chosen “race” to guide the future of humanity. For him, this figure has supposedly inherited the worst traits of the Spaniard and the Indian, traits to which Mexico’s violence and militarism of the 1920s can be attributed (*El militarismo* 139).

However, where Vasconcelos and Blasco Ibáñez’s visions of cultural homogeneity in Latin America can be seen in partial alignment is in their treatment of Argentina. Following the first section of *La raza cósmica*, which explores the positive qualities of *mestizaje*, the two lesser-acknowledged sections consist of a travel memoir of Vasconcelos’ diplomatic experiences in Brazil and Argentina in 1922. According to José Joaquín Blanco, it was in Argentina that Vasconcelos found “la patria ideal, democrática, próspera, sin ‘barbarie’ ni conflictos de raza, con menores contrastes sociales” (119). Yet, as one commentator has noted, the final section on Argentina, as the space of hope for all Spanish speakers against the Anglo-Saxon Other, dilutes markedly his argument for *mestizaje* precisely because that
nation lacks a significant indigenous presence (M. G. Miller 32). What Vasconcelos supports, in consonance with Blasco Ibáñez, is a European *mestizaje*, from which arises not the *mestizo* but the alleged pre-eminence of the Castilians. According to Vasconcelos, the superiority of the *castellanos* is attributable to their so-called assimilatory faculty for melding together diverse European cultures within the Argentine space, a factor that resonates to a certain extent with Rojas’ approach to Spain and his hopes for Argentina, ideas to be developed in Part Three. Vasconcelos, then, like Blasco Ibáñez, offers an exalted image of modern Spain transplanted to Argentina and reimagined in the throes of its spiritual and material progress, demonstrating that the rights to forging Civilization do not lie in the domain of the Anglo-Saxons alone (*Cósmica* 147-48, 173).

What is more, Vasconcelos, going against the grain of the ideals of the Mexican Revolution, reaffirms the privilege afforded to Spain in Latin America by extending it to Mexico at the end of the 1920s, during the height of hispanophobia. Then, Mexican hostility towards the Peninsula and Spaniards living in Mexico had been fuelled largely by the Cristero War (1926-1929): a virtual civil conflict during which militant Catholics in Mexico, or *cristeros*, opposed to the secular modernisation called for by the Revolution, rose up in arms against the government.36 For these Catholic guerrillas, Mexican Catholicism was seen as a direct, positive legacy of Spain’s influence in the Americas. Being Catholic in Mexico at this time was thus seen to equate to a pro-Spanish stance and, therefore, one that conflicted with the aims of the Revolution (Pérez Montfort, “Indigenismo” 368). In 1928 hispanophobia appeared to reach a climax. It was then that a government-sponsored pamphlet was published that urged the expropriation of all assets held in Spanish hands, prompting the wrath of Vasconcelos and his vindication of Spain’s presence in his homeland (Pérez Montfort, “Indigenismo” 369). As he asserts: “Renegar de lo español sería renegar asimismo del resto de la América hispana y no sólo de España, puesto que el resto de la América nuestra es tan española como España.

36 For more on the Cristero War, see Keen and Haynes 299.
Por cualquier lado que se le mire, desespañolizar es lo mismo que traicionar” (Vasconcelos, “Disolución” 14).

If, for Vasconcelos, Mexico had betrayed its Peninsular heritage, for fervent right-wing Catholics like Albiñana Sanz back in Spain, victory for the Second Republic in 1931 spelt the betrayal of Catholicism as the perceived foundation of Spain’s national essence. As Pike has affirmed, for conservative Catholics, the anti-clericalism of the Second Republic had dissolved the ideal of the allegedly traditional, authentic Spanish nation and turned Spain into “an antipatria” (275). In Mexico, the land, labour and economic reforms instituted under the liberal presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940) caused further alarm in Spain for the Catholic Right. It feared that Mexico, suspected of an ideological alignment with revolutionary Russia, had become an atheistic, socialist state (Pike 294-95). Thus, Albiñana Sanz, as a Spaniard and a staunchly conservative Catholic, was doubly affected by the aspirations of the Revolution during the latter period of his time in Mexico, which were seen as a threat to Catholicism and Spain’s historical legacy.

What has become evident in my examination of Blasco Ibáñez and Albiñana Sanz’s accounts of Argentina and Mexico is the deep division between the positive representations of Argentina and the undoubted hostility and condemnation with which each approaches Mexico. As I have argued, such contrasting images owe themselves to Mexico’s disdain for its Spanish roots during the post-revolution hispanophobia of the 1920s. It was then that the doctrine of mestizaje and aggressive supporters of Indianism were proclaiming alternatives to Mexico’s Peninsular heritage, opting to exalt the nation’s indigenous past as a means of nation-formation. In contrast, Argentina, as revealed by Blasco Ibáñez, showcases the potential for a positive postimperial image of Spain to emerge to correct the inaccuracies of the Black Legend. He envisions Argentina as a hospitable space for the relocation of Europe’s neglected working classes, among which Spain’s workers will be most visible, confirming Spain’s capacity for industrial and intellectual progress.
In his attempt to represent Argentina in a positive light, however, Blasco Ibáñez neglects to address there the very real issues of poverty, class and ethnic tensions, and social inequalities that had been the principal concern of his social novels set in Spain just a few years prior. Although Argentina is refigured as a Melting Pot, an assimilatory force for eliminating differences and creating of a new mode of being, the assimilation that it effects is selective and manipulated, since Peninsular immigrants are to rise above others to reassert Spain’s presence in Latin America, thus contradicting the very premise of the metaphor of the Melting Pot.

In many ways, the trope of the Melting Pot in Argentina, by serving to imagine a uniform sense of identity, functioned in a comparable fashion to the doctrine of mestizaje in Mexico. However, accounting for both Blasco Ibáñez and Albiñana Sanz’s disdain for the latter was the fact that, in Argentina, assimilation was conceived as a European-led mestizaje that did not devalue the alleged prestige of Spain’s legacy in the Americas. In contrast, the doctrine of mestizaje in Mexico, and more overtly the Indianist movement, had been hostile to foreign influence and, in particular, to the presence of Spanish immigrants. This antagonism leads Albiñana Sanz to denounce what is, for him, a grotesque indigenous-led nationalism in Mexico and call for Spain’s cultural and spiritual imposition there all the more vehemently. In conclusion, there is a total failure on the part of Blasco Ibáñez and Albiñana Sanz to approach Latin America without reviving Spain’s imperial history in the nation’s cultural imaginary. What Reyes had hoped might be the future capacity of Spain to gravitate with a sense of empathy towards the former Latin American colonies without neoimperialist aspirations is, in the travels and texts of Blasco Ibáñez and Albiñana Sanz at least, far from eventuating.

Ironically, neither Argentina’s ethnic cohesion, alluded to by Blasco Ibáñez through the Melting Pot, nor its modernity, highly valued by the Valencian also, were aspects of Argentine society that gave much heart to two of its cultural nationalists, Rojas and Gálvez. Unlike Blasco Ibáñez, both failed to be convinced that out of the amalgamation of immigrating cultures, Argentina had forged a unified national spirit. Rather, they considered that
immigration and the modern pursuit of material gain were fragmenting Argentine society. In Part Three, I trace a reversal of Blasco Ibáñez’s trajectory south, or what was his escape from Spain’s stagnation to modern Argentina. With Ugarte’s positive embrace of modernity as a foil, it is precisely the perceived ills caused by the modern sensibility that lead Rojas and Gálvez to Spain, where their quest is to imagine a historic, idealised Spain as a solution to Argentina’s disunity and a refuge from a purely utilitarian modernity.
In the decades following Argentina’s independence from Spain, a struggle developed between Argentina’s elites, who sought the political power to define and control the emerging nation-state in accordance with two opposing ideologies. The first was that held by the liberal Unitarians, whose goal was to nationalise Buenos Aires and to unify the nation by opening it up to international commerce. The second of these ideologies was promoted by the Federalist landowners, oligarchies that envisaged greater autonomy for the provinces and less centralised control. In 1829 it was the latter of these that prevailed under the authoritarianism of rural caudillo and wealthy estanciero, Juan Manuel de Rosas. His dictatorial rule, as Governor of Buenos Aires, lasted until 1852 and was characterised by privilege being granted to the landed elite in the provinces. Through cunning and repression, he sought to consolidate his power there by building alliances with landowners in the country’s massive rural expanses.

Two of the most vocal opponents of the Rosas regime and its version of Federalism, and whose voices spoke of the ideals of liberal Unitarianism, were political theorist Juan Bautista Alberdi (1810-1884) and writer, liberal statesman, and Argentine president from 1868 to 1874, Domingo Sarmiento (1811-1888). In rejecting the consolidation of power in the hands of the landed aristocracy in the provinces, Alberdi and Sarmiento considered a renewal of the theme of Argentine national unity along differing lines to those of Rosas. Although
Alberdi favoured a more authoritarian approach in support of his liberal policies, it appeared that Sarmiento, at least on the surface, adhered to more progressive models that upheld constitutional democracy as the ideal form of government.\textsuperscript{1} Generally speaking, however, the vision of liberal positivists like Alberdi and Sarmiento was to effect the nation’s unification through the promotion of mass immigration to Argentina, so as to pursue the goal of the nation’s material progress based on North American and Northern European models. It was with these foreign examples in mind that Alberdi’s \textit{Bases} (1852) underscored the crucial belief that, in Argentina, “[n]ecesitamos constituciones, necesitamos una política de creación, de población, de conquista sobre la soledad y el desierto,” which was a premise exemplified in his often cited maxim, “en América, gobernar es poblar” (40).\textsuperscript{2} Heavily influenced by the example offered by the United States, this text subsequently became a pivotal element for the drafting of the Argentine Constitution in 1853.

Sarmiento’s own literary praise in favour of European immigration as the impetus for Argentina’s civilising project, which also amounted to an offensive against the politics of caudillismo, was voiced in his 1845 text, \textit{Facundo: Civilización y barbarie}. While a little over half a century later Blasco Ibáñez would contemplate the positive side to Argentina’s territorial expanses,\textsuperscript{3} for Sarmiento, Argentina’s enormous territory represented a distinct obstacle to the modernising process and national progress. For him, it was in the nation’s solitary wastelands where “los salvajes,” or the allegedly wild Indians, preyed upon “innocent” rural communities (\textit{Facundo} 56). Such was the supposed barbarism of the desert, facilitated by the immense distances between settlements, that barbarity, according to Sarmiento, was seen as the norm, thus rendering any pursuit of “civilisation” an unrealistic aim (70). Nevertheless, in his introduction to \textit{Facundo}, Sarmiento challenges the immutability of the state of the nation

\textsuperscript{1} For a more thorough exploration of the conflict between these opposing political and economic ideologies of the Unitarians and the Federalists, see David Rock, \textit{Argentina 1516-1987: From Spanish Colonization to Alfonsín} (Berkeley: U of California P, 1987) 96-131, and Halperín Donghi 108-13, 131-38.

\textsuperscript{2} The full title of Juan Bautista Alberdi’s text is \textit{Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República de Argentina}.

\textsuperscript{3} Blasco Ibáñez notes in \textit{Argentina y sus grandezas} that it was in Argentina’s vast, diverse tracts of land, that a fertile, exploitable resource was to be found, “[t]an favorecida y mejorada . . . al recibir la herencia de la naturaleza, que posee todos los climas, todas las vegetaciones y hasta todas las razas” (36-38).
under Rosas, as he asks: “¿Hemos de abandonar un suelo de los más privilegiados de la América a las devastaciones de la barbarie? . . . ¿Hemos de cerrar voluntariamente la puerta de la inmigración europea que llama con golpes repetidos para poblar nuestros desiertos y hacernos . . . pueblo innumerables como las arenas del mar?” (44). His response was an emphatic call to the contrary, noting that an end to the current tyranny of the Rosas regime would be inevitable: “[E]s ley de la humanidad que los intereses nuevos, las ideas fecundas, el progreso, triunfen al fin de las tradiciones envejecidas, de los hábitos ignorantes y de las preocupaciones estacionarias” (45).

Argentina’s political and social redirection, along what Sarmiento thought was to be its “cauce ordinario” (Facundo 60), away from alleged savagery and the brutal caudillismo of the Rosas regime, was itself, ironically, facilitated by violent initiatives; it was Sarmiento’s goal to eliminate the so-called barbarism deemed innate in the nation’s indigenous, black and criollo populations, as these were seen as obstacles to civilisation and advancement. The support and success of General Julio Roca’s campaign against the indigenous and rural communities of the interior, known as the “Conquest of the Desert,” was instrumental to this end.¹ In what amounted to “an elitist makeover of society,” according to Julia Rodríguez, the resulting void in the interior prompted national leaders to manufacture artificially a sense of national unification by striving to create, by way of immigration, the nation’s “new citizen” (6). Basing their positivist ideologies with regard to “race” on late nineteenth-century scientific thought for this contrived sense of unity, Argentina’s elite, Rodríguez notes, “sought to emulate the Anglo-Saxons and transcend the supposedly inherent tendencies of their own Latinness” (4). Consequently, a national environment considered conducive to the civilising projects as first envisaged by Alberdi and Sarmiento had been created. In a little over fifty years, the national population had grown from 1.1 million in 1857 to 7.8 million in 1914 (Rock 132, 165). The

¹ General Julio A. Roca was made Minister of War in 1877 and assumed the presidency in 1880 and again in 1898, leading the nation for a six-year term on each of these occasions. In what came to be known as “la conquista del desierto,” Roca headed a military campaign against the indigenous populations in the provinces, forcibly removing these communities from the land or exterminating them altogether, so as to extend Argentina’s national territory on a massive scale for later exploitation and development. See Rock 154-55.
ideals of the nation’s political and intellectual elite had largely been realised, for, as Argentina was propelled into the twentieth century, Helg notes that the nation had become “of predominantly European stock” (38), even though the reality of Argentina’s strategic immigration saw the nation’s doors swung open by those immigrants arriving from southern, rather than northern Europe.

The arrival in droves of European immigrants to Buenos Aires constituted a major concern for those writers and intellectuals, such as Rojas and Gálvez, who became preoccupied with the idea of Argentina’s national unity based on ethnic and cultural terms. During a comparable historical period, and as explored in Part Two, Mexico was able to draw on its potent indigeneity to promote a sense of indigenous cultural nationalism. As José Moya notes, this nationalism, based on deeply rooted tradition, was constructed to counterbalance Europeanisation and the “equally foreign” idea of Hispanism (363). Unlike Mexico, Argentina seemed unable to formulate a similar bicultural framework for envisaging an idea of national identity between hispanistas and indigenistas following the Conquest of the Desert. Nevertheless, as N. Miller affirms, in early twentieth-century Argentina such a bicultural model, albeit transformed, did come to dominate the national debate regarding identity. While the indigenous and black populations had been, for the most part, either exterminated or marginalised, it was the massive immigrant population that effectively replaced these as the nation’s Other (Shadow 164).

The first decade of the twentieth century had witnessed one generation of Argentine writers, the so-called Centenary Generation, respond to the need for national unity during a period of profound and rapid change in the sociocultural environment of the nation. This generation was thus labelled, in retrospect, because their most intense intellectual activity and literary output came to light in the years around 1910, during the centennial celebrations of the May Revolution of 1810, which, six years later, resulted in Argentina’s formal declaration of independence from Spain. Its writers included Rojas, Gálvez, Emilio Becher, Emilio Ortiz
Grognet, Juan Pablo Echagüe, Ricardo Olivera, Alberto Gerchunoff and Atilio Chiappori.\(^5\) The works of the Centenary Generation reacted to the potential threat of the dilution of an allegedly authentic *argentinitad* due to the nation’s modernisation and rampant European immigration, which had aimed to fill the void left by the displaced or extinguished indigenous and black populations. As Carlos Payá and Eduardo Cárdenas have noted, for the writers of the Centenary Generation, “era el aluvión de extranjeros, ávidos de dinero y faltos de raíces en el país, el que había transformado esta reposada nación en una agitada factoría” (15).

These writers and intellectuals also rejected the positivist thought and materialist culture of Buenos Aires, which, they feared, would come to compromise the cultural integrity of the entire nation. As most of them hailed from Argentina’s interior provinces, their astonishment at the cosmopolitan capital, as an arena for social tension, had made it all the more possible for them to reject in their work the preciousness of elite modernism, enabling them to view the nation in a different light (Cárdenas and Payá 26). In this way, the writers of the Centenary Generation aimed to rediscover the nation’s alleged heritage and tradition by revalorising Argentina’s forgotten interior provinces (Quijada 16). The vehicle used to voice their national concerns was largely Gálvez and Olivera’s short-lived journal from 1903 to 1905, *Ideas*. What came to light in its articles were Argentina’s first concerted expressions of nationalist thought, which, a few years later, Mónica Quijada asserts, would be coherently laid out “en obras de ensayo y literatura y cuyo contenido puede resumirse en la siguiente trilogía conceptual: espíritu, tradición, raíces hispánicas” (18).

Indeed, this trilogy is crucial for my analysis in Part Three of the experiences in Spain of three Argentine writers and intellectuals: Ugarte, Rojas and Gálvez. As cultural nationalists, Rojas and Gálvez were all too weary of the pitfalls of modernity and the threat of materialism to Argentine cultural values and ideals. Both the modern consciousness and increasing materialist values appeared to thwart Argentina’s sense of cultural and spiritual cohesion and

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\(^5\) According to N. Miller, rather than the political leanings of the Centenary Generation, it was their common ground as young intellectuals witnessing the tensions and threats posed by mass immigration and a Europe-focused elite that did most to inform their distinctive brands of nationalist thought and propelled them to influence, each in their own way, Argentina’s self-image. See N. Miller, *Shadow* 164-65.
what they saw as the necessary formation of a new sense of nationhood to combat each of these dangers. However, rather than oppose modernisation, their aim was to balance the inevitability of material progress and cosmopolitan diversity with a new-found reverence for the Argentine nation and the continuance of its cultural legacy. It was the desired homogeneity of ideals, which had been seemingly fragmenting from the force and mass of European immigration to Argentina at the turn of the twentieth century, that most concerned Rojas and Gálvez.

In 1947, while travelling in the Alcarria region east of Madrid, Spanish writer Camilo José Cela, hinting perhaps at the lack of technology there and its need to modernise, opined that the village of Pastrana would have fared better had it conserved its loom rather than its artistic depiction in Diego Velázquez's canvas, *Las Hilanderas* (c.1657). For Cela, Pastrana’s focus on the past is representative of the nation’s general misguided obsession with its former Golden Age glory, and its failure to find answers to the dilemmas of post-Civil War Spain (160). Nevertheless, I will argue here that, by prizing similar visions of a glorious, spiritual, and artistic past as he travelled in Spain in the first decade of the twentieth century, Gálvez inverts the priorities upon which Cela was to muse four decades later. It is precisely Argentina’s loss of higher spiritual values, and its lack of a will to create art and affect the soul as a consequence of the materialism and utilitarianism of modernity, that prompts Gálvez to imagine Spain as a spiritual production kept in a state of quarantine. Through Spain’s historical sites and pre-modern towns and cities, refigured as art pieces and spaces for meditation and reflection, Gálvez, as I will develop, aims to instil in Argentina a new cultural and spiritual idealism. In this process, I will contend that Gálvez provides two alternative images in his discourse on Spain. The first is the “infection” of spiritualism, posited as an antidote to the contagion of Argentina’s detrimental materialism. The second is an image of the urban space that challenges Sarmiento’s contention that civilisation resided in the city and barbarism in the rural towns and provinces. Furthermore, I will propose that both Rojas and Gálvez see Argentina’s need to create and cement a national historical sensibility by way of a
positive and self-affirming sense of the past that, rather than stem the nation’s modernisation or advocate an outright return to past ways, may flourish in tandem with the nation’s modernity; as Rojas declares: “Vivir de una manera histórica es, acaso, quitar un poco de su intensidad y su grandeza materiales al momento presente; pero es dar un valor y una permanencia morales a la vida, reviviendo en recuerdo el ayer que huye, y anticipando el mañana en la vislumbre de un ideal colectivo” (La restauración 312).

Furthermore, I will argue that Rojas’ positive re-evaluation of Spain stands resolutely outside stereotypical accounts of that nation’s uncivilised backwardness and intellectual incapacity, attitudes most characteristic of the Black Legend, which, in Argentina, came to be perpetuated with the utmost conviction by Sarmiento himself. It is Rojas’ purpose to “rectificar un día los errores de visión de Sarmiento,” who, for lack of historical depth, a defining characteristic of his generation, Rojas opines, naively judged the worth of a people by its technological advances and the type of utilitarianism so vehemently criticised in Rodó’s Ariel. Rather than providing evidence of transatlantic disparities, Rojas’ account of Spain, in his virtual attempt to unearth the telluric “mystery” of the nation and its people, illuminates a historical moment and a cultural encounter of the type identified by N. Miller, which attempts to offer a historiography of identity and nationalism in Latin America. According to her, instead of focusing on the element of difference, Latin American nations sought cultural alignment to foreign nations through the recognition of similarities in order to construct their own cultural identities (“Historiography” 216).

While my analysis of Rojas’ Retablo español and Gálvez’s El solar de la raza forms the crux of Part Three, brief reflection on Ugarte’s Visiones de España offers a counter image of

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6 One of the most often cited examples of Black Legend discourse in Argentina is Domingo Sarmiento’s critical account of Spain put forth in Viajes por Europa, África i América, 1845-1847, first published in 1849. Written some sixty years prior, Sarmiento’s vision of Spain stands in stark contrast to Ricardo Rojas’ Retablo español, inasmuch as the former Argentine president saw Spain as a veritable ruin, adverse to technological advances and general progress in the Arts and Sciences. Upon his arrival in Madrid Sarmiento makes his hostility towards the former metropolis clear, when he portrays Spain in a state of sickness. Even more telling is his obvious lack of sympathy, unwillingness to offer a cure, and even malicious desire to perpetuate Spain’s so-called pain: “Esta Aspaña (sic) que tantos malos ratos me ha dado, téngola por fin en el anfiteatro, bajo la mano; la palpo ahora, le estiro las arrugas, i si por fortuna me toca andarle con los dedos sobre una llaga a fuer de médico, aprieto maliciosamente la mano para que le duela.” See Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Viajes por Europa, África i América, 1845-1847, ed. Javier Fernández (Nanterre: Université Paris X, Centre de recherches latino-américaines, 1993) 127.
Spain to those presented by Rojas and Gálvez. Rather than seek out imaginings of the past as an idealised sanctuary, Ugarte’s focus on Spain’s industrialising periphery and its will to progress reveals a commitment to the present moment—and Spain’s future—rather than to the nation’s preterite grandeur. Although he is sympathetic to Spain’s state of decadence, Ugarte shuns the focus of Centenary writers like Rojas and Gálvez on the past and laments an image of a decayed Spain suffocating under the weight of its own history and tradition.

Ugarte had belonged to a group of writers retrospectively known as the Generation of 1900 and as the _Mercurio de América_, which had preceded the Centenary Generation and embraced the elitist modernism that those of the Centenary would later come to reject. In addition to Ugarte, the so-called Generation of 1900 included intellectual figures such as Ángel de Estrada, social scientist José Ingenieros, and modernist writer Leopoldo Lugones. In terms of their literary production, these writers had sought to counter the Realist and Naturalist schools by looking back to the symbolism and modernism of Rubén Darío, as well as to French writers like Charles Baudelaire and Paul Verlaine (Cárdenas and Payá 25). In this sense the Generation of 1900 was, like Darío, more cosmopolitan in its outlook than its successors, the Centenary writers: a fact not without correlation, given that Ugarte had been born and raised in Buenos Aires while the majority of the Centenary Generation of writers, like Rojas and Gálvez, were natives of the interior provinces, as noted earlier. According to Quijada, the quest of the Generation of 1900 was for a literary expression that, in its explorations of the subconscious and the pursuit of an ideal beauty, aimed to reject the then current tendency towards explaining social phenomena through scientific positivism (17).

Reflecting on the Generation of 1900 and his contemporaries late in life, Ugarte indicated

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7 Articles and texts in Spanish that refer to this generation of writers do so with the name “La Generación del 900,” or “La Generación novecentista.” For examples, see Norberto Galasso’s Prologue to a compilation of Ugarte’s writings entitled _La nación latinoamericana_, ix-xxv, and Claudio Maíz, _Imperialismo y cultura de la resistencia: Los ensayos de Manuel Ugarte._

8 However, N. Miller notes that Lugones is sometimes considered as belonging to the Centenary Generation. While neither Lugones himself nor the writers of the Centenary Generation would have included him in its ranks, in terms of seeking to forge a unique Argentine identity they did share some aspects, which merits Lugones’ inclusion with the likes of Rojas and Manuel Gálvez. See N. Miller, _Shadow_ 164.
that, culturally and ideologically, its writers situated themselves between Madrid, their “punto de partida,” and Paris, as the Generation’s “ambiente espiritual” (“Los escritores” 295).

With intellectual residence in Europe came the realisation that physical distance from their homeland had erased political borders, or what Ugarte calls “líneas secundarias,” back home and highlighted instead the nature of Latin America’s continental essence. Viewed from afar, Ugarte remarks, this essence permitted him, and other writers of the Generation of 1900, to speak of Latin America as a single nation and it was the consciousness of this one “nation” that they sought to awaken (“Los escritores” 295-96). Ironically, although based on the notion of a uniform “race,” as discussed in Part Two, Blasco Ibáñez had criticised what he saw as the blinkered vision of most Europeans, who, when contemplating Latin America, paid little attention to its diversity and instead saw it similarly as a borderless, homogeneous whole.

More overtly political than either Rojas or Gálvez, Ugarte was committed to the unification of Latin America as the Patria Grande, in a similar fashion to how Martí had envisaged the continental union of the Latin American nations. However, there was one important distinction: Ugarte’s ideological belief in the values of socialism to achieve this union. In fact, while the trilogy of influences for the Centenary Generation would be Argentina’s spirit, its idea of tradition, and its Spanish heritage, the trilogy of issues that most profoundly and ideologically propelled Ugarte, José Luis Rubio Cordón affirms, centred on Latin American unity, anti-imperialism and socialism (15-16). It was precisely Ugarte’s novel approach to socialism that resulted in the marginalisation of his voice within Argentina, even though he shared with the likes of Rodó, José María Vargas Vila and Rufino Blanco Fombona the ideals of the harmony of Latin America as one nation united against the neoimperialist threat (Galasso, “Prólogo” xviii-xix). At the same time that socialists in fin-de-siècle Europe strove to justify colonialism, and those in Argentina saw in the patriot a traitor to their ideals,

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9 For further discussion on the similarities between Ugarte and Martí, see Adriana Arpini, “Ecos martianos en el latinoamericanismo de un argentino: Manuel Ugarte,” Cuadernos Americanos 34.4 (1992): 164-70.
Ugarte’s discourse, Norberto Galasso remarks, constituted “una mezcla explosiva” that tried to combine socialism and nationalism in the form of a Latin American democratic nationalism. Indeed, as Galasso points out, Ugarte was perhaps Latin America’s first intellectual to attempt to marry socialism with national (continental) liberation from imperialism (“Prólogo” xviii-xix).

Ugarte’s stance against imperialism, a conviction he stood by throughout his life, had consolidated following a trip he had made to the United States in 1899. While not denying the moral and intellectual threat to the South that the United States posed, Ugarte saw the US as a more blatant economic and political menace than either Rojas or Gálvez would later recognise explicitly in their writings. In an essay published in 1901, Ugarte likens its commercial and moral invasions of the Caribbean region to waves that, as they roll south and penetrate the fragile breakwater that is Central America, will gain intensity if they are not confronted with a concerted continental defence against total submersion (“El peligro” 66-67). In contrast, however, as will be discussed below, for Rojas and Gálvez the threat of the North lay more in its capacity as a cultural arena and host for the infections of materialism and utilitarianism, which both writers perceived as attacking Argentina’s cultural and spiritual integrity.

It was Ugarte’s commitment to initiate the defence of the Patria Grande against the North that saw him publish El porvenir de la América latina (1910). A decade later, and with an air of regret, his prologue to the new revised edition of this text alluded to the increasingly apparent tendency of Latin America’s political elites to either play down or dismiss altogether the threat of US imperialism. Even more alarming for Ugarte than the lack of a will to resist was the blind acceptance with which these elites greeted the imperialist rhetoric of the North, which proclaimed that territorial expansion, and influence in Latin America, was the United States’ supposed Manifest Destiny. What would ensue from this complacency and disregard,

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10 A more specific analysis of Ugarte’s brand of socialism can be found in Norberto Galasso, Manuel Ugarte: Los orígenes del socialismo (Buenos Aires: U de Buenos Aires, 1973).
Ugarte forewarned, was the certain demise of Latin America’s continental character and the rapidly decreasing ability to effect its salvation (*América española* xii).

Writing this prologue in 1920, the same year as Blasco Ibáñez’s scathing attack on Mexican militarism, Ugarte notes that the only combative challenge to US dominance had come in the form of General Venustiano Carranza’s Mexico. Albeit simplistically, Ugarte contends that the dilemma of the Latin American nations lies in the decision either to follow the example of Mexico and resist the North, or bow to its influence, as in the case of Cuba. In fact, he opines, it was precisely their internal struggles as divided entities, “desmigajadas y dispersas,” that had rendered the Latin American nations vulnerable to neoimperialism in the first place. What was lacking, Ugarte asserted, was their “unión espiritual” (xvi-xvii). Consequently, in a comparable fashion to the continental tour of Latin America undertaken by Altamira, who sought to profess the region’s spiritual and cultural ties with Spain, Ugarte set out on his own journey around the Latin American nations. It was this sociopolitical context that prompted the new edition of Ugarte’s text. Calling it the definitive edition, and directing it to Spaniards as well as Spanish Americans, what is most noteworthy is the modification Ugarte made to the title. Originally published in 1910 as *El porvenir de la América latina*, it was a title that, by his own admission, Ugarte regarded as a little vague. Thus, by 1920 it had become *El porvenir de la América española*, which, he explains, “mejor expresa el pensamiento del autor” (xix). Whether this modification provides evidence that Ugarte had begun to give greater value to Latin America’s Peninsular heritage is unclear, since he does not elaborate any further on the reason for the change. However, given Latin America’s apparent failure to address adequately on its own the menace posed by the US, and in widening the readership of his text to include the Peninsula, I suggest that Ugarte recognised the combined role that the Americas and Spain needed to play in a unified effort to offset US imperialism, even though Spain’s capacity to do so at that time was limited.

Nearly two decades earlier, Ugarte’s contemplation of Spain and its need for national regeneration had been far more thorough. Towards the end of 1902, Ugarte spent about four
months travelling in Spain. In contrast to the imaginings of Spain by Rojas and Gálvez, developed below, Ugarte’s 1904 text, Visions de España: Apuntes de un viajero argentino, expresses his regret at the stagnation of Spain’s tradition-laden interior provinces and their perceived aversion to modernisation. Although he shows empathy for Spain’s depleted national will after 1898, Ugarte, like Darío, sees Spain’s future in the industrialising centres of the nation’s geographical periphery. Indeed, during his stay in the Basque Country he remarks that San Sebastián, after Barcelona, Valencia and Bilbao, is “la única población que vive en España con el siglo” (Visiones 24).

Since Ugarte himself had noted in his essay, “Los escritores iberoamericanos del 900,” that this generation, truly continental in scope, counted Darío amongst its writers (295), it is not surprising that both men shared a similar prognosis for Spain’s recovery. In essence, what Ugarte called for was Spain’s Europeanisation: its ability to overcome its obsessive adherence to a traditional past, and to look beyond its borders for renewed intellectual and cultural stimuli. For the Spaniard, Ugarte confirms, “[t]iene una gran debilidad: su veneración por el pasado; una gran energía: su fidelidad al terruño; y un gran defecto: su prevención contra todo lo francés” (Visiones 15). During his stay in Salamanca his description of that city’s stagnant atmosphere acts as a fitting parallel for his thoughts on the whole of the nation’s interior. There he adopts an analogy akin to Darío’s description of Madrid as a disused house to imagine an enclosed space where the customs, ideas and the people have remained the same for over a century. Indeed, it is for lack of “oxygen,” in the form of new values and ideas, that the population, subjected to an asphyxiating, stale environment, is imagined as suffocating within “un cuarto cuyas puertas no se abren desde hace mucho tiempo” (57). Unlike Ganivet’s call to barricade shut Spain’s doors in the hope of recapturing an allegedly lost national spirit (155), Ugarte, alluding to a much needed respect for the various regions’ cultural diversity and independent spirits, suggests an opposite approach for Spain’s recovery:

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11 By Ugarte’s own admission, the Generation of 1900, of which he belonged, was far from being restricted to Argentine writers alone since, apart from Nicaraguan Rubén Darío, it also included within it Peruvian José Santos Chocano, Colombian José María Vargas Vila, and Guatemalan Enrique Gómez Carrillo. See Ugarte, “Los escritores” 295.
“Abranse las puertas, déjese á cada cual su independencia, su iniciativa, su personalidad, y
tornará la primavera y volverán á brotar flores” (Visiónes 49).

Nevertheless, where Darío and Ugarte’s visions for Spain deviate, I contend, is in their respective attitudes towards the nation’s traditional, idealised past. As developed in Part One, Darío sought a balance between modernisation and a cosmopolitan outlook, and safeguarding a sacred space within which Spain’s Quixotic ideas might continue to be nurtured amid the nation’s nascent modernity. In contrast, in a chapter aptly entitled “España triste,” Ugarte is much more critical of Spain’s past, its traditions and its customs since, for him, a people with traditions is a people in decay: “Cuando un pueblo empieza á tener tradiciones, es que ha dado todo lo que podía, y entra en el período del descenso. España tiene muchas tradiciones, demasiado plomo en las alas” (Visiónes 76-77).

Yet it is precisely this “plomo,” or a sense of tradition forged over time, that attracted writers like Rojas and Gálvez to Spain soon after Ugarte, and who were rather sceptical of the artistic value of the modern industrial city. In fact, while in Barcelona, Ugarte anticipates the sort of reaction to the modern, urban space that would later typify Gálvez’s suspicion of cities like Barcelona and Bilbao in El solar de la raza. Ugarte notes that locations of modernity prompt misgivings by those who deem such spaces resistant to cultivating poetry and the intellectual ideal. Moreover, in an era of utilitarianism and materialist pursuits, he adds, it was thought that true art had fled the great urban centres and sought refuge “en las selvas vírgenes, lejos del humo de las locomotoras y del estrépito de las máquinas” (Visiónes 161). Although Ugarte does not subscribe to such an outlook, Castile provides just such an imagined virgin space for Gálvez’s contemplation of Spain’s ancient towns in what is his own personal escape from the unfavourable aspects of modernity in Argentina.

Likewise, Ugarte’s intent to praise the instances of Peninsular modernity and its future potential is a marked divergence from Rojas’ focus on Spain’s prehistory in his effort to secure a representation of cultural unity as a lesson for Argentina. Nowhere is this disparity more emphatic than during Ugarte’s experience in Burgos where, for him, “todo es aniquilamiento,
tristeza, muerte infinita” (39). However, the real variance between Ugarte and Rojas’ priorities in Spain becomes evident during Ugarte’s conversation with two young French women who were also visiting Burgos. The women are explaining to him their sheer excitement at having earlier become lost in Burgos’ narrow, twisting streets, before a young boy was able to escort them to the Plaza Mayor, where they found a small arts and crafts shop. Their delight at the local handiwork, the women remark, reminded them of the trinkets they had acquired from their travels in what was then Saigon in French Indochina. Just as they had done with those purchases, their aim was to create a “collection” from their Burgos souvenirs that would recall their experiences there (Visiones 39-40). For Ugarte, what is at stake is their disrespectful treatment of Spain as an archaic space that recollects France’s orientalist vision of its colonies in the East: “Yo escuchaba en silencio, devorando la tristeza de oir (sic) hablar de España como de un país oriental por donde se viaja buscando las sensaciones de una civilización casi prehistórica” (40). Although it was not his mission to gather souvenirs in this manner, Rojas’ experience in Spain was, in large part, precisely an attempt to seek out similar “sensations of a prehistoric civilisation.” Thus, while such a purpose was greeted with intense sadness by Ugarte, Spain’s prehistory was actually intended as a useful tool for Argentina’s much desired sense of cultural cohesion by Rojas, to whom I now turn.

Rojas’ recourse to the past is understandable, given his acute awareness of what he saw as the pitfalls of modern society. Not only was he weary of the negative aspects of mass immigration, the means by which Argentina sought to forge its “new citizen” in the wake of its loss of indigeneity. He was also highly critical of its promotion and glorification of materialist culture during the nation’s rapid modernisation. Indeed, in his text Cosmópolis (1908), Rojas asserts that “[e]l cosmopolitismo materialista puede ser una etapa pero nunca la meta de nuestra civilización. El ideal político que Sarmiento y Alberdi predicaron . . . ha comportado, al realizarse, nuevos problemas morales que los escritores de nuestro tiempo no podríamos desdeñar” (xi). Thus, in his work Rojas leaned towards the aforementioned conceptual trilogy made up of a focus on Argentina’s spirit, tradition, and Peninsular heritage in an effort to
address this new moral dilemma, and to correct the alleged imbalance between materialism and the more profound ideal of Argentina’s cultural and spiritual cohesion.

The expressions of concern in Rojas’ *Cosmópolis* for the future of Argentine national identity during a period of massive European immigration were foremost in the writer’s mind as he travelled to Europe in the same year as that text’s publication. In 1908 Rojas visited Europe with a dual purpose. It was his intention to undertake a profound study of those nations that had impacted most on the development of Argentine identity during the period following Argentina’s independence from Spain. To this end, Rojas’ travels in Britain assisted the orientation of his ideas concerning Britain’s nineteenth-century economic influence in Argentina, while time spent in France and Italy shed light on the development of Argentine intellectual thought and on the origins of the majority of the nation’s then present-day immigrants, respectively. However, the primary purpose of Rojas’ tour of Europe was a profound study of European education systems, as commissioned by the state to promote pedagogical reform back home. Rojas’ findings and suggestions for change were subsequently laid down in *La restauración nacionalista* (1909), a text described as one of the first vehicles for voicing a distinct Argentine nationalism (Cárdenas and Payá 13). According to Julio Ramos, addressing the role of a revised curriculum for teaching the modern humanities, and its influence on the cultural life of the nation, brought to the fore the potency of the humanities in early twentieth-century Argentina “as a discipline capable of compensating for the crisis generated by modernization” (*Modernities* 235). Indeed, Rojas, one of the nation’s leading ideologues of educational reform, saw the revision of the humanities as fulfilling a higher pedagogical purpose and a wider philosophical ideal, in that it would counter Argentina’s so-called crisis of conscience (*La restauración* 10, 12). Consequently, in *La restauración nacionalista* Rojas’ call for the reorganisation of Argentina’s education system aims to forge a common sense of national identity through the nation’s schools, in direct response to the perceived societal divisiveness brought about by European immigration and foreign influence.
In so doing, however, Rojas does not intend to incite tension based on class, “race” or nationality:

Este libro, y los demás que con éste se relacionan, permiten probar que no he formulado mi doctrina para defender a una clase social contra otra, ni para espolear los odios arcaicos de la xenofobia, ni para aislar a mi nación entre otras de América . . . sino para dar a nuestro pueblo de inmigración . . . una conciencia social que haga de la Argentina un pueblo creador de cultura en el concierto de la vida internacional, a la cual pertenecemos. (La restauración 22)

Having addressed the role of education in Europe, another objective for Rojas was to stay several months in Spain. Although it was his last port of call during his time in Europe, it was the most crucial for the subsequent development of the writer’s theories on Argentine and Ibero-American cultural and spiritual identity. Rather than continue to pursue the ideals of educational reform in Argentina as he travelled through the Iberian Peninsula, Rojas carried with him to Spain in 1908 the idea that the Argentine capital “ha tendido á desespañolizarse, y acaso provengan sus más graves defectos de haber olvidado el propio genio de la raza, para caer en esta cosa híbrida donde vivimos” (Cosmópolis 44). Preoccupied at what he perceived was the regrettable descent of Argentina toward a state of cultural hybridity, brought on by the spiritual fragmentation caused by foreign immigration following the decimation of the nation’s indigenous peoples, Rojas’ quest in Spain is to rekindle a forgotten “genio de la raza.” Thus, like other writers of the Centenary Generation, he turns to the nation’s Peninsular origins, the legacy of which, for Argentina, was “the closest thing to an autochthonous tradition” (Moya 363). The search for such an allegedly native or popular tradition, he hopes, would act as a catalyst to consolidate a newly unified national, spiritual, and cultural identity in Argentina. The literary result of his travels in Spain in 1908 was Retablo español, published thirty years later in 1938.

12 It is in Cosmópolis that Rojas addresses a request made by Ramón Menéndez Pidal for him to seek out examples of popular romances tradicionales in the Americas for an anthology of popular verse that was to be published in Spain. In citing the difficulty of this venture, Rojas links the lack of such examples of popular verse in Buenos Aires to the Argentine capital’s tendency to sever its cultural and ethnic ties with Spain (39-49).
Less than three decades before Rojas’ travels in Spain, Ernest Renan had addressed the Sorbonne in 1882 with a lecture entitled “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?” There he emphasised the critical importance of forgetting the past as one of the defining characteristics of nationhood formation. For Renan, this wilful act of historical forgetfulness was to be so forcefully enacted upon the newly emerging nation that it was to border on a rejection of known historical fact: “Forgetting, I would even go as far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation” (11). Conversely, as Rojas seeks to revisit Argentina’s “forgotten” past, in the sense of its “desespañolización,” by casting his gaze back to Spain, it is not through forgetting the past that he considers that Argentina’s cultural unification may be forged, but through a contrived act of remembrance that would construct culturally a sense of national cohesiveness.

Despite such apparent disparities between Renan’s and Rojas’ visions, Gioconda Marún establishes a link between what she terms the “literary nationalism” of Rojas and the philological work of Renan. As a field of inquiry, the academic discipline of philology had been opened up during the eighteenth century. No longer restricted to the function of grammar and the classification of languages, it began to include the study of literature, “race,” customs and religion, and the distinct roles of each in the process of forging an image of the nation. According to Marún, Argentina’s fin-de-siècle literary nationalism was directly influenced by the new developments of eighteenth-century philology, because, in the attempts by literary nationalists to locate Argentina’s historical origins, they reflected upon not only “la herencia, la sangre, [y] la raza,” but also the nation and “el espíritu de la tierra.” These sources of inquiry were of most benefit, Marún notes, for Argentine writers Rojas and Leopoldo Lugones, at a time when the nation’s re-evaluation was deemed imperative due to societal changes caused by modernisation. Therefore, the notion of historical origins became a primary concern in the writings of both writers: “Al hacerlo con mirada crítica, como aconsejaban los filólogos, [Rojas y Lugones] vuelven al pasado para encontrar las raíces de una nacionalidad que no sólo el aluvión inmigratorio amenaza destruir, sino [también] el proceso de europeización,
universalización y secularización que se vivió a fines del siglo XIX en la Argentina, y que dio origen al modernismo” (Marún 268-71).

It is with this idea of Argentina’s historical origin in mind that Rojas turns to Spain, reaffirming that nation’s alleged homogeneous national spirit or “genio de la raza” in Retablo español. Contemplating Spain’s legacy and perceiving its future influence in Argentina, Rojas strives to make use of that past as a tool for re-imagining both Argentine identity and the wider scope of a so-called Ibero-American essence. Indeed, it is the imagined cohesion of the latter that is increasingly threatened by the neocolonial presence of the United States in Cuba and Puerto Rico.

In order to situate Retablo español and Rojas’ search for a cohesive vision of a unified Argentina, projected upon imaginings of an historic, eternal Spain, it is first necessary to consider in greater depth the theories presented in Cosmópolis (1908) and Blasón de plata (1912), conceived during Argentina’s centennial celebrations of independence in 1910. As expressed in his prologue, Rojas’ aim in Cosmópolis, published the same year as his departure for Europe, is to “fortalecer la cohesión del espíritu americano” (vii). Of prime importance to Rojas’ thesis in this text is the express need that Argentina forge its ethnic and spiritual cohesion: “[N]osotros aspiramos á ser, no solamente una entidad política sino también una entidad étnica y espiritual” (35). As he ponders the detrimental effects should this pursuit either fall on deaf ears or fail altogether, Rojas entertains a scenario in which the assimilatory potency of the often-used trope of Argentina as Melting Pot is rendered inadequate. In contrast to Blasco Ibáñez, Rojas imagines the possible negative outcomes should the nation be unable to construct a homogenising force capable of creating anew the identities of the masses of arriving immigrants:

Argentina va en camino de perder su carácter nacional, y si de la fusión de tantos elementos extraños como los que han cambiado su sangre y su alma, no resulta un tipo nuevo, tan característico y poderoso como el antiguo, podremos caer en la triste ralea de los pueblos híbridos y conquistables.
Necesitamos, en una palabra, salvar el núcleo nacional para afirmar nuestra unidad histórica en el tiempo y definir nuestra fisonomía de nación en el espacio. (*Cosmópolis* 38)

As was shown in Part Two, what Blasco Ibáñez prized most in Argentina was what he saw as the severance of ethnic, national and class-based ties that had formerly bound migrants to Argentina (other than those from Spain) to their European points of origin. As such, he essentially advocated a form of the doctrine of forgetting for emergent nations as upheld by Renan. Towards the end of *Blasón de plata* Rojas asserts that he is not against the arrival en masse of foreigners to Argentina. In fact, like Blasco Ibáñez, he emphatically calls would-be immigrants to the nation's shores: “Venid, todos, pues, á colaborar en nuestra causa de cultura” (*Blasón* 236), However, Rojas would deny that Renan’s doctrine of forgetting is a reality for immigrants in Argentina. He would similarly question the validity of the image of the modern nation as a Melting Pot, as described by Blasco Ibáñez. For Rojas, as he highlights in *Blasón de plata*, there is definite resistance on the part of new immigrants to what Blasco Ibáñez perceived was the power of Argentine cultural identity to assimilate the foreign. Instead, Rojas confirms, the assimilating force are the very immigrants themselves, who seek to absorb local Argentine culture. Thus, while the theme of Argentina as a Melting Pot is present in Rojas, the force of attraction occurs in reverse, a fact detrimental to his desire to see Argentine cultural identity imagine a sense of unity. For Rojas, assimilation is to be unidirectional. Only the Argentine must be capable of absorbing the foreign. As lessons to those who would strive to exert undue influence over the Argentine, then, Rojas offers the examples of contemporary North America and historic Spain, as allegedly effective receptacles for absorbing migrating peoples: “Hombres de Italia, renunciad á italianizarnos. Hombres de Francia, renunciad á galicanizarnos. Hombres de Alemania, renunciad á germanizarnos. Hombres de Inglaterra, renunciad á britanizarnos. No lo podríais. No lo queremos tampoco. Aprended la lección de Norteamérica, hombres. Aprended la experiencia de España, reyes” (*Blasón* 235).
Rather than simply pursue evidence of Argentina’s cultural and ethnic heritage in Spain, Rojas’ purpose is to attend to that nation’s experience as a space where, historically, waves of diverse, migrating peoples have settled and, apparently, later forged their cohesive union as Spaniards. In *Blasón de plata* Rojas alludes to historic Spain’s cultural hybridity as he describes its colonisation by invading Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans and Arabs. However, he asserts that Spain’s ability to found a sense of unified national identity under the Castilians was made possible by the land itself. For him, it was “el ambiente de las tierras ibéricas” that had created “un tipo y una civilización locales,” which, comprised of Celts, Iberians, Arabs and Visigoths, were all foreign in terms of territorial origins but had become “españoles por su posteridad en el suelo de España” (*Blasón* 232-33). In textualising these same notions in *Retablo español*, Rojas’ desire is that they serve to rectify Argentina’s alleged problematic status as a hybrid people lacking the homogeneity of spirit and ideals necessary to write the nation as a unified whole.

While the alleged successful assimilation of migrating peoples in Spain was a historical experience, far removed from the era of early twentieth-century modernity applicable to Argentina, US encouragement of mass immigration and efforts to assimilate its new arrivals were modern phenomena contemporary with Argentina’s own struggle with the foreign. Consequently, if, as Rojas mentions, North America also offers an effective model of assimilatory power, it is worth asking why he did not travel to the United States. However, given its neoimperialist encroachment upon Latin America at the time, together with criticism of North American materialism and utilitarianism in such widely read works as Rodó’s *Ariel*, it is not surprising that the US was not a feature of Rojas’ travel itinerary. Rojas urges those who would proclaim a sense of fraternity in his homeland based on materialist pursuits to abandon such a divisive ideal. For him, rather than consolidate unity, such a principle would produce nothing but social disorder and disharmony: “[N]o sería sino la convivencia de hombres heterogéneos en una sorda hostilidad babílica” (*Blasón* 234-35).
Together with Spain’s cultural and ethnic ties with Argentina, and its military defeat by a progress-driven United States, Rojas’ gravitation towards the former Madre Patria is further justified by what he observes as disparities between the phenomena of modern and ancient experiences of migration. Rojas notes that, in their modern contexts, migrations, like those from Europe to Argentina, are individual, peaceful ventures. As such, they differ from their equivalents in ancient times, which, based on the movements of armed collectives, had facilitated the formation of communities in Europe centuries earlier and characterised imperial Spain’s own migrations to the Americas (Blasón 235). What is paramount here is not so much the disjuncture between the idea of peaceful migrations and those sustained by hostility and violence, but the perceived anomalies between mass movements of isolated individuals as opposed to those of whole cultural groups. In his discourse on the idea of culture, T. S. Eliot notes that, in the colonial migrations of prehistoric times, it was whole tribes that migrated as a collective or at least a large representative part thereof. Essentially, what was transferred was a culture in its totality (63). However, in the modern age, Eliot remarks, only a fraction of the total culture has migrated:

The people have taken with them only a part of the total culture in which, so long as they stayed at home, they participated. The culture which develops on the new soil must therefore be bafflingly alike and different from the parent culture; it will be complicated sometimes by whatever relations are established with some native race, and further by immigration from other than the original source. In this way, peculiar types of culture-sympathy and culture-clash appear. (63-64)

Drawing on Eliot’s notion of the partial transference of culture by modern-day migrants, Homi Bhabha affirms that it is the very incompleteness of this displacement, and the articulations of inequality and social division by this fractured culture in its new environment, that interrupt what would otherwise have constituted “the self-recognition of the national culture, [and] its anointed horizons of territory and tradition” (“In-Between” 54).
Two interrelated ideas emerge here that it is imperative to explore further in relation to Rojas’ *Blasón de plata*. The first revolves around the diverse temporalities of migratory experience, the ancient and the modern, so as to account for Rojas’ favourable view of the former and anxiety toward the latter. The second centres on how he defines Argentina’s “anointed horizons of territory and tradition,” or its so-called national culture and spirit, which have apparently been disrupted by their sudden collision with modern immigration. Rojas affirms that Argentine history, and even its future yet to be written, has been forged by the constant relationship—at times harmonious, at others antagonistic—between two concepts that he terms “indianismo” and “exotismo,” which “designa la pugna ó el acuerdo entre lo importado y lo raizal” (*Blasón* 164).  

However, explaining the tension in Argentina between “indianismo” and “exotismo” is not simply a matter of distinguishing or segregating the native from the immigrant; Rojas is conscious that the peoples of the entire American continent are themselves products of waves of immigration and settlement throughout history (95). What is crucial for him is the idea and the location of a so-called national essence of “indianismo,” which, even when brought into contact with modern immigration as the “simiente exótica,” has sufficient strength to effect “un continuo retoñar indiano” (225). Consequently, Rojas implores Argentines to define themselves in accordance with this vague strength, so that what amounts from exposure to “exotismo” are the necessary cultural borrowings, integrations, and partial losses that will assist in forging Latin American civilisation: “[S]eamos tales que la inmigración sólo nos oblige á integraciones ó pérdidas parciales, necesarias á la civilización de América” (226). Nevertheless, what must be determined first is exactly how Rojas, in cultural and ethnic terms, defines the core of Argentina’s “indianismo.” Indeed, when faced with the foreign, Rojas continued to be preoccupied with the nation’s cultural core and its definition in the

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13 Rojas remarks that, throughout the nation’s history, the conflict between “indianismo” and “exotismo” accounts for the struggle over land between the indigenous peoples and the Spanish colonisers, the fight for liberty between the Creole and the “realista,” the struggle between Federalists and Unitarians over the Constitution, and tensions between nationalism and cosmopolitanism over Argentina’s spiritual autonomy. See Ricardo Rojas, *Blasón de plata: Meditaciones y evocaciones de Ricardo Rojas sobre el abolengo de los argentinos* (Buenos Aires: García, 1912) 164.
essays of his 1924 text, *Eurindia*. There he considered the formulation of a new model of inclusive Argentine identity that might balance the nation’s heterogeneous cultural reality with the need to fashion a homogeneous national ideal.\(^\text{14}\)

In contrast, therefore, to the ideals set out by Alberdi, Sarmiento and later, Blasco Ibáñez, Rojas sees immigration as weakening the present formation of Argentine national identity. Although it increases population numbers and a nation’s potential wealth, mass European immigration has debilitated what he considers to be Argentina’s Ibero-Indian core: “[N]o se formó un pueblo, porque se debilitó el núcleo iberindio que debía ser el órgano de asimilación racial y de continuidad histórica” (*Retablo* 401). At the same time, he is disturbed by the fact that no initiative to control immigration at a national level has been forthcoming (402). Consequently, I propose that Rojas sees modern European migrations to fin-de-siècle Argentina in a similar fashion to how Eliot and Bhabha articulate the challenge posed to colonial settler societies as to the effective management of cultural differences, especially when faced with mass migrations of individuals and so-called in-between cultures that disturb imaginings of a national essence.

If Argentina is to overcome weaknesses brought about by what Rojas considers is its lack of cultural cohesion as a hybrid nation, it is imperative that this “new” Argentine citizen to whom Rojas alludes in *Cosmópolis* (38), forged as a consequence of immigration, share the characteristics and the strength of its predecessor. According to Rojas, this “former” citizen, the Creole, fashioned by the “la fuerza inmanente del territorio,” had itself surfaced as a “tipo nuevo” during the nation’s three hundred years of colonialism, as a result of an alleged purification of what had been Argentina’s heterogeneous indigenous, themselves either “autóctonos ó inmigrantes, civilizados ó bárbaros, venidos del Tibet ó de la Atlántida” (*Blasón* 14

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\(^{14}\) One year prior to the publication of a similar idea in Vasconcelos’ *La raza cósmica* (1925), Rojas’ *Eurindia*, as an ideal, posited that a new synthesis of all Argentina’s cultural groups had the potential to forge a renewed image of Argentine identity fragmented by societal divisions and antagonisms. Where Vasconcelos highlighted that this identity could then flourish into one characteristic of the entire Latin American continent, as the arrival of the “Cosmic Race,” Rojas confined his doctrine to Argentina, where he hoped an end to the tension between “indianismo” and “exotismo” could be achieved. See Ricardo Rojas, *Eurindia: Ensayo de estética sobre las culturas americanas* (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1951). For a critical analysis of this text, and the pitfalls and contradictions inherent in such attempts to propose an inclusive model of national identity, see Amaryll Chanady, “Ricardo Rojas’s *Eurindia*: The Contradictions of Inclusive Models of Identity,” *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos* 34.3 (2000): 585-604.
As Patricia Funes remarks, in contrast to the writers of the Argentine Vanguard of the 1920s, such as Jorge Luis Borges, for whom technological change, speed and the cult of the new were highly valued, Rojas and the Centenary Generation were “nostálgicos de un mundo tradicional” (109). Sensing signs of menace and the erosion of social order in the ubiquitous cosmopolitan immigrant, the enactment of universal male suffrage in 1912 and social conflict in general, Rojas and the Centenary writers looked back to the colonial era and the alleged stability of, and the essential characteristics inherent in, the rural environment, the gaucho, and *criollismo* (Funes 109). Indeed, it was Rojas’ colonial “tipo antiguo” from the Argentine interior that had influenced to the greatest extent his ideas on Argentina’s “núcleo nacional,” or the synthesis of the indigenous peoples of Argentina with Peninsular colonists. The resulting fusion had created the American Creole. In terms of projecting his cultural aspirations for Argentina upon Spain, Rojas confirms a sense of nostalgia for this idealised Creole by casting himself as the “peregrino indiano que anda soñando en España,” and resolving to chart his trajectory and itinerary “al revés, del presente hacia el pasado” (*Retablo* 46).

Nevertheless, what immediately emerges as a contradiction in terms is Rojas’ appraisal of the *criollo*. While he appears critical of the perils of Argentina’s cultural hybridity, is not the Creole the very epitome of the hybrid? Thus, I contend that, for Rojas, it is not the nature and product of hybridity itself that is cause for concern. Rather, his angst is attributable to a hybridity evident in Argentina that is based increasingly less on a uniquely Ibero-Indian fusion, which culminated in the Creole, and more on a synthesis of non-Ibero-Indian elements. I argue that, for Rojas, the result of such an amalgamation does not share with

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15 According to Adolfo Prieto’s appraisal of the discourse and literature of *criollismo* in fin-de-siècle Argentina, it was *criollismo*, through the central theme of the intrinsic value of the rural *campesino* and his language, that seemed destined to unite an ethnically and culturally fragmented Argentine society, struggling with the perils of modernisation. See Adolfo Prieto, *El discurso criollista en la formación de la Argentina moderna* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1988) 18-19.

16 In calling himself the “peregrino indiano” during his travels in Spain, Rojas recalls the title of the epic poem written by Antonio de Saavedra Guzmán, which was the first work by a Creole to be published in Spain in 1599. The poem chronologically traces the events of Spanish conquistador, Hernán Cortés, from his arrival to Cuba to his conquest of Tenochtitlán. See Antonio de Saavedra Guzmán, *El peregrino indiano*, ed. María José Rodilla León (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008).
Argentina’s supposedly dissolving Creole core the same ideals that had sparked the Creoles’ emancipatory calls for independence in 1810, when, Rojas perceives, what was realised was Argentina’s awakening as a people and its recognition of its own collective consciousness (Blasón 114, 221). For Rojas, as for other intellectuals of the Centenary Generation, two internal challenges posed a distinct threat to the idealised remnants of this perceived national core: the liberal elite’s exclusive brand of Europeanised nationalism, which held local culture in contempt, and the societal discord brought about by an increasingly large immigrant community, whose primary allegiance was not to forge and solidify the cultural cohesiveness of the nation, but rather, to acquire material wealth (N. Miller Shadow 164-65).

Having located Argentina’s cultural tradition in the fusion of indigenous and Peninsular elements, the threatened disintegration of this alleged essence is perceived to have a direct impact on the future strength of Argentine cultural identity: “Menoscabado lo indígena, lo gaucho y lo español, la Argentina quedó sin defensas ni expresión” (Retablo 402). In his journey to Spain in 1908, it is Rojas’ purpose to study the supposed Iberian essence that makes up fully one half of his “núcleo iberindio.” It is hoped that it will provide the element that will facilitate the unification of Argentina’s cultural identity, undermined through erroneous modernising programmes that favour immigration policies as the means of forging the nation’s societal and cultural unity.

Rojas’ search for inspiration for Argentina’s cultural and spiritual unification in the Peninsula does not, however, privilege Spain as a precise model for Argentina to follow. Spain cannot provide the template for Argentina’s cultural unification, because adoption of a foreign model in its entirety as a blueprint for nationhood elsewhere contradicts Rojas’ firm belief in the individuality of nations as organic entities: “Necesitaba conocer la España auténtica, Rojas’ privileging of the Creoles of Argentina’s independence, the crystallisation of a national conscience that they helped facilitate, and the sense of cohesion that moulds his attitude towards Spain, is evident in Retablo español. “Mi actitud respecto a España, se inspiró en la sensibilidad de los hombres de la Independencia, no en el ideario cosmopolita de la época siguiente” (386-87).

These challenges are closely related to the criticisms levelled in Rodó’s Ariel (1900) at the undermining of Latin America’s continental spirit and heightened ideals by an invading, foreign spirit of pragmatic utilitarianism. However, Rodó directed his disapproval at the culture of the United States and not that of Europe.
aunque no para proponerla de modelo a América, porque eso habría sido contrario a mi tesis de las naciones como genuinas personas históricas” (Retablo 402). That said, Rojas demonstrates a distinct preference for the role played by Spain in the cultural formation of the Argentine people when he confirms: “España es América durante tres siglos de nuestra historia, los siglos de nuestra gestación. Por ella hemos tenido noticia escrita de los indios y sin ella no podemos explicar la génesis del gaucho” (402).

Key to understanding Rojas’ thought is this idea of an alleged cultural and spiritual essence created from a primordial and “original” people. As a point of difference to what occurred in Argentina, Rojas argues that, in Europe, the “people” were formed, and had a real sense of their spiritual and cultural unity, prior to the official formation of nationhood. The reverse, he posits, had been true for Argentina. Having gained its formal independence from Spain in 1816, Argentina found itself essentially working backwards against the grain of European cultural nationalism in its contrived attempts to find expression for what had become an officially unified nation on paper, but which lacked a comparable and identifiable cultural cohesion as a people. Rojas fears that, due to the impact of foreign arrivals, the Argentine “race” risks forgetting its traditions altogether:

Lo que diferencia las sociedades europeas de las americanas, y acaso crea para las nuestras una inferioridad, es que en aquellas los “pueblos” han sido anteriores á la “nación” y á la “independencia,” en tanto que nosotros, después de haber creado la independencia y la nación, necesitamos, por una alteración de factores, plasmar en nueva substancia cosmopolita, un pueblo homogéneo que responda á los ideales de una civilización superior.

Pueblos heterogéneos, pueblos advenedizos y sin unidad espiritual, son pueblos sin perpetuidad y sin destino humanos. Raza que olvida su tradición pierde su aliento de permanencia histórica. (Cosmópolis viii)

Through the ideas set out in Cosmópolis, Rojas signals the defects present in the theses of Alberdi’s Bases and Sarmiento’s Facundo, which both concern the formation of an
Argentine culture and civilisation heavily based on material advancement, and Anglo-Saxon influence and immigration. As a result of such foreign-centred initiatives, Rojas states, not only is the Argentine nation guilty of forgetting its very essence (*Cosmópolis* 44). It is also in danger of relinquishing its traditions, thus throwing into doubt the desired historical longevity of the Argentine people.

Nevertheless, to argue that the cultural and spiritual cohesion of the peoples of Europe was a reality prior to their official unification under the banner of modern nationalism appears oversimplified. It says nothing of the lack of unity, prior to nationhood, between the peoples of what were then different kingdoms and local communities. To take the case of Spain, Rojas’ standpoint fails to account for the antagonism between Castile and the peoples in the peripheral regions of Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country, even after Spain’s political unification under the Catholic Monarchs. Moreover, Rojas would later contradict the assertion made in *Cosmópolis* that the people of pre-independence Argentina lacked cultural and spiritual cohesion. Instead, he alludes to the existence of a distinct Creole unity, the collective consciousness of which, forged in the true spirit of “indianismo,” came to constitute “el pueblo creador de la independencia [y] era anterior á la independencia misma” (*Blasón* 220).

What is at stake, I maintain, is the association of cultural worth judged according to time spent in the community with attachment to the land and its history. In *Blasón de plata*, Rojas stresses that the Creole collective consciousness, and Argentina’s new citizen and its independence, are products of three hundred years of refinement (220-21). Privileging the Creole in this way, Rojas corroborates Charles Taylor’s view that, historically, those who have been admired and respected are “cultures that have provided the horizon of meaning for large numbers of human beings, of diverse characters and temperaments, over a long period of time” (66-67). What Rojas desires is the similar birth of a revived consciousness a century later; a sort of second coming of the Creole. What has changed, however, is the temporal factor. Modern migration and the transference of partial, minority cultures via immigration to Argentina has, in just half a century, dramatically altered the nation’s sociocultural landscape.
If it took the Creole three centuries, Rojas’ hope for the new twentieth-century citizen to achieve a similar standing is a rather lofty pursuit. Moreover, his emphasis on the Creole as a major culture that, over time, has animated the whole of Argentine society, fails to accommodate the minority cultures of immigrants by introducing what Bhabha has seen, through his reading of Taylor, as “a temporal criterion of cultural worth that elides the disjunctive and displaced present through which minoritization interrupts and interrogates the homogeneous, horizontal claims of the democratic liberal society” (“In-Between” 57). As Bhabha points out, in the ambivalent attempt of liberal discourse to recognise cultural difference and equality, this recognition is "genuinely intended, but only so long as we start from a historically congruent space" (56).

My readings of Rojas perceive this supposed harmonious location of historicity as a duality of spaces. On the one hand, in Blasón de plata, Rojas’ textual search for the traditional essence of the Argentine land and its people is epitomised by the two interior provinces of Córdoba and Santiago del Estero, the latter being where Rojas himself grew up: “Entraña de la patria, ellas conservaron el núcleo de conciencia territorial en el espacio, y la unidad de conciencia histórica á través de los tiempos” (37). On the other hand, this space is also Castile, the unifying heartland of the Iberian Peninsula described in Retablo español. What is striking is that, as Retablo preceded publication of Blasón, it was travel to, and contemplation of, Spain first rather than his native Argentina that characterised Rojas’ attempt to locate this space and, with it, the desired emergence of a renewed form of Argentine collective consciousness. It is to Retablo that I now turn to develop further his perceptions of Spain as a location from where to imagine such a national conscience.

Retablo español comprises a series of 108 articles. The work’s title, drawn from the idea of a religious tableau or altarpiece, not only conveys the idea of an entrance or portal offering access to a new realm, but also the impression of a series of divided, fragmentary images. Nevertheless, the sheer breadth of topics concerning the historical and contemporary nation and its people prompted the writer to request in his 1938 prologue that the work be
judged not by its fragments but seen as a cohesive whole (Retablo 17). Even more illuminating was the fact that, as mentioned, these articles were not immediately published in 1908 due to time constraints. It was not until thirty years later, compelled by the upheaval of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) as “[l]a tragedia que hoy ensangrenta a España” (16), that Rojas returned to the original manuscripts, bringing them together in book form under the title of Retablo español.

Rojas’ attempt to recuperate these articles and thus an image of Spain precisely in 1938, and to affirm their relevance three decades after the fact, is not coincidental. The Spanish Civil War propelled both conservative and liberal Argentine intellectuals to offer their solidarity and support to the respective causes of either the Nationalists or the Republicans. On the one hand, Argentine liberals sought to defend progressive Spain’s revolutionary ideals against the same type of fascism that, in the 1930s, had been gaining momentum in Hitler’s Germany and Mussolini’s Italy. On the other, conservatives looked to the Nationalists to consolidate an image of Spain that would be grounded in traditionalism and Catholicism, which, they believed, would help contain social protests and the spread of communism in Argentina. Consequently, the struggle between liberalism and fascism being played out in Spain had a much wider resonance. Comparing the first-hand experiences in war-torn Spain of two Argentine intellectuals—conservative Catholic, Gustavo Franceschi, and liberal doctor, Gregorio Bermann—Silvina Montenegro points out that, for both men, Spain was both the root of, and solution to, Argentina’s sociopolitical concerns, and the arena where a large proportion of the Argentine public believed that the destiny of its own nation would be decided (203, 195). However, as I will show, it was not to contemporary Spain that Rojas looked but to the nation’s past, the alleged foundation of Spain’s national consciousness, with a gaze that proves highly contradictory. Although Rojas supported the Republican cause in the Spanish

19 The Spanish conflict was not only intimately felt and closely followed in Argentina. The official stance of Lázaro Cárdenas’ government in Mexico (1934-1940) was to support Republican Spain. Moreover, Mexico’s solidarity with the Republicans acted as a means of popular resistance to the danger posed at home by the rise in Mexico of the Right, which, spurred on by the actions of the Spanish Nationalists, threatened to repeat in Mexico the tragedy unfolding on the Iberian Peninsula. See Mario Ojeda Revañ, México y la guerra civil española (Madrid: Turner, 2004) 11-12.
conflict, his focus on the Peninsula’s past essentially mimics the defence of traditional values that formed the ideological pillars of the Nationalists.

Besides obvious references, albeit scarce, to the Spanish Civil War added in 1938, it is virtually impossible to gauge with any certainty the extent to which Rojas revised and rewrote the original manuscripts upon revisiting them thirty years later. On the surface, it would appear that minimal rewriting had occurred, as the writer affirms that his initial perceptions of 1908 had not been distorted with the passing of time and considers that the original pages “aún son de actualidad” (15). On accounting for their relevance and timeliness three decades later, Rojas links Spain’s social turmoil of 1938 with the first murmurings of agitation he had witnessed thirty years prior: “El año 1908 fue el último del marasmo externo que siguió a lo de Cuba, pero asomaba entonces el conflicto espiritual que hoy se ha convertido en suceso sangriento” (16-17). It was this “spiritual conflict,” Rojas states, that provoked in 1909 Spain’s “grandes agitaciones sociales . . . [y] un periodo de descomposición oficial, cuyas etapas han sido la guerra de África, la dictadura de Primo de Rivera y la caída del Rey” (16).20

In 1908 the challenges to social order that Spain was facing had been caused by the postimperial nostalgia of a ruling elite desiring neocolonial expansion overseas. As Sebastian Balfour has remarked, Spain’s defeat in the Spanish-Cuban-American War in 1898 resulted in a deep sense of insecurity among the nation’s political hierarchy. Now no longer in possession of an empire, their impotency was a direct factor in prompting Spain’s invasion of Morocco in February 1908, an attack called for by those who had become active proponents of Spain’s neocolonial expansion into Africa during the latter part of the previous century (Balfour, Embrace 3-4, 8). What is more, Spain’s military incursion into Morocco had deeply divided Spanish society between the “africanistas,” who opted for Spain’s increased political and military presence in North Africa, and those who stood firmly against their expensive and futile campaigns into the region (Charnon-Deutsch 263). Those against intervention had

20 Rojas’ allusion to Spain’s spiritual conflict, which later materialised as violent civil war, is intimately tied to the historic tension between the so-called “dos Españas,” one pulling toward conservative traditionalism and the other toward liberal modernisation. Such an image of a Janus-faced nation is evident in all advanced nations of Europe. See Vicente Cacho Viu, “La imagen de las dos Españas,” Revista de Occidente 60 (1986): 51-52.
become most vocal in their protests in 1909, one year after Spain’s initial invasion. With violent resistance growing against the Spanish military in Morocco, army reserves were needed. These had been called up largely from the ranks of the working classes unable to pay the fee required to exempt them from military service. Their anger provoked massive protests at the ports of embarkation, as seen in the anti-war strikes by a group of militant metalworkers in Barcelona in July 1909, which triggered the infamous “Semana Trágica” (Balfour, Embrace 19).

According to Balfour, it was commonly felt within military circles that Spain’s colonial army, disillusioned and embittered following its 1898 defeats, had been sacrificed by the Restoration government. Moreover, returning soldiers found adjusting to civil life difficult alongside the rise of leftist, anti-military movements in the first decade of the twentieth century. As they had come to see themselves as the creators of modern Spain, their grievances were also compounded at this time by the appearance of regional nationalisms, which, they perceived as an attack against the integrity of the Spanish nation-state that they had been charged with defending. These three factors served to steer the military away from its nineteenth-century progressive, republican tendencies towards a far more right-wing, anti-democratic ideology (Balfour, Embrace 9). It was the rise of a right-wing military in the early 1900s that would set the ideological stage for the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) as an arena of “conflicto espiritual” (Retablo 17), which Rojas would revisit in his Retablo español in 1938.

However, social upheaval was not only dividing Spain at this time. Argentina was eight years into its década infame, a dictatorship instigated under General José Feliz Uriburu after the military coup of 1930 to oust the Radical government of Hipólito Yrigoyen, then in his second term in office.21 That coup of 1930 overthrew eighty years of constitutional rule in Argentina. The sweeping reforms of General Uriburu called for the establishment of a semi-fascist corporate state in Argentina, to be modelled on the growing right-wing, anti-

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21 Hipólito Yrigoyen’s first term as Argentine president was from 1916 to 1922. His second term was from 1928 to 1930.
democratic movements gaining ground in Italy, Spain and Portugal (Skidmore and Smith 83). Although Rojas was far from advocating for the Left, N. Miller notes that he was extremely disheartened by his nation’s slump into anti-democratic rule in the 1930s (Shadow 164-65). Reacting against the suppression of individual rights and freedom of speech, Rojas’ stance in the political arena was itself silenced. Subsequent to joining the Radical Party in 1930 and standing up for the lost rights of the Argentine people, three years later, in 1933, Rojas was charged with conspiring against the government. He was exiled to Martín García Island and then to Tierra del Fuego, where he was imprisoned for five months in 1934 (Glauert 9).

The instability of Argentina in the 1930s paralleled politically the cultural fragmentation that Rojas had been attuned to two decades earlier in Spain. The principal cause of Argentina’s cultural heterogeneity, as viewed by Rojas, stemmed from the extent to which mass migrations of Europeans had impacted upon, and altered, the nation’s cultural landscape. Such mass movements of people, Susan Friedman notes, typify periods of modernity in that they produce an “intensification of intercultural contact zones.” What is more, Friedman affirms that, in addition to rapid institutional change, “heightened hybridizations, jarring juxtapositions, and increasingly porous borders both characterize modernity and help bring it into being” (433). Such observations on the idea of modernity are applicable to the era of accelerated change, mass immigration and Europeanisation that characterised fin-de-siècle Argentina. Consequently, Rojas’ search for historical and cultural ties to Spain can be read as an attempt to imagine a degree of immutability for Argentina in the wake of intense societal upheaval. For Rojas, the visible effects of Argentina’s modernity, as J. Ramos asserts, represent a crisis for the national conscience and the “death” of tradition (Modernities 236). Rojas’ quest, then, to write a coherent, unifying narrative for Argentina in such uncertain times recalls Bhabha’s contention that it is solely in “the disjunctive time of the nation’s modernity . . . that questions of nation as narration come to be posed”

22 Martha Mercader asserts that Rojas’ stance in favour of democratic nationalism is a rather bold claim, as, like Leopoldo Lugones’ authoritarianism, Rojas’ standpoint was one expressed through his literature and not through direct political action. See Martha Mercader, “Leopoldo Lugones y Ricardo Rojas: El nacimiento de los nacionalismos autoritario y democrático en la Argentina,” Río de la Plata: Culturas 4.6 (1987): 474.
"DissemiNation" 294). However, it is ironic that Rojas looked to Spain a decade later to imagine a degree of cultural cohesion that might remedy Argentina’s problematic modernity, given that Spain itself was then facing similar issues.

The dynamic societal changes that accompany modernity have, for the most part, been conceived of alongside the static nature and immutability of tradition, since one cannot be contemplated without the other. Both concepts are seen to operate in tandem, with S. Friedman arguing that “[t]radition forms at the moment those who perceive it regard themselves as cut off from it” (434). What this paradigm assumes is that the relationship between a traditional, idealised "then" over a more modern "now" has most often been articulated as an antagonistic struggle. Yet S. Friedman contends that the interdependency of tradition and modernity is apparent, given that “[m]odernity invents tradition, suppresses its own continuities with the past, and often produces nostalgia for what has been seemingly lost” (434). Further elaborating on the binary relationship between the terms, Mark Salber Phillips calls for the notion of tradition to be thought about in less constrictive ways so as to break down its apparent opposition to modernity: "Once this false opposition is set aside and the problem of tradition ceases to be defined as a resistance to modernity, tradition becomes again a means of raising essential questions about the ways in which we pass on the life of cultures—questions that necessarily include issues of authority as well as invention, practice as well as interpretation” (25).

Nevertheless, a stance that continues to view these terms as binary opposites, as the severance from a perceived continuity with a traditional past that is attributable to modernity, is clearly applicable to Rojas’ historic imaginings in Spain. As a consequence of such a rupture, a sense of nostalgia colours his reflections there. First diagnosed in 1688 as a medical malady with identifiable physical symptoms, nostalgia, Lowenthal notes, ceased to be thought of in seventeenth-century terms as a physical illness brought on by extreme homesickness, to be redefined in the modern age as a sociological “state of mind” (The Past 10-11). Just as the homesick longed for home, a sense of longing epitomises present-day, twentieth-century
expressions of nostalgia, which Lowenthal considers the universally acknowledged term for looking back (*The Past* 4).

With regard to *Retablo español*, it is pertinent that Rojas perceives it as “una crónica estilizada por la nostalgia” (16). Rojas’ self-diagnosed sense of nostalgia exists not only when he himself evinces it in 1938 in his prologue to the text but also during his travels in Spain thirty years prior. His nostalgia in 1938 can be attributed to events that have rendered the sociopolitical spheres on both sides of the Atlantic contested spaces of upheaval, division, and authoritarianism, brought about by the rise of the Right in Argentina and Spain. Such turmoil constitutes an essential component in Lowenthal’s theories on contemporary nostalgia as a desire for unity amid epochs of division, since nostalgia “envisage[s] a time when folk did not feel fragmented, when doubt was either absent or patent, when thought fused with action, when aspiration achieved consummation, when life was wholehearted; in short, a past that was unified and comprehensible, unlike the incoherent, divided present” (“Nostalgia” 29).

Such a desire to imbue a national narrative with constancy and uniformity during moments when modernity becomes increasingly heterogeneous and separated from the past is intimately linked, as Hobsbawm posits, to the notion of invented traditions: “It is the contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant, that makes the ‘invention of tradition’ so interesting for historians of the past two centuries” (“Inventing” 2). For Hobsbawm, traditions are often contrived by way of invention, in an effort to provide evidence of “continuity with a suitable historic past” (1). This phenomenon, he asserts, is as important in terms of its relationship to the nation and to national histories as it is for creating a sense of group affiliation: “[A]ll invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion” (12-13). These reasons, I contend, are evident in Rojas’ *Retablo español* and his travels in Spain, given that ultimately he is concerned with securing an imagined sense of Argentina’s cultural and spiritual cohesion and continuity.
It is by focusing on notions of tradition that Rojas differentiates Spain from Europe in the opening article of Retablo español, “Avisos para entrar en España.” There he advises the South American traveller, for whom he states this text is written (19), regarding what are, for him, the three most important considerations when arriving in Spain. Firstly, Rojas warns his traveller not to enter the Peninsula through one of its port cities (19). Secondly, rather than disembark at a coastal port, he recommends coming to Spain via the French border (20). Lastly, travellers are to disregard the European literary works on Spain that exalt the superficially picturesque, such as those by the French Romantics, as well as “las frívolas historias escolares.” Inclined to focus, in large part, on the dynastic political history of Spain, he considers that these texts overlook the sociocultural history of the people, often at odds with official history (21). Rojas notes that the express intention of each of these warnings is to avoid the misleading tendency of the South American traveller to categorise Spain as a European nation (19).

It should be remembered that, as developed in Part One, cultural and political relationships between Spain and Europe at the time of Rojas’ travels in the Peninsula were of prime concern for Spanish intellectuals. In contrast, Rojas’ warnings for the South American traveller to Spain in Retablo español express the need to view that nation, not in terms of its cultural alignment to either Africa or Europe, but as uniquely Iberian, the source of a powerful and original spiritual essence: “Ni europea, ni africana, España es una ínsula ibérica, distinta de cuanto la rodea. Su tierra y su hombre se individualizan en una potente originalidad” (19-20). Consequently, in an effort to contrast Europe with a Spain presented as non-Europe, Rojas’ second piece of advice is that visitors approach Spain through the Basque Country from French Hendaye, so as to note the sharp contrast between modern France and “el misterio prehistórico de los vascos” (20). By arriving in the Basque Country, a land that, for him, stands resolutely outside modern historiography, in stark contrast to the modernity and heterogeneous composition of Buenos Aires, it is Rojas’ aim to locate an imagined pure form of Peninsular identity: “Ante ese hecho probado, se ha de inferir que los vascos sean
sobrevivientes de una raza primitiva, ya que ellos son los únicos españoles sin mestizamiento de moro y con lengua no nacida del latín. Sus montes fueron el Ararat ibérico en el diluvio romano y en el mahometano” (20).

Rojas’ cautionary advice for would-be travellers to Spain from Latin America is closely tied to notions that foreground discrepancies between political nationhood and a sense of ethnic or cultural nationhood. In two articles that ponder this division, one on the reign of Charles V (1519-1556) and the other on his successor, Philip II (1556-1598), Rojas asserts that it was the rule of the former that had initiated the dramatic incongruence, still apparent in the early twentieth century, between Spain’s foreign dynasties and its people (57). For Rojas, the suppression of the people’s spirit over the centuries by the foreign ruling class has not only characterised the nation but also explains the so-called Discovery of the New World; in seeking to flee from the domineering influence of the foreign, the “genio ibérico” spilled over into the Americas, as the “puerta de escape de la voluntad aventurera en la acción” (60).

A similar voyage, but in the opposite direction, accounts for Rojas’ journey to Spain, given that it is the omnipresence of European immigration in Argentina that serves as the catalyst not only for his travels but also to imagine Spain as non-European. In so doing, I suggest that Rojas imagines a parallel process, deemed necessary first in Spain and then Argentina, to envisage the foreign as culturally filtered out in order to unearth what is perceived as truly native and secure a cohesive sense of Argentine cultural identity.

The act of turning to reflect on the past, however, requires an environment conducive to the production of nostalgia that such a gaze enables. According to Malcolm Chase and Christopher Shaw, the conditions in which a sense of nostalgia may thrive are the belief of modern, Western societies in the notion of historic time as linear and secular, the perception of the present as somehow inadequate, and the ability to access readily images and objects from the past (2-4). Consequently, it is not without coincidence that Rojas’ first port of call, indeed his “más urgente curiosidad” (38) while in Madrid, is a much anticipated visit to the National Museum of Archaeology. More than looking to the past, however, Rojas’ motives are
rooted in the present day. His aim in visiting the museum is precisely to pinpoint the vestiges of ancient Iberian culture that have endured three thousand years and continue to inflect the character of the Iberians in the early twentieth century (*Retablo* 42). Such a focus on Spain as pre-modern allows Rojas to imagine the survival of the Argentine spirit and the Ibero-Indian nucleus of his homeland. For him, this cultural core is rapidly effacing its Iberian origins in the wake of mass, non-Iberian immigration during the era of modernity.

As Anthony Smith asserts, imagining the nation as either distinctly modern and in a state of flux, or as innately ancient, immemorial and unchanging, foregrounds a distinct area of contention for those theorists of nationalism who are deeply divided over the role of the past in modern nations (163). Smith critiques the modernist approach to nationalism upheld by theorists such as Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, and Anderson, for they seek to explain the birth and survival of the nation, and the concept of nationhood, solely as products of modernisation, failing to acknowledge the significance and authority of cultures and ethnic affiliations prior to the era of modernity. Although Smith acknowledges modernist insights, he favours instead what he calls a historical ethno-symbolist approach to nationalism. What empowers the idea of the nation, he posits, are “the myths, memories, traditions, and symbols of ethnic heritages and the ways in which a popular living past has been, and can be, rediscovered and reinterpreted by modern nationalist intelligentsias” (9-10). He asserts that, by appropriating the memories, symbols and traditions of a nation’s prehistory, new generations are able to rethink notions of national identity amid such modern challenges as the demands placed on nations to be more inclusive of alterity (9). It was a similar recovery of Argentina’s past, and an exploration of that nation’s traditions and ethnic heritages, that had occupied Rojas’ thoughts in *Blasón de plata*.

Looking back to the Iberian Peninsula’s prehistory at the site of historical recovery constituted by Madrid’s archaeology museum, Rojas’ purpose is to unearth “ciertos misterios de lo que llamamos el pueblo español” (38). In this process, Rojas corroborates Smith’s notions on the ethno-symbolist approach to national identity by considering several of Iberia’s
prehistoric symbols, such as the Leones de Baena, La Bicha de Balazote, and La Dama de Elche. In his contemplation of the sandstone sculpture of La Dama de Elche, as a prototypical work of Iberian art in Spain, Rojas boldly claims to have solved the alleged mystery of the Spanish people after having reflected upon her alone: “[H]a podido revelar por sí sola lo persistente y característico de esta raza, a la vez primitiva y actual” (38). Thus, Rojas credits La Dama de Elche, somewhat simplistically, with revealing the longevity of the Iberians and their historical continuity, as she is seen to occupy simultaneously the spaces of primitive tradition and contemporary modernity. In so doing, she can be seen to symbolise what Smith has called the “longue durée” of the ethno-symbolist approach: the need to trace the birth of nations, with a view to charting their potential future, “over long periods of time (la longue durée), and not tie their existence and formation to a particular period of history or to the processes of modernization” (10). Similarly, Rojas’ focus seeks not only to reconstruct the links between the present-day Spanish people and the ancient inhabitants of Iberia. In fixing his gaze on prehistoric Iberia, Rojas also confirms his aspirations for the future spiritual and cultural unification of the Argentine people and their longevity by projecting these desires onto Spain’s imagined past: “En ninguna nación ha persistido tanto la psicología originaria, fenómeno aun más notable por haber sido tantas las invasiones y mezclas que el pueblo español ha soportado. El mestizaje con griegos, fenicios, romanos, árabes y godos no ha despintado la figura prehistórica” (Retablo 40). Nevertheless, I suggest that wholehearted acceptance of such a utopian construction of the past, of the strength and continuity of an original people in the face of constant foreign incursion, should be avoided, because, as Lowenthal states, “[t]hat past is false . . . because those who lived in it could never have so viewed their own circumstances. What we are nostalgic for is not the past as it was or even as we wish it were; but for the condition of having been . . . the past as reconstructed is always more coherent than when it happened” (“Nostalgia” 29-30).

As Rojas traces the continuities between primordial Spain and the nation as he saw it in 1908 I argue that he embodies—first in Spain and later in Argentina—what Smith terms the
nationalist as archaeologist (176). According to Smith, to view the archaeologist merely as an excavator of remains belies his underlying motivation. It is not only uncovering the materials of a past epoch that inspires the field of archaeology. What is also important is the significance of relics for reconstructing a past era and mapping its similarities onto the present day. Moreover, the archaeologist does not simply trace relationships across time but “fixes communal location in space” (176). Therefore, just as ethnic origins have a time, they also emerge from specific geographical sites: a factor that explains Rojas’ attempt to contemplate a distinct part of Argentina’s ethnic core by travelling to Spain. His purpose, however, is more specific than highlighting continuities across time and space. When questioned as to his profession in a local Madrid café, El Gato Negro, following his visit to the museum, Rojas describes himself not as an archaeologist in the strict sense of the term, nor as an anthropologist, but as an “antropósofo.” Elaborating on this self-appointed vocation while in Spain, he clarifies his responsibility as follows: “[Y]o estudio el espíritu de los pueblos que no quieren morir. El español es uno de esos pueblos, según creo” (Retablo 42).

For Rojas, envisaging the survival of the Iberian essence meant leaving the confines of the Spanish capital. Indeed, metaphorical or literal escape from Madrid into its hinterlands was a common among Spanish writers and intellectuals, such as Azorín, Pío Baroja and Unamuno, who, during the first decade of the twentieth century, sought respite from a city that repelled as much as it attracted. In terms of its attraction, Juliá asserts that, the sustenance of intellectual and literary pursuits was dependent upon the capital city, since the urban space acted as a focal point of centralised political and cultural hegemony. In this respect, the city-space provided a location of artistic activity where intellectuals could gather in tangible proximity to challenge the power of the State (75). However, Madrid’s intellectuals also had to endure the hardships and chaos of urban life in a city that was severely under resourced (Juliá 76-77). For this reason, these writers also sought temporary sanctuary from Madrid altogether and refuge from the national reality by returning to Spain’s immutable, idealised past: “Inventaron un tiempo ideal, el del romancero, con pueblo y poeta confundidos
en la unidad originaria de la nación, proyectando así hacia un momento inmóvil el tiempo de los pueblos muertos de Castilla, la tradición eterna, las notas constantes, la permanente identidad de la historia de España” (Juliá 80). While Unamuno found refuge in his native Salamanca, Azorín and Baroja favoured Toledo.

Following the trajectories charted by Azorín and Baroja, Rojas’ first excursion out of the Spanish capital in *Retablo español* is a journey to Toledo. Although not born of the same desire to escape the perceived decadence of Madrid, Rojas’ itinerary south inspires in him a similar evocation of Spain’s idealised past. Through his descriptions of Toledo, he attempts to revive what he imagines as the nation’s historical memory, grounded in the utopian vision of the Iberian people’s eternal tradition, and its original unity and cohesion despite cultural diversity.

The crisis for collective memory during times of historical discontinuity, when the present is perceived to vanish with ever-increasing speed into an irretrievable past, is a concern also highlighted by Nora. Reflecting on the historical sensibility of modernity, and the manner in which it has quashed a sense of continuance with prescribed tradition, Nora considers the differences between what he sees as two opposing terms: memory and history. The notion of history, he maintains, exists as a means by which “modern societies organize a past they are condemned to forget because they are driven by change.” Consequently, Nora views history as a process of incomplete reconstruction and representation that claims a certain universal authority. As for memory, he continues, it remains “in permanent evolution, subject to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of the distortions to which it is subject, vulnerable in various ways to appropriation and manipulation, and capable of lying dormant for long periods only to be suddenly reawakened” (Nora, “Between Memory” 2-3). In the modern age, Nora contends, history has taken precedence over memory. As a consequence, what remains are no longer the once concrete environments where “memory [was] a real part of everyday experience,” but *lieux de mémoire*. These *lieux de mémoire* constitute sites or realms of memory that represent the social need to recall what has long
since slipped away, but where also “a residual sense of continuity remains” (“Between Memory” 1). Furthermore, Nora explains that the notion of a lieu de mémoire finds form in “any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community” (“Realms” xvii). Therefore, lieux de mémoire, in their physical guises, exist not only as cemeteries, museums, statues and monuments, but also as specific topographical locations. Unlike the often hastily erected monument or statue, topographical locations, constructed over time, cement their significance as “mirrors of a society or a period, like the cathedral of Chartres or the palace of Versailles” (“Between Memory” 18).

In Retablo español, the cathedral in Toledo is one location that apparently offers this kind of faithful reflection. As Rojas contemplates the cathedral’s Gothic architecture, he is imbued with the essence of the cathedral and the city as they were in their historical period of grandeur, as if he had been transported in time: “[S]entí el alma de Toledo tal como llegó a ser en la época de su máximo esplendor” (51). From the location of the cathedral Rojas is also able to perceive in its entirety the history of Spain, for both cathedral and city are seen to articulate condensed versions of the historical nation in miniature: “La Catedral es por dentro una fastuosa enciclopedia histórica de España, como Toledo lo es en torno de ella” (52). For Rojas, then, not only does the cathedral function as a lieu de mémoire but the entire city space.

Wandering Toledo’s labyrinthine streets, Rojas reflects on the creation in Spain of the people’s seemingly unique, homogeneous cultural identity, which he perceives as formed and consolidated before the creation of the political nation-state:

Por estas calles donde yo paseo ahora han paseado . . . gentes que vistieron togas romanas, armaduras góticas, turbantes orientales, ornamentos talmúdicos, antes de que se formara el Estado español. Pero todo eso se ha fundido en un nuevo ser. Rara ciudad, morisca y cristiana, señoril y pobre,
Rojas seeks to recover Toledo as a tangible symbol that has survived the waves of invasions to which the Iberian Peninsula has borne witness: “Toledo es la alegoría arquitectónica de España a través de su accidentada historia, símbolo plástico de las invasiones que han echado sus oleadas de sangre sobre el suelo español” (51). 23 What is of most interest to Rojas is what remains as a product of these successive waves of cultural influence on the Peninsula. In his reading of Toledo, as a land of immigration itself, the Spanish town becomes a crucible and a location for envisaging the formation of this “new being” in Argentina. Indeed, Toledo exists as a site for the imaginary recovery of what is, for Rojas, the lost historical memory of the allegedly original unity and cohesion of Argentine cultural identity.

Rojas accounts for Argentina’s loss of historical memory by alluding to his country’s rapid modernisation, and to the life of the nation lived in the here and now. These factors, he states, beget “nuestra acción sin continuidad ni tenacidad. Trabajamos para lo actual y no para lo eterno” (53). 24 Argentina has failed, Rojas declares, to comprehend fully a true sense of tradition: “La tradición es para nosotros una abstracción pobre en formas, que se confunde con el paisaje virgen. La pampa es un ámbito subjetivo y musical: carece de piedras” (53). The detrimental effects of Argentina’s modernity, its comparatively short trajectory of national historiography, and its misrepresentation of the Pampas as a locale of authentic historical tradition prompt him to meditate on Toledo as a site that might allow insight into the recovery of his nation’s own memory and tradition, and as a location from which to obtain a better sense of historical consciousness: “Por eso esta lección de cosas toledanas me penetra con su aliento vital, me ensancha, me arraiga, me sacude, iluminando lo que es el verdadero sentido


24 Rather than “para lo eterno,” it was this idea of working “para lo actual” that attracted Blasco Ibáñez away from Europe and to Argentina, as a nation apparently unhindered by the static, overly deterministic notions of history and tradition that he saw holding Europe back.
Having traversed the narrow streets of Toledo proper, Rojas embarks on a “meditación argentina” upon the city from the Montes de Toledo. From his elevated vantage point, perched upon a rock high above the Tagus River and “con alegría de argentino” (54), he emphasises that his reflections on Toledo stem from a uniquely Argentine perspective. It is from here that Rojas introduces the notion of the Melting Pot to imagine metaphorically a pivotal period for what he sees as the cultural and spiritual homogenisation of Spain and, in turn, express his hopes for an Argentina similarly porous to foreign assault:

¡Luego, pues, tal suceso era posible! Era posible que el paisaje se convirtiese en historia y que la historia se sedimentara sobre el paisaje, identificándose con él. ¡Cuántas gentes extrañas vinieron hasta aquí, unas tras otras! Guerrearon por subsistir y perecieron; todas fueron fundidas como los metales en un crisol; de todas ellas se formó la nación española, con su alma característica. ¡Cuánta esperanza da esto a nuestra Argentina, tierra de inmigraciones, y qué lección para los venidos de afuera que aspiran a mantener sus formas de origen! También en nuestra tierra americana el paisaje se convertirá en historia y la historia sedimentará una cultura nueva sobre nuestro paisaje... (54)

So potent is this image of the Melting Pot in Toledo, as a source of inspiration for Rojas’ homeland, and such is his optimism and enthusiasm, that the possibility of creating a new culture in Argentina is seen to be more viable as a consequence. Indeed, Rojas celebrates the future potential of cultural and spiritual alchemy in Argentina for extinguishing the hopes of newly arrived immigrants of maintaining their “formas de origen.” For Rojas, then, the question necessarily becomes how best to ensure that, in Argentina, the immigrant’s original traditions are displaced in favour of national initiatives for nurturing Argentina’s own threatened traditions and historical memories.
Rojas’ historical reading of Toledo attempts a re-imaginaiton and reorganisation of Argentina’s past by locating and recognising Toledo as a realm of national memory in Spain and a mirror for Argentina’s spiritual and cultural cohesion. Although not constitutive of a precise model for Argentina to follow, the image of Toledo, as “lección” and “enseñanza” (53), has been born of Rojas’ nostalgic reflection on an idealised historical past that is intended as a source of inspiration for future cultural unification in his homeland. Rojas’ use of Toledo as a site of memory for his own agenda in Argentina highlights the fluidity of Nora’s realms of memory, which exist to serve the projects of whosoever desires to harness their potency, only to recycle them in another space and in another epoch: "If a ‘realm of memory’ is to exist it must have a capacity for metamorphosis: the recycling of knowledge through associations and new symbolic representations. In becoming a synonym for national identity, a ‘realm of memory’ enables successive generations to mediate their cultural myths by inculcating them with their desires” (Kritzman xiii).

A similar sense of the “desespañolización” of Argentina that had prompted Rojas to address the nation’s cultural and spiritual identity by reflecting on Spain would provoke unease in a contemporary of his in the mid 1940s, Manuel Gálvez (1882-1962). In his opening statement in España y algunos españoles (1945) it is not only Argentina but all Spanish America that runs the risk of casting aside its Spanish heritage and throwing into doubt the very moral fabric of the nation and the continent: “El riesgo que los argentinos—y los hispanoamericanos, en general—corremos hoy, de desespañolizarnos del todo, es gravísimo. Están en peligro nuestro concepto de la vida, de la familia, de la moral y hasta de la dignidad de la mujer” (5-6).

Like Rojas, Gálvez had also been a key figure of Argentina’s Centenary Generation. He shared with Rojas a desire to realign the nation culturally amid outside challenges to what they saw as a much-needed cohesiveness, which was to be imagined in the form of an alleged authentic Argentine identity. It has already been noted that the appearance at this time of Rojas’ essays in La restauración nacionalista (1909) was highly significant regarding
such a notion of *argentinidad*. Indeed, for Cárdenas and Payá, the other work besides Rojas’ text that generated a foundational sense of an Argentine nationalism, were Gálvez’s essays, published a year later in 1910 with the title *El diario de Gabriel Quiroga* (13). There, Myron Lichtblau remarks, Gálvez’s most fundamental beliefs were expressed in what was a virtual “manifesto” on the struggle to consolidate Argentine sovereignty and economic independence vis-à-vis foreign interests, while voicing the need to assimilate spiritually the masses of newly arrived immigrants from Europe to a perceived Argentine way of life (Manuel 22).

As Gálvez himself makes clear in his first volume of memoirs, *Amigos y maestros de mi juventud* (1961), of prime importance to him and other writers of the Centenary Generation was stemming the nation’s liberal focus on the foreign rather than the national, and on material rather than spiritual values: “Y está, sobre todo, nuestra lucha heroica contra el ambiente materialista y descreído, extranjerizante y despreciador de lo argentino, indiferente hacia los valores intelectuales y espirituales. Nosotros . . . podemos afirmar que hemos sido los *pioneers* desinteresados y tenaces del actual sorprendente movimiento cultural y espiritual” (Amigos 43).

Gálvez’s intellectual response to Argentina’s materialism and its apparent crisis of spiritual identity has been largely overlooked by scholars, who have tended to direct attention towards Rojas’ project for national rejuvenation. Nevertheless, Gálvez is equally deserving of reflection and analysis here for, like Rojas, Gálvez travelled to Spain in the first decade of the twentieth century, attempting to make use of Spain so as to refigure a sense of *argentinidad*. This experience not only shed light on his fervent sense of Argentine nationalism. It was also valuable as a means for envisaging a transatlantic Hispanic identity and the proposed role of postimperial Spain in an Argentina that saw itself confronting two challenges from the North: the influx of European immigration and the general continental threat posed by the advance of neoimperialism from that other America, the United States. Indeed, Argentina’s focus on

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25 According to N. Miller, if there was one overall belief common to the writers of the Centenary Generation it was their opposition to this liberal vision of the Argentine nation. See N. Miller, *Shadow* 165.
the foreign, and its imitation and promotion of European and North American models for Argentina’s advancement, had characterised the liberal elite’s approach to nation-building ever since independence, at the expense of the nation’s Spanish heritage, its popular traditions, and its mixed-blood masses (Shumway 214).

In his second volume of memoirs, *En el mundo de los seres ficticios* (1961), Gálvez recalls a bitter diatribe he delivered in 1913 against the alleged invader from the North. As he set about writing his memoirs nearly fifty years after the fact, he remarks tellingly that his opinion of the US has not wavered since. Now, attempting to counter the threat of US influence with a unifying sense of Hispanic heritage, Gálvez differentiates the two Americas by invoking Spain, and the potency of eighteen Latin American nations joined by the common Castilian language:

Desde Méjico tumultuoso hasta esta laboriosa Argentina, todo cuanto es noble procede de España. En dieciocho naciones habla la misma voz de la raza, voz ahora velada por la angustia; voz que clama contra el rapaz invasor del Norte; voz que ha de hacerse más dolorosa cuando los pobres pueblos desamparados sepan que en esta Argentina de sus esperanzas se ha adulado vergonzosamente, en el aventurero cazador de tigres, al yanqui que nos desprecia y anhela para los pueblos hispanos la ignominia de la esclavitud. (Seres ficticios 18-19)

It was precisely in an effort to reaffirm the nation’s Spanish past that Gálvez travelled to Spain.

Thus, just as Rojas’ travels in the Iberian Peninsula were a precursor to the publication of *La restauración nacionalista*, so too did Gálvez’s first journey to Spain in 1906 precede his foundational text on Argentine nationalism, *El diario de Gabriel Quiroga*. Following a second voyage to Spain in 1910, Gálvez published *El solar de la raza* (1913): both a collection of
essays and a travel narrative that chronicles Gálvez’s travels. In a similar fashion to how Rojas had evoked a sense of nostalgia in the opening pages of *Retablo español*, Gálvez also recalls feelings of sympathy towards what is, for him, a forgotten Spain, acknowledging in his memoirs that both *La restauración* and *El solar*, initiated “una corriente de simpatía hacia la olvidada y calumniada España” (*Amigos* 43).

In casting their appreciative and vindicating gazes back to Spain at the beginning of the twentieth century, it must be recognised that Gálvez and Rojas’ attitudes towards the former metropolis were novel ones. In effect, they challenged the predominance in Argentina of the thesis, advanced by scientific positivism, that posited Spain’s apparent irreversible decadence and backwardness as the logical reasons for the nation’s “racial inferiority” (Cárdenas and Payá 66). By exalting a decaying Spain, Gálvez, for one, became vulnerable to accusations that he lacked faith in the kind of progress and modernisation that had been transforming Argentina according to the dictates of foreign models. This was a charge that Gálvez felt the need to address in his “Advertencia” to the 1920 edition of *El solar de la raza*, the first to be published in Spain, stressing that the text must be considered “modern” for its “inquietud espiritual, por su sentido del carácter, [y] por su amor a la energía” (9).

Yet although Gálvez proclaims the modernity of *El solar*, his definition of “energy” bears little resemblance to the examples put forth by the United States of an incessant, barbaric and automatic energy. Instead, for Gálvez, the energy of Argentina is spirited and creative; pointing towards the pursuit of a harmonious ideal lacking in the North, it harks back to Rodó’s *Ariel*: “Nosotros poseemos el secreto de la energía. Pero no será la nuestra una energía bárbara y automática como aquella (sic) que hierve sin cesar en los Estados Unidos de Norte América. La nuestra es y será una energía armoniosa, una fuerza atemperada de elegancia latina, un impulso inteligente, un brazo de un sér (sic) en quien la acción no ha

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26 On reviewing Gálvez’s *El solar* in *La Esfera* of Madrid in 1914, the Spanish literary critic, Andrés González Blanco, was forthright in his praise of Gálvez’s portrayal of Spain. In particular, the critic commented on the ability of the work, in its exaltation of Spain, to counterbalance the threats to the Spanish-speaking world of the cultural, spiritual, and economic neoimperialism of the United States. See Myron Lichtblau, “Spanish Reaction to Manuel Gálvez’ *El solar de la raza,*” *Symposium* 29.1-2 (1975): 132. Such a reading of *El solar* pleased Gálvez: “Me agrada que el crítico haya visto una especie de implícito anti-yanquismo en mi obra” (*Serés ficticios* 14).
destruido al ensueño” (*El solar* 60). The origins of the distinctiveness of such an idealised image of Argentine energy is what drew Gálvez to the heart of the former empire, and had given critics cause to reject his focus on Spain. As a result, Gálvez had to defend himself against those who maintained that, by focusing on the spiritual energy of “la España vieja,” it was his intention to resurrect a similar past in Argentina (7). Gálvez denied this charge, affirming that “[e]l pasado se ha ido y no debe volver.” Subsequently, he admits to evoking Spain’s past but also stresses that he does not intend it to be a model or even a guide for contemporary Argentine society (8).

In seeking to locate certain illustrative vestiges of Spain’s past, then, Gálvez’s *El solar de la raza* expresses an attempt to negotiate the usefulness of these remnants with liberal Argentina’s focus on the foreign and its pursuit of progress, as well as the demands of modernity. As if it were a question of mere “tolerance,” Gálvez questions the supposed incompatibilities of the coexistence of modernity alongside tradition: “No comprendo por qué no han de existir junto a las cosas del presente algunos ejemplos intactos del pasado. Nuestra civilización parece tolerante, pero lleva en sí misma un germen que destruye todas las tradiciones” (*El solar* 100). By invoking pathological terminology, Gálvez foregrounds the notion that it is Argentina’s materialism that constitutes the “germ” that threatens a sense of tradition. For him, this allegedly destructive germ stems directly from Argentina’s European immigrants and their promotion of a new way of life, representative of a foreign contagion that infected the local populace with dangerous ideals. These values placed the search for personal wealth over and above more desirable morals that would have served to enrich the national soul (14). Such concerns for the detrimental impact of morally wayward immigrants continued to preoccupy Gálvez well into the 1940s, when the danger lay in their potential to “descaracterizar” the Argentine “race” (*España* 6).

Foreign threats to a cohesive sense of nationhood, together with the immorality and social injustices of early twentieth-century Argentine society, were critical foci in Gálvez’s fiction also. The association of these themes with the idea of a diseased public found a
fictional voice in his social novel Nacha Regules, published in 1919. Set in the seedy, degenerate quarters of working-class Buenos Aires, the novel’s protagonist, Fernando Monsalvat, has lofty ideals with which to address social ills, beginning with the “infected” tenement house he owns. By mortgaging the property, Monsalvat hopes to convert the building from “un antro infecto donde se apelmazaban unas quince familias de trabajadores,” into a more respectable “casa higiénica” (Nacha 25). Furthermore, it is this character’s quest, as a redeemer of morals, to convince Nacha Regules, a prostitute also representative of the social body, to abandon her life of slavery and immorality in favour of a path that would avoid degeneration and disease: “Nacha, hay que cambiar de vida inexorablemente. Es preciso que usted sea usted misma, que recupere su personalidad, que viva. . . . La juventud pasará pronto y un día se encontrará usted vieja, enferma, fatigada, hecha un harapo humano. La devorará la tuberculosis, le contagiarán males horribles; y si no se vuelve idiota, se quedará paralítica” (56).

According to Susan Sontag, the usage in literature of illness and disease as metaphors for a corrupt or unjust society has had a long history (72). In contending in El solar that the immigrant-inspired cult of wealth, the alleged germ of the nation, “destroys” tradition, Gálvez’s description recalls the metaphorical implications of cancer as analysed by Sontag, who asserts that “[t]he controlling metaphors in descriptions of cancer are, in fact, drawn not from economics [as they are for tuberculosis] but from the language of warfare,” whereby cancer cells are “invasive” in their attack of the body’s “defenses” (64). By way of a cure for this so-called germ of immigrant-fuelled materialism, then, Gálvez’s analysis of Spain in El solar de la raza aims to offer an alternative and more desirable “infection,” that of a dose of spirituality: “[S]ólo he querido mostrar a los argentinos—tan materialistas, tan preocupados de las cosechas, de las lanas y del valor del suelo—, algunos ejemplos de espiritualismo. . . . para contagiarlos del espiritualismo” (9-10).

In her study on the discursive incorporation of science and medicine as one of the means through which Argentina’s nineteenth- and twentieth-century elites sought to civilise
the nation, Rodríguez alludes to the use of similar medical terminology. She notes that, as Argentina’s urban population surpassed that of rural areas, Argentina’s elites became aware of “an urban pathology.” Rather than serving as the nation’s salvation, the country’s immigration initiatives, and the rampant urbanisation that followed, brought to light “a new barbarism.” Quite literally, just as the city swelled towards the end of the nineteenth century, so too did the spread of foreign, epidemic diseases. On a metaphorical level, Rodríguez affirms that “[i]mmigrants became identified as carriers also of moral contagion—prostitution and pimping, crime, [and] destabilizing political ideas” (23, 187). Argentina’s national “body” had become “infected” from several sources; political, moral and economic.

It was the relationship between a diseased society’s unbridled pursuit of financial gain and the need for its spiritual prosperity that continued to stir within the mind of another Argentine, Ernesto Sábato. As he travelled around Spain in 2002, almost a century after Gálvez, Sábato echoes similar concerns with regard to the predominance of material growth over spiritual well-being. Sábato remarks with a sense of disquiet in Alicante on the “astonishingly modern” architecture of the city and the sheer number of ships berthed in its modern ports, thus highlighting the problematic materialism caused by economic growth and its consequences for the human spirit: “El criterio que predomina [en Alicante] responde a la cultura del espectáculo y las necesidades del mundo empresarial. Es evidente la prosperidad, pero se sabe que una economía favorable no siempre es pareja al buen desarrollo del espíritu humano” (81).

Sábato’s reflections on Alicante also resonate with a second theme crucial to Gálvez’s project: the role of the city as the space within which the tensions between a debased materialism and a more heightened spiritual morality are most tangibly played out. From the

27 It is relevant that, just as for Gálvez nearly a century earlier, Ernesto Sábato’s journey to Spain in 2002 took place during a period of social upheaval in Argentina, which inspired writers and intellectuals to call for Argentina’s national rejuvenation. As Sábato asserts in the prologue to España en los diarios de mi vejez, his travels in Spain had coincided with “aquel momento en que la Argentina se desplomó después de gobiernos nefastos,” which had left the nation “en un estado de miseria, desempleo y destrucción como jamás nadie pudo imaginar.” Therefore, he affirms that publication of this text at such a time had been driven by a strong motive: “[L]a recuperación de la Argentina, este renacer de las posibilidades que se viven hoy, y que muestran, una vez más, que lo que pareció imposible está encontrando su surco. Que la utopía es el único camino.” See Ernesto Sábato, España en los diarios de mi vejez (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2004) 9-10.
quiet streets and squares of Segovia, in Spain, and with a degree of relief, Gálvez recalls having left behind the “ciudad moderna”; with “el tumulto de Buenos Aires” still palpable in him, he reveals a sense of pure pleasure at having been squarely transported into Segovia’s past (El sol 89). Such an escape from the masses and the Argentine capital’s materialism can be seen as a response that also mimics a natural course of treatment prescribed to nineteenth-century sufferers of tuberculosis. According to Sontag, “the rejection of the city” in favour of the islands, the mountains or the South, was seen as a positive step towards an individual’s healthy recovery (73). The idea of the modern city as metaphorically disease-ridden was again later taken up by Frank Lloyd Wright, when he noted in 1958 that “[t]o look at the cross section of any plan of a big city is to look at something like the section of a fibrous tumor” (31). Yet, unlike those who sought nineteenth-century treatment from tuberculosis, Gálvez does not pursue refuge from the urban altogether. Not only does he desire to “infect” Argentina with Spain’s apparent spirituality, but this is a distinct spirituality made palpable within “el ámbito de las decrépitas ciudades,” such as those of Segovia, Toledo and Ávila (El sol 10). Naturally, the urban spaces of early twentieth-century Buenos Aires, let alone Sábato’s Alicante, are a far cry from these Castilian “cities,” which, at the turn of the twentieth century, were more akin to provincial towns dotting the rural plains of the central meseta. Gálvez’s flight from Buenos Aires, then, can be read as a rejection of the populous, modern, and allegedly diseased urban space, favouring instead the imagined state of purity characteristic of the ancient “urban” city. It was these earlier urban spaces, Wright points out, that grew as “natural,” healthy organisms: “The city then was not malignant” (67-68).

As with Rojas, Gálvez’s desire to observe and read the ancient towns of Castile as a means to rethink his homeland recalls the writers of Spain’s so-called Generation of 1898. Just as the formation of Argentina’s Centenary Generation was a nationalist response to the threat to argentinidad posed by the nation’s liberal politics, its immigration initiatives, and US neoimperialism, the project of national rejuvenation inspired by the Generation of 1898 in Spain occurred in light of the loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, and within an
apathetic climate of national decadence. It was a sense of sociocultural stagnation that spurred these writers to reflect intimately, and indeed critically, on the supposed spiritual essence of the nation, which they believed inhabited the ancient towns and landscapes of Castile. According to Teresa Alfieri, the dual purpose of Gálvez’s earlier work is to offer a severe critique of Buenos Aires while at the same time seeking the spiritual renewal of Argentina, aims directly influenced by Spain’s so-called Generation of 1898: “En su obra Gálvez desea, como la generación del 98, reconquistar la vida espiritual del país, mientras acusa a la ciudad de Buenos Aires de ser el núcleo del materialismo” (202).

The influence of this generation of writers continued to be of significance to the development of Gálvez’s novels during the 1930s. As Dinko Cvitanovic asserts, the 1898 generation and, in particular, the work of Miguel de Unamuno, had the most impact on Gálvez’s sense of “national evangelism” (225). In *El solar* Gálvez makes a direct comparison between his generation of writers and Spain’s Generation of 1898, for whom the ideals of self-understanding through self-reflection and observation, and the cultural and spiritual consolidation of their nations were paramount concerns: “El pequeño grupo que formamos, ejerce aquí una misión semejante a la que tuvo en España aquella generación de ideólogos que surgió después del desastre. España, por medio de Ganivet, Macías Picavea, Costa, Unamuno y algunos otros, se observó a sí misma y llegó a conocerse profundamente” (*El solar* 15-16). It can be said, therefore, that Gálvez’s aim to locate the spirit of Spain echoes similar calls made by writers such as Azorín, who advocated a thorough reflection on the spirit of the “pueblo muerto” of Castile, as a means towards Spain’s national and cultural renewal:

> Vedlo y recorredlo todo: empapaos del espíritu de la vieja España que perdura en estas piedras y en estos muros. Y cuando hayáis recorrido todas las callejuelas, y hayáis escudriñado todos los caserones, y hayáis desparramado la vista por la llanura, entonces retiraos un momento a vuestra posada, y pensad, con el recogimiento de un creyente, en esta España fuerte de la leyenda.

(*Azorín, Los pueblos* 46-47)
In following a comparable ideological and intellectual path to that trodden by Spain’s 1898 Generation through the landscapes and towns of Castile, Gálvez likewise directs his focus towards Spain’s interior. Concentrating his primary thoughts on the centre was only natural, given that the interior regions of his homeland occupied a privileged position for him. In fact, Gálvez was from one of the most important families of the province of Santa Fe. His father, José, had become governor there in 1886 and his uncle had risen to Minister for the Interior in 1910 (Cárdenas and Payá 39, 54). What was even more significant, however, was Gálvez’s appointment as Inspector of Secondary Education in 1906 following his first trip to Europe, after which his fondness for the provinces only intensified. It was during his travels from school to school that he became acutely aware that it was in the nation’s interior that a purer past had been preserved, and where the process of repelling foreign influences had largely been successful (86). As Gálvez makes clear in his second volume of memoirs, *En el mundo de los seres ficticios*, had it not been for his position as Inspector, he would have been merely another “escritor europeizante.” He goes on to state that, instead, “me puse en contacto íntimo y profundo con el alma nacional, con los paisajes de mi tierra . . . [y] me impregné de amor a lo nuestro y de auténtico nacionalismo” (48).

The spatial indicators deployed by Gálvez distinguish between a corrupting cosmopolitanism at the periphery and an authentic, national soul at the centre. Nevertheless, it is not only the physical interiors of the Argentine and Peninsular geographies that are of concern. For Gálvez, occupying the interior is also a marker of the ability to uphold an interior existence; that is, a more spiritual way of life that is allowed to flourish amid isolation and solitude. Gálvez’s alter ego, Gabriel Quiroga, brings the correlation between these two differing notions of interior living to the fore with a diary entry made in Argentina’s northwestern province of La Rioja: “Estas ciudades de provincia tan viejas y tan pobres atesoran encantos singulares. Para los seres sencillos que aman la placidez de la existencia y poseen el don precioso de vivir interiormente, nada más admirable que estos lugares remotos y solitarios” (*El diario* 144).
Such an image of the provincial town stands in stark contrast to the modern urban space, within which Gálvez locates “la barbarie de las energías materiales” (El solar 13). In so doing, and as studied by Francesca Camurati with regard to certain fictional works by Gálvez, he specifically situates this alleged barbarism in the cosmopolitan, progress-driven city, as opposed to Argentina’s supposedly lawless, provincial interior, which had been the argument put forth by Sarmiento. Responding further to the anti-modern charge levelled at him by his detractors, Gálvez admits to his own “egoísmo de artista,” attempting to deflect their accusations by explaining that his admiration for Spain is purely artistic and literary (7-8). As a consequence of his travels in Spain, then, it is not without coincidence that, with the publication of El solar, Gálvez’s attempt to tame the barbarism of the city is to be carried out by “retoques de espiritualidad” (13), as if he were a painter “retouching” the nation by selecting from his palette the appropriate hue with which to restrain the barbarity of materialism.

Given the correlation here between the city and art, it is telling that in his essay, “Right to the City,” Henri Lefebvre affirms that the city functions as “an œuvre, closer to a work of art than to a simple material product” (101). Furthermore, according to Lefebvre, the city as œuvre is a feature that runs counter to “the irreversible tendency towards money and commerce, towards exchange and products. Indeed, the œuvre is use value and the product is exchange value” (66). Lefebvre’s comments are pertinent, for they corroborate Gálvez’s desire that Europe retain examples of its pre-modern towns as artistic testament to a past age when the value of works of art was not seen in purely monetary terms, and when the process of modernisation had yet to corrupt the morals and distinctive soul of a people: “[Q]uisiera...”

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28 In order to address the idea that Gálvez inverts Sarmiento’s theory concerning the spatial locations of an alleged civilisation in the city and barbarism in the provinces, Francesca Camurati’s analysis focuses on Gálvez’s fictional works, La maestra normal (1914) and El diario de Gabriel Quiroga (1910). See Francesca Camurati, “Manuel Gálvez y la construcción de un imaginario nacional a través de la oposición campo-ciudad,” Cahiers du Monde Hispanique et Luso-Brésilien/Caravelle 87 (2006): 132.

29 On the differentiation between the city as “use value” or “exchange value,” Henri Lefebvre notes that use value concerns “the city and urban life,” whereas “exchange value” considers the city as a site for “spaces bought and sold, [and] the consumption of products, goods, places and signs.” See Henri Lefebvre, Writings on Cities, trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) 86.
que en Europa quedara un buen número de viejas ciudades de arte, como ejemplos de lo que fueron los pretéritos siglos” (8).

Therefore, in striving to effect a re-spiritualisation of Argentina, Gálvez’s text conceives of Spain’s national space in terms of a museum for the soul. This arena is offered by the writer as an example of Spain’s supposedly innate capacity to retain its so-called national essence and is imagined as a cultural realm intended to facilitate the moral civilising of Argentina. It is from here within the space of Spain, as museum, that Gálvez aims to promote a new idealism that prizes reflection on the arts and a meditation upon a supposedly more spiritual past: disciplines largely absent from the pursuit of material gain in the early twentieth century. As Gálvez notes, “[I]a influencia del dinero es contemporánea. No se estudia, no se escribe, no se pinta, no se curan enfermos, no se hace nada sin pensar en la ganancia paralela” (El solar 41). Reconfigured as a “museum-nation,” Spain stands as a site that might enable Argentine society’s ideal pursuit of heightened cultural and spiritual goals; Spain’s ancient, medieval towns, for the most part seen in a state of time-lag with regard to modernisation, are figuratively hung by Gálvez as works of art. Consequently, Salamanca, for instance, reveals to his subconscious “las raíces de la raza,” for the city is seen as nothing short of “arte hecho piedra” (117).

Correlating Spain’s national space with that of the museum provides evidence of Gálvez’s desire to hold on to, and place on display, aspects of the nation’s historical past. What gives weight to the notion of imagining Spain and, in particular, Castile, as a museum space in El solar is that this trope occurs virtually in tandem with similar ideas evident in Gálvez’s novel La maestra normal, published one year after El solar in 1914. Camurati asserts that, as a “novela riojana,” the civilisation-barbarism paradigm voiced by Sarmiento is

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30 For Gálvez, a distinct Argentine soul, or national spirit, was evident during the era of Argentina’s emancipation from Spain in the early nineteenth century, an ideal that, a century later, has been seen to suffer under the effects of the nation’s cosmopolitanism and materialism. It is therefore natural for Gálvez to turn to Spain at this time, for, according to his reading, the so-called soul of Spain has not been tainted by similar modern processes, and continues to be evident in its cathedrals, artworks, literature, and in the towns of Castile: “El alma española antigua . . . no será nunca olvidada porque ella vive en las iglesias de la baja Edad Media . . . en los cuadros del Greco, en las novelas picarescas, en los versos del romancero y en la arquitectura de los pueblos estáticos de Castilla.” See Mánuel Gálvez, El diario de Gabriel Quiroga: Opiniones sobre la vida argentina (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2001) 85-86, 88.
subverted in this novel. Here Gálvez gives precedence to the cities of Argentina’s interior provinces as spaces untouched by foreign contamination, repositories that safeguard what Gálvez considers to be Argentina’s true historical and spiritual values, necessary for the regeneration of the Argentine soul. In the same way that Spain is seen to act as a living repository for *Hispanidad*, Argentina’s interior cities, Camurati proposes, constitute for Gálvez “un repositorio de los valores del pasado, de un pasado heroico que representa la defensa de los valores espirituales contra el avance de los nuevos modelos que se nutren del mito positivista del progreso indefinido” (132).

Gálvez’s implicit representation of Spain as a museum can be fruitfully linked with his self-image as a “social reformer” (Lichtblau, *Manuel* 72). What drives his ambition to “atenuar el torpe materialismo que hoy nos agravia y avergüenza” is a double purpose, both idealist and patriotic (*El solar* 14). In seeking to create a new idealism that might temper the negative aspects of modernity, his idealism foregrounds the rights and responsibilities of dutiful citizenship in his homeland. A similar didactic purpose had been envisaged for the public museum. As criminal punishment withdrew from the public gaze and was institutionalised behind closed doors, Tony Bennett notes that “it was increasingly the museum that was conceived as the primary instrument of civic education” (102).

According to Bennett, the birth of the public museum in Western culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries arose from culture being seen as a means to effect new ways of governing and to exercise new forms of social control (19). The practice of preceding centuries, which had been characterised by the private collecting of art by royalty and the aristocracy, gave way to public museums whose doors were opened, serving their new function as “instruments of public instruction” (95). More than having as its purpose the

31 On the notion of the museum as an instrument of power, Benedict Anderson affirms that, together with the map and the national census, the museum had a profound impact on the ways in which empires were able to envisage their dominions, and the peoples and geographies therein. Thus, the museum helped render the colonies entirely visible to imperial administrative control in what amounted to a “totalizing classificatory grid, which could be applied with endless flexibility to anything under the state’s real or contemplated control: peoples, regions, religions, languages, products, monuments.” See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006) 163-64, 184-85.
reform of an individual through improving their inner life and moral and mental health, in the late nineteenth century the museum, together with the public library and the art gallery, was dedicated to "civilizing the population as a whole" (18-19). Indeed, Bennett states that the formation of the public museum takes place at roughly the same time as the institutionalisation of the prison, the clinic and the asylum, the implications of which have been developed by Michel Foucault. However, where Foucault’s "carceral" theories on the prison, the clinic and the asylum point to institutions of confinement, the museum is to be considered primarily as an institution of exhibition. Notwithstanding this point, as Bennett argues, their juxtaposition may be instructive, as each in its own distinct way is an articulation of disciplinary practices and power relations (59, 61).

The themes of civilising and educating the population are not without reference in Gálvez’s work. Such a role had been taken on by the character Monsalvat, as the self-professed reformer of the prostitute Nacha Regules in Gálvez’s novel of the same name, mentioned above. Not only is Monsalvat the moral redeemer of the wayward Nacha, but a translation of his Catalan surname elevates him to the status of saviour of the world. Monsalvat’s role can be seen as a moral response in literary fiction to what Argentina’s elites had, in the late nineteenth century, defined as a national problem of social degeneracy. According to Rodríguez, they reacted with their own civilising mission, to be carried out by scientists, hygienists, psychiatrists and social pathologists. From the 1880s these social scientists were able to diagnose such allegedly degenerative types as prostitutes, murderers, pimps, homosexuals, vagrants, alcoholics and criminals. Argentina’s national body was seen as a sick organism that had strayed from some pre-prescribed form of ideal humanity. What is more, the nation’s diseased state was attributed to quite contradictory causes. On the one hand, it was a symptom of the genetic make-up of the population. On the other, it was thought that degeneracy of this kind had been caused by Argentina’s surging prosperity and the overcrowding brought about by progress, modernity and immigrant masses (Rodríguez 71-72, 138).
It may be by mere chance that Gálvez’s first trip to Spain in 1906 coincided with the European journey of Argentine psychiatrist, José Ingenieros (1877-1925). The latter’s tour of Europe, by invitation of President Julio Roca, was intended as a two-year diplomatic mission to address Argentina’s place in the civilised world. Ingenieros’ belief in a “hierarchy of ‘civilization’” meant that ascension of this hierarchy, so as to compete with the Europeans, was dependent on Argentina overcoming its supposed symptoms of degeneracy and barbarism, for which programmes of social reform were developed and implemented (Rodríguez 53-54).

It cannot be concluded with any certainty that Gálvez shared the beliefs of the Argentine elites and scientists on the theory of biological inferiority, and the social engineering initiatives of government to control Argentina’s population. Nevertheless, a sense of social surveillance over the masses does figure in Gálvez’s political ideology. As he explains in his memoirs, a strong anti-liberal stance since adolescence, and a general faith in “la necesidad del orden, no sólo del orden policial sino del orden jerárquico,” had driven his belief that social justice could only ever be attainable in Argentina through state intervention. Although he upheld socialist principles, Gálvez was an advocate for the government’s restriction of civil liberties, not only during periods of outright war and internal conflicts, but “cuando es urgente realizar ciertas reformas sociales o corregir la excesiva corrupción” (Seres ficticios 157).

For Gálvez, Argentina’s supposed immorality and excessive materialism constitute reasons that justify the exercising of methods of control by the nation’s elite so as to achieve

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32 Aline Helg notes that José Ingenieros was a little-studied physician and sociologist whose theories on “race” have not received much scholarly attention. For Helg, Ingenieros was a socialist who upheld the theories of racial inequality and natural selection. He stood firmly for “coherent and intransient racial evolutionism in Argentina,” as well as for the “biogenetical correlation’ between environment, climate, race, institutions, and beliefs,” in accordance with French theorists such as Count Arthur de Gobineau. See Aline Helg, “Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930,” The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: U of Texas P, 1990) 39, 42.

33 Gálvez states that his socialist tendencies must be understood in the wider sense of the term. Declaring his outright allegiance to socialism as a political ideology that is anti-clerical and materialistic, and that fails to recognise the immortal soul of all human beings, would have contradicted his faith as a devout, practising Catholic. That said, his sympathies with socialism lie in its capacity to promote social justice, thus avoiding the tendency of capitalism toward exploitation: “El individualismo es hermano del capitalismo y conduce a la explotación del hombre por el hombre. Además, aquí [en Argentina] donde la iniciativa individual es casi nula y todo se espera del gobierno, un incipiente socialismo de Estado, algo como lo que quieren los laboristas ingleses, me pareció siempre la solución para nuestros males y problemas.” See Manuel Gálvez, Recuerdos de la vida literaria II: En el mundo de los seres ficticios (Buenos Aires: Hachette, 1961) 146.
needed social reform. A member of Argentina’s cultural elite, Gálvez affirms that *El solar* has been written almost exclusively for his fellow citizens (*El solar* 20). Thus, it is through this text that his desire to exert a measure of moral and spiritual control, or at the very least, to exercise a guiding influence over Argentina’s spiritual morality is expressed. As such, *El solar* constitutes his own agenda toward social reform in Argentina by offering an idealised image of Spain that, for Gálvez, is to stand as Argentina’s spiritual and moral benchmark. Proclaiming that “Castilla nos creó a su imagen y semejanza” (59), he refigures God’s creation of Man to posit Castile as Argentina’s Almighty Creator. It is from Castile’s ancient towns, Gálvez points out, that Argentine society is to receive its “lección espiritualista” (25).

Recalling the theories of Ingenieros, Gálvez’s belief in a “hierarchy of order” is manifest in *El solar* when he effectively organises the nation’s geography as spaces of display for the museum-nation that is Spain. Thus, Castile, as Divine Creator, is placed at the head of a moral and spiritual hierarchy, with the organisation of such an order coherent with the function of the public museum. According to Bennett, as a site of representation, the museum was transformed during the course of the nineteenth century “through the use of historicized principles of display which . . . organized its own hierarchies and exclusions” (33). In a similar fashion to the principles underpinning the museum, Gálvez’s *El solar* makes evident an order of precedence by locating Castile as the first major geographical location, covered in what is the largest section of the text, “La España castiza.” There seven chapters are dedicated to this region, six to specific towns and one in contemplation of the landscape. Less textual space is afforded to the three remaining sections in the text: “La España latina,” comprising a single chapter on Barcelona; “La España africana,” in which Andalusia forms the focus of four chapters; and “La España vascongada,” which devotes four chapters to the Basque Country. Serving as a frame for the whole work is a lengthy first chapter entitled “El espiritualismo español.”

In essentially listing the contents of Gálvez’s text in this way, I propose that the first framing chapter and each of the subsequent sections form four “Spains,” which function like
rooms or specific displays within the museum-nation. They hence constitute a constructed itinerary manufactured according to a hierarchical order that prizes certain “rooms” over others. In so doing, Gálvez’s narrative does not faithfully reflect his physical trajectory in Spain in either space or chronological time. By requiring readers to trace a specifically fashioned itinerary in this way, the structuring of Gálvez’s text can be compared to the formulation of preconceived trajectories within the space of the museum. On the development of the art museum, in particular, Bennett has noted that a shift occurred from rooms initially organised to affect the viewer’s senses to pedagogically focused displays that sought to chart the progression of art across distinct periods and schools. The effect of the latter was that the space of the museum was reorganised so as to produce “an itinerary that the visitor is obliged to perform. The museum converts rooms into paths, into spaces leading from and to somewhere” (44). An itinerary of this type thus transcribes, in terms of a time flow, a perception of supposed progress by setting out from a point of origin and arriving at a present condition or state.

By locating his reflections on Castile at the beginning of El solar, Gálvez not only announces a hierarchy of order, but also the origins of an evolutionary sequence that begins with ancient Castile, the creator of Argentina. It is telling that, at the end of the text, having revealed “el alma de España—tal como yo la siento y la veo—mostrándotela en sus ciudades.

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34 It is apparent that El solar is not a travel text about the physical act of travelling, as it fails to represent accurately the physical and chronological journey itself as a series of geographical locations traversed across time and space. Firstly, Gálvez’s two trips to Spain in 1906 and 1910 have been compressed into a single text with only one reference made to this effect. The only place where this is noted is in the chapter on Toledo, when he remarks upon having returned to the city five years after his initial visit (El solar 100). Secondly, at the end of the chapter on Salamanca, Gálvez asserts that it had been there that he had witnessed “la última visión . . . de la fuerte, de la eterna España” (117). Nevertheless, the chapter on Salamanca precedes a chapter on Ávila, where his focus on Spanish mysticism allows him to affirm that this city makes palpable “la más perfecta síntesis de la España vieja,” formed by way of “aquella tan española fusión de lo caballeresco y de lo místico” (138-39). Hence, it could be argued that it may not have been precisely Salamanca that had presented to him his lasting image of a “strong” and “eternal” Spain.

35 It was not only the art museum that instructed its visitors to follow a linear path of progress according to time but the modern museum in general. As Tony Bennett remarks, the modern museum served as “the primary institutional condition” for a new set of geological, archaeological, historical, biological, anthropological, and artistic knowledge that surfaced in tandem with the birth of the museum. As this new knowledge was brought together within the museum space according to “the modern episteme,” its objects were arranged “as parts of evolutionary sequences (the history of the earth, of life, of man, and of civilization) which, in their interrelations, formed a totalizing order of things and peoples that was historicized through and through.” See Tony Bennett, The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics (London: Routledge, 1995) 96.
decrépitas y maravillosas,” Gálvez announces a desire to evoke for his readers, in a similar fashion, the “soul” of Argentina by examining its cities and landscapes (*El solar* 263-64). However, he states that, first, it had been necessary to examine the nation’s birth place: “Pero antes de penetrar en la raza [argentina] era preciso conocer su solar” (264). In so doing, Gálvez justifies the methods employed to formulate his textual itinerary through Spain as a museum-nation, informed by, and instructive of, an evolutionary sequence: “¡Saber de dónde venimos, sin lo cual nunca sabremos adónde vamos, lector!” (264). As a consequence of transcribing a path according to evolutionary time and exploring Argentina’s origin, Gálvez is not only able to obtain an image of Argentina in some present state or condition, but can also navigate more confidently towards the nation’s future destination.

Charting a trajectory from the point of a nation’s supposed creation, or birthplace, is not the only possible itinerary of evolution through Spain as museum. Based on the sequence of “display rooms” through which Gálvez directs his readers in *El solar*, I suggest that his itinerary from Castile to Catalonia to Andalusia, and then to the Basque Country, not only traces a path from the centre to the periphery, but one from an ancient, pre-industrial heartland to its thriving, modernising margins.\(^{36}\) Just as it was significant that Gálvez’s text began in Castile, as the imagined creator of Argentina, it is similarly instructive that the itinerary of *El solar* ends in the Basque Country, in what is the final display within the museum-nation, for Gálvez attributes Argentina’s modernising energy to the Basque people and their lands: “[L]os vascos son, en cierto sentido, los fundadores de la energía argentina. . . han sido los verdaderos pioneers de nuestra civilización” (221).

Yet, it would be misleading to assume that Gálvez’s itinerary, illustrating in one instance a process of modernisation from centre to periphery, deems this form of development towards modernity as the correct path to trace. This is not to say that the desire for progress is absent from his text altogether. Rather, it is the pursuit of an ethical, moral,

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\(^{36}\) Although Andalusia may appear to be at odds with an evolutionary sequence that evokes a process toward modernisation, Gálvez does include the Andalusian city of Huelva in a list of commercially and economically potent locations along Spain’s periphery: “Es la España de las minas, de las fábricas, del comercio, del porvenir económico; la España de Bilbao y de Huelva, de Barcelona, de Valencia, de Guipúzcoa” (*El solar* 99).
and spiritual well-being that directs Gálvez’s transcription of an evolutionary sequence in *El solar*. While he states that two forms of progress exist, a “progreso material” and a “perfeccionamiento ético,” it is the latter, “el verdadero progreso,” that is of greater importance as Gálvez constructs an itinerary around Spain (*El solar* 53). Therefore, Gálvez’s text, as a guide to the museum-nation for readers/visitors, succeeds in corroborating Bennett’s theory that, to its visitors, the museum offered “both a prompt and an opportunity to civilize themselves . . . by treating the exhibits as props for a social performance aimed at ascending through the ranks, to help keep progress on path” (47).

If each of the sections of *El solar* can be envisaged as a “display room” in the museum-nation that is Spain, what remains to be addressed, then, in Bennett’s terms, are the nature of the specific “exhibits” and how each is able to suggest a “social performance”: that is to say, a pedagogic outcome from attempts to shape Argentine society through civilising habits so as to maintain the nation on a path towards moral prosperity and “true” progress. To take the final section or “room” denoted “La España vascongada,” there Gálvez affirms, somewhat problematically, that the Basques “se asemejan espiritual y hasta físicamente a los castellanos” (223), thereby implying that a process of cultural and biological assimilation in the region has homogenised any perceived differences. Without doubt, such a statement dilutes distinctions between the two peoples and fails to identify the uniqueness of the Basques. Subsequently, a contradiction arises that apparently questions that such an assimilatory process has indeed taken place. According to Gálvez, the Basques hold the key to the rejuvenation of Spain’s former grandeur (226), because the very same energy that helped forge Latin America’s Southern Cone may be harnessed for the good of a decaying Spain: “Si los vascos han contribuido a crear la fuerza de la Argentina, del Uruguay, de Chile, ¿por qué no han de poder animar también los músculos cansados de España e infundir nuevos vigores a la energía de la vieja estirpe?” (227). Nevertheless, this desired transfer of energy is dependent on the future ability of the Basques to align themselves culturally and spiritually with Castile, indicating that this process is yet to occur. What currently hinders this alignment,
Gálvez remarks, is the ethnic fanaticism and linguistic insularity of the Basques: "Hay en el pueblo éuscaro un terco fanatismo étnico que le tiene recluído en sus montañas y fortificado en su idioma, que si es bello también es inútil, pues no puede ser conductor de ideas ya que sólo lo entienden doscientas mil personas" (226-27). Consequently, Gálvez’s representation of the Basque people can be seen to be a product more of his express desires than of historical fact.

As such, I posit that the social performance exhibited in the final “display room” of Spain as a museum-nation proposes a civilising process that calls for minority differences to be erased for the greater benefit of a dominant culture. Such a call begs comparison with Gálvez’s cry for cultural and spiritual uniformity in Argentina in the name of moral betterment. In *El diario de Gabriel Quiroga*, Gálvez describes the process of scorching the earth to eradicate weeds in preparation for new crops as a metaphor for preparing and treating the nation’s “territorio espiritual,” in which “las impurezas del ambiente moral” are destroyed, as are “las exterioridades inútiles e irrisorias” (89). Gálvez similarly evokes such an image of the death of a noxious nature in relation to the Basque Country, itself exterior in relation to the nation’s unifying centre, when he notes the perceived destruction of the symbol of Basque nationalism: the Tree of Guernica. Gálvez sees this symbol as nothing more than a dry, ruined corpse, the death of which Gálvez uses as justification for the necessity of the Basque Country’s fusion with Castile:

¿[N]o creéis, vascones, que haya en su muerte también un símbolo? ¿No significará que el alma vascongada debe desaparecer para fundirse en la gran alma española? ¿No pensáis que llegó el momento de abandonar aquellas tradiciones que entorpecen vuestro camino hacia adelante, de aprender otra lengua para comunicaros con otros pueblos, de haceros españoles definitivamente? (*El solar* 227)

It is apparent that such a request repeats the familiar trope of cultural fusion imagined as a process of melting and is reminiscent of similar calls made by Blasco Ibáñez and Rojas.
However, here it is the Basque Country that is urged to relinquish its traditions and language, and to forsake its isolation and heterogeneity, in favour of a homogenising centre, an appeal that was met with harsh criticism by Basque nationalists (Lichtblau, “Reaction” 135). This kind of proposal for national homogenisation finds an echo in the image of Argentina that the Centenary Generation sought to forge. These writers attempted to imbue a corrupt, cosmopolitan periphery, seen in the form of an immigrant-flooded, polyglot capital city on the nation’s geographical margins, with a new and more uniform spiritual and moral idealism voiced from an allegedly authentic interior. However, it is ironic that Gálvez condones the forsaking of Basque traditions when his hopes for Argentina rest on the protection of national traditions and memories. Furthermore, in terms of language, just as Castilian Spanish is to take precedence over Euskera in El soliar, J. Ramos, for one, notes a comparable push toward language homogeneity in Argentina; one aspect of the social crisis affecting the Argentine “soul” at the turn of the twentieth century was manifested in what was a perceived threat of “contamination” of the national language by the minority tongues of working-class immigrants (”Faceless” 26).

The precedence of Castile, and the homogenising potentiality of a distinct Castilian spirit and language, are also discernible as Gálvez wanders the “display room” of “La España africana.” Even though he acknowledges degrees of linguistic influence of the Arabic language in the development of Castilian Spanish, Gálvez affirms that in no way is this proof that the spirit of the Arab world has participated in the formation of Spain (El soliar 178). Within this section of the museum-nation, what is exhibited as Andalusia offers little in the way of the Arab influence on the region, even after several centuries of Moorish occupation in the south. The Arab imprint is made to appear minimal and indeed, scarcely perceptible, except for ruined testaments to their architecture: “La posesión musulmana del territorio español durante siete siglos . . . no influyó sino indirectamente en la formación definitiva del alma española. Hoy sólo existe lo árabe en España como ruina arqueológica” (163). Similar to how Blasco Ibáñez rendered Spanish immigrants to Argentina impervious to the properties of its
Melting Pot in an effort to uphold Spain’s cultural and spiritual dominance in Argentina, Gálvez constructs Castilian Spain and its “soul,” identified with the nation, as an alchemical force without comparison: “Los invasores, lejos de modificar el espíritu español, fueron modificados por España” (El solar 179). Thus, as in “La España vascongada,” the social performance exhibited in “La España africana” represents other cultural communities as excluded from participation by a hegemonic centre, or as increasingly pushed to the margins of civil society.

Just as Gálvez dilutes what would otherwise be exhibitions of heterogeneous pluralities in the previous two “rooms” of the museum-nation, as he enters “La España latina,” so too is Catalonia’s distinct regionalism imagined as extinguished beneath the banner of an ideally homogeneous Spain. Nevertheless, although Barcelona fails to express the same “castrismo” as the Castilian cities, Gálvez proclaims that the Catalan capital is a very Spanish city (El solar 151). What is pivotal in Gálvez’s appraisal is that Barcelona’s modernisation, unlike that which transformed the social fabric of Buenos Aires, has not altered the city’s sense of tradition nor its character (152). In fact, it is precisely in its capacity to balance an idealised past with the material present, in what is, for Gálvez, its “dualidad moral y material” (159), that Barcelona is displayed as a pedagogical lesson for Argentina: “[N]os muestra que es negocio realizable—¡gran enseñanza para nosotros los argentinos!—la convivencia del trabajo, del arte y del idealismo” (154). Indeed, Gálvez had pointed out in El diario de Gabriel Quiroja that such a balance would be achievable in Argentina should Buenos Aires be able to modernise the provinces at the same time as these provided the capital city with their restorative moral values: “Todas las excelencias provincianas serán perdidas mientras no realicemos el milagro de llevar Buenos Aires a las provincias y de traer las provincias a Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires para las provincias quiere decir trabajo, higiene, alimentación.” Meanwhile, for the capital city, the Argentine provinces are to reawaken “el sentimiento de la nacionalidad que hemos perdido, restaurar el patriotismo e infundir la esperanza y los anhelos en destinos eternos, fecundos, nobles” (El diario 150).
What is evident in Gálvez’s project here is a process of homogenisation that is ideally equal on both sides. The moralising geographical centre of the interior provinces and the modernising urban periphery of the capital city must each be seen to teach as much as they are taught, and to influence as much as they are influenced. However, the same degree of exchange between the ancient interior provinces and the modern margin, as envisaged in Argentina, cannot be seen to exist, nor even be promoted, within the Spain of Gálvez’s *El solar*. There is not the same willingness by Gálvez to witness the modernising peripheries of Barcelona and the Basque Country propel the Castilian centre along a similar path towards modernity. One explanation for his hesitation could be that, in their insularities, separatist regionalisms and distinct languages, Catalonia and the Basque Country represented forms of “foreignness” similar to those from which Gálvez was seeking respite as he searched in Spain for some form of authentic, native essence. Another reason for his reluctance could reside in the fact that, in early twentieth-century Spain, these peripheries, as well as regions in Andalusia, were hotbeds of anarchism and socialism. In his memoirs Gálvez affirms his distrust of socialist ideology due to its anticlerical stance and its doctrine of preaching materialism and determinism. What is more, in opposition to Gálvez’s own beliefs, socialism, he remarks, fails to recognise the immortality of the human soul (*El mundo* 146). In Spain the socialist party had been founded in 1879 and its trade union, the *Unión General de Trabajadores*, or UGT, had been created three years later in 1882. As Carr has remarked, what gave the socialist movement its first show of mass support were the mining industry strikes in Bilbao in the 1890s, the first serious organisation of striking workers anywhere in the advancing industrialisation of fin-de-siècle Spain that was primarily affecting the modernising regions of Catalonia, the Basque Country, Asturias and Cartagena, had greatly increased worker numbers in the industrial sector. With this increase came the self-awareness of these workers as a collective with common desires to improve their standards of living. For the most part, as a means to achieve these standards, the working classes aligned themselves to either the socialist or anarchist movements, which had been gaining in strength at this time. In addition to organising themselves into syndicates, it was especially during the first two decades of the twentieth century that an increasingly agitated working class in need of emancipation sought to voice their dissatisfaction and advance their needs through the promotion of general strikes, to which was added a third method to their cause: the inciting of sporadic outbreaks of violence. See Jose María Jover Zamora and Guadalupe Gómez-Ferrer Morant, “En los umbrales del siglo XX. Expansión económica, crisis social,” *España: Sociedad, política y civilización (siglos XIX-XX)*, ed. Jover Zamora, Gómez-Ferrer Morant, and Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpúrua (Madrid: Debate, 2001) 490-91, 497.
Spain. With the growth of the movement, the weak, isolated cries of worker discontent characteristic of the past became transformed into more cohesive “societies of resistance” (Carr 447-48).

If a focal point for socialist resistance had been the Basque Country, then a similarly industrialised region, Catalonia, had become “the great anarchist homeland of Europe” (442). However, rather than anarchist in the strict sense of the term, Catalonia had turned to what Carr calls “anarcho-syndicalism—the strong revolutionary union with the instrument of the general strike” (445). What served to steer Catalonia more towards anarchism than to socialism, Carr contends, was that the region was increasingly influenced by “the immigration of ‘foreign’ elements from provinces with a tradition of primitive revolution,” such as the violent, lower-working classes that had flooded Barcelona from Andalusia (445), as well as the intimate contact of the Catalan capital with the Italian anarchist movement. Galvez’s depiction of Barcelona as suffering from what Carr has called “the contagions of a great port” (445) recalls Gálvez’s similar concern for the presence of detrimental foreign elements in the port-city of Buenos Aires, which had also fed the growth of anarchism and socialism there.

Thus, for Gálvez, the element of the “foreign” present in Spain’s peripheries, as well as their separatist ideologies, act as deterrents to any will on his part for Castile to be imbued with their modernising influence. Nevertheless, he appears caught in a dilemma: on the one hand, he desires Spain to harness the positive aspects of progress; on the other, he wants to see its ancient cities exhibited within the museum-nation as testaments to an idealised past, supposedly free from the pitfalls of a modernity that corrupts, promotes materialism, and destabilises a cohesive national spirit. Such a process of exchange between the centre and the margins in Spain is a more unbalanced transfer of influence than that called for in Argentina by Gálvez in *El diario*. In the Spain of *El solar*, the cities of the ancient, pre-industrial centre take precedence over those located on the modernising margins.

Where this predicament between tradition and modernisation is voiced loudest is within the final and, indeed, largest “display room” analysed here, into which Gálvez enters
first in *El solar*. “La España castiza.” There, in Toledo, Gálvez foregrounds most tangibly the ensuing tension between the modern and the ancient when he reflects upon the city as if in the presence of a work of art. On the idea of looking at art, Bennett has distinguished between what is visible—the painting itself—and an invisible “higher order reality (*art*)” (164). Notwithstanding the fact that all viewers see what is visibly displayed, not all are capable of communicating with the hidden realities of art. This division, Bennett remarks, goes a long way toward explaining different attitudes towards the contextualising materials utilised by art museums, such as guidebooks and labels, which help explain the significance of their pieces and collections (164). For those in possession of “the appropriate socially-coded ways of seeing,” looking at art pieces, as well as entire collections, becomes meaningful; acting like portals, they provide access to this higher reality and to invisible realms of meaning, one of which, Bennett states, is access to the past (35).

I suggest that *El solar* attempts to bridge the gap between the visible and the invisible by seeking to make accessible Toledo’s supposedly hidden realm of meaning, thus functioning in a similar fashion to the intentions of the maps, plaques and guidebooks offered to visitors to art museums. In evoking Toledo as art, Gálvez alludes not only to the city’s two realms of meaning, consistent with Bennett’s notions on the visibility and invisibility of works of art, but also to the division between those travellers to Toledo who are in communion with both realities and those who are not: “[M]ientras para casi todos los viajeros Toledo es solamente una ciudad de arte, para otros la vieja ciudad significa algo más” (*El solar* 95). On the one hand, for Gálvez, Toledo’s visible beauty, as a “city of art,” is comprehensible to “todo espíritu un poco artista.” On the other, what constitutes the city’s alternative and less accessible text is its interior or ideological beauty, which “no logran comprender sino las almas profundas” (95). As a type of intermediary who possesses such a soul, then, Gálvez exposes Toledo’s hidden reality, which he articulates as “la expresión de un gran dolor” (95). This reality, however, does not solely emanate from the single art work that is Toledo. Rather, it is the
expression of an anguish characteristic of the entire “collection” within the display room denoted “La España castiza.”

According to Gálvez, the alleged pain of Castilian Spain surfaces as a result of its impotence in adapting to what he refers to as “la vida moderna,” due precisely to the fact that its “viejos ideales espiritualistas parecen incompatibles con la actual civilización burguesa” (98). What is highlighted here is that the “modern life” of civilised bourgeois society, which, Gálvez maintains, has been produced by “ese cruel tirano que se llama el Progreso” (91), is allegedly incompatible with the spiritual ideals characteristic of a pre-modern period. Such is the failure of Old Spain to reconcile its past, and its traditional, spiritual energy, with an increasingly modernising present, that Gálvez foresees the conclusion of its suffering in the figurative death of Castile altogether:

Y he aquí el dolor de España: ver cómo el sentido positivista de la vida domina el mundo; cómo el arte humano y único que expresaba aquellos ideales resultará pronto exótico e incomprensible, habiendo perdido casi toda relación de semejanza con la vida actual; cómo a la energía espiritual reemplaza la energía industrial; cómo las almas del Cid, de Don Quijote y de otros no menos admirables seres no influirán nunca más sobre los hombres, cómo morirá la España vieja, la grande, la castiza. (98-99)

As Gálvez regretfully remarks upon the inevitable rise in Spain of positivism over more spiritual, idealised and “human” art forms, as well as the displacement of a so-called spiritual energy by industrial energy, he brings to the fore the cognitive and social transformations brought about by bourgeois modernity. According to Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, this form of modernity, linked historically to the rise of capitalism and brought into being through societal modernisation, broke with the confines of antiquated tradition, allowing the subject to seek individual betterment and personal goals within a more materialistic, progress-driven world. On the one hand, modernisation produced cognitive transformations that resulted from an emphasis on the principles of progress, a heightened understanding of the self as an
individual, and the belief in a scientific, secular consciousness. On the other hand, it produced social transformations, such as the increased bureaucracy of national and local governments, the birth and institutionalisation of industrial economies, and the proliferation of the mass media, as well as increased literacy, mobility and urbanisation (Gaonkar 1-2). However, rather than merely highlight the existence of these transformations, Gálvez notes their impact upon high art forms, an “arte humano,” soon to be rendered foreign and incomprehensible to a modern, industrial and mass-producing society devoid of spiritual ideals.38

In favour of salvaging such art forms, and opposing the mundane routines, the regimented pragmatism and the sense of orderliness and consumption-driven mass culture of bourgeois modernity, was a cultural modernity intimately tied to the ideals of the mid nineteenth-century Romantics. Their principles privileged instead the power of imagination over reason, and had the passionate self-exploration and fulfilment of the individual as its prime concerns: “[T]he proponents of cultural modernity were repelled by the middle-class ethos—by its stifling conformities and banalities; by its discounting of enthusiasm, imagination, and moral passion in favor of pragmatic calculation and the soulless pursuit of money” (Gaonkar 2).

However, as Matei Calinescu stipulates, the cultural modernity of Romanticism, which upheld the ideals of a timeless beauty that was supposedly acknowledged universally, had begun to exhaust its aesthetic potential from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries onwards (3-4). In its place, Calinescu affirms, was a view of the artist now severed from a traditional past. Unable to offer models or examples to follow, a focus on the past was brought into question as a consequence of the artists’ new awareness of the present, which facilitated their aesthetic responses to what was a heightened sense of a fleeting, transitory present moment, continuously overhauled and modified by the transformations of rapid modernisation: “What we have to deal with here is a major cultural shift from a time-honored

38 It is this division that Andreas Huyssen has called the “great divide” between high art and mass culture. See Andreas Huyssen, After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986) viii.
aesthetics of permanence, based on a belief in an unchanging and transcendental ideal of beauty, to an aesthetics of transitoriness and immanence, whose central values are change and novelty” (Calinescu 3).

Consequently, modernism became the aesthetic response by artists, writers and intellectuals of cultural modernity to the transformations prompted by societal modernisation from the end of the nineteenth century and during the first three decades of the twentieth. However, it is worth noting that, in their questioning of the present, the proponents of modernism were far from forming a unified and homogeneous response to the ills of modernisation and mass culture. As Raymond Williams has pointed out, while the only constant was that its artists, writers and intellectuals all stood firmly against bourgeois society, the representatives of modernism chose either “the formerly aristocratic valuation of art as a sacred realm above money and commerce, or the revolutionary doctrines, promulgated since 1848, of art as the liberating vanguard of popular consciousness” (34).

Considering Gálvez’s allusion to Toledo as art, I argue that his allegiance is to the former principle, where what is prized is the sacredness of the artwork/city, which aims to avoid the spiritual corruption of the mass market that posits art as an object with a certain exchange value.

Five years after his initial visit to Toledo, Gálvez returns once more to stand figuratively before the city as an art piece displayed upon the walls of the museum-nation. By now the tension between Toledo as an immutable, sacred realm, and its manipulation by the

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39 As Robert Wohl has remarked, the greatest impact of modernism was felt during the decades just prior to the First World War and up until shortly before World War Two, that is, from 1890 to 1933. See Robert Wohl, "The Generation of 1914 and Modernism," Modernism: Challenges and Perspectives, ed. Monique Chefdor, Ricardo Quinones, and Albert Wachtel (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1986) 68. However, although the aesthetic productivity of modernism may have been at its most concentrated during this period, Raymond Williams, for one, has warned against thinking solely in terms of such a narrow temporal focus. Williams affirms that, in art, it would be shortsighted to isolate the early twentieth-century Cubist movement from the earlier impressionist painters of the 1860s, for each sought to find artistic expression for the rapid social change affecting Parisian life during the period of modernisation. Similarly, when thinking about modernism in literature, it would be equally misguided to separate the conventional modernist writers, such as Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka or James Joyce from the Realist works of Gustave Flaubert and Charles Dickens in the 1840s, for the latter made the texts of the former possible. What is more, each of these writers contributed to the organisation of a new vocabulary that expressed the effects upon society and the individual of the growth of the industrial city and the process of urbanisation. See Raymond Williams, The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists, ed. Tony Pinkney (London: Verso, 1989) 32.
commercial enterprises of the modern present, has become apparent. For Gálvez, what has served to instigate this tension, and to usher in a new era for the city, is the arrival of tourists, the mass-consumers of foreign towns and cities par excellence: “Es el turismo, el triste turismo, lo que hace inaugurar la transformación de Toledo” (*El solar* 101). Thus, with the arrival of the tourist to the streets of the city, the former rendition of Toledo is superseded by an image replete with the equalising, homogenising effects that the social transformations of bourgeois modernity enact upon the urban landscape:

Entonces otra Toledo reemplazará a la actual. Casas modernas sustituirán a las viviendas ruinosas, las calles estarán ensanchadas y niveladas—pues la democracia y el progreso, siendo niveladores, no toleran ninguna desigualdad—, un tranvía correrá desde la Estación hasta el clásico Zocodover y se leerán anuncios de máquinas agrícolas en los muros históricos de la puerta Bisagra. (101)

By virtue of their imagined originality and Castilian individualism, the notion that certain regions of the nation have managed to avoid the homogenising effects of modernity in an age of mass production is precisely that which attracts Gálvez to Spain, where each city displays an allegedly unique character and soul, differentiating it from all others (42-43). As modernity encroaches upon this perceived originality, however, it has the detrimental consequence of producing homogeneity, and diminishing the unique spiritual value of Spain; as Gálvez asserts, so-called modern civilisation “hace asemejarse a todos los pueblos entre sí” (43).

Nevertheless, although Gálvez admits to being saddened by what he calls “el fin del pasado” (102), it should not be taken as a given that he fervently opposes modernity. While in Toledo Gálvez appears to bow down to Spain’s nascent modernisation, confirming that a national rebirth necessarily requires a national death: “Me apena imaginar que todo esto [de la vieja España] tiene que morir, que está ya muriendo. Una España nueva que no puede coexistir junto a la antigua comienza a levantarse llena de bríos. . . . Yo que soy ciudadano de
un país potente de energías, no puedo sino regocijarme por esta naciente energía española”

(99). Resulting from the process of modernisation, cast as a national death, what Gálvez laments is the inevitable loss of what would constitute the supposed essence of the nation. It is this same idea of a disappearing national spirit, intimately bound to national literature, that was of such concern for Sábato as he pondered the images of modernity present in Alicante. Given that Sábato’s travels in Spain took place in 2002 it may have given Gálvez some heart to know that, far from being lost altogether, vestiges of the nation’s essence were still palpable almost a century after his own experiences in Spain, as Sábato declares: “Me entristece que la esencia de la España que amo esté desapareciendo. La España áspera, indómita, fuerte. La España de Cervantes, de Unamuno, de Machado, de Lorca, de Hernández. Quiera Dios que no llegue el día en que McDonald’s instale su fábrica de hamburguesas en una plaza de toros” (Sábato 82).

However, to focus on Gálvez’s apparent joy for Spain’s emerging modernisation belies the fact that he expresses more delight in the idea that the potential of Spanish modernity to cement firmly its presence appears to be a long way off. As such, Gálvez’s contentment stems not from examples of Spain’s imminent economic and commercial progress, but rather from a continued ability to seek refuge in an idealised image that maintains the spiritual integrity of that nation and its people, located outside modernity. So strong is Gálvez’s conviction that a spiritual conscience, together with the geographical locations where it might be nourished, are of more value than the progress offered by modernisation, that he refutes his earlier statement in which he advocated, albeit hesitantly, Spain’s “death” in order that it be reborn. As he focuses on the perceived role of the European city for the alleged victims of modernity, Gálvez rejects that the death/modernisation of these cities is a logical outcome: “Pero no; estas ciudades no deben morir ni progresar jamás. Segovia, Toledo, Venecia, ¿por qué no quedan eternamente para servir de refugio, en las intemperies de la vida moderna, a los soñadores incurables, a los vencidos, a los atormentados por la inquietud espiritual?” (92).
For such cities to escape the seemingly unavoidable “death” that so-called progress demands necessarily requires that the locations to which Gálvez refers be virtually frozen in time. I suggest, then, that Gálvez’s *El solar* can be read as an attempt at drafting a tentative heritage policy for Spain’s ancient cities and towns. He may also be seen to foresee and promote early ideas of what was later recognised at the 1972 Paris Convention for World Heritage as the need to protect the world’s cultural and natural heritage sites. According to Italy’s permanent representative to UNESCO, Francesco Caruso, the list of sites drawn up by the convention has become the world’s “physical memory” in today’s globalised age, during which time cultures are becoming standardised and the need to acknowledge the diversity and dignity of all cultures is paramount (9). Thrown into a sense of urgency by the arrival of tourism to Toledo, Gálvez’s wish is to suspend the town’s development and demarcate it historically, capturing it as a physical site of memory in the terms set out by Nora. He seeks to revive and preserve the image of a pre-utilitarian society at a critical juncture before Toledo’s nascent modernisation alters the sociocultural landscape of the town and nation forever and, in so doing, severs Argentina’s remedial access to what he perceives as an idealised spiritual past. Gálvez’s quest to secure the spiritual nature of Spain, therefore, is one writer’s attempt to animate the Argentine collective spirit with locations outside the nation, far removed from what certainly could have been more effective spaces within Argentina itself for tapping into Argentina’s national consciousness.

As Gálvez refigures towns like Toledo and Segovia as artworks hung within the metaphorical galleries of the nation, it is fitting that such demarcations require that, as cultural and spiritual heritage sites, they be framed. As Bennett has noted with regard to the aims of heritage policy to preserve and attest to the age and value of a historic location, “the simple act of extracting a site from a continuing history of use and development means that a frame is put around it” (129). Here, the frame exists on two levels. In a more literal sense, the frame is what encloses these Spanish towns and provinces as testament to a spiritual ideal, so that they may be contemplated on the walls of the nation imagined as a museum.
Figuratively, following Bennett’s contention that the frame can be simply a notice or an elaborate piece of legislation (129), Gálvez’s *El solar de la raza* acts as a textual frame in a comparable fashion to how Bennett reads Steven Greenblatt’s analysis of the signage at the entrance to Yosemite National Park, which textually establishes that region as an area of wilderness. The park is contemplated as pristine nature “only because it is *publicly demarcated* as such” (129). However, due to the sign, what is evident is not pure nature at all but a product of culture: wilderness represented as a text (130). Thus, if Spain and its earliest settlements are envisaged as spiritual spaces that are superior to the pragmatic modern world it is only because they are represented this way in Gálvez’s text.

In this sense, the chapters of *El solar*, each virtually representing a different town or city, can be read as an extended plaque to be read at the city gates, or a guidebook to be perused while wandering its streets. Indeed, in consideration of the image of Spain as a museum-nation, *El solar* functions as the museum’s guide to its collection or the small wall labels that accompany and describe a work of art. Both are performances of culture that organise the expectations of its visitors and viewers. Moreover, Bennett maintains that visitors to parks, where wilderness is a cultural text, and those to museums and historic sites, where a version of the past is framed and culturally arranged, are orientated by, and confronted with, “a set of textually organized meanings whose determinations must be sought in the present” (130). As such, in a manner akin to the way in which the demarcation of nature may have been organised according to the present-day encroachment of the urban upon the rural, or the threat to the survival of wildlife due to pollution, Gálvez’s arrangement of the past in *El solar* is influenced by what he judges as the wayward modernity of fin-de-siècle Argentina. His desire that Castilian cities be kept in a virtual state of quarantine from modernity, then, can almost be read as an act of selfishness. Barred from entry to the exclusive club of modern nations, Spain and its ancient cities are to serve as the spiritual guideposts to more advanced, prosperous nations, without ever being granted access to the same avenues that propelled these nations toward progress.
What have emerged from my analyses in Part Three are highly disparate imaginings of Spain by Ugarte, from the Generation of 1900, and Rojas and Gálvez, both cultural nationalists belonging to Argentina’s Centenary Generation of writers. The former group had embraced modernity and its cosmopolitan outlook, and celebrated the modern urban space as a site of dynamism, diversity and new artistic pursuits. Thus, Ugarte’s affinities in Spain, like Darío’s, lie with the nation’s modernising industrial centres. As a corollary to this focus, Ugarte is intensely critical of Spain’s sense of tradition and its recourse to its own idealised history. In contrast, the Centenary Generation is all too aware of what they perceived were the looming pitfalls of modernity and foreign influence in fin-de-siècle Argentina: materialism, cultural and spiritual fragmentation, and the abandonment of higher ideals in favour of utilitarianism. Although immigration and cultural diversity are not in themselves causes for concern, it is the impending dissolution of Argentina’s national identity and so-called spiritual essence through an unchecked cultural heterogeneity that causes their distinct unease and that needs addressing.

For Rojas and Gálvez, therefore, the present moment constitutes a problem to be remedied. The cure centres on evoking Argentina’s renewed historic sensibility and it is to Spain that they look to achieve their objectives. There, Rojas and Gálvez’s quest is to imagine the restoration of Argentina’s threatened cultural unity and to recapture its perceived forsaken national spirit. For Rojas, a representation of Spain takes shape in which waves of migrating peoples have allegedly been assimilated successfully to the Castilian culture; it is precisely this image that permits him to visualise the future cultural and spiritual homogeneity of his homeland. For Gálvez, influenced by Rodó’s critique of the aggression and materialist culture of the North, Spain constitutes a means to offset Argentina’s apparent loss of higher spiritual ideals. Imagined as uniquely non-modern, Spain’s ancient Castilian towns—Argentina’s non-utilitarian reference points—are refigured as artworks, serving as lessons with a moralising mission to reorientate Argentine society, both culturally and spiritually. Indeed, by drawing on Sábato’s experience in Spain, it is noteworthy to ponder the fact that, a century after Rojas
and Gálvez’s travels, the very idea of Spain in Latin America’s cultural imaginary continues to be an idealised representation that, it is hoped, might repel the worst traits of modern civilisation. Thus, an unwavering faith in Spain’s mythical past and its sense of tradition still resounds in the early twenty-first century, evincing what may be seen as a succession of Argentine writers with a persistent reluctance to imagine Spain as a truly modern nation.

However, looking to a supposedly idealised, homogeneous Spain as a means of imagining a similar cultural and spiritual cohesiveness in Argentina is highly problematic. For one, Rojas neglects to account for the fact that, in the migratory waves of peoples to Spain, it was whole cultures that moved over centuries. As such, the phenomenon had little in common with Argentina’s modern experiences of immigration, characterised largely by the arrival of individuals and smaller groups to the nation’s urban centres during a comparably short time frame. Furthermore, there is also a general failure on the part of both Rojas and Gálvez to reveal the full extent of Spain’s own cultural heterogeneity and the resulting regional tensions. It is somewhat ironic, then, that both writers look to Spain and its past for an image of cultural and spiritual unity. The Spain that is textually constructed by Rojas and Gálvez can only ever exist as a contrived representation of union and cohesion.
Conclusion

Rethinking Reciprocation

“[S]uffering in common unifies more than joy does. Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require common effort.”
(Renan 19)

A common assumption of Western historiography at the turn of the twentieth century was that, much like the life-cycle of the individual, nations, in their imperial capacity to extend themselves geographically and culturally, passed through a series of stages. They were born, experienced a form of youthful adolescence, and then an era of maturity before a period of decay ultimately led to an inevitable death. The example of Spain’s loss of its last remnants of empire in 1898 to the burgeoning hegemonic influence of the United States merely served to reinforce this worldview. As Spain’s life-cycle was seen to have gone full circle, the emergent imperial activity of the US proclaimed that a new cycle, this time for the Anglo-Saxon world, had just begun. The twilight of one empire simultaneously announced the arrival of another.

At the same time that Spain suffered its postimperial “death,” Latin America’s cultural elites, troubled by the ”birth” of Spain’s successor, expressed concerns for their nations, which were seen to endure a suffering of a different nature. Although not envisioned precisely as a death, at the very least it was a threat of decay, a sociopolitical and cultural suffocation. Warnings were issued by Latin American intellectuals that foretold their nations’ demise, born of the neoimperial advance of the US upon the region, the perceived ills of modernity, and the impact wrought by floods of immigrants and foreign values. Indeed, the signs of ruination were already palpable: the death of tradition, the loss of historical sensibility, dilution of a unifying sense of cultural identity, and the materialistic, utilitarian pursuit of “progress” over and above any initiative to safeguard what was perceived as a national spirit or essence.

As I have illustrated in this study, it was in the concerted efforts of Spain to overcome its postimperial suffering, and the resolve of Latin America’s cultural elites to temper their own
anguish as they faced United States neoimperialism and the influence of the foreign, that Spain and its former colonies were drawn into a much closer, more mutually influential sphere. In its simplest guise, my research has considered this transnational cultural arena of Iberoamérica, wherein the task of reflecting on the self as seen through an Other constituted an attempt to account for immense sociocultural changes and, often, a sense of general discontent in the local space. I have sought to map thematically various discursive and imaginative responses to the aftermath of Spain’s so-called death from both sides of the Atlantic. Initiating a process that I have called reciprocated gazes between the Peninsula and the Americas, these gazes culturally constructed images of otherness in each of their nation’s respective national imaginaries. In accordance with personal and national agendas, these gazes also composed disparate representations of Iberoamérica, as a shared, transnational cultural realm circumscribed by Spain and its former colonial possessions.

Just how Spain sought to overcome its lost imperial standing and its subsequent crisis of identity, I have argued, was to become reacquainted with those ex-colonies. In so doing, it was the aim of those Peninsular regenerationists who did look to Latin America to reimagine a degree of authority there. The ideological framework through which this newfound influence was sought was the sociocultural discourse of hispanoamericanismo. As a Peninsular construct and postimperial project seeking renewed hegemony across the Atlantic, the manufactured discourse of hispanoamericanismo highlighted Spain’s attempt to create an illusion of cultural unity in Iberoamérica with Spain at the helm. To do so, common bonds that allegedly continued to link Latin America and Spain in the postimperial/postcolonial arena, based on perceptions of a shared language, history and ethnicity, were accentuated and reinforced. Official associations like the Unión Iberoamericana were established to commemorate this newly proclaimed cohesion, monuments exalting Spain’s imperial conquests were erected in the nation’s cities, and Ibero-American cultural expositions were organised, together with the inauguration of a celebratory holiday in honour of “la raza.” The dual outcome of this discourse was Spain’s much needed national regeneration in the wake of its lost imperial
standing and, as compensation, the resurrection of its waning ability to exert its influence culturally beyond its borders. The very fact that Spain’s efforts to renew contact with the ex-colonies was given a title, and that the ex-Metropolis went to such lengths to organise formal conferences and initiate exchange programmes, is testament to hispanoamericanismo as an official discourse planned and rigorously pursued as a hegemonic endeavour.

However, as I have shown, it was not only Spain that needed to rediscover its former colonies in an effort to gain valuable insights into its cultural identity after 1898. A prevailing theme running through the thesis has been that the former colonies, intent on defining their own postcolonial realities, similarly realised the potential in casting their gazes back to the former Madre Patria. In contrast to Spain, though, the Latin American intellectuals whom I have analysed and who travelled to Spain did so in the absence of such official rhetoric as that proclaimed from the Peninsula via hispanoamericanismo. Rather than a project pursuing renewed imaginings of authority in the space of the Other, as in Spain’s case, theirs was a reaction aimed at countering hegemony. Thus, looking to Spain could be largely seen, in a general context, as Latin America’s continental response to the effects of US encroachment upon the South. As far as Argentina is concerned, I have suggested that recourse to Spain was a means to offset the perceived detrimental impact of modernity and its tendency to create within Argentine society increasingly heterogeneous and fragmented cultural realities.

It was certainly the case for Darío that the threat of the United States’ influence over Latin America was foremost in his mind as he turned his gaze towards Spain in 1898 in the immediate aftermath of the Spanish-Cuban-American War. Unlike Rojas and Gálvez, however, who, as cultural nationalists, viewed Spain as a lens through which to refract their aspirations for their homeland, I have read Darío’s España contemporánea as offering a Latin American perspective on Spain’s desire for national resurgence from cultural decadence. Sent to Madrid almost out of sympathy to report on the extent of the post-war wounds of the Madre Patria, Darío did more than that; he proposed a solution for Spain’s recovery. In this sense, I have sought to shed light on several of his articles as practical sources for action that exceed any
aim to merely isolate the problem. Rather than pursue Spain’s regeneration as Ganivet did, who proposed to close off the nation in an effort to recapture and nurture the so-called lost national spirit, I have argued that Darío, and later Ugarte, saw Spain’s recovery as dependent upon looking outward beyond the national borders and embracing the cosmopolitan ideal. The figurative walls that encircled the nation, an enduring image noted by Darío initially, not only hindered Spain’s view of the outside world; they also sapped any energy and will on its part to cultivate local cultural forms.

Nothing could have jarred his awareness of Spain’s sociocultural regression more than the reality of leaving behind the vibrant, cosmopolitan port-city of Buenos Aires for Spain’s insular stagnation, as read through land-locked Madrid. In a reversal of the traditional role of the periphery, as the receiver of knowledge and instruction from the centre, the hope was that Spain might follow the ex-colony’s lead, which, seen as having surpassed the former Madre Patria, now appeared further along the linear model toward civilisation and modernity, as theorised by Western historiography. Iberoamérica, then, united in its cultural modernity, and with the inclusion of what was hoped would become a regenerated Spain, would stand a better chance of offsetting the hegemonic advances of the Anglo-Saxon world.

As I have shown, the cosmopolitan ideal of cultivating the local space by searching for positive foreign influences acted as the guiding force behind Darío’s impetus to spur on Spain’s cultural revival. For the cosmopolitan, comfort and competency in the space of the Other meant the sort of confidence necessary at home to reawaken local culture. To illustrate this point, Darío turned to Catalonia as an example of positive cultural renewal, predicated on a cosmopolitan outlook. It is relevant that an essay on Barcelona opens Tierras solares and is one of the first articles in España contemporánea that Darío sent back to Buenos Aires, given that Catalonia is represented as pivotal for the cultural modernity deemed essential for the rest of the nation. However, due to the historical tension between Catalonia and the Spanish state and the region’s aspirations for independence, Catalonia is not only admired but also feared as a threat to a potential Ibero-American cohesion. Consequently, when Darío asserts
in Tierras solares that he could find no evidence of Catalonia’s desire to separate from Spain, he seeks to secure a more unified image of Iberoamérica.

Nevertheless, that the unity of Iberoamérica was being undermined is evident in Darío’s imaginings of Peninsular feminine beauty in España contemporánea and his treatment of Andalusia in Tierras solares. As examples of cosmopolitanism gone awry, Darío explores the corrupted images of the Spanish woman based on the exoticised gypsy, as well as a similarly exotic Andalusia. The cosmopolitan ideal required that foreign influence not usurp local culture but assist it to flourish. However, the dictates of French and British fashion, which swamp the Spanish feminine form, and the encroachment of British industry and commercialism on Andalusia’s coastline, threaten to extinguish the local in favour of the imported. At this point cosmopolitanism, as a love of diversity and personal autonomy, ceases to be and, in essence, is replaced by something more akin to cultural imperialism and globalisation. Darío’s historic, romanticised image of an exotic, Moorish Andalusia, fabricated through his Orientalist imaginary, is challenged, due to the loss of the Andalusians’ agency to forge their own path towards modernity. Darío hence defends what he imagines as idyllic bastions of Peninsular culture, inherent in Spain’s past and its alleged Quixotic ideals, and their balance alongside an emergent culture of modernity. Such a balance epitomises the cosmopolitan ideal of pursuing the new while granting due respect to the old.

In contrast to Darío’s promotion of the cosmopolitan ideal for Spain’s regeneration was Unamuno’s proclivity to prize the local over the foreign. As I have contended, Unamuno considered that cosmopolitanism posed distinct challenges to the local culture, since, for him, the cosmopolitan was a rootless figure, unattached to places and people. Consequently, rather than attempt to respond to questions posed at home by looking for answers abroad, as Darío’s proposal for Spain suggested, Unamuno does not advocate cosmopolitanism as a cure. Instead, he sees it as an eclectic means by which he occupies intellectually a multitude of spaces at any one time.
Paramount in Unamuno’s approach to Latin America was his faith in the common ground that purportedly united the Iberian Peninsula and its former American colonies, as envisaged through the concept of *Hispanidad*. This theory stipulated that Spain and its former colonial possessions shared a common history, language and spirit, which contributed to a discourse that nullified the regional diversity of *Iberoamérica*. In this sense, Unamuno’s vision of the Americas becomes partially aligned to that of Ganivet, for whom Spain was to stand, intellectually and spiritually, at the head of a united *Iberoamérica*. As I have stated, not only is Unamuno’s utopian vision of Ibero-American unity dependent upon his implicit failure to recognise adequately regional diversity and cultural plurality. His version of *Hispanidad* appears as a rather intangible, abstract means for effecting transatlantic union, surfacing as a disguise that transfers Spain’s past aspirations for hegemony into the postcolonial/postimperial Ibero-American space, where the lost cultural prestige of the Peninsula is imagined as restored.

Partly echoing notions expressed by both Darío and Unamuno for renewed imaginings of the Ibero-American space was Reyes. Critical of the response to Spain’s perceived societal ills by the so-called Generation of 1898, whom he judged as perpetuating the nation’s insularity through focusing on Castile, Reyes advocates that Spain turn to rediscover Latin America. In so doing, he specifies that, should Spain succeed in becoming reacquainted with its former colonies without attempting to renew its lost hegemony, it will emerge as the world’s moralising superpower par excellence. However, Reyes’ solution provokes the question as to whether an ex-imperial power can ever seek out renewed contact with its former colonies without resorting to imperial histories of conquest and colonisation as justification. Such an issue became all the more pertinent as I traced the experiences of Albiñana Sanz and Blasco Ibáñez in Mexico and Argentina.

If it was Darío and Reyes’ will that Spain become intimately acquainted with the advances of progress in its former colonies, then Blasco Ibáñez may well have heard their call. The very title of his text, *Argentina y sus grandezas*, is an explicit reference to that nation’s
modern spirit and industrial growth. As I have explored, in Blasco Ibáñez’s contemplation of 
Argentina, three central themes arise that highlight issues pertaining to “race,” immigration, 
and colonisation. In the wake of its perceived absence of an indigenous heritage, Argentina is 
endowed in Blasco Ibáñez’s text with what he perceives as the virtues of a newly forged racial 
homogeneity. Moreover, through its democratic ideals as a federal republic, Argentina is 
represented as conducive to the successful relocation of Europe’s forsaken working classes.

However, at the same time that the writer extols Argentina as a utopian Melting Pot, 
within which Old World “races” would be dissolved to form a new being, his desire was for 
Argentina’s transformation to be effected by a rejuvenated, and distinctly Latin, Europe. In so 
doing, he went against the grain of Argentine liberals like Sarmiento who, decades earlier, 
had called for Anglo-Saxon immigration to be the basis upon which Argentina was to forge a 
new image of the nation. Moreover, it was Blasco Ibáñez’s wish to see this rejuvenation 
carried out primarily by the Spanish “race.” Spanish immigrants to Argentina, where El Dorado 
was now to be found in business and industrial enterprise, would embody, he hoped, a new 
breed of Old-World conquistador, a precursor of sorts to the present-day investment in Latin 
America by Spain’s large transnational corporations. Recourse to Spain’s initial conquest of the 
Americas is evidence, I have posited, of Blasco Ibáñez’s belief in what he deemed was Spain’s 
unfinished mission there. By rising above the alchemical properties of Argentina’s so-called 
Melting Pot, Spain would reaffirm its supposed prestige in the Americas, in a similar fashion to 
one of the goals of Altamira’s American programme.

While Argentina’s eager reception of European immigrants was one of the factors that 
most attracted Blasco Ibáñez there, it was the repulsion of immigration in Mexico by 
intellectuals intent on defining that nation in accordance with local, indigenous cultural forms 
that prompted the writer’s critique in El militarismo mejicano. Given Blasco Ibáñez’s affection 
for the United States, as a positive lesson in federal republicanism, together with Argentina, it 
is small wonder that Mexico, in the throes of its violent revolution on the doorsteps of the US, 
and expressing outright hostility to all foreign influence, stood in stark contrast to his
imaginings of Argentina. Indeed, precisely due to the alleged nature of the Mexican mestizo, whom Blasco Ibáñez considered opposed to progress, he perceived revolutionary Mexico as offering a highly detrimental image of Ibero-American identity to Western public opinion.

Likewise, in Bajo el cielo mejicano, Albiñana Sanz criticises the inclination of 1920s Mexico to disrespect Spain’s so-called historical civilising mission in favour of indigenous nationalisms. Somewhat simplistically, Albiñana Sanz reduces the heterogeneous reality of Mexican cultural identity to two conflicting narratives of racial descent. Mexicans, he states, need only choose between their Peninsular and indigenous heritages. As they have been seen to embrace the latter, Albiñana Sanz notes a disturbing tendency in Mexico towards “desespañolización” and the disparagement of its Peninsular past. Consequently, Albiñana Sanz judges Mexico’s inclusion in a transatlantic convivial culture based on acknowledgement of Spain’s cultural and spiritual hegemony as constituting a fruitless endeavour.

The theme of the “desespañolización” of Spain’s former colonies reappeared when Argentine cultural nationalists, Rojas and Gálvez, turned towards Spain as Argentina prepared to celebrate its centenary of independence in 1910. As writers within Argentina’s so-called Centenary Generation, one of their primary concerns was the potential disruption posed by the dilution of an allegedly authentic vision of Argentine cultural identity, as a consequence of the nation’s impetus to modernise. In contrast to Darío’s embrace of cosmopolitan diversity, Rojas fears that cosmopolitanism is wholly inadequate as a means for nation-building in Argentina. As an alternative, he turns to the nation’s Peninsular heritage in search of an allegedly native tradition. As I have developed, Rojas sees Spain’s traditional past as a catalyst for imagining, on a national scale, a newly unified spiritual and cultural identity in Argentina, and for reviving the nation’s historical sensibility, deemed to be largely lost in the fascination of the modern era for the present moment.

Similarly driving Gálvez was the need to stem Argentina’s liberal focus on the foreign rather than the national, and on material instead of spiritual values. His goal was to steer Argentina away from its increasingly materialist pursuit of utilitarian progress in favour of a
deeper, more cohesive sense of national cultural and spiritual identity. The text that resulted from his journey to Spain, *El solar de la raza*, provides the moralising mouthpiece for just such an objective. There, imagining the towns of Spain in their ancient, pre-modern states, Gálvez exalts these as refuges for Argentina's wayward spirit and for the sort of artistic endeavours forsaken by the modern sensibility in favour of immediate material gain. As I have argued, Gálvez refigures Spain's provinces as display rooms within the nation imagined as a museum, upon the walls of which Spain's medieval towns are hung metaphorically as cultural testaments to a past spiritual age hitherto unknown in early twentieth-century Argentina.

On considering Blasco Ibáñez's account of Argentina, and the Argentines Rojas and Gálvez's vision of Spain, an important contrast emerges. For the Argentines it is crucial that their nation reclaims its historical sensibility in attempting to forge a future culture and spirit, given that the Argentine Pampa lacks the sense of history and tradition that they see thriving in Spain's interior provinces. Conversely, Blasco Ibáñez advocates promoting in Argentina a life lived in the here and now, and that very same quest for material gain that Rojas and Gálvez so criticise. Much like Ugarte, who announces the detrimental impact of tradition on Spain's modern industrial growth, Blasco Ibáñez signals that in Spain and Europe there is too much history, too much tradition. Consequently, his vision of Argentina could not have been more dissimilar to the national and cultural fragmentation lamented by Rojas and Gálvez.

Furthermore, both Gálvez and Blasco Ibáñez refer to processes of cultural assimilation: Blasco Ibáñez in Argentina through the trope of the Melting Pot, and Gálvez in Spain with his contention that, for that nation's successful future, the Basques must assimilate to the Castilians. Hence both writers, in their treatment of marginalised subjectivities, relegate these further to the periphery, giving precedence to some form of ideal cultural type.

I do not deny that the Argentine writers analysed in this study are preoccupied with imagining their national futures. However, to cast the gaze toward a projection of the future alone belies a certain nostalgia for the alleged spiritual and cultural cohesion of the Peninsular and Argentine pasts. I would contend that future projections and evocations of an imagined
past are not mutually exclusive endeavours but often overlap, each informing the other. If Rojas and Gálvez's texts are to be read, as I have maintained, as a discourse for Argentine regeneration predicated upon their Peninsular experiences, then that discourse finds much in common with Spanish regenerationists, who believed that looking to the Americas could assist in solving national concerns.

A general theme that permeates the works analysed in my study is that, more than any other nation or region in Latin America, Buenos Aires/Argentina potentially offers the Spanish-speaking world the most viable model of a competitive counterbalance to the might of the United States. From intellectuals and writers on both sides of the Atlantic, the weight of expectation upon Argentina to fulfil this mission appears to have been strong. Argentina, it was hoped, would become the Latin/Spanish-speaking equivalent of the Anglo-Saxon United States: similarly modern, progressive, and supposedly inclusive of alterity through its acceptance of mass immigration. However, there was to be a marked difference: Argentina, as the hope for the Spanish-speaking world, would be modern without forsaking the morals and cultural ideals abandoned in the type of modernity that Latin American intellectuals viewed as detrimental in the US. Consequently, I have shown, the role that Spain played at this time was crucial, and was a theme prevalent in the Latin American writers sympathetic to Hispanism. If Spain could become modern without effacing its historical past, then it would stand as testament to the strength and character of the Ibero-American “race” in maintaining its cultural roots while embracing the advances of the modernising world.

Judging from the reflections on Latin America by each of the three Peninsular writers analysed in this study, it seems highly unlikely that, during the first third of the twentieth century, Spain’s reacquaintance with the Americas could be envisaged in terms other than a revival of sorts of Spain’s former imperial presence there. At times unconsciously, at others explicitly, Spain’s renewed aspirations for a type of cultural hegemony over Latin America are never far from the surface. One further question that my study has exposed revolves around the manner in which the ex-colonies pursue revived contact with the dispossessed imperial
centre in such a way that rapprochement is not read by that centre as the ex-colonies’ request, or need, for some form of guidance in the postcolonial arena.

The attention granted by Latin American writers to Spain can be understood, I have affirmed, not as a show of support for a lost imperialism, but rather as a perception of Spain as a logical alternative. Given that, unlike the United States, Spain no longer constituted an immediate threat to Latin America after 1898, it was almost safe to look back to that nation. Faced with the threat posed by the culture of materialism and utilitarianism in the North, it was almost certain that, in response, Latin American intellectuals would, in some way, and for distinct purposes, direct their gazes to Spain, either for insights into their own cultural destinies, or to spur Spain on to regenerate, modernise, and gather the waning cultural and economic forces necessary to counteract Anglo-Saxon ascension after 1898. However, by doing either, or both, unwittingly or not, Latin American intellectuals essentially lent support to Peninsular campaigns championing hispanoamericanismo, which sought Spain’s cultural hegemony in its former colonies when political dominance there was no longer viable. In so doing, the Latin American writers whom I analyse essentially fed the belief held on the Peninsula that the former colonies were in need of, and actually desired, the sort of spiritual and cultural guidance that only Spain believed it could provide.

As the second centenary of Argentina’s and Mexico’s independence from Spain in 2010 approaches, and as Mexico is about to reflect upon what will be one hundred years since the outbreak of its revolution in 1910, my hope is that the issues highlighted in this study might engender further insights into the idea of Ibero-America’s shared cultural arena, in the light of how this space is being imagined from both sides of the Atlantic a century on. At present, the re-emergence of the former colonies in Spain’s cultural imaginary, and vice versa, is not owed to the liquidation of the Spanish empire and Spain’s need to regenerate nor to the rise of North American hegemony. Neither do Peninsular immigrants to the Americas, to the same extent as in Blasco Ibáñez’s case, provide an opportunity for Spain to rethink its legacy there and reimagine Iberoamérica as a common cultural space. Rather, it is as a consequence of
the increasing presence in Spain’s largest cities of immigrants from its former colonies (and not only Latin America but also Africa), that this space and an Ibero-American sense of identity are currently being redrawn and redefined. A fertile avenue for future critical inquiry, therefore, might map the experiences of these immigrants in the ex-Metropolis, taking into consideration the ways in which cultural and ethnic pressures, and the possibilities for *convivencia*, are being negotiated in the early twenty-first century, as new challenges emerge and old tensions are reignited.

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