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### **Discovering the big other : modernisation, otherness, and the nation in early twentieth-century Spanish New York narratives**

Miranda-Barreiro, David

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**Discovering the Big Other: Modernisation,  
Otherness, and Nation in Early Twentieth-Century  
Spanish New York Narratives**

David Miranda-Barreiro

Bangor University

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

# Discovering the Big Other: Modernisation, Otherness, and Nation in Early Twentieth-Century Spanish New York Narratives

David Miranda-Barreiro

## Abstract

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, New York City emerges as a recurrent theme in Spanish literature. However, critical attention to the presence of this city in Spanish letters has been traditionally limited to the study of *Diario de un poeta recién casado* (1916) by Juan Ramón Jiménez and *Poeta en Nueva York* (published posthumously in 1940) by Federico García Lorca. The wealth of popular novels and novellas published in this same period as well as the numerous travelogues where New York played a prominent role, have traditionally been dismissed due to their alleged lack of literary value. This is the case of *Pruebas de Nueva York* (1927) by José Moreno Villa, *El crisol de las razas* (1929) by Teresa de Escoriaza, *Anticópolis* (1931) by Luis de Oteyza, and *La ciudad automática* (1932) by Julio Camba.

Departing from traditional aesthetic and structuralist analyses, I propose that this corpus provides an important insight into the cultural debate on modernity in early twentieth-century Spain. For my analysis, I will be drawing on key theoretical work in postcolonial and gender studies, particularly with relation to the nation. The application of these theories to close textual analysis of early twentieth-century Spanish New York narratives will unveil the pervasive use of the biopolitical criteria of ‘class’, ‘gender’, and ‘race’ by competing projects of national regeneration after 1898 in Spain, as well as the often disregarded connections between the Spanish crisis of national identity and the wider European context.

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## Introduction

This thesis looks at the role played by New York City recurrently as a symbol of modernisation in early twentieth-century Spanish narrative. Taking the representations of this city in a range of literary texts as a departing point, I will explore the connections between the often contradictory reactions to modernisation and the crisis of Spanish national identity triggered by the so-called ‘Desastre del 98’. By so doing, the present thesis aims to contribute to the study of Spanish Modernism within the field of Hispanic cultural studies, and it is therefore indebted to the debates and methodologies arising from the so-called ‘cultural turn’ in the discipline, as fostered in recent decades by scholars such as Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi (1995a), David T. Gies (1999), and Elena Delgado, Jordana Mendelson, and Óscar Vázquez (2007), and Christopher Soufas (2007), amongst others. In this body of works, the understanding of culture as ‘a plural set of possibilities moving in different directions’ has challenged a monolithic notion of Spanish modernism as ‘a collection of set texts’ (Graham and Labanyi 1995b: vi-vii). Going beyond the strict distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ literature and departing from the limitations imposed by historically rigid definitions of the literary canon, contemporary Hispanic cultural studies have opened the study of culture to a variety of texts neglected by traditional literary studies. Scholars such as Christopher Soufas have argued for the superseding of generational classifications consolidated in the post-Civil War period which fostered ‘the idea that contemporary Spanish literature remains fundamentally different from contemporary literature of the rest of Europe’ (2007: 22). Furthermore, Soufas also points out that the tradition of dividing literature into generations ‘has created a situation in Spanish literature in which the part defines the whole’, and therefore, ‘writers who do not fit the generational pigeonhole do not fare well’ (2007: 48). In this vein, this thesis highlights the productivity of the study of popular literary genres such as the travelogue and popular narratives for a more comprehensive understanding of Spanish modernist literature, and to pit the notion of culture as a continuous process of negotiation against a fixed and static division of Spanish modernist literature into different ‘groups’ or ‘generations’.

From the vast corpus of Spanish New York narratives written in the first decades of the twentieth century, I have selected four texts published in the late

1920s and early 1930s, since Spanish cultural production in these decades best captures the anxieties brought about by modernisation processes.<sup>1</sup> Two of them, *Pruebas de Nueva York* (1927) by José Moreno Villa and *La ciudad automática* (1932) by Julio Camba, belong to the genre conventionally described as ‘travelogue’. Another one, *Anticipolis* (1931) by Luis de Oteyza, can be classified as a novel and, finally, *El crisol de las razas* (1929) by Teresa de Escoriaza, a much shorter text than the preceding three, could be classified as a novella.<sup>2</sup> This choice of works is based, as we shall see, on the concomitances that can be found among them with regard to discourses around Spain’s modernisation. Although most New York narratives written in Spain at the time present a marked range of similarities in their approach to the American metropolis, I propose that the view of New York as the embodiment of modernisation stands out especially in the chosen texts, which present a series of tensions that can be explained by the various bio-political criteria impinging on the debate on national identity at the time: class, gender, and ‘race’.

As its title indicates, this thesis will focus on the relationship between modernisation, discourses of otherness, and national identity in Spain during the first three decades of the twentieth century. By ‘modernisation’ I refer to Johan Fornas’ distinction between modernism, modernity, and modernisation, according to which ‘while modernity is the result of modernisation that provokes modernisms, modernity is also the condition in which modernisation appears, and of which modernisms are necessary constituents’ (1995: 40). As Patrick Williams explains, modernisation can be defined, therefore, as ‘an ensemble of economic, technological and political processes premised on change’, whereas modernity is ‘a state or condition’, and modernism a ‘heterogeneous group of collective ways of relating or reacting to the other two’ (2000: 29). Marshall Berman, who divides modernity into three phases – sixteenth century to 1790; 1790 to twentieth century; twentieth century – argues that such transformations became especially visible in the twentieth century, in which ‘the social processes that bring this maelstrom into being, and keep it in a state of perpetual becoming, have come to be called “modernization”’ (1999: 16). ‘Capitalist modernisation’, as it has also

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<sup>1</sup> The scope of this thesis lies within the field of peninsular Hispanic Studies. For this reason, texts of the same historical period springing from Latin American contexts will not be analysed.

<sup>2</sup> Here I refer to the first edition; however, the editions I will follow are *Pruebas de Nueva York* (1989), *El crisol de las razas* (1929), *Anticipolis* (2006), and *La ciudad automática* (1960).

been called (Swingewood 1998: 137), is the backdrop against which the case studies analysed in the present thesis were published.

Modernisation processes did therefore intensify in the twentieth century, precisely when the United States started its rise as world power. This increase coincided with the questioning of the values promoted by modernity in Europe. A key text of the time, Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (1926, 1928), captured the sense of disenchantment that invaded Europe in the first decades of the last century, especially after the First World War. The reaction in the arts to such a crisis – in the form of modernism (Punter 2007: 36) – denounced the decadence of modern life, as Berman points out, 'in the name of values that modernity itself has created' (1999: 23). Ironically, modernisation was thus regarded as a threat to the values of Western liberalism, since economic, technological, and political change favoured the rise and visibility of the 'Others' of European modernity: 'the masses' (in opposition to bourgeois elitism), women (in opposition to patriarchy), and non-white peoples (in opposition to white colonial power). As Daniel Pick argues, 'theories of progress always seem to involve the implication of potential inversion, recalcitrant forces, subversive "others" necessarily to be excluded from the polity' (1989: 20).

The increasing influence of American capitalist modernisation in Europe fostered the image of the United States as a 'Big Other' that imperilled European values. Peter Wagner points out that:

American principles were seen to endanger the European spirit. And this was what Europeans came increasingly to fear. The existence and increasing power of the Big Other across the ocean was a drain on the European way of life, on its hopes and on its means to create its own future. (2001: 111)

The USA was seen as the embodiment of a potentially threatening future in which mass democracy, mass production, women's emancipation, and multiculturalism challenged the principles of Western civilisation.

While Europe was facing, in Spengler's words, 'the early winter of full Civilization' (1926: 44), Spain was also immersed in a domestic crisis. 1898 has been seen as a turning point in Spanish history, when the final fall of the Spanish Empire and subsequent regionalist claims for independence from Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia not only questioned the social and political

structures of the Restoration system, but also posed the daunting question of how to solve the so-called ‘problema de España’. Similarly to the European case, Spain was perceived by its intellectual élite as a decaying nation. It is, then, not surprising that ‘regeneration’ became the catch word for a group of polymaths concerned with the perceived weakness of their country. The solutions for the ‘regeneration’ of Spain were, however, not homogeneous. For conservative sectors, the country would be regenerated through the recovery of traditional values and a series of essentialist characteristics of Spanishness – often identified with Catholicism – and hence by the restoration of Spain’s imperial past. Conversely, liberal positions, inspired mainly by the French Enlightenment and the ideas of the German philosopher Karl Christian Friedrich Krause, argued for the Europeanisation of Spain as the solution for the country’s backwardness and stagnation. These two opposite positions – at least theoretically – also involved two distinct conceptions of national identity: two different views of the nation that led to the division of Spanish society and eventually to the Civil War. The clash between different political views of the nation was not exclusive to the Spanish case, however. Rather, the Spanish crisis was ‘a regional variant of a crisis that had rocked most of Europe since the First World War in which three opposing projects for the reconstruction of the post-war state – liberal democracy, fascism and revolutionary socialism – had vied for hegemony’ (Balfour 2000: 246).

Nevertheless, the modernisation of Spanish society seemed to progress independently of the controversies about national identity. As Paul Aubert points out, both economically and in a demographic sense, Spain ‘está modernizándose desde finales del siglo XIX’, and ‘los indicadores económicos del desarrollo se acercan a los indicadores de los demás países occidentales’ (2006: 46). In spite of being ‘highly uneven, concentrated mainly in the north, north-east, and the Levant’ (Balfour 2000: 246), such modernisation prompted what Balfour has defined as ‘a long-term crisis generated by modernisation’, since ‘in many parts of Spain, industrialisation, urbanisation, migration and the spread of communication networks were undermining the social and ideological structures of the Restoration system’ (1996: 113). In the 1920s, under the ‘regenerationist’ dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera, the country’s progress towards modernisation became particularly visible. Despite the political repression exerted by the regime, the country saw the increasing presence of ‘the masses’ and

women in the public arena. Later on, at the beginning of the 1930s, and after Primo's administration failed to provide the solution for the 'Spanish malady', the arrival of the Second Republic was perceived as an opportunity for change. It seemed that Spain was finally going to be Europeanised.

During these two decades, the unstoppable entry of Spain into the realm of modernisation was seen with suspicion and anxiety not only by traditionalist sectors, but also by liberal ones. On the one hand, reactions against modernising processes from conservative positions mirrored their distrust of foreign policies, which were seen as the origin of Spain's decadence already in the sixteenth century. The traditionalists argued that under Bourbon rule, foreign ideals had been introduced into the country and therefore a loss of the essential values of the Spanish Empire, 'unity, hierarchy and militant Catholicism' (Balfour 1995: 25) had occurred. Therefore, modernisation posed a threat to the restoration of 'true Spanishness'. On the other hand, cautious attitudes towards modernisation from liberal positions were in tune with the ambivalence of modernist responses to change in the rest of Europe. Spanish Republican and liberal intellectuals aimed to create a modern Spanish nation-state inspired by the values of the French Enlightenment (education, democracy, and secularisation). However, whereas Spain was initiating its struggle towards modernity, calls for Europeanisation clashed with the rise of 'the masses', women's claims for civil equality, and postcolonial debates arising from the country's loss of its hold in America. As John A. McCulloch argues, the country was facing a cultural dilemma: 'its ideological 'tug-of-war' between a historical tendency for extreme introversion, whilst simultaneously striving to be outward looking on a par with her European neighbours' (2007: 3).

In the midst of this turmoil, New York emerges in Spanish literature as the symbol of modern times. The recurrent literary presence of this city in a historical period when modernity and modernisation became a recurrent theme in the debates around Spanish national identity – in which intellectuals were preeminent actors – raises a series of questions about the role played by New York in the early twentieth-century Spanish narrative: why did New York capture the attention of Spanish writers at the time? Does New York encapsulate the anxieties and contradictions brought about by crises of modernisation and national identity? What are the reactions to mass society and mechanisation, women's



emancipation, and multiculturalism in the representation of New York led by Spanish writers in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and how do such reactions reflect the role played by ambivalent responses to modernisation in nation-building processes? By looking at these questions, the present thesis aims not only to contribute to current research on Spanish modernism, but also to highlight and reassess the traditionally overlooked presence of New York in Spanish early-twentieth century narrative.

### **New York in Spanish Modernism: the Shadow of Federico García Lorca's *Poeta en Nueva York***

Critical work on Spanish modernism has expanded significantly in the last two decades, as evidenced by the vast bibliography in the field: Stephanie Sieburth (1994), Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi (1995a), David T. Gies (1999), Anthony L. Geist and José B. Monleón (1999), Jo Labanyi (2000), Mary Lee Bretz (2001), Marta T. Pao and Rafael Hernández-Rodríguez (2002), Roberta Johnson (2003a, 2003b), Brad Epps and Luis Fernández Cifuentes (2005), Susan Larson and Eva Woods (2005), Elena Delgado, Jordana Mendelson, and Óscar Vázquez (2007), John A. McCulloch (2007), and Christopher Soufas (2007). However, most critical work in this area seems to have overlooked the presence of New York in Spanish narratives of the first third of the last century, and moreover, the role of the city as a catalyst for the tensions and contradictions around national identity caused by Spain's late entrance into modernisation. In their introduction to the ground-breaking *Spanish Cultural Studies. An Introduction. The Struggle for Modernity*, Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi point to the lack of interest in 'the dehumanisation of (American) mass culture' shown by Spanish Republican intellectuals of the 1930s, since this was 'a phenomenon still too recent in Spain to cause concern' (1995c: 2). This is a surprising statement, since in their introduction to the volume these scholars highlight the conflicting attitudes towards 'the masses' expressed by Spanish intellectuals at the time, and epitomised by Ortega y Gasset's criticism on mass society (1995c:12). Furthermore, Graham and Labanyi define modernisation as 'a recognizable process of capital-driven social, economic, political, and cultural change occurring at differential rates over the past 200 years across Europe (and, of course, *par excellence* in the USA)' (1995c: 9). Given the problematic responses to the

changes brought about by such a process in Spain, it is not surprising that Spanish writers turned their eyes with both curiosity and anxiety to the USA, and in particular to New York, a city that was beginning to be perceived in Europe as the embodiment of modernisation. Until recently, however, the literary relationship between Spain and New York has been almost exclusively focused on the representation of New York as dehumanised, mechanical, and capital-driven created by Federico García Lorca – indeed one of the intellectuals of the Republic – in *Poeta en Nueva York* (written in 1929-30).

As Anthony L. Geist states, criticism on Lorca's writing 'has reached truly industrial proportions' (1999: 151), and *Poeta en Nueva York* is one of the most studied volumes of this tide of critical work. Lorquian scholarship has, however, overlooked the connections between the text and the crisis of national identity and modernisation taking place in Spain at the time, focusing instead on aesthetic analyses of Lorca's text. To begin with, the complex and somewhat mysterious textual history of *Poeta en Nueva York* has been analysed in detail by a number of scholars. María Clementa Millán, for example, points out that studies on *Poeta en Nueva York* from the point of view of the text's historiography have evolved along two diverging paths, namely 'la que defiende la escisión del corpus neoyorquino en dos libros distintos, *Poeta en Nueva York* y *Tierra y luna*, y la que apoya la unidad de *Poeta*' (1998: 25). According to the first position, some of the poems included in the first editions of the book originally belonged to another collection. Antonio Monegal (1994:14) even proposes the existence of a 'ciclo neoyorquino' that comprises, apart from *Poeta en Nueva York* and *Tierra y luna*, a film script entitled *Viaje a la luna*, and a set of drawings produced by the artist during his stay in the city which has been studied by Cecelia Cavanaugh (1996). Following Millán, the position in favour of the existence of two distinct works is supported by Eutimio Martín (1981), Miguel García-Posada (1981), Piero Menarini (1972, 1990), and Monegal (1994). Conversely, Daniel Eisenberg (1974), Andrew A. Anderson (1986), Christopher Maurer (García Lorca 1978), Millán (1986), and Mario Hernández (1987), have argued for the unity of the book (Millán 1998: 25).

The complexity of the controversy around the ultimate textual structure of *Poeta en Nueva York* mirrors the intricate nature of the poetic fabric woven by Lorca in the compositions born from his experience in the American metropolis.

The hermetic character of Lorca's New York poems is the result, at least in part, of the influence of avant-garde experimentalism, surrealism in particular, as Virginia Higginbotham (1973: 237), Francisco Umbral (1977: 116), Derek Harris (1978: 9-25), Piero Menarini and Ángel Del Río (1984: 392), Manuel Antonio Arango (1995: 341), and Millán (1998: 91-98) have suggested. However, the adscription of *Poeta en Nueva York* to surrealism has raised yet another debate. As Higginbotham points out, only in the late 1960s did scholarship on Lorca start to consider the book as surrealist (1973: 237), for example Paul Ilie (1969: 57-104). Previously, literary critics such as Ricardo Gullón (1957: 161-170), and Guillermo de Torre (1965: 573) had denied a surrealist influence in the collection of poems. More recently, this tendency has been restated by Dionisio Cañas, who relates Lorca's experimental writing to romanticism, expressionism, and Walt Whitman's free verse poetry (1994: 82-83).

Following this aesthetic approach, Lorquian scholarship has been mainly concerned with the interpretation of Lorca's hermetic verses. García-Posada (1981) and Arango (1995), for instance, have produced extensive analyses of Lorca's poetic language. As these studies show, along with the presence of some of Lorca's recurrent themes and symbols (such as death, solitude, blood, air, the moon, or the sea) in *Poeta en Nueva York*, a new and powerful symbol emerges which becomes the centre of the collection of poems: the city. Certainly, the relationship between the poet and the metropolis, and the negative character assigned to New York's urban space by Lorca have been the focus of most thematic analyses of the text. Early critical approaches such as Guillermo Díaz-Plaja's (1954) have interpreted the apocalyptic view of the modern metropolis given in Lorca's New York poems as an expression of the anguish caused to the poet by American mechanisation and capitalism, to the extent that 'nuestro poeta nos presenta constantemente a lo largo de su obra el choque dramático de estos dos mundos: el de la naturaleza y el de la artificiosidad' and therefore, 'el dolor del poeta surge al contemplar cómo lo natural se esclaviza ante lo artificioso. Cómo la naturaleza – que el poeta ama – es devorada por el monstruo insaciable de la ciudad' (Díaz-Plaja 1954: 162-63).

Interpretations such as this one have been challenged in recent times by a different approach, which takes into account two complementary sources that add yet another element of complexity to Lorca's text: the letters written by the poet to

his family during his stay in New York, compiled by Christopher Maurer (García Lorca 1978) and the *Conferencia-Recital* held in Madrid on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 1932, in which Lorca showcased a selection of his New York poems (García Lorca 1997). The inconsistencies, similarities and connections between these three texts have been studied by Maurer (García Lorca 1978), Luis Martínez Cuitiño (1998), Dionisio Cañas (1994), Christian De Paepe (2005), Millán (2005), and Beatriz Barrantes (2007).

The picture of New York presented by Lorca in these three texts is, according to the above critics, far from coherent. Maurer points out that ‘la visión que esta conferencia-recital nos da de Nueva York complementa, y a veces contradice, la de las cartas’ (1978: 110). Moreover, the relationship between the depiction of the city offered in the letters and the one carried out in his poetry has also been seen as conflictive. De Paepe suggests the existence of three different discourses: ‘correspondencia, poesía, conferencia: tres tipos diferentes de discurso, tres públicos diferentes, tres Lorca diferentes, tres veces *Poeta en Nueva York*’ (2005: 416). Following the same idea, Millán also points out that ‘estas opiniones [those expressed in the different sources] nos plantean un gran problema a la hora de enjuiciar su concepción sobre esta metrópolis, ya que, dependiendo del medio donde aparezcan, sus versiones varían’ (2005: 405). Consequently, according to recent studies, and due to the changing character of New York in Lorca’s declarations, ‘la interpretación aceptada tradicionalmente que muestra la ciudad como la causa fundamental de la angustia expresada por el poeta’ cannot be fully accepted (Millán 2005: 405). As has been argued by García-Posada (1981: 59), Cañas (1994: 103), Flint (2005: 174), De Paepe (2005: 427), and Geist (2005: 453), *Poeta en Nueva York* is a polysemic work which cannot be limited to the dichotomy city (civilization)/countryside (nature). The author’s personal situation while he was writing the book has been considered by recent criticism as a key influence in the portrait of New York given in *Poeta en Nueva York*. Lorca was experiencing a deep personal crisis, as documented by Ian Gibson in his biography of the Spanish poet (1998). This approach to Lorca’s New York poems has thus opened new avenues for their interpretation, by presenting *Poeta en Nueva York* as a multifaceted work in which several levels of meaning are interwoven. Following this analytical thread, Geist considers the text to be the result of three different crises, namely personal, social, and poetic (2005: 453).

The personal crisis would be a sentimental one, triggered by Lorca's break up with the Spanish sculptor Emilio Aladrén (Gibson 1998: 400-401) and by the self-repression of his homosexuality. At a social level, Lorca rejected the capitalism and mechanisation of the modern world in favour of nature and human solidarity. Finally, the Spanish poet was deeply disappointed with the reviews of his first collection of poems, *Romancero gitano* (1928), which had considered the text, far from the writer's wishes, as traditionalist. Similarly, Millán argues that 'frente a lo que pudiera deducirse de una primera aproximación a esta obra, el eje esencial de estas creaciones no es la ciudad neoyorquina, sino la interioridad de su protagonista poético' (1998: 79), an idea also defended by De Paepe (2005: 427). The impact of Lorca's personal crisis on his view of New York has not, however, fully replaced those previous analyses that gave preeminence to the social critique present in his poems. Although critics such as Julio García Morejón have rejected the interpretation of the text as 'una obra de compromiso' (1998:111-112), others such as Millán and García-Posada among others, have described *Poeta en Nueva York* as a book in which social denunciation plays an essential role. García-Posada, for instance, states that 'es el libro de la revuelta, de la denuncia lúcida e implacable contra todas las fuerzas enemigas de la vida' (1982: 63). The innovative nuance provided by new approaches to Lorca's New York poems is to consider, as Millán does, that such a critique 'no surge únicamente de un fondo social, como pudiera desprenderse de sus denuncias a la ciudad neoyorquina, sino que está estrechamente ligada a su propia situación como individuo' (Millán 1998: 84). Flint also proposes that 'la homosexualidad desempeña un papel crucial en este contexto al ejemplificar la proximidad de la política, dolor y el deseo en la obra de Lorca', who 'desafía una ideología (burguesa, reaccionaria, quizá fascista) que busca mandar sobre el deseo y es a la vez víctima' (2005: 174).

Despite the extensive analysis of *Poeta en Nueva York* in aesthetic and thematic terms, I would propose that critical work on Lorca's New York poems displays a series of persistent voids. First of all, the book has been mostly considered in isolation, disregarding the connections between Lorca's poetic representation of the American metropolis and the considerable amount of works written at the time which also had New York as their main focus. Secondly, although Lorca's reaction towards New York has been related to reactions towards modernisation in modernist art, few works – as I will show next – have

contextualised such criticism within the *fin de siècle* European crisis and the crisis of Spanish national identity. Furthermore, Lorca himself showed his awareness on the fact that his New York poems had been preceded by works with a similar interest. In the letters written to his family during his stay in the city, Lorca declared that ‘me interesa mucho Nueva York y creo que podré dar una nota nueva no sólo en la poesía española, sino en la que gira alrededor de estos motivos’ (García Lorca 1978: 55). In the *Conferencia-recital*, Lorca openly stated that:

no os voy a decir lo que es Nueva York por fuera, porque, juntamente con Moscú, son las dos ciudades antagónicas sobre las cuales se vierte ahora un río de libros descriptivos; ni voy a narrar mi viaje, pero sí mi reacción lírica con toda sinceridad y sencillez. (1997: 111-112)

In the light of Lorca’s own perception that New York was already being exploited as a fertile creative ground by his contemporaries, it is therefore surprising that this body of work has remained unstudied either independently or in relation to his work. Although Lorca’s poetic experimentalism does indeed provide to his poems ‘una nota nueva’, I propose that the New York narratives written in Spain in the first three decades of the last century go beyond a mere description of the city.

Moreover, the study of *Poeta en Nueva York* as the expression of Lorca’s personal crisis without taking into account the stances taken in similar works leads, I argue, to an incomplete understanding of the poems, since it overlooks the connections between this text and early twentieth-century Spanish reactions to modernisation. Such an omission strongly contrasts with efforts to highlight the similarities between *Poeta en Nueva York* and major European modernist creations. Apart from the influence of surrealism in Lorca’s poetic language, critics such as Cañas (1994), Gibson (1998), and Millán (2005) have linked Lorca’s view of the modern metropolis to archetypical reactions towards industrialisation and urban space in European modernism. Cañas compares the attitude towards ‘the masses’ in *Poeta en Nueva York* to similar reactions in works by Baudelaire and Juan Ramón Jiménez (1994: 95). Millán, on her part, also suggests connections between Lorca’s poems and Baudelaire’s *Petits Poèmes en Prose* (1869), as well as with Rilke’s *Das Stunden-Buch* (1905), *Das Buch der Bilder* (1906), *Neue Gedichte* (1907) and *Malte Laurids Bridge* (1910), and T.S.

Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) (2005:410), a fact also hinted at by Gibson who points to Eliot's *The Hollow Men* (1926) as a possible source of inspiration for some of the metaphors used by Lorca in *Poeta en Nueva York*, including that of 'los hombres vacíos' (1998: 383-384). Both Gibson (1998: 369-70) and Millán (1998: 72-73; 2005: 410) also coincide in considering John Dos Passos' novel *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) as a likely influence on the text. Moreover, Millán relates Lorca's poems to expressionist painting, and more concretely, to Ludwig Meidner's *Ich und die Stadt* (1914) and George Grosz's *Metropolis* (1916-1917). Finally, both Millán (2005: 410) and Gibson (1998: 370) discuss the possible influence of Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* (1927) on Lorca's representation of New York. The connections between Lorca's collection of poems and major modernist works leads Millán to declare that:

el uso dado por Lorca a la metrópolis de Nueva York está en consonancia con un amplio contexto artístico que, frente a la exaltación positiva de los futuristas, transforma la gran urbe en símbolo de la angustia y desazón de toda una época. (2005: 410-411)

One can notice that whereas the relationship between Lorca's New York poems and similar texts written in Spain at the time has been generally neglected by Hispanism, scholarship has visibly striven to include *Poeta en Nueva York* within the catalogue of European modernist works. Significantly, the relationship between Lorca's text and similar works in Spanish literature has been almost exclusively limited to studies on Juan Ramón Jiménez – another modernist poet whose work went beyond the borders of the Spanish literary system – and his *Diario de un poeta recién casado* (1916), partially inspired by Jiménez's experience in New York. For example, José Ortega's comparison of both texts falls into traditional critical commonplaces about Jiménez and Lorca, which pit the former's aestheticism against the latter's social critique. Accordingly, whereas *Diario de un poeta recién casado* is presented as a text in which 'desde el punto de vista [...] de la vinculación del hombre al plano material, la aportación de este poemario es nula', Ortega argues that in *Poeta en Nueva York* 'existe un planteamiento del conflicto del hombre con el brutal contexto norteamericano' (1981: 876). Following a different approach, Marta López-Luaces suggests that the contact with New York triggers in both poets a dramatic change in their writing, which undergoes a linguistic transformation that breaks with previous

poetic conventions and becomes a landmark in the writers' work (2008: 127). In relation to *Poeta en Nueva York*, López-Luaces briefly refers to the influence of colonial discourses in Lorca's depiction of black people:

Lorca enfatiza la correspondencia entre la comunidad negra y lo primitivo. Forma a través de su poemario un binarismo entre comunidad negra/modernidad, primitivo/moderno y bueno/malo. Este tipo de binarismo, está en la base de un pensamiento que ha justificado tradicionalmente las jerarquías sociales, raciales y de género. (2008: 130)

This is precisely an aspect of Lorca's New York poems that has been traditionally overlooked. On the contrary, the presence of binaries such as white (modernity)/black (primitivism) in early twentieth-century Spanish New York narratives will be one of the main points of analysis in this thesis. As I will show, similar references can be found in José Moreno Villa's, Julio Camba's, Luis de Oteyza's, and Teresa de Escoriza's texts, confirming not only the existence of a set of common attitudes to New York's multiculturalism in Spanish narratives, but also the connection of these attitudes to European discourses of 'Otherness'.

As one can see, Lorca's towering status and the revolutionary character of *Poeta en Nueva York* in terms of poetic experimentation have shadowed the relevant role played by New York in early twentieth-century Spanish narrative as an embodiment of the often contradictory attitudes towards modernisation produced by Spanish writers and intellectuals at the time. This thesis aims to fill this gap by looking at authors and at narrative genres (travelogues and popular novels) which have been traditionally left out of the literary canon.

### **Spain and Modernity in Hispanic Literary and Cultural Studies**

The relationship between modernisation and national identity has been the focus of much critical work within Hispanic literary and cultural studies in recent years. In the seminal volume *Spanish Cultural Studies. An Introduction. The Struggle for Modernity* (1995), scholars such as Helen Graham, Jo Labanyi, Sebastian Balfour, José Álvarez Junco, and Sue Frenk bring to the fore the contradictions posed by modernising processes to the redefinition of Spanish national identity after the crisis triggered by the end of the Spanish Empire in 1898. The volume revolves around 'the role that culture has played in constructing – and resisting –



modernity, and to stress the notion that culture is – as the Civil War would show so dramatically – a form of struggle’ (Graham and Labanyi 1995b: vii). This path was also followed subsequently in the collection of essays edited by David T. Gies (1999), which contains similar studies by Gies, Inman Fox, Álvarez Junco, and Thomas Mermall. Furthermore, Balfour (1997) and Fox (1998) have also worked on the examination of Spanish national identity in the decades prior to the Civil War. Balfour argues that the fall of the Restoration system fostered ‘the growth of a plurality of identities in more developed parts of Spain, replacing traditional self-images with new perceptions of regional, class, and gender identities’ (1995: 29). Following this argument, the challenge to monolithic views of national identity posed by Spain’s process of modernisation will be precisely the main focus of this thesis. Recurrent references to mass society, women’s emancipation, and multiculturalism in early twentieth-century New York Spanish narratives show, in line with similar attitudes in Europe, the concerns brought about by new forms of identity. The very concept of Western civilisation has been based on a set of binary oppositions (male/female, élite/masses, white/non-white), which were eroded by new social practices favoured by industrialisation and the growth of urban spaces, leading to a sense of decadence. As Graham and Labanyi point out, the crisis of European modernity was also felt in Spain, where ‘*fin de siècle* European anxieties about the decadence of Western civilization were experienced in a particular complex form’, with intellectuals divided ‘as to whether or not Spain should follow the European modernizing model, and as to whether the problem in Spain’s case was modernity or a lack of modernization’ (1995c: 21). The responses to modernisation from both positions were often contradictory, a fact that stands out in New York Spanish narratives, as this thesis will show. Depicted simultaneously as a primitive civilisation and as a society in constant progress, New York catalyses the anxieties brought about by the late entrance of modernisation into Spain.

A number of studies have also focused on the attitudes towards modernity and modernisation in the early twentieth-century Spanish narrative, going beyond the traditional dichotomy between the so-called Generation of 98 and Spanish *Modernismo*, as well as the division of the period in a series of different ‘Generations’ (1898, 1914, 1927). In her comprehensive study of Spanish modernism, Bretz points out at the role played by ‘Francoist reappropriation and

redefinition of early twentieth-century criticism' in works such as Pedro Laín Entralgo's *La generación del noventa y ocho* (1993, first published in 1945) and Guillermo Díaz-Plaja's *Modernismo frente a noventa y ocho* (1979, first published in 1951) that established the opposition between the Generation of 98 as 'virile, energetic, socially and politically committed, governed by reason, in search of precise forms and categories, architectural, metaphysical, Castilian, classical, allied with Velázquez, ethical, and obsessed with time and temporality', and *Modernismo* as 'feminine, passive, governed by sensibility, individualistic, escapist, ivory tower, vegetable, sensual, allied with El Greco, amoral, a mixture of disparate elements, and concerned with instantaneity and the moment' (Bretz 2001: 67). As Bretz shows, traditional critical paradigms have been challenged more recently by Germán Gullón (1992) and Christopher Soufas (2010), who 'argue for the need to view Spanish literature of the period within the context of international modernism' (Bretz 2001: 21). Likewise, the volume edited by Anthony Geist and José B. Monleón (1999) aims precisely to show how Spanish modernism has been left out of the European modernist canon. Carlos Blanco Aguinaga (1999), for instance, proposes to include in this canon both works by writers from the Generation of 98/*Modernismo* such as Unamuno as well as those Spanish writers ascribed to 'high modernism' (the Generation of 27). In the latter case, Lorca's *Poeta en Nueva York* would be – once more – the main exponent, since his poems represent 'not only the so-called alienation of modern urban life – one of the characteristics of modernism [...] but also the relationship of *that* to peripheral life' (Blanco Aguinaga 1999: 10). Furthermore, Larson and Woods go against the distinction between Spanish and European modernism, arguing that 'the specificity of Spanish modernity does not mean that it lies outside of a larger European modernity (France, Germany, England), or that Spain arrives "late" to modernity, as is so often assumed' (2005: 5). In a similar vein, in his examination of Ramón Gómez de la Serna's narrative works, John McCulloch has argued for an understanding of novels by this author such as *El novelista* (1923) 'within the context of modernist fiction at large', therefore connecting Ramón 'with contemporary international literary figures such as Joyce or Woolf in the way traditional notions of literature are subjected to questioning' (2007: 90). Delgado, Mendelson, and Vázquez have also highlighted the 'misperception of the participation of the country's artists and writers in the formation of cultural

modernism' (2007: 108). In contrast with terminologies such as 'alternative' or 'peripheral' modernisms, they propose the adjective 'recalcitrant', which captures 'the conflictive relationship between modernity and Spain' (2007: 109).

Importantly for this thesis, Delgado, Mendelson and Vázquez highlight that:

a crucial archive that deserves further study is that of the little studied (though widely popular in its time) pulp fiction written in the first quarter of the twentieth century. It is in those texts where a different side of Spanish cultural modernity can be found: one in which we discover an unabashed exploration of sexuality and pleasure, in contrast to the stark denial of both found in the so-called *noventayochistas*. (2007: 113)

It seems that the authors above are referring mainly to early twentieth-century erotic novellas, since they allude to Pura Fernández's essay (2002) on *fin de siècle* Spanish literary eroticism. However, as I will demonstrate later on, pulp fiction or mass produced literature published in Spain in the first decades of the last century also presents a strong focus on other anxieties brought about by modernisation in relation to mechanisation, women's emancipation, and multiculturalism. As a matter of fact, two of the four texts chosen for this thesis (*Anticópolis* and *El crisol de las razas*) sit comfortably with the definition of mass produced literary works. Moreover, both *Pruebas de Nueva York* and *La ciudad automática* were originally published as journalistic articles in *El Sol* and *ABC* respectively, newspapers with a high rate of daily circulation.

If we look at the studies of the Spanish narrative written in the 1920s and 1930s, scholarship has usually given almost exclusive attention to the so-called avant-garde novel. The corpus delimited by Ramón Buckley and John Crispin (1973), Víctor Fuentes (1984), Gustavo Pérez Firmat (1993), José María del Pino (1995), Derek Harris (1995), Ana Rodríguez Fischer (1999), Juan Chabás (2001, first published in 1952), and Marta T. Pao and Rafael Hernández-Rodríguez (2002), focuses on Ramón Gómez de la Serna's experimental novels and on narrative works mainly published in the collection *Nova Novorum*, edited by the *Revista de Occidente* and directed by José Ortega y Gasset. The focus on the avant-garde novel and the dismissal of mass produced literary works seems to reflect the same elitist attitude defended not only by avant-garde novelists, but also by the main theoretician and advocate of the movement, Ortega y Gasset, in his essay *La deshumanización del arte* (1925). As Fisher argues, 'uno de los

aspectos más conflictivos que se deriva de la actitud vanguardista' is 'el distanciamiento o escisión que se produce entre una "minoría avanzada" y "la masa" o el público' (1999: 38).

In contrast with previous studies, Beatriz Barrantes states that the division of the narrative of the period into different trends or movements 'no permite captar el abanico multicolor que fue la narrativa de los años veinte y treinta del siglo XX en España' (2007: 103). Consequently, she argues for a more inclusive view of 1920s and 1930s Spanish narrative, since:

la interconexión durante estas dos décadas de diferentes manifestaciones artísticas, diferentes grupos generacionales y diferentes tendencias políticas terminó cristalizando en una compleja red cultural que queda totalmente desvirtuada si se estudia a la luz de binarismos pedagógicos. (2007: 104)

Furthermore, Barrantes highlights the multiplicity of literary genres coexisting in these two decades, 'desde el folletín romántico populista, hasta la más pura experimentación vanguardista minoritaria, pasando por el relato de viajes o la novela proletaria', which, in spite of their differences, 'todos pertenecen a un mismo contexto moderno y sus producciones culturales, "vanguardistas" o no, constituyen excelentes catalizadores de lo que era ya una realidad incuestionable, la modernidad' (Barrantes 2007: 104). The case studies brought together in this thesis no doubt confirm Barrantes's criteria. A close look at those literary works that have been dismissed for their alleged lack of literary value demonstrates that they share similar concerns and attitudes towards modernising processes with avant-garde novels. In order to overcome previous and reductive views, Barrantes proposes a new term, 'novela de la modernidad', under which:

encajaría tanto la tradicionalmente considerada "novela de vanguardia", como toda una serie de manifestaciones que, a pesar de no ser consideradas "vanguardistas" *sensu* estrictu, comparten buena parte de esa estética preocupada por los fenómenos urbanísticos, el recalentamiento político del país o los novedosos patrones de las relaciones interpersonales de esas dos décadas. (2007: 105)

Taking Barrantes' definition one step further, I would like to propose an even more comprehensive concept, that of 'narrativa de la modernidad' or 'Spanish narratives of modernity'. Under this reading, narrative manifestations other than the novel, such as the travelogue and the novella, could be also included within the study of the narrative written in these two decades. As this thesis will show,

the anxieties and contradictions brought about by modernisation are not exclusive of narrative fiction, but also represent an essential characteristic of personal testimonies of the modern metropolis provided in journalistic chronicles and travel books. Similar to fictional accounts of the modern urban space, these genres – traditionally neglected by literary studies – offer an enriching perspective on the reactions to modernising processes in early twentieth-century Spanish literature.

In the main, criticism on early twentieth-century Spanish popular literary texts has focused on two types of narratives: women-authored texts on the one hand, and, on the other, the popular novella, published serially in collections such as *El Cuento Semanal* (1907-1912), *Los Contemporáneos* (1909-26), *La Novela Corta* (1916-25), *La Novela Semanal* (1921-25), and *La Novela de Hoy* (1922-32). The early twentieth-century Spanish novella has been studied by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles (1971, 1975), Luis Fernández Cifuentes (1982), Brigitte Magnien (1986), Alberto Sánchez Álvarez-Insúa (1996), Jesús A. Martínez-Martín (2001), Manuel Martínez Arnaldos (2007), and Cecilio Alonso (2008), amongst others.

Significantly, these two paths often converge, since the publication of women's writing was usually limited to mass produced popular literature (Johnson 2003a: 24), confirming the modernist identification between 'low' culture and women which Andreas Huyssen influentially identified in *After the Great Divide* (1988: 47). As Catherine Davies points out, while the presence of women in the elitist avant-garde was extremely reduced – and limited to a secondary role –, 'the marked increase in popular newspapers and magazines and, above all, commercial publishers, resulting in numerous series of novellas or short stories produced cheaply for mass consumption, provided great opportunities for women writers' (1998: 109). The alleged lack of literary experimentation in these texts has been the main reason traditionally argued by scholarship in Hispanic studies not to include women writers in their studies. Roberta Johnson, for example, states that:

because novels written by women during the first thirty years of the century do not incorporate the kinds of narrative innovation and exploration of individual (male) consciousness that we have seen in the male modernist novel, women writers have been left out of literary history and the canon. (2003b: 160)

Early twentieth-century Spanish mass-produced literature and women's writing have been therefore dismissed due to their alleged lack of aesthetic value, and

because of the audience to which they were directed, namely ‘the masses’ and women readers. The ‘great divide’ between male-elitist and female-mass-produced literature must be, however, clarified. Far from mere cheap and light entertainment, these genres also tapped into the same cultural debates raised by those texts traditionally defined as ‘high literature’, voicing concerns about modernisation, and sometimes resorting to subversive discourses which challenged traditional conceptions of national, class, and gender identity (Davies 1998: 117-118). As Álvarez-Insúa points out, the novellas published in the first decades of the twentieth century in collections such as *El Cuento Semanal* (1907-1912):

convierten la literatura y aledaños en palestra política, replantean costumbres y formas de vida, introducen nuevos modelos morales y de comportamiento, inciden directamente sobre aspectos tan importantes como la sexualidad y consiguen por fin que la lectura se convierta en la forma más barata y fundamental de ocio y cultura. (2007: 91)

The case studies that will be analysed in this thesis can be classified as examples of early Spanish narratives of modernity. *Anticópolis* (1931) by Luis de Oteyza was published by Renacimiento, a publishing house whose ‘perspectiva comercial hizo compartir la editorial con autores de calidad literaria y ventas discretas [such as Galdós and Pardo Bazán] y, a su vez, con un tipo de autores de literatura barata pero con grandes beneficios’ (Martínez 2001: 197). Whereas established authors such as Unamuno complained about the lack of readers and commercial success of their works (Martínez 2001: 201), writers such as Oteyza enjoyed a great deal of popularity with the Spanish readership. In her introductory study to *Anticópolis*, Barrantes points out that ‘en la medida que presentaba todos los elementos necesarios para conseguir tal objetivo – aventuras, acción, amores, lugares exóticos –, la literatura de Oteyza destacó como producción de “consumo” destinada a una sociedad moderna de masas’ (2006: 42). His most popular novel, *El Diablo Blanco* (1928) ran to five editions in Spanish and was translated to fourteen languages. Thanks to its international success the book even had the chance to be adapted into a film in Hollywood – in which the main character would have been played by Lionel Barrymore –, but eventually the project did not go ahead (Barrantes 2006: 22-23). *Anticópolis* also had a subsequent edition in 1933, this time with another publishing house, Fénix (Barrantes 2006: 79), which

indicates that this novel captured the attention of the Spanish audience too. Moreover, the fact that the book was reviewed in the United States in the journal *Hispania* (Rosenberg 1932: 307-308) also shows the interest raised by the novel outside Spain.

Teresa de Escoriaza's *El crisol de las razas* (1929), published within the collection *Los novelistas* (Prensa Moderna), was probably also widely read in Spain. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to find sources to quantify the success of Escoriaza's novella in terms of its readership and reception. However, it is worth noting that *El crisol de las razas* is number 43 in the collection, and was published in the second year of the collection's existence. Consequently, we can imagine that *Los novelistas* was, at least, enjoying some success in 1929. Based on the editorial success of similar publications, we can presume that Escoriaza's novella had a reasonably high rate of distribution. As Álvarez Insúa states, after the initial publication of the collection *El Cuento Semanal* in 1907, 'seguirían más de un millar de publicaciones seriadas similares de todo orden [...] que inundan los quioscos y librerías' and 'se reparten a domicilio a los suscriptores' (2007: 91). According to Martínez Arnaldos, some of the novellas published in *El Cuento Semanal* reached 50,000 and 60,000 copies (2007: 15). Subsequent collections, such as *La Novela Corta* (1916-1925), even exceeded this number and issued 200,000 copies of some of its texts (Álvarez Insúa 2007: 98).

We can also infer that the articles written by José Moreno Villa and Julio Camba, which would eventually make up their *Pruebas de Nueva York* and *La ciudad automática* respectively, had a broad audience when they were published originally in the newspapers *El Sol* and *ABC* in 1927 and 1931. Martínez Martín has pointed out the increasing growth of the press in early twentieth-century Spain, when:

el periodismo político cobró un gran impulso con una amplia gama de diarios de muy diverso talante ideológico y se consolidó como un importante instrumento de opinión. Las tiradas de algunos llegaron a alcanzar los 200.000 ejemplares. [...] *ABC, Ahora, El Sol, El Liberal* o *El Socialista* son ejemplos de diarios de gran tirada en la capital, aunque de difusión nacional. (2001: 181)

The reception of *Pruebas de Nueva York* and *La ciudad automática* once they were published as books, was, however, very different. On the one hand, Moreno Villa's work only had two editions, the original in 1927 (Imprenta Sur/Espasa

Calpe) and a facsimile edition of the original published in 1989 (Pre-Textos). As I will explain in more detail, Moreno Villa's narrative works have been obscured by the study of his poetic production. As a matter of fact, the author published a second work inspired by his experience in New York, the collection of poems *Jacinta la pelirroja* (1929), which has been given more critical attention. On the other hand, *La ciudad automática* has been continuously reedited since 1932, the latest edition of the book being as recent as 2008 (Alhena Media).

Despite the interest raised by these texts in an early twentieth-century Spanish readership, critical attention by scholars of Spanish modernism has been either non-existent, or limited to a rather descriptive approach. Kirsty Hooper has highlighted 'the persistent focus that has been placed on canonical literary texts' and 'the exclusion of both lesser-known texts and other cultural media' (2008: 172). Apart from their alleged lack of literary interest, the difficulty in including mass produced popular texts in the rigid classifications established by scholarship has left them out of the canon (Barrantes 2001: 5). Consequently, texts and authors beyond categories such as the Generation of 98/*Modernismo*, the avant-garde novel, and the Generation of 27 have often been catalogued as 'raros y olvidados', even by scholars such as Sainz de Robles (1971, 1975) and Alonso (2008), who have attempted to rescue them from the oblivion to which they have been traditionally consigned by studies of Spanish literature. As Alonso argues:

escritores muy difundidos que habían alcanzado gran popularidad sobre todo en la narrativa breve y en el teatro, fueron ingresados sin más en la cofradía de la rareza y el olvido a partir de 1939. Y contra las previsiones de recuperación que cabía suponer antes de 1975, lo cierto es que muy pocos de aquellos raros han dejado de serlo y menos todavía el número de los que han salido del olvido por la vía editorial. (2008: 11)

Alonso proposes to delineate an alternative canon of 'raros y olvidados', in order to 'llenar simbólicamente el vacío producido por la destrucción del entramado cultural cuyo desarrollo culmina en la 2ª República' (2008: 11). It is not the aim of this thesis, however, to incorporate early twentieth-century New York Spanish narratives to an alternative canon of forgotten works or to judge the aesthetic or artistic qualities of these texts. Rather, for the purpose of my analysis, I consider that regardless of their literary value, forgotten or 'bizarre' texts outside the canon also shed light on the debates around Spanish national identity, mass society,



women's emancipation, and multiculturalism. As Sieburth points out, 'mass cultural novels [...] are gold mines for cultural analysis, both in their uniqueness and in those aspects that transcend national boundaries' (1994: 15). Mass produced literary texts are a product of modernity in themselves. Moreover, the discourses promoted in these works are also an expression of the contradictions, anxieties, and sometimes hopes, brought by modernising processes to early-twentieth century Spain. The delimitation of Spanish modernism would be therefore incomplete without taking these works into account.

### **Specific Studies of New York in Spanish Literature**

This thesis is not the first attempt to study the presence of New York in Spanish literature. Previously, the interest not only in New York but also in the United States in general held by Spanish writers has been analysed by Dionisio Cañas (1994), Isabel García-Montón (2000, 2002), Carmen González López-Briones (2000), Eduardo Lago (2001), Emilio José Álvarez Castaño (2003), Eloy Navarro Domínguez (2004), and Luis García Jambrina (2004, 2006). Primarily, these studies have drawn attention to the existence of an extensive corpus of Spanish literary works about the United States and New York. Cañas points out that 'dentro de la poesía hispánica se puede decir que desde los inicios del siglo XIX ya Nueva York es una presencia significativa' (1994: 11). Such a prominent presence has led Jambrina to refer to this corpus as 'un género literario e, incluso, una tradición poética' (2003: 20). This tradition is still alive today, as Jambrina himself states (2003: 20), and is not only limited to poetry but also includes narrative genres such as the novel and the travelogue, as Lago (2001) has shown. Following a similar approach, Navarro Domínguez, in his introductory study to *La ciudad de los rascacielos* (1919) by Eduardo Criado Requena, also refers to a 'tradition', already in the first decades of the twentieth century. Navarro Domínguez argues that Criado's work 'no se sitúa en ningún espacio vacío de la tradición literaria y periodística española', since 'los Estados Unidos generan una abundante bibliografía en la literatura española a lo largo de los siglos XIX y XX' (2004: 37). An example of this vast bibliography is García-Montón's *Viaje a la modernidad: la visión de los Estados Unidos en la España finisecular*, an anthology of narrative texts published between 1875 and 1931. The corpus

selected by García-Montón is mainly based on excerpts taken from late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century travelogues – the only exception is *Anticópolis* by Luis de Oteyza –, a fact that highlights the early curiosity awakened in Spanish writers and travellers by the United States, and the continuity of this theme during the decades prior to the Spanish Civil War. Finally, in ‘Some 20th Century Spanish Views of the U.S.’ (2000), González López-Briones also highlights the attraction exerted by the United States on Spanish writers, in a study that focuses on a selection of texts published from the late 1910s to the 1990s.

In his book *El poeta y la ciudad. Nueva York y los escritores hispanos* (1994), Cañas focuses on poetic works within Hispanic literature and more precisely, on the analysis of José Martí’s *Versos libres* (1882), Lorca’s *Poeta en Nueva York* (1940), and Manuel Otero Ramos’s poetry written during the 1980s. Cañas’ choice of works highlights the connections between Spanish and Latin-American poetry – Martí in Cuba and Otero Ramos in the Puerto Rican community of New York – in relation to New York as a literary topic, an aspect that is beyond the scope of this thesis. More interestingly for the present study, Cañas’ study includes an ‘Apéndice Histórico’ that offers a panorama of New York’s presence in Hispanic letters (1994: 143-172). This appendix contains concise references to some of the works written during the time frame to which the present study is limited, namely: Juan Ramón Jiménez’s *Diario de un poeta recién casado* (1916), César M. Arconada’s *Urbe* (1928), José Moreno Villa’s *Pruebas de Nueva York* (1927) and *Jacinta la Pelirroja* (1927), and Julio Camba’s *La ciudad automática* (1932). Cañas pays special attention to Moreno Villa’s travelogue, which is briefly analysed in relation to Lorca’s *Poeta en Nueva York*. This succinct examination focuses on the similarities between Moreno Villa’s and Lorca’s discourses regarding the situation of black people in American society, the opposition between nature (spiritualism)/civilisation (materialism, capitalism), as well as other topics such as American commercialism and the reactions from both poets towards the urban ‘masses’. Cañas highlights that in *Pruebas de Nueva York*, ‘muchas de las opiniones allí recogidas por Moreno Villa son muy semejantes a las que Lorca expresará después’ (1994: 155). Such similarity is explained by the likely possibility that Lorca was familiar with Moreno Villa’s book:

unos años después vendrá Lorca a Manhattan y, aunque no sabemos si leyó el libro de Moreno Villa – posiblemente tuvo acceso a los artículos conforme fueron saliendo en la prensa –, las coincidencias en la actitud de Lorca frente a Nueva York son tantas que es difícil no pensar que ciertas “ideas hechas”, respecto a la ciudad, no provienen ya del texto del primero. (Cañas 1994: 158)

Cañas does not clarify what he means by ‘ideas hechas’, but he seems to imply that Lorca’s opinions about New York were shaped by the representation of the city he previously read in *Pruebas de Nueva York*, therefore overlooking the existence of similar discourses in the Spanish narrative of the time.

Secondly, García-Montón’s *Viaje a la modernidad: la visión de los Estados Unidos en la España finisecular* (2002) functions mainly as a textual catalogue, and includes very little critical discussion of the anthologised material. The brief introduction to the anthology presents the different topics according to which the chosen excerpts have been classified, namely: ‘Las minorías étnico-culturales’, ‘Los medios de comunicación. La publicidad’, ‘La industria’, ‘Los transportes’, ‘La religión’, ‘El espacio público. Las ciudades’, ‘La educación’, ‘La mujer’, ‘El ocio’, and ‘El paisaje’. Certainly, García-Montón’s prologue is not a critical analysis but rather offers some information on the historical context and an introduction to the themes we will find in the volume. However, and despite its brevity, this preface confirms the recurrent and continuous interest of Spanish writers in subjects such as industrialisation (‘La industria’, ‘Los transportes’, and ‘Las ciudades’ can be ascribed to this category), the situation of women in the United States, and multiculturalism. In a previous essay, García-Montón (2000) brings to the fore a very particular group of travelogues within the corpus, written between 1899 and 1914. The depiction of the United States given in these books is directed to ‘restituir una imagen más equilibrada sobre las características reales de la sociedad estadounidense’ after the 1898 war (2000: 238). García-Montón, advancing the structure of her subsequent anthology, divides her essay in three sections that correspond to the following topics: ‘La educación’, ‘Un nuevo actor social: la mujer’, and ‘El interés por lo español: significadas demostraciones’. The main question that remains unaddressed is: where does this recurrent interest come from, and to which interests do these favourable depictions respond?

In the opening lines to ‘Some 20th Century Spanish Views of the U.S.’ (2000), González López-Briones offers a promising approach to the corpus by stating that:

these publications show the perceptions of those who travelled or lived temporarily in the US and felt compelled to write about American life. Reading these pages one can also perceive how Spaniards felt about their own country and how they compare life in Spain with the US. (2000: 269)

This critic, however, does not really engage with the contrasting image that the United States represents in these texts. The focus of the essay on personal ‘perceptions’ yet it overlooks the catalysing role played by this country as a pivotal image between traditional and modernising concepts of Spanish national identity. In her essay, González López-Briones refers to a wide range of texts published from the early twentieth century to the 1990s. This extensive review is nevertheless restricted to a succinct, descriptive approach to the books, and ultimately it does not contribute to critical debates around modernity and modernisation in Spain. For example, in relation to Camba’s view of New York, González López-Briones argues that the writer ‘reflects a city full of activity and energy, yet Camba did not fail to transmit its idiosyncrasies and some of the problems he perceived’ (2000: 274). The questions of what these ‘idiosyncrasies’ and ‘problems’ were, and most importantly, why these ‘problems’ were perceived as such by Camba, are not addressed by this scholar.

In *Nueva York en los escritores españoles del siglo XX* (2003), Álvarez Castaño defines New York as the first modern metropolis, ‘anticipando rasgos y modos de vida que hoy asumimos como normales pero que entonces todavía se encontraban en periodo de asimilación’ (2003: 7), and provides a list of common themes present in the corpus, including the crowds, the accelerated pace of urban life, multiculturalism, and jazz music. However, Álvarez Castaño fails to connect the representations of New York given in these books to the Spanish historical context. Instead, his introduction offers a panoramic overview of the presence of the city in Spanish literature since the seventeenth century and a descriptive review of Spanish literary texts with a focus on New York – including poetry and narrative – written between 1923 and 1966. Two of the texts chosen for analysis by Álvarez Castaño are precisely *Pruebas de Nueva York* and *La ciudad*

*automática*. Although his analysis insinuates some potentially interesting points for debate, his approach to the texts is basically descriptive and highly dependent – especially in the case of Moreno Villa’s chronicles – on the author’s biographical details.

More interestingly, Navarro’s preliminary study (2004) of the travelogue *La ciudad de los rascacielos* (1919) integrates Criado Requena’s book within a ‘tradition’, as mentioned earlier, and refers to New York as an image that captures European anxieties towards modernisation. As Navarro states:

los europeos empezarán [...] a interrogar a la gran ciudad norteamericana acerca de su propio futuro, ante las evidentes señales (presentes tanto en el urbanismo como en los modos de vida de las grandes capitales europeas) de que el modelo económico y social que representa esa misma ciudad está destinado a extenderse por todo Occidente. En este sentido, la consideración de los Estados Unidos y de la gran metrópolis norteamericana como símbolo del futuro y espejo del presente experimentará aún distintas oscilaciones a lo largo del siglo XX en función de los cambios que se dan en los valores éticos y estéticos de la propia sociedad europea occidental y en la relación del continente con los Estados Unidos. (2004: 39-40)

The view of New York as a ‘symbol of the future and mirror of the present’ argued by Navarro will be essential for the analysis of the texts chosen for this thesis. Titles such as *Anticópolis* and *La ciudad automática* show at first glance the futuristic character given to the metropolis. Early twentieth-century Spain was at the crossroads between capitalism, industrialism, and mass democracy – social processes which are indeed the product of modernisation – and the traditionalism of the Restoration system. As the present thesis aims to demonstrate, Spanish writers, travellers, and polymaths also ‘interrogated’ New York about the destabilising effects that modernisation could trigger in the re-definition of national identity.

### ***Pruebas de Nueva York, El crisol de las razas, Anticópolis, and La ciudad automática: Critical Work on Four ‘Forgotten’ Texts***

In a broad sense, it would be imprecise to locate José Moreno Villa (Málaga 1887- Ciudad de México 1955) within a list of ‘weird’ or ‘forgotten’ authors. For twenty years, from 1917 to 1937, the author worked as a member of staff in the *Residencia de Estudiantes*, the famous centre founded in Madrid by the

*Institución Libre de Enseñanza* in 1910, and breeding ground for the poets of the Generation of 1927. This contact with the writers of the so-called ‘Silver Generation of Spanish letters’ has probably saved Moreno Villa’s work from oblivion, despite the fact that his ascription to a literary movement has been often problematic. Guillermo Carnero argues that Moreno Villa ‘tuvo la mala suerte de venir al mundo literario entre dos épocas bien definidas y dotadas de figuras de primera magnitud’, the generations of 98 and 27 (1989: 13). Similarly, Francisco Javier Díez de Revenga defines the author as ‘uno de esos escritores inclasificables, situado entre modernismo y la vanguardia, amigo de muchos de los poetas del 27, y exiliado, tras la guerra civil, como alguno de ellos, compartió afanes comunes en la Residencia de Estudiantes y en el Centro de Estudios Históricos’ (2001: 129). Juan Chabás, for his part, includes Moreno Villa in the ‘grupos de transición’ from Spanish *Modernismo* to the avant-garde, and defines him as a precursor of new poetic forms characterised, amongst other aspects, by ‘el ingreso entre los temas literarios de las formas maquinistas de la civilización técnica moderna’ (2001: 372).

It is worth noting that the efforts to recuperate Moreno Villa’s literary production refer to the avant-garde character of his poetry, and often highlight the relationship of the writer with the Generation of 1927. Such is the approach taken by José Luis Cano (1970: 49-53), Guillermo Carnero (1977: 368-369, 1989: 15), Luis Izquierdo (1978: 3, 1989: 70), Carmen de Mora (1978: 156), Álvaro Salvador (1978: 353), Margarita Smerdou (1988: 66), Francisco Javier Díez de Castro (1989: 32), Eugenio Carmona (1985: 9), and Humberto Huergo (1996: 490). It seems that the study of Moreno Villa’s work needs to be justified by the question of literary value which in a sense confirms the elitism of avant-garde experimentalism and its insertion in the canon. Consequently, and as expected, the vast majority of the critical attention given to Moreno Villa’s work has been devoted to his poetic production. Apart from the essays I have already mentioned, this is the focus of José Francisco Cirre (1963), María Antonia López Frías (1990), Rosa Romojaro (1991), Ada Salas Moreno (1992), James Valender (1999), and Andrés Romero Jodar (2009).

By contrast, Moreno Villa’s prose has been barely studied. Eduardo Jiménez Urdiales (1988, 1998), has analysed Moreno Villa’s narrative fiction, consisting

of two volumes: *Evoluciones, cuentos, caprichos, bestiario, epitafios y obras paralelas* (1918) and *Patrañas* (1921). Jiménez Urdiales points out that the author

acoge y asume todo el saber recibido de las generaciones precedentes, en contra de la actitud, impuesta por la mayoría de las tendencias del vanguardismo artístico y literario europeo, de rechazar la tradición cultural para crear una poética moderna basada en la experiencia propia dentro del nuevo espacio urbano creado a raíz de los progresos industriales y técnicos de principios de siglo. (1998: 18)

This lack of experimentation in Moreno Villa's narrative production is possibly the main reason for the scant critical interest it has received, as opposed to the attention given to the documentary value of his memoirs, *Vida en claro* (2006, first edition 1944). Moreno Villa's autobiography has been studied by José Luis Cano (1976), José María Bermejo (1978), Pura Serrano Acosta and José A. Fortes (1989), Manuel Alberca Serrano (1989), and Romero Chamorro (1988).

In contrast with the alleged lack of interest in modernity shown by Moreno Villa in previous narrative texts, *Pruebas de Nueva York* (1927) revolves around themes such as the modern city, industrialisation and mechanisation, capitalism, women's emancipation, and multiculturalism. The text was inspired by Moreno Villa's stay in New York in 1927. The writer travelled to the United States in order to meet the family of his American girlfriend, Florence – whom he had met in the *Residencia* –, and to obtain her father's permission to marry her. The experience resulted in failure, since Moreno Villa was rejected by Florence's parents, and returned to Madrid, 'recién soltero' in the writer's words, alluding to Juan Ramón Jiménez's *Diario de un poeta recién casado* (Ballesteros and Neira 2000: 27). During the time he spent in New York, Moreno Villa wrote a series of articles for the journal *El Sol*, published between 19<sup>th</sup> May and 24<sup>th</sup> July, and subsequently gathered in the volume entitled *Pruebas de Nueva York*. Two years later, he published *Jacinta la pelirroja* (2000, first published in 1929), which was inspired by both his relationship with Florence and his experience in New York. Ballesteros and Neira argue that:

Moreno Villa pretendía precisamente hacer una poesía nueva, diferente, moderna por antirromántica, lúdica, deportiva, expresión de su tiempo, reflejo fiel de la muchacha que la provocaba: una poesía que rompiera definitivamente con los esquemas de la lírica sentimental al uso. (2000: 52)

The same critics highlight the modernist character of the poems, in which we can find ‘muchos otros signos de la modernidad’ like ‘el cine [...], el arte contemporáneo [...], la arquitectura racionalista [...], el deporte [...] el auge del maquinismo y los automóviles [...] la atmósfera de los años veinte en la imagen del mundo que baila sin cesar’ (2000: 52). This modernity has been precisely the reason for considering *Jacinta la pelirroja* the most relevant work in Moreno Villa’s literary production, and explains the interest of scholarship in the text, as in the studies by José Servera Baño (1978), Álvaro Salvador (1978), José Ángel Cilleruelo (1988), José de la Calle (1990), Salvador Jiménez Fajardo (1994), Humberto Huergo (1996), Rafael Ballesteros and Julio Neira (2000), Rosa Romojaro (2001), and Khemais Jouini (2007).

However, *Pruebas de Nueva York* has been mostly regarded by scholarship as a secondary text of mere documentary interest that complements the love story depicted in the aforementioned collection of poems. This widespread view has been promoted in studies such as those by Ballesteros and Neira, where the critics define the text by its ‘autenticidad de crónica amorosa – correlato en prosa de *Jacinta la pelirroja*’ (2000: 27). Similarly, Díaz de Castro argues that ‘el ambiente cosmopolita y moderno, las grandes ciudades, la mezcla de razas, las multitudes, la música – y la plástica – del jazz’ reflected in *Pruebas de Nueva York* as well as ‘distintas observaciones sobre la mujer norteamericana’ are of great help in order to understand ‘la figura de Jacinta’ (1989: 35). In such a reading, Moreno Villa’s representation of New York is understood as a reaction to the setbacks he suffered in his emotional life. Ballesteros and Neira propose that Moreno Villa’s portrait of the city as an incarnation of capitalism – which the author relates to the influence of Judaism – is caused by ‘la herida del conflicto con la familia judía de la amada’ (2000: 26). In a similar way, Moreno Villa’s description of the American modern woman would be an expression of sentimental disappointment. Ballesteros and Neira argue that

de toda la colección de artículos es en “La niña violenta” donde vierte mayores dosis de desahogo sentimental en la dureza del reproche a esas “niñas bien” a la americana, de las que Florence es inmejorable representante, y en el que se trasluce la amargura del desamor. (2000: 26)



Specific studies on *Pruebas de Nueva York* have not significantly gone beyond descriptive approaches to the text in which the view of New York and modernisation given by the author is interpreted as the expression of his personal turmoil. Alessia Cassani relates Moreno Villa's attitude towards women to his failed relationship with Florence, which leads the author to a 'risentimento nei confronti di un tipo di donna volitiva e risoluta che chiaramente è riconducibile alla sua fidanzata' since 'la ferita sentimentale era ancora troppo fresca per potere valutare con freddezza il tipo umano femminile descritto' ['resentment against a strong-willed and resolute type of woman that clearly refers to his fiancée' since 'the sentimental wound was still too fresh to be able to coolly assess the type of femininity described'] (2006: 84). Similarly, Álvarez Castaño relates the depiction of Jewish people given in the text to the rejection suffered by Moreno Villa by Florence's family (2003: 63). Furthermore, Castaño justifies the author's opinions towards the emancipation of women and multiculturalism by the cultural contrast between Spain and the United States:

a un cierto tipo de lector actual le puede llamar mucho la atención el cúmulo de generalidades en las que cae Moreno Villa, sobre todo cuando habla de las mujeres (estando él acostumbrado, por la época en la que vivió, a asociarlas a un tipo de vida más familiar), la poca consideración que le merecen los judíos o los negros. [...] Claro que sus generalidades, que empiezan por tener casi todas tintes negativos, acaban por ir matizándose poco a poco y, gracias a esa labor de conocimiento que dice que está haciendo, llega incluso a cierto grado de alabanza de determinadas visiones y aspectos de la vida neoyorquina, lo que supone una buena lección para él y también para aquellos que tengan opiniones del mismo tipo que la suya. (2003: 67-68)

As I will explain in my analysis of *Pruebas de Nueva York*, Moreno Villa's change of perspective in relation to modernisation is one of the most fascinating features of the text. However, as one can see in the previous extract, Álvarez Castaño does not go beyond a mere description of such transformation. This is the same approach taken by Cañas. As we have seen, although he refers to *Pruebas de Nueva York* as a precursory text for Lorca's *Poeta en Nueva York*, Cañas does not engage in critical analysis. He succinctly mentions Moreno Villa's references to black people (1994: 158) and the connections between capitalism and Judaism referred to in the text (1994: 156), but this critic explains the author's attitudes mainly as a reflection of cultural differences between Spain and the United States:

‘los comentarios de Moreno Villa parten siempre de la perspectiva del ciudadano español, aunque el poeta hace un esfuerzo por entender y justificar un tipo de vida que le es ajena’ (1994: 156). Cristóbal Cuevas also regards Moreno Villa’s reaction towards the modernisation incarnated by New York as the result of a cultural clash, in which ‘Nueva York, para él, es símbolo de una nueva concepción de la cultura, o mejor de una nueva forma de concebir la vida, e incluso de ser hombre’, and therefore American commercialism contrasts with the author’s ‘espíritu artístico y mediterráneo’ (1991: 311- 312). Cuevas also refers to the change of perspective undergone in Moreno Villa’s opinions, in relation not only to New York but also to Spain, since ‘los defectos que advierte en España a su regreso contrastan con la idealización en que la tenía en Nueva York’ (1991: 313). However, in Cuevas’ conclusion, the influence of Moreno Villa’s stay in the metropolis is simply related to the writer’s personal effort to combine modernity and tradition: ‘de un lado, España, con tantas cosas sedimentadas por la tradición; de otra, el torbellino aventador de lo nuevo, situado en Alemania desde su infancia, irradiando desde Nueva York a partir de la primera cuarentena del poeta’ (1991: 313).

On the contrary, and in an attempt to supersede the above author-based analyses, I propose that the image of New York developed in *Pruebas de Nueva York* is not a mere reflection of Moreno Villa’s failed relationship with Florence or simply of his personal circumstances. The change undergone by Moreno Villa through his contact with New York provides an excellent insight into the contradictions brought about by modernisation in Spain and Europe. First of all, we must consider that the opinions about modernisation provided in the opening chapters of the book are highly influenced by the image of the modern city and modern civilisation as decadent and primitive which was promoted by European modernism. Similarly, I argue that reactions against women’s emancipation reflect the patriarchal structures of Spanish and European society. Finally, Moreno Villa’s racist remarks can be related to colonial discourses, and his anti-Semitic stance to European racialist concerns about degeneration. Therefore, the analysis of Moreno Villa’s opinions should not be merely restricted to his personal point of view, but should take into consideration a series of Western discourses that shaped the writer’s subjectivity. Consequently, the progressive transformation in his opinions does not merely constitute ‘una buena lección para él y también para

aquellos que tengan opiniones del mismo tipo’, as Álvarez Castaño (2003: 67-68) states, but more importantly points out the inconsistencies of modern Western discourses of Otherness. Moreover, in relation to the Spanish case, the text shows the contradictions arising from an overlapping of the efforts to modernise the country and the criticism of modernisation posed by the modernist view.

Critical work on *El crisol de las razas* (1929) and on the author Teresa de Escoriaza (San Sebastián, 1891-1968) has been scarce. Escoriaza herself embodied the ‘new woman’ who was gaining access to public life, in line with other Spanish women writers who, as Carmen Muñoz Olivares points out:

utilizan la narración para proyectar las inquietudes sociales de todo tipo que les preocupan. Son las primeras periodistas y corresponsales de guerra como Carmen de Burgos y Sofía Casanova; críticas literarias como Blanca de los Ríos y Pardo Bazán, conferenciantes, ensayistas, traductoras y, sobre todo, divulgadoras de unas ideas e inquietudes que tenían como uno de los ejes principales la incorporación de la mujer a la vida pública española. (2000: 96)

She obtained a university degree and worked as a journalist – she was renowned as one of the first Spanish women foreign correspondents along with Carmen de Burgos and Sofía Casanova – and a lecturer in Spanish in the United States (Marta Palenque 2006: 364). Escoriaza also collaborated on the newspaper *La Libertad* founded in 1919 and directed by Luis de Oteyza. From 1919 to 1921 she published a series of articles written in New York in which she gave her opinions about the city. These articles can be considered the prelude for her novella, since some of the main themes of *El crisol de las razas* such as women’s emancipation and the connection between capitalism and Judaism are already outlined in her journalistic contributions from the United States. In 1921, she was sent by *La Libertad* to cover the war between Spain and Morocco. Her war chronicles were subsequently gathered in the volume *Del dolor de la guerra (crónicas de la campaña de Marruecos)* (1921). Escoriaza’s journalistic activities were not limited to the printed press. She also participated in the first radio broadcasts in Spain, in which she gave the so-called ‘Primera Conferencia Feminista’ in this media (Escoriaza 1924).

Critical work on Escoriaza has focused mainly on her journalistic output. María Ángeles Sánchez Suárez (2004: 100-104) explores Escoriaza’s journalistic career,

focusing on her war chronicles from Morocco. Her contributions to radio have been mentioned without going into much detail by Manuel Ángel Fernández Sande (2005a: 393, 2005b: 123-129), and Fátima Gil Gascón and Salvador Gómez García (2010: 113). The most complete approach to her life and work to the date is Marta Palenque's article 'Ni ofelias ni amazonas, sino seres completos: aproximación a Teresa de Escoriaza' (2006). Palenque provides an extensive biographical note in which she mentions Escoriaza's friendship with Luis de Oteyza and her contributions to *La Libertad*. Moreover, she includes the only reference, to the best of my knowledge, to Escoriaza's novella. Palenque points out that *El crisol de las razas* has never been mentioned 'en relación con las obras literarias que, por estos años, toman a Nueva York como centro' (2006: 372). Indeed, the author belongs to the group of 'forgotten writers', whose work, produced outside the canon, has been traditionally dismissed. As Palenque states, 'la vida y obra de Teresa de Escoriaza permanece [...] casi oculta y su nombre apenas si asoma en la bibliografía sobre el periodismo español o en relación con las sociedades feministas' (2006: 364). Despite such oblivion, it seems that Escoriaza enjoyed certain popularity as a writer and journalist. Rafael Cansinos Assens, for instance, mentions the writer in his memoirs when alluding to the feminist Isabel Oyarzábal, of whom he says:

pertenece a ese número de nobles mujeres, de ideología moderna, desligadas de la tradición clerical, libres, pero no libertinas, en que figuran Teresa de Escoriaza, Clara Campoamor y otras menos célebres, que continúan la línea de Carmen de Burgos y las llamadas damas rojas de principios de siglo. (1995: 271)

As one can see, Escoriaza is equaled to well-known literary and political figures such as Carmen de Burgos and Clara Campoamor. Moreover, the press also echoed Escoriaza's popularity. In *T.S.H. (Revista Semanal, Órgano de Radio Madrid)*, she is referred to as 'la ilustre escritora Teresa de Escoriaza' (Escoriaza 1924: 13). Similarly, a piece of news in the republican newspaper *El Radical* covering the celebration of the anniversary of the Republic in New York includes the writer in the group of 'personalidades de la colonia española de Nueva York' that attended the event, 'entre ellas la notable escritora, asidua colaboradora de *La Libertad* de Madrid, señorita Teresa de Escoriaza' (Anonymous 1933: 1). As Palenque points out, Escoriaza's recognition increased thanks to her work as a

journalist both in the press and on the radio, to the extent that ‘la amplia tirada de los rotativos en que trabajó y su posterior quehacer en la radio le aseguraron un alto número de lectores’ (2006: 371). Unfortunately, Escoriaza’s fame and her contributions to Spanish feminism have been overlooked in recent reassessments of this period. *El crisol de las razas* has not captured the attention of Hispanism, not even in the studies about Spanish literature with a focus on New York. The novella, as Palenque argues:

conecta con la visión amarga del futuro de la civilización que la misma ciudad representa a ojos de los que la visitan. Nueva York es aquí la gran urbe de los años 20, con casi seis millones de habitantes, a la que acuden personas de todos los continentes y razas en busca de una vida mejor; es la promesa de una civilización sin límites raciales o ideológicos, lo que a Escoriaza (una de esas personas) le parece imposible. (2006: 372- 374)

Placing the emphasis on a race-oriented discourse, *El crisol de las razas* depicts New York as a shambolic urban experiment in which the coexistence of different cultures and ‘races’ results in ‘males irreparables’ (44). The novella tells the story of Helen Waters, an Anglo-Saxon American woman married to a Russian-Jewish tycoon, Boris Zinovief. When Boris becomes interested in Sonia, a Russian singer, Helen decides to fight for her marriage and recover her husband. The narrative concludes in a fatal ending in which Helen is accidentally killed. The moral of the story is directed to show the alleged menace provoked by the coexistence of different ‘races’ in the same nation. Escoriaza’s text repudiates the idea of a country with a multi-ethnic population – ‘donde se encuentran todas las razas y cada una de las variantes de éstas’ (44) –, in contrast with the concept of nationhood promoted by European nationalisms at the time, often identified with ‘racial’ homogeneity. The novella presents the supposedly conflictive character of multiculturalism through the failed marriage between Helen and Boris. In tune with Western discourses of ‘Otherness’, the main threat posed by ethnic heterogeneity comes from the East, in the form of an archetypical ‘Jew’ described as greedy, lustful, and uncivilised, who is in addition blamed for the tragic ending of the story. On the contrary, Helen represents an intrepid and independent American ‘modern woman’, who has nevertheless compromised her individual freedom by marrying a man from a different ‘race’ and a different class. Helen’s character is in turn juxtaposed with a female counterpart, Sonia, who is doomed to

remain subdued to patriarchy due to her economical difficulties. Class, gender, and ‘race’ are therefore at the core of an ambivalent view of the United States that condemns miscegenation but can however also be interpreted as a feminist plea for women’s liberation from patriarchy.

In spite of his successful career as a journalist, the popularity of his novels and even his political career as ambassador of the Republican government in Venezuela, the life and work of Luis de Oteyza (Zafra, 1883-Caracas, 1961), has been also traditionally forgotten by Spanish literary and cultural studies. His name has been at most mentioned in passing, as Barrantes points out, ‘en las listas de “Otros autores” o bajo epígrafes arbitrarios y dispares’ (2006: 80). César González-Ruano includes the author in his *Antología de poetas españoles contemporáneos en lengua castellana*, referring to him as ‘poeta rubeniano’ (1946: 371). Similarly, Richard A. Cardwell (1976: 3-6; 1984: 178) alludes to Oteyza’s as a poet from Spanish *Modernismo* along with Antonio and Manuel Machado, amongst others. Recently, Christian H. Ricci has also referred to Oteyza’s poetry, classifying it as ‘bohemia’, and in line with Spanish *Modernismo* (2010: 162). Focusing on his narrative production, Eugenio de Nora includes him in a list of writers belonging to the so-called ‘novela costumbrista’ (1958: 379). The same list is quoted by José Carlos Mainer and Luis Granjel in their study of the Spanish early twentieth-century novella (1984: 147). Following a different classification, Sainz de Robles (1959: 27) and José Domingo (1980: 95) refer to Oteyza within the list of writers of the so-called ‘Promoción del *Cuento Semanal*’.<sup>3</sup>

The status of Oteyza as ‘escritor raro’ has been highlighted by Luis Antonio de Villena in ‘Un moderno muy olvidado: Luis de Oteyza’ (1999). Villena refers to the writer’s contribution to the struggle for modernity in 1920s and early 1930s Spain (1999: 169). He describes Oteyza as:

el representante de un periodismo muy moderno en una España [...] en que ésta luchaba por ser moderna, y lo conseguía aparentemente más en sus escritores *menores* (Retama, Oteyza) que en los mayores (Unamuno, Pérez de Ayala), superficialmente más tradicionales, aunque claro es, de muchísimo más peso. (1999: 169)

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<sup>3</sup> The term was coined by Sainz de Robles and refers to the writers who published in *El Cuento Semanal*, as well in similar collections between 1909 and 1925 (Sainz de Robles 1971: 10-11).

The distinction between major and minor authors and works, and the priority given to the former by virtue of their alleged superiority in terms of literary quality assumed by Villena, has obscured the existence of ‘other’ literary texts. The category of ‘raro’ and ‘olvidado’ given to writers such as de Oteyza does in fact not correspond to the success they enjoyed at the time. Barrantes argues that:

cuando uno se adentra en este periodo, se percata de que hay mucho material más allá de la generación del 27, Juan Ramón Jiménez o Ramón Gómez de la Serna y de que, precisamente, esos conceptos de “generación”, en el primer caso, y de “genialidad individual”, en el de los dos segundos, han sido claves y determinantes a la hora de construir el canon de la literatura española [...]. Pero, ¿dónde quedan autores y obras que iban a contracorriente o que, simplemente, no respondían fielmente a esos postulados? (2008: 5)

Villena points out that ‘minor’ authors were often more in tune with modernising processes than canonical ones. However, the distinction between canonical authors as concerned with important and serious themes such as ‘el problema de España’, and minor writers as cosmopolitans and whose work is envisaged as mere cheap entertainment, responds to yet another cliché often resorted to by literary historians in order to justify the alleged superiority of canonical over ‘other’ texts. As Bretz has shown, the traditional distinction between the Generation of 98/*Modernismo* and the definition of the former in terms of its national(ist) focus, responds to the political interest of scholars such as Laín-Entralgo (1945) and Díaz-Plaja (1951), ‘key examples of Francoist reappropriation and redefinition of early twentieth-century criticism’ (2001: 64-68). As this thesis aims to show, popular narratives such as *Anticópolis* reflect the contradictions and anxieties brought about by modernising processes to the re-definition of Spanish national identity. Similar dialogues between nation and modernisation in both categories (‘canonical’ and ‘other’) therefore challenge fixed categorisations established by the canon, as shown by cultural studies (Graham and Labanyi 1995b: vi; Labanyi 2002: 9), and favour a rising attention to ‘forgotten’ writers such as Oteyza. As a result of this interest, several re-editions of his journalistic and literary publications have been published in recent years (*El Diablo Blanco* 1993, 2006; *Abd-El-Krim y los prisioneros*, 2000; *Obras selectas*, 2000). Of particular importance for the present work is the re-edition of *Anticópolis* carried

out by Barrantes (2006), who also devoted a subsequent study to Oteyza's novel (2008).

In her introduction to the novel, Barrantes argues that *Anticópolis* presents 'las cuestiones más candentes de la época – progreso *versus* tradicionalismo, consecuencias de la modernidad, feminismo, problemas multiculturales y de inmigración' (2006: 72). The critic inscribes the text within European and Spanish responses to modernity and modernisation, by relating the novel to the work of European modernist authors such as Baudelaire and Dickens, and to Spanish avant-garde texts written in the 1920s, in which 'la ciudad [...] sirve, la mayoría de las veces, como objeto de diatribas – más o menos explícitas – sobre la incidencia de la modernidad y sus secuelas en el ser humano de esa época' (2006: 46- 47). Similarly to European and Spanish modernist texts, as Barrantes argues, *Anticópolis* presents a contradictory image of the metropolis. New York embodies the future of civilisation, both in a positive and in a negative sense. On the one hand, the presence of 'the masses' and the frantic rhythm of modern life 'responde [...] a ese imaginario colectivo donde la multitud es alienante y deshumanizadora, aunque al mismo tiempo inevitable' (Barrantes 2006: 63). On the other hand, in Oteyza's novel 'hay mucho de tributo al progreso y la liberación de costumbres' especially in relation to women's emancipation (Barrantes 2006: 73). The novel narrates the story of a Spanish family that moves to New York in order to fulfil the delirious aspirations of the head of the family, don Antonio, who dreams of becoming a successful inventor. However, don Antonio plays a small role in the story, since the novel starts at his funeral and we only know about his life from a series of flashbacks. After his death, doña Jesusa – his wife –, who detests New York and its modernity, decides to take her children back to Oviedo. However, they do not agree with this decision and start a revolt against their mother, since they consider themselves to be New Yorkers and do not want to leave the city and return to a country that they see as backward. Rosa – the elder daughter – is the head of this rebellion and assumes the leading role in the family, even over her brothers. From that moment on, the story revolves around a dialectical battle between the mother and the daughter. New York as 'la ciudad de la anticipación' is a concept voiced by a key character in the novel, Doctor Jiménez, for whom New York 'iba delante, muy por delante de todas las demás ciudades en la marcha hacia lo futuro' (186). Jiménez describes New York first and foremost as an



avant-garde city, an image of the future awaiting the rest of the world. On the one hand, New York's 'anticipation' refers both to the groundbreaking aspect of its streets – the height of the skyscrapers, the star-like streetlights, the continuous fast movement of the new means of transport – and the mechanisation of daily life. On the other hand, the modernisation embodied by the city becomes especially evident – according to Jiménez – in the increasing equality between men and women, and the access of the latter to the public sphere, from which they had been traditionally excluded. The traditionalism/modernisation dichotomy is in fact embodied by the two main female characters: doña Jesusa – a traditional Spanish woman – and her daughter Rosa, who has completely adapted to American ways. Rosa's violent rejection of the Catholic view of femininity represented by her mother echoes fears towards female rebelliousness, not only in *Pruebas de Nueva York* but also in *La ciudad automática* – as I will show –, but most importantly it conveys an alternative notion of womanhood that challenges Western gender constructs. In addition, the alleged superiority of white 'races' as preached by racist theories in vogue in Europe at the time is also challenged by endowing Jiménez's character with a modernising stand. The Doctor is in fact a black Puerto Rican and therefore a member of a former Spanish colony. Jiménez's efforts to modernise Jesusa and show her the positive side of American civilisation unveil the constructed character of Western oppositions between the 'civilised'- 'civilising' coloniser and the 'primitive' colonised, supposedly in need of protection and guidance.

The opposition between Jesusa – representation of the traditional woman – and Rosa – embodiment of the modern woman – reflects the contrast between Spain's stagnation and New York's modernisation (Barrantes 2006: 67). This critic concludes that:

Oteyza consigue en *Anticópolis* presentar las dos caras de la modernidad a través de la construcción de personajes metafóricos; parece que lo que el escritor finalmente intentaba explicar era que [...] la modernidad también contenía sus propias contradicciones, pero que, a pesar de ello, el progreso, aun con todos sus efectos negativos, era la única manera de seguir adelante. (Barrantes 2006: 73)

Barrantes' study will constitute the starting point for my analysis of *Anticópolis*. However, I propose that the opposition between traditionalism and modernisation inherent in the dichotomy traditional/modern woman must be considered at a

deeper level, in relation to the crisis of modernisation and of national identity suffered by Spain in the first decades of the last century. As I will show in this thesis, the conflict between traditionalism and modernisation embodied by the symbolical characters of the novel was embedded in the often contradictory responses to modernity offered by early twentieth-century Spanish writers and intellectuals.

Apart from two novellas, *El destierro* (*El Cuento Semanal*, 1907) and *El matrimonio de Restrepo* (*La Novela de Hoy*, 1924), both recently re-edited by Ediciones del Viento in 2007, Julio Camba's literary career developed mainly in the context of journalistic writing (Llera 2003: 159). He wrote for several newspapers, mostly for *ABC*, and some of his articles were subsequently published as books. Camba was especially renowned for his chronicles from foreign countries, such as *Londres* (1973, first edition 1916), *Alemania, impresiones de un español* (1968, first edition 1916), *Un año en el otro mundo* (2009, first edition 1917), *La rana viajera* (2008, first edition 1920), *Aventuras de una peseta* (2007, first edition 1923), and *La ciudad automática* (1960, first edition 1932). Julio Camba's view of New York revolves around the mechanical nature of the city, as the title of his travelogue indicates. *La ciudad automática* compiles Camba's articles written between 1931 and 1932 for *ABC* during his stay in New York. This was not his first visit to the United States, since in 1916 he had already been sent there by the same newspaper. His American chronicles were subsequently gathered in the volume *Un año en el otro mundo*, published in 1917, in which he provides a general impression of the United States (López García 2003: 119-121). In *La ciudad automática* he focuses on New York, although he refers to the city as representative of American society. Camba depicts New York as a futuristic city, to which he displays a contradictory reaction. This attitude, added to his focus on themes included under titles such as 'Rascacielos', 'Judíos', 'Negros y blancos', 'La "American Girl"', 'La serie', and 'La mecanización', directly connects the book to similar New York narratives produced in Spain at the time. Moreover, the reception of the book confirms the interest raised by New York in Spain; as López García points out, 'es uno de los títulos de Camba que más interesará a los escritores y poetas de la Generación del 27 (gustó mucho, por ejemplo, a Salvador Dalí, quien confesará [...] su

entusiasmo por la visión cambiana de los Estados Unidos' (2003: 155). The American metropolis is defined in this text as 'la ciudad del tiempo' (9), a city that 'está en el centro de esta época' (10), since 'nuestra época sólo Nueva York ha acertado a encarnarla' (11). In contrast to *Anticópolis*, the text conveys the idea that the progress prompted by modernisation does not imply the superiority of the new world over the old one. As I will show in my analysis, the text strongly rejects mechanisation and standardisation, and despises the rise of a mass society. The view of New York given in Camba's travelogue is constructed upon a sarcastic approach to modernisation, in which sardonic remarks about women's access to the private sphere reveal male anxieties towards the challenge to patriarchal social structures represented by the 'modern woman'. Furthermore, and similarly to *Pruebas de Nueva York* and *El crisol de las razas*, multiculturalism is rendered as problematic. Stereotypical descriptions of Jews and blacks in particular, stemming from Western discourses of 'Otherness', also convey concerns towards the increasing influence in Europe of a society which grants visibility and civil rights to the traditional 'Others' of the West.

The success of Camba's articles, as demonstrated by the constant re-edition of his books, especially by Espasa Calpe, favoured the inclusion of his name in some general studies of Spanish literature such as those by Nicolás González (1943: 127), Ángel Valbuena (1950: 527-528), Emiliano Díaz Echarri and José María Roca (1962: 1390-1392), and Chabás (2001: 254-255). Mentions of Camba's work, however, have focused on its journalistic and humorous character, and therefore his output has been relegated to epigraphs such as 'escritores humorísticos' (González Echarri, Valbuena) and 'ensayo y periodismo' (Chabás, Bazo and Varcácel). Nevertheless, since the 1980s, critical interest in Camba has increased, both from a biographical approach (Benito Leiro 1986, Diego Bernal 1997, Pedro López García 2003, Mariano Gómez-Santos 2003, Juan A. Hernández Les 2006, Jordi Gracia and Domingo Ródenas 2008), and in studies of his journalistic prose (Socorro Girón 1984, María Dolores Costa 1996, Almudena Revilla 2002, José Antonio Llera 2002; 2003; 2004, Fermín Galindo 2002, Ofelia Requejo 2003, Ana Rodríguez Fisher 2004, Rafael Alarcón 2005). This interest has been also followed by the re-edition of some of Camba's works in publishing houses such as Alhena Media and Rey Lear, as well as the inclusion of the writer

in an anthology of Spanish columnists (Teodoro León and Bernardo Gómez 2009).

Recent critical work on Julio Camba has engaged with the strict distinction between traditional literary genres and subsidiary ones (i.e. journalist chronicles and travel writing). General studies on this matter such as those by José Ortega (1995), Félix Rebollo (1998), and Lluís Albert Chillón (1999) have questioned the downgrading of journalistic writing to a secondary place within literary studies and shown its connections with narrative genres such as the novel. Ortega, for instance, points out that ‘se ha dicho que la auténtica creación literaria se encuentra en la prensa. Literatura de periódico, pero literatura al fin y al cabo’ (1995: 111). In his study, Ortega includes Camba in a list of canonical writers such as Unamuno, Azorín, and Ortega y Gasset, who actively published in the press. Similarly, Gracia and Ródenas have incorporated Camba to their anthology of Spanish essayistic prose (2008: 227-233). Efforts to establish the importance of Camba’s work have also followed the path of the paradigm of movements and generational divisions, as in Girón, who defines Camba as ‘escritor novecentista’ (1984: 13).<sup>4</sup> Fermín Galindo argues that studies such as those by Girón (1984) and Revilla (2002) have fostered a renewed interest in Camba’s work (2004: 232-234). Moreover, public vindications of Camba’s figure by writers and journalists such as Juan Bonilla, Antonio Muñoz Molina, and Manuel Rivas – the latter was awarded in 2002 the *XXIII Edición del Premio Julio Camba* –, as well as the institutional support given by the Xunta de Galicia and Galician universities to research on his life and work seem to have been directed to restore the writer’s reputation.<sup>5</sup> Galindo refers to ‘la animadversión anterior de algunos sectores de la sociedad gallega’ (2004: 237). Significantly, Galindo – whose essay is blatantly aligned with efforts to reinstate Camba’s within literary studies –, does not refer to the reasons for such hostility, which I infer has been prompted by the writer’s sympathies for the nationalist uprising against the Republican government in

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<sup>4</sup> Girón’s approach to modern Spanish literature follows traditional and strict divisions between the generations of 98, 14 and 27, in line with Díaz-Plaja (1951). Regarding the opposition between 98 and *Modernismo*, she argues that ‘mucho se ha hablado y escrito sobre “el modernismo frente a noventa y ocho”. No se trata de de comparar ni de ver una tendencia superior a la otra. Son diferentes. Coinciden en tiempo y en su afán de renovación, pero en nada más’ (1984: 21-22).

<sup>5</sup> As Galindo states, in recent years, ‘la Diputación de Pontevedra publica por fin la tesis de Almudena Revilla *Periodismo y literatura en la obra de Julio Camba*, la Xunta de Galicia organiza las *Primeras Xornadas sobre Julio Camba* en su villa natal y la Universidad de A Coruña, el *I Congreso Internacional Julio Camba*’ (2004: 237).

1936, and the subsequent dictatorship. As a matter of fact, in these studies, Camba's affinity with Franco's regime has been either toned down (López García 2003:160-166) or even completely erased (Girón 1984: 33). I propose that this attitude can be read in two different ways. Firstly, it seems that the study of Camba's work and the intentions to incorporate the writer into the list of canonical writers needs to be accompanied by mitigation of his alignment with Francoist ideology. Furthermore, Camba's often ferocious criticism of foreign cultures and his controversial stance in relation to themes such as multiculturalism and women's emancipation has been alleviated by considering it as an expression of his humorous style. In fact, and despite the innovative approach taken by recent studies, Camba's humour is still seen as the most distinctive feature of his texts. López argues that 'Camba é ante todo un magnífico creador de páxinas humorísticas' (2003: 14), and Galindo describes his prose as 'o contraste entre unha visión normal das cousas, racionalizándoas ao máximo, para logo reducilas ao absurdo. O estilo de Camba desborda alegría, o seu humorismo resulta atractivo e agradable' (2002: 44). Girón, who refers to the writer as 'literato y humorista inconfundible de la Edad de Plata' (1984: 12), devotes a chapter of her essay to analyse precisely Camba's humour. The critic compares Camba's parody to Francisco de Quevedo's satire. Interestingly, she alludes to Quevedo's famous mockery of the big nose ('Érase un hombre a una nariz pegado') in comparison to Camba's obsession with this physical trait (1984: 218-219). Similarly, she also mentions Camba's scorn of Jewish beards in *La ciudad automática* (1984: 225). However, Girón's analysis merely dwells on aesthetic aspects, focusing for instance on Camba's use of figures of speech such as irony, simile, and metaphor (1984: 227), and she argues that the writer 'se ríe de lo humano en general' (1984: 218), since 'nunca dirige dardos a nadie en particular' (1984: 222-223). López García also exculpates Camba's contempt for Jewish people, in this case by referring to it as a purely physical antagonism: 'el antisemitismo de Camba parece, como el de Pío Baroja, más una antipatía física (se burla mucho, por ejemplo, de su voz aguda, melifluas maneras y barbas imposibles) que un concepto verdaderamente pensado o razonado' (2003: 161). Remarks such as this one avoid confrontation with Camba's blatant anti-Semitism, although Girón argues that 'Julio Camba opina sobre la raza y este malabarista de la lengua española es uno de los escritores que más conciencia ha tenido de la misma'

(1984: 239). Girón refers to the Spanish ‘race’ and its relations to the so-called ‘problema de España’ in writers of the Generation of 98 (1984: 239), but the scholar remains seemingly unaware of the connections between the concept of ‘race’ – especially in vogue in Europe after Darwin’s theories of evolution – and the concerns about ‘degeneration’ – especially ‘racial’ degeneration – at the time. As I will show in my analysis of *La ciudad automática*, Camba’s anti-Semitic remarks are related to the challenge posed by New York’s multiculturalism to the ‘racial’ homogeneity advocated by a traditional view of national identity. Although I do not intend to question the characterisation of Camba’s style as humorous, I do consider that this approach has limited the understanding of his New York chronicles. I propose that Camba’s irony and wittiness often entail a caustic criticism of questions such as mass society, women’s emancipation, and multiculturalism. His elitist stance is therefore aligned with Ortega y Gasset’s criticism of mass society, and therefore with modernist responses to modernisation. Such positioning becomes especially clear in the case of *La ciudad automática*, a book whose title openly refers to the mechanisation fostered by industrialism and capitalism.

Individual studies of *La ciudad automática* are scarce. On the one hand, Cañas (1994: 147), López-Briones (2000: 271), and Barrantes (2006: 50) merely mention the book. On the other hand, more comprehensive studies such as Girón (1984: 183-202), Mónica Álvarez and Ángeles Abuín (2003: 29-45), and Álvarez Castaño (2003: 81-92) follow a rather descriptive approach, mostly limited to a summary of the ideas expressed by Camba, and without engaging in a critical dialogue with the text. Girón briefly compares Camba’s opinion about black people to Lorca’s New York poems (1984: 186). Far from exploring the colonialist implications of Camba’s discourse, Girón perpetuates similar colonial attitudes based on the dichotomy nature (primitivism)/culture (civilization) in her own analysis, by stating that ‘el negro conquista al blanco con las armas de su ingenuidad, su inocencia, su arte y su ritmo. Así conquistó a Federico García Lorca y Julio Camba’ (1984: 190). According to Álvarez and Abuín, Camba’s text offers a unique insight into American progress and future influence on Western European society; they argue that ‘a importância de Julio Camba como jornalista radica no seu espírito visionário, que soubo perceber, a comezos do século XX, do papel que os Estados Unidos desempenhariam no mundo tanto social como

políticamente' (2003: 30). As one can notice, the previous statement overlooks similar reactions to the United States in Spanish and European literature. Moreover, it also disregards the connections to the Spanish and European crises. The essay does not refer to Camba's attitudes towards multiculturalism, and the writer's patriarchal reaction against the increasing presence of women in public life is reduced to a superficial remark: 'se algún tipo de obxección se lle pode facer a un xornalista tan brillante é acerca das súas palabras cara ó sexo feminino' (2003: 45). Concerning Álvarez Castaño's study, the most remarkable aspect of his approach to *La ciudad automática* is the acknowledgement of Camba's contradictory arguments, especially regarding the writer's opinions about New York's multiculturalism:

en una nueva paradoja, asegura que los negros encarnan todo aquello en lo que la raza anglosajona primitiva no fue educada y que, por tanto, no puede evitar caer en ello, y es que los primeros pobladores blancos de América fueron puritanos [...]. En cuanto al llamado "problema negro" dice que tal problema no existe, que no hay razón alguna de separar a blancos de negros, como todavía se hacía, porque las razas ya están claramente diferenciadas de por sí como para distinguirlas. Claro que en lo que no cae Camba es que no se separaban, ni se separan a las personas, únicamente para distinguirlas sino para no tener contacto con aquellos con los que no se quiere tener mucha relación, y ésta es una problemática que va mucho más allá de la mera cuestión racial. (2003: 83-84)

However, Álvarez Castaño neither explains where the mentioned paradox lies nor provides a critical analysis of the opposition between white and black 'races'. Similarly, he avoids mentioning any references to Camba's anti-Semitic statements. The study of stereotypical descriptions of the Jews in *La ciudad automática* is limited to a bland and descriptive sentence:

tras hablar de los negros no duda tampoco en referirse a los judíos, a los que dedica menor número de palabras al hacernos saber que, según él, los hay de dos tipos: los de Rivington Street – representantes del espíritu clasicista – y los de Park Avenue –hijos de los anteriores pero representantes del capitalismo y, en consecuencia, más cerca del verdadero espíritu de Nueva York. (2003: 84)

Both Álvarez and Abuín, and Álvarez Castaño also have recourse to the overused cliché of Camba's humorous style. The former refer to the 'grandes doses de ironía e sarcasmo' in Camba's depiction of the United States (2003: 30). The latter also alludes to the writer's use of irony and paradox (2003: 82). However,

and as María Dolores Costa (1996) has shown, a critical analysis of Camba's work should not be limited to the acknowledgement of the writer's ability to play with words and to satirise American society. In her study of Camba's travel writing – which contains several references to *La ciudad automática* –, Costa dismantles the view of the writer as mere humorist (1996: 154-165). She points out his recurrent use of stereotypes (1994: 156-157), and his negative reaction against women's emancipation (1994: 161). As she notes, 'Camba's criticism ultimately serves no didactic function. He does not intend to civilize the "barbarians", simply degrade them' (1996: 162). Therefore, I propose that Camba's humour must be taken seriously. Humour is frequently a mechanism of self-defence; below the wittiness of Camba's words we find the anxiety raised by social change, the fear of miscegenation and, above all, the concern that American modernisation will eventually reach Spain and challenge elitist, patriarchal, and colonialist social structures that were the basis not only of traditional views of Spanish national identity, but also of the modern conception of the 'West'.

### **Chapter Synopsis**

An initial exploration of the historical background in which the crisis of Spanish national identity was inscribed will be the starting point of this thesis. First of all, I will look at the often contradictory responses to modernisation in Europe as well as the concerns raised by the increasing power of the United States and its growing influence in the Old Continent. Next, I will survey the different responses to Spain's national crisis throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century, from the 'regenerationist' approaches brought about by the final demise of the Spanish Empire in 1898, to the increasing influence of capitalist modernity in the 1920s and 1930s. I will engage in critical dialogue with the views of Spanish national identity expressed by authors such as Miguel de Unamuno, Ángel Ganivet, and José Ortega y Gasset, amongst others, with the intention of showing the connections between the Spanish crisis and concerns with the decline of Western civilisation in Europe. After providing this historical background, I will focus on the role played by discourses of Otherness in the formation of Spanish national identity, and the challenges posed by modernisation processes to elitist, patriarchal, and ethnocentric views of the Spanish nation.



I will then turn to the three individual chapters on the selected case studies, which will be respectively directed to the analysis of the attitudes towards mass society and mechanisation, women's emancipation, and multiculturalism expressed in the texts. A thematic approach has been favoured here, as opposed to a book- or author-based one, for different reasons. Structurally, this *modus operandi* helps avoid repetition, since these four texts share similar attitudes and anxieties. Moreover, from an analytic point of view, proceeding by way of a thematic approach, the concomitances between the discourses expressed in the texts and the connections to the crisis of Spanish national identity will be highlighted. However, these three different aspects cannot be considered in isolation. European discourses about the 'masses', women, and non-white cultures present revealing similarities. Consequently, and despite the distribution of these themes in different sections, my analysis intends to engage in a continuous dialogue between the three chapters.

I will initiate the analysis of the case studies in the second chapter, by looking at the responses to mass society and mechanisation in the chosen Spanish New York narratives. I will look at the recurrent view of the United States – of which New York works as metonymy – as a dehumanised and primitive society, in contrast with a self-perception of Europe as peak of human civilisation given in *Pruebas de Nueva York*, *La ciudad automática* and *Anticópolis* (exceptionally in this chapter, *El crisol de las razas* will be excluded from the analysis, due to the scarce references to this theme in the novella). As I will show, the reactions against technology and the rise of 'the masses' reflect the ambivalent responses to modernising processes in early-twentieth century Spain.

The role played by women's emancipation in the modernisation of Spanish society will be the focus of Chapter 3. I will argue that negative reactions against the 'modern woman' showed in *Pruebas de Nueva York* and *La ciudad automática* unveil the strength of patriarchal discourses both in the formation of Western modernity and in the conception of Spanish national identity proposed by both conservative and liberal stances. The increasing presence of American women in public life challenged Spanish male-centred views of the nation, in which women were relegated to a submissive role as 'reproducers of the nation'. On the contrary, *Anticópolis* and *El crisol de las razas* contribute to the debate in a more productive manner. As I will show, the opposition between modern and

traditional models of womanhood carried out in the texts highlights the relevant role played by women in the struggle for modernisation in Spain.

The fourth and final chapter will turn to the attitudes towards New York's multiculturalism developed in all four texts, by focusing on the references to the black and Jewish communities. Recurrent racist attitudes expressed in *Pruebas de Nueva York*, *La ciudad automática* and *El crisol de las razas* reveal, on the one hand, essentialist views of the nation as a community which is 'racially' homogenous. The nature of the United States as a nation based on political citizenship rather than kinship of blood challenged Western conceptions of nationhood. On the other hand, racialist theories in vogue in Europe at the time will be found to be present in the form of stereotypes aimed at strengthening the opposition between primitivism and civilisation. Moreover, colonialist attitudes to former colonies such as Cuba and Puerto Rico convey a sense of nostalgia for the Spanish colonial past. Once more, *Anticópolis* involves an innovative response, by developing a counter-discourse that empowers the colonial 'Other' and also explores the possibilities of a transnational concept of identity.

## **Chapter 1. Otherness, Modernisation, and Nation in Early Twentieth-Century Spain**

In his influential work *Orientalism* (first published in 1978), Edward Said argued that ‘too often literature and culture are presumed to be politically, even historically innocent; it has regularly seemed otherwise to me’, and concludes that ‘society and literary culture can only be understood and studied together’ (1995: 27). The approach taken in this thesis will draw on Said’s remark in order to analyse the chosen body of works. Accordingly, I propose that early twentieth-century Spanish New York narratives reflect a particular cultural and historical context – the crisis of national identity after the end of the Empire in 1898 –, and therefore cannot be completely understood without establishing the connections between the texts and the aforementioned context, which I will provide in this first chapter.

The main question that will be asked in the following pages is: why did New York emerge in early twentieth-century Spain as a recurrent literary topic and with such prominence? I argue that in order to answer this question we must start by asking whether Spanish interest in New York was an isolated phenomenon, or rather, a common theme in other European literary systems. The first sections of this chapter will therefore explore the reactions towards New York and the United States in early twentieth-century Europe. Alongside, a new question emerges: do Spanish texts reflect similar attitudes towards American modernisation to those expressed in contemporaneous European texts? Finally, if we go back to our initial premise – literary texts can only be understood when related to the cultural context in which they were produced –, a last question arises: is there a connection between the European and Spanish contexts?

Certainly both Europe and Spain were undergoing a deep crisis in the first decades of the twentieth century. At the turn of the century, and especially after the First World War, philosophical and literary texts expressed European concerns about the impending demise of Western civilisation, caused by a generalised distrust of the effects of modernisation. At the same time, Spain was also suffering a domestic crisis prompted by fears of degeneration and national decline. Significantly, Europe played a key role in the re-invention of Spanish

national identity in the first decades of the twentieth century, as the confrontation between *casticismo* and *europianización* shows. Paradoxically, both traditional and liberal projects for national regeneration shared concerns about modernisation. Whereas *casticista* positions rejected modernisation in order to preserve the ‘essence’ of Spanish national identity, those in favour of Europeanisation also conveyed concerns about the degeneration of Western modernity, notably summarised in José Ortega y Gasset’s *La rebelión de las masas* (1929). Ortega’s analysis of the decline of the West does in fact shed light on the connection between European and Spanish responses to American modernisation and the relationship between the Spanish and European crisis. The threatening ‘masses’ to which Ortega attributes the degeneration of Western civilisation have in fact a recurrent presence in European and Spanish accounts of the United States, which is precisely characterised as a mass society, dominated by the ‘internal Other’ that challenged the authority of the ruling élites of the Old Continent. Furthermore, ‘the masses’ were not the only ‘Others’ of Western modernity with a recurrent presence in early twentieth-century European and Spanish accounts of the United States. As Ania Loomba argues, the idea of ‘the West’ has historically been constructed as a masculine-dominant-rational-civilised entity in opposition to a feminised-childlike-innocent-irrational-uncivilised Orient (1998: 151-152). European identity did not only rely, therefore, on the opposition between the élite and ‘the masses’, but also on the binary oppositions white/non-white and masculine/feminine. European and Spanish representations of the United States do in fact consistently refer to the ‘social emancipation’ of black and Jewish people as well as the independence women were gaining from men, especially in New York.

Inspired by Edward Said’s application of Foucault’s concepts of ‘discourse’ and ‘archive’ to his analysis of ‘Orientalism’, I intend to show how the ‘archive’ of images of ‘Otherness’ has been culturally perpetuated in ‘the West’. The main theoretical backdrop of this chapter will be postcolonial analysis of ‘Otherness’, such as Stuart Hall’s and Ania Loomba’s, the view of nations as ‘invented’ or ‘imagined communities’ in the light of contributions by theorists of the ‘modern paradigm’ such as Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Benedict Anderson, as well as feminist examinations of nationalism as a gendered construct in Nira Yuval-Davies’ and Carol Pateman’s work, amongst others. The application of

these theories to the analysis of early twentieth-century European and Spanish representations of the United States, will show the pervasive use of the biopolitical criteria of ‘class’, ‘gender’, and ‘race’ in the construction of Western identity.

### **1.1 Views of the United States in Early Twentieth-Century European Literature: the Rise of ‘the Big Other’**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the United States was perceived in Europe as a new civilisation, different in many ways to the Old Continent, and also as an emerging world power. The image of the United States as ‘the country of the future’ was soon epitomised by New York as the modern metropolis *par excellence* (Navarro 2004: 38-39). New York’s urban landscape, dominated by the skyscraper, became both a symbol of American economic wealth and of its rupture with European architecture (Berman 1999: 289).

Until the nineteenth century, European thinkers such as John Locke and Friedrich Hegel had considered that America was in a primitive stage of development in comparison to the progress of Western civilisation, and the whole American continent was therefore seen as representative of ‘the childhood of mankind’ (Hall 1992: 312; Wagner 2001: 109). According to this criterion, it was believed that:

there was one path to civilization and social development, and that all societies could be ranked or placed early or late, lower or higher, on the same scale. The emerging ‘science of society’ was the study of the forces which had propelled all societies, by stages, along this single path of development, leaving some, regrettably, as its ‘lowest’ stage – represented by the American savage – while others advanced to the summit of civilized development – represented by the West. (Hall 1992: 312)

The rise of the United States as a world power challenged previous oppositions between a ‘civilised’ Europe and a ‘primitive’ America. Rather than a reflection of the past, the United States began to be seen as a new society, and importantly too, as a ‘Big Other’, ‘the image of a pure-modernity-turned reality as well as the counter-position of an Old-World-henceforth-lost’ (Wagner 2001: 117). James W. Ceaser argues that in the first decades of the twentieth century, ‘America’ became a literary and philosophical symbol, fashioned by several German thinkers, such

as Max Weber, Oswald Spengler, Ernst Jünger, and Martin Heidegger. In particular, America was identified by Heidegger with the threat of technologism and cultural homogenisation. The concept of ‘Americanisation’ was seen as tantamount to decay, or as a process towards catastrophe, one defined by the ‘suppressing [of] authentic culture, indeed of suppressing all cultures in their particularity, and of subsuming everything into one vast, boundless mass’ (Ceaser 1997: 9). However, the image of the United States promoted by European thinkers did not reflect the reality of this country – as Ceaser states, ‘America’ as a symbol takes over the real America (1997: 2) –, but rather worked as a *third image*, ‘a counter-image, developed by Europeans for their own social world’ (Wagner 2001: 115).

Curiosity about the United States and its increasing influence in Europe was reflected in texts such as *V Amerike* (1906) by Maxim Gorki, *Amerika* (1927) by Franz Kafka, *New York* (1929) by Paul Morand, *Scènes de la vie future* (1930) by George Duhamel, and *The New America, the New World* (1935) by H. G. Wells, amongst others.<sup>6</sup> European thinkers and writers developed a twofold view of the United States as ‘the future’. On the one hand, the United States represented an innovative architecture, a new social organisation, and the site of astonishing technological developments. On the other, the same modernisation not only posed a threat to the hegemony traditionally held by European powers worldwide, but it also reflected the crisis of modernity that the Old Continent was undergoing at the turn of the century.

### **1.1.1 Mechanisation and the Fear of ‘the Masses’: the Threat to Elitism**

The United States’ technological development strengthened the perception of Americans as distant individuals whose humanity, endangered by the influence of mechanisation – metaphorically represented by the slaughter houses in Chicago and the car factories in Detroit (Wagner 2001: 111) –, would disappear amid the engulfing, standardised mass. Negative views of mechanisation and mass society in the United States echoed European concerns about the decline of Western

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<sup>6</sup> For more examples, see William T. Spoerri’s *The Old World and the New. A Synopsis of Current European Views on American Civilization* (1937, first published in 1936), Allan Nevins’ *America Through British Eyes* (1968, first published in 1948), and Olga Peters Hasty and Susanne Fusso’s *America through Russian Eyes, 1874–1926* (1988).

civilisation. In the first decades of the twentieth century, especially after the First World War, the image of the West as the peak of progress was under question (Delanty 1995: 109). The consequences of the war – sixty million human losses and twenty million wounded and mutilated people – turned the belief in constant progress into distrust of civilisation and its technological achievements (Fusi 1997: 101-102). In *The Decline of the West* (1918-1923), Oswald Spengler referred to ‘the Decline of that West-European Culture which is now spread over the entire globe’ (1926: 50). Similarly, José Ortega y Gasset, in *La rebelión de las masas* (first published in 1929), argued that ‘muchas cosas parecían ya imposibles en el siglo XIX, firme en su fe progresista. Hoy, de parecernos todo posible, presentimos que es posible también lo peor: el retroceso, la barbarie, la decadencia’ (2007: 111). The image of European decline was also transmitted by modernist writers such as Herman Hesse, Marcel Proust, Luigi Pirandello, Frank Kafka, T. S. Eliot, and James Joyce, who gave literary form to the pessimism and disappointment felt towards a civilisation that was seen to have brought about its own annulment (Fusi 1997: 104). Following David Punter:

the movement called ‘modernism’ has often considered to be a reaction against, or a response to, a more concrete eruption of the chaotic, the disorderly and the inhumane, in the form of the First World War, which was widely believed, at least during the 1920s, to represent a nadir of human brutality which threw the very possibility of human progress into radical question. (2007: 36)

The sense of decadence was also generated by the unprecedented growth of population produced by industrialism and the rise of the so-called ‘masses’, a concern expressed for example by Ortega y Gasset:

desde que en el siglo VI empieza la historia europea, hasta el año 1800 – por tanto, en toda la longitud de doce siglos –, Europa no consigue llegar a otra cifra de población que la de 180 millones de habitantes. Pues bien, de 1800 a 1914 – por tanto, en poco más de un siglo – la población europea asciende de 180 a ¡460 millones! (2007: 116)

Since the late nineteenth century, ‘the masses’ were seen in Europe as an internal and degenerate ‘Other’, which threatened the health of Western ‘races’ (Pick 1989: 21). *Dégénérescence* was in fact a concept originating in nineteenth-century European psychiatry which enjoyed great currency in a vast number of scientific publications on social evolution, degeneration, and perversion (Pick 1989: 20). As Mike Hawkins points out, ‘in Europe during the late nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries there was, alongside the belief in progress, a widespread fear of moral and psychological degeneration, and a sense of decadence and the imminent demise of Western civilisation' (1997: 5). Indeed, such concerns were to a great extent motivated by theories of evolution argued by Charles Darwin in *On the Origin of Species* (1859). The interpretation of Darwin's ideas of 'natural selection' as the famous axiom of the 'survival of the fittest' coined by Herbert Spencer, and their application to the physical and psychic deterioration of the 'lower classes', served as the scientific basis for the trope of Europe's degeneration. Darwinism challenged the idea of species as permanent, and therefore the belief in the notion of a universal human nature (Hawkins 1997: 30). The application of evolutionary theories to society – Social Darwinism – introduced the 'struggle for survival' that characterised animal and plant kingdoms, to human life (Hawkins 1997: 132). One of the consequences of such theories was the thought that, as well as being in a sense hardwired for evolution, human 'races' were also quite capable of regression (Hawkins 1997: 146).

'The masses' were regarded as 'amorphous, an aggregate in which individuality is lost, unpredictable, always potentially dangerous' (Jervis 1998: 79). According to Ortega y Gasset, 'the masses' had revolted against the leading elites, 'las minorías selectas' (2007: 83), and therefore posed a threat to the values of European liberalism. In Ortega y Gasset's texts cultural elitism is regarded as the guardian of the values acquired by progress and civilisation, a perspective also shared by other European intellectuals such as T.S. Eliot, Paul Valéry, Spengler, Julien Benda, and Frank R. Leavis, for whom Western decadence was a consequence of cultural decline, prompted by massification (Fusi 1997: 110). Following such elitist assumptions, if the order was subverted and 'the masses' took over the leading minority, Europe ran the risk of degenerating backwards into a pre-civilised state, that is, back to primitivism.

Literary representations of the United States drew on these anxieties in order to convey the view of the United States as a 'primitive' country dominated by mechanisation, massification, and cold capitalism. In *V Amerike* (1906), Maxim Gorky for instance described New York as 'The City of the Yellow Devil', an image that captures the view of the United States as a materialist society, dominated by 'the power of the Gold' – the Yellow Devil –, in which individuals are enslaved by technology and trade:



entering the city is like getting into a stomach of stone and iron, a stomach that has swallowed several million people and is consuming and digesting them. The street is a slippery, greedy throat, in the depths of which float dark bits of the city's food – living people. Everywhere – overhead, underfoot, alongside, iron clangs, exulting in its victory. Awakened to life and animated by the power of Gold, it casts its web about man, strangles him, sucks its blood and brain, devours his muscles and nerves, and grows and grows, resting upon voiceless stone, and spreading the links of its chain ever more widely. (Gorky 2001: 10)

Focusing on the threat posed by massification to individuality, some passages of Franz Kafka's novel *Amerika* (1927) also depict a society in which the individual is lost in the crowd, as the original title of the text, *Der Verschollene* (*The Man Who Disappeared*) implies. Such a concern is, for example, encapsulated in the following description of New York's streets:

from morning to evening and far into the dreaming night that street was the channel for a constant stream of traffic which, seen from above, looked like an inextricable confusion, forever newly improvised, of foreshortened human figures and the roofs of all kinds of vehicles, sending into the upper air another confusion, more riotous and complicated, of noises, dust and smells, all of it enveloped and penetrated by a flood of light which the multitudinous objects in the street scattered, carried off and again busily brought back, with an effect as palpable to the dazzled eye as if a glass roof stretched over the street were being violently smashed into fragments at every moment. (Kafka 1946: 39)

Interestingly, Kafka never visited the United States; as Anne Fuchs (2002: 27) points out, the view of the United States given in *Der Verschollene* is highly influenced by contemporary travelogues, especially by Arthur Holitscher's *Amerika heute und morgen* (*America Today and Tomorrow*). Kafka's novel exemplifies the use of the symbol 'America', not to 'denote the American reality mimetically but rather to connote a specifically European version of America' (Fuchs 2002: 26). As we shall see, this will also be the case in the flurry of New York Spanish narratives written in the first third of the century.

### **1.1.2 Modernisation as the Modern Woman: the Threat to Patriarchy**

Fears of degeneration were also reflected in the reactions against the emergence of the so-called 'modern woman' at the turn of the century, which questioned traditional parameters of gender discourse deeply marked with the logic of

‘sexual difference’. In late nineteenth-century Europe, the ideal of womanhood was embodied by the figure of ‘the Angel in the House’ (Nash 1999: 28), an image popularised by Coventry Patmore’s eponymous poem (1905, first edition 1854). The ‘perfect wife’ described by Patmore is a self-sacrificing, docile, devout, and pure woman under the authority of her husband, ‘a creature in constant need of male supervision and protection’ (Noddings 1991: 59). The trope of the ‘Angel in the House’ reflected a biosocial conception of gender that established fixed roles according to a series of binary oppositions. On the one hand, the social category of ‘man’ was identified with the public sphere, and hence with the workplace, politics, civil life, society, and rationality. On the other, the category of ‘woman’ was located in the private sphere and therefore was associated with the home, family, nature, and emotion (Barrantes 2006: 66-67). Women were portrayed as irrational beings, dominated by passion – in opposition to men’s rationality –, defined by their bodily natures, and incapable of contributing to civil life as individuals, a view supported by male theoreticians of Western modernity such as Rousseau, Hobbes, and Freud (Pateman 1989: 25; Yuval Davies 1997: 2). The result of this dualistic logic is the confinement of women to the private space. For Rousseau, the family is an expression of the order of nature, where ‘age naturally takes precedence over youth and males over females’; henceforth his view of the family ‘is necessarily patriarchal’ (Pateman 1989: 20). Moreover, the family is seen as the foundation of civil life, and therefore the basis of the nation (Pateman 1989: 20).

Despite claims for freedom, equality, and fraternity, the project of Western modernity limited the access to citizenry to an élite of white heterosexual bourgeois European men. As Gerard Delanty points out, ‘patriarchal culture was fundamental to European identity’ (1995: 88). Following this idea, Nira Yuval-Davies argues that nationalist movements consider nations as a prolongation of familial bonds, establishing a gendered division of labour in which men are responsible for protecting the *womenandchildren*, term used by this scholar to highlight the separation between public and private spheres established by patriarchy (1997: 15). The nation is referred to as ‘the fatherland’, and it is also imagined as ‘the brotherhood’ or a fraternity: there is no space in the nation for sisterhood (Eisenstein 2000: 41). Cloistered in the family home and restricted to their roles as ‘mothers’ and ‘wives’, women carry the ‘burden of representation’

and become ‘reproducers’ of the national identity (Yuval-Davies 1997: 45). However, and in spite of the women’s confinement to the private sphere, nationalisms also promote the representation of womanhood as a national emblem, notoriously in the image of the ‘motherland’. Drawing on the same private/public dichotomy, women are in this case presented as the embodiment of both the nation-state and its cultural values. In such gendered national allegory, women – as mothers and wives – are given the task of reproducing the nation in literal and figurative terms (Loomba 1998: 215-216), being therefore expected to convey the values that sustain the national identity to their children, including the patriarchal order on which nationalism rests (Peterson 2000: 66; Yuval-Davies 1997: 45; Warner 1996: 12). The image of the ‘mother-nation’ not only goes against ‘the varied realities of women’s experiences in society’, but is also a mask adopted by patriarchy (Eisenstein 2000: 41). Images of womanhood are therefore employed to embody the values of patriarchy, giving way to a paradoxical construction, in which a false woman’s body incarnates, in a manner, I propose, not dissimilar to processes of cross-dressing, the social order created by men. Therefore, ‘the fantasmatic woman’ that ‘becomes the body of the nation’ (Eisenstein 2000:43) is the disguise taken by patriarchy in order to continue its position of superiority.

Biosocial conceptions of gender, and therefore of ‘the nature of sexuality, marriage and motherhood’, were being violently debated at the beginning of the twentieth century (Mullin 2006: 140). During the First World War, women entered the work-force in great numbers, a fact that fostered claims for civil equality between the two sexes. Moreover, historians have pointed out the unprecedented entrance of women into higher education, the amount of women remaining childless, and also the increased visibility of lesbian relations in this period (E. A. Kaplan 1992: 18). Women’s widening access to the jobmarket provided them with economic independence and challenged social conventions. As Christina Simmons (2009: 111) points out:

woman suffrage, women’s greatly expanded public roles and employment, birth control practice and activism, and feminist thinking deeply challenged Victorian gender roles and culture. These changes demonstrated that women could be active citizens in the public sphere and that wifehood and motherhood no longer fully defined their lives.

The 'Angel in the House' trope was metaphorically killed by Virginia Woolf in her speech 'Professions for Women' (delivered in 1931 and published post-humously), where the novelist tells of her experience as a professional writer in order to demonstrate the falsehood behind traditional images of women as incapable of participating in the civil sphere (Woolf 1979: 57-63). The submissive nature of the 'Angel in the House', unselfishly devoted to her husband and family, is unveiled by Woolf as a hindrance to women's development as individuals, since the 'Angel' 'never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others' (1979: 59). Therefore, the only way of liberating women from mindless obedience to men is to revolt against the imposition of such a deceitful image of femininity invented by patriarchy:

I turned upon her and caught her by the throat. I did my best to kill her. My excuse, if I were to be had up in a court of law, would be that I acted in self-defence. Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing (1979: 59).

Thanks to the social change regarding the man/woman dichotomy promoted by first-wave feminism, the 'Angel in the House' was challenged by new forms of femininity, especially by the figure of the 'modern woman', which became one of the icons of social modernisation (Kirkpatrick 2003: 221) and was perceived as yet another sign of the decadence of the West (Showalter 1996: 10). Elaine Showalter suggests the names of Émile Zola and Maurice Barrès, amongst others, as examples of 'anti-feminist literature' in France. She also refers to 'anti-suffrage groups' organised in England and the United States. Women, regarded as those to engender the members of the nation and inculcate the principles of the national culture, were then seen to endanger the 'natural' order from which the nation stemmed – the family –, if they abandoned their duties and rebelled against their masters, namely their fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons.

As the principles of patriarchy were gradually challenged, women's increasing independence was criticised as a harbinger of 'sickness, freakishness, sterility and racial degeneration' (Showalter 1996: 39). Male reactions against the modern woman were, according to Showalter, twofold. On the one hand, there was an 'intensified valorisation of male power, and expressions of anxiety about waning virility' (1996: 10). On the other hand, it also generated a series of images of

womanhood as a violent threat that expressed ‘an exaggerated horror of its castrating potential’ (1996: 10). Referring to the representations of woman as devil, vampire, castrator, medusa, flower of evil, killer, and idol of perversity, Jervis argues that these metaphors reflect the prevailing view in modernism, according to which those women who had abandoned their fixed role in the private sphere ‘had inevitably regressed to the bestial’ (Jervis 1999: 114). The parallels with the depiction of non-European societies and ‘the masses’ are evident. As Bretz points out:

the link between women, the lower class, and primitive peoples has a long history in Western thought and continues in Freud’s description of female sexuality as the “dark continent” of psychology [...] and in Ortega y Gasset’s association of women, non-Europeans, and the lower classes. (2001: 373)

Similarly, Andreas Huyssen argued that ‘the masses’ were portrayed in European political, physiological, and aesthetic discourse as a hysterical ‘feminine threat’, condensing the fear of both women and ‘the masses’ as the ‘fear of nature out of control, a fear of the unconscious, of sexuality, of the loss of identity and stable ego boundaries in the mass’ (1988: 52).

As one can see, the fear of women is an expression of the fear of modernisation, of the disintegration of those structures – the patriarchal family and the nation – which were considered to be the foundations of Western modernity. The challenge to binary oppositions – civilisation/nature, public/private, and man/woman – is at the root of the crisis of the project of the Enlightenment from which negative images of the modern woman emanate: whereas modernity is masculine, modernisation is seen as feminine. Representations of women and modernisation are consequently twin images, and the reactions towards the ‘modern woman’ another expression of the anxieties prompted by the crisis of Western modernity.

The fear of women is also notably represented by European depictions of the American ‘modern woman’ as a product of massification and mechanisation, as in George Duhamel’s *Scènes de la vie future*: ‘the legs, the lovely legs with their beautiful contours, obviously mass-produced, that are sheathed in glistening, artificial silk, and that the little knickers clasp with so charming a garter – where are they grown?’ (1974: 64). Significantly, the woman described by Duhamel is

driving a car, indeed a symbol of technological development: the image suggests an identification between the female body and the machine, both conceptualised here as dangerous. Moreover, the male narrator – who is in the passenger’s seat – is not in control but rather at the mercy of the female driver. The blatant sexism of the text reflects an effort to regain a position of power by reducing the woman to a feminine body subjugated to patriarchy. The scene therefore conveys male fears surrounding the increasing power of women in the United States, incarnated in the metaphor of the ‘modern goddess’, a model of femininity spread by the mass-media, ‘published in an edition of two or three million copies, through the services of a vigilant industry, as the prize and the pride of the American citizen’ (Duhamel 1974: 66).

In Paul Morand’s travelogue *New York*, the American woman – ‘that creature hated and admired by European women’ – is described as ‘the woman with the most money in her handbag’ (1931: 135). The context for such assertion is again illuminating, since the woman described by Morand is walking through Fifth Avenue. She is in the heart of the city, in one of the most central spots of New York, alone, without the company of a man and hence gaining control of the public space. Moreover, the association with Fifth Avenue – a street characterised by the expensiveness of its shops –, relates to the power of money. As Morand declares, ‘the American woman makes herself supreme on the Fifth Avenue pavements with overwhelming assurance, happiness and superiority...’ (1931: 135). As these two texts exemplify, in European eyes, the ‘modern woman’ was in fact not only identified with ‘technologism’, but also with materialism and capitalism.

### **1.1.3 The United States and ‘Racial’ Degeneration: the Threat to Ethnic Nationalism**

As Ceaser states, ‘symbolic America has had a long-standing, direct, and intimate connection to racialist thinking’ (1997: 87). Following Ceaser’s argument, America represented two opposite images of ‘race’ that mirrored Western concerns with ‘racial’ degeneration. On the one hand, America was seen as the repository of the purity of Aryan blood in the modern world, as a young nation founded on the ‘supremacy’ of the white Anglo-Saxon ‘race’ over ‘inferior races’. On the other hand, democracy, equality, and the practice of ‘racial’ intermixing

represented a contaminating threat for the hegemony of the white 'race', to the extent that:

by allowing the increasing homogenization of blood types that shaped its vitality, America was falling to the ranks of the mediocre among the nations of the world. America, with its foundation in the rationalist ideas of equality and unity of the human species, was slowly destroying itself. (Ceaser 1997: 88)

As opposed to the concept of community promoted by European nationalism – which was highly dependent on ethnic ties –, the United States represented 'a new type of nation whose national identity was not ethnically based but constructed around political values of equality, freedom and individualism' (Guibernau 2007: 119). Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out the connexions between nationalism and racism in Europe, arguing that between 1880 and 1914, 'ethnicity and language became the central, increasingly the decisive or even the only criteria of potential nationhood', to the extent that 'race' and 'nation' were used as virtual synonyms (1990: 63). Since the nineteenth century, scientific ideas of 'race' were at the core of the definition and delimitation of modern nation-states. The identification between nation and 'race' has led the theorists of the so-called 'modern paradigm' to consider nationalism as an invented doctrine that establishes the belief in nations as 'obvious and natural divisions of the human race, by appealing to history, anthropology and linguistics' (Kedourie 1993: 74). According to this view, nations are a cultural construct – 'imagined communities' as the famous definition coined by Benedict Anderson (2006, first published in 1983) suggests – far from the 'natural' character ascribed to them by nationalists. Nationalism not only draws on myths of common ancestry and traditions in the delimitation of national identity (Kedourie 1993: 141), but also, as Gellner (1983: 48) and Hobsbawm (1990: 91) argue, invents them and even obliterates other cultures.

Furthermore, the creation of a dialectics of alterity has been essential to the formation of Western modernity. As Stuart Hall proposes, the consolidation of national identities was not only the consequence of internal processes but it also came into being 'through Europe's sense of difference from other worlds – how it came to represent itself in relation to these "others"' (1992: 279). Hierarchical images of the white European 'race' as superior make for a constant and essential element in the construction of European identity, since the archive of images and

'racial' stereotypes of the 'Other' has a long and pervasive influence in the history of the West. In the era of early European imperialism started by Columbus' 'discovery' of America, the representation of the 'Other' constructed by European nations was based on a series of attributes such as laziness, violence, greed, sexual promiscuity, bestiality, primitivism, innocence, and irrationality (Loomba 1998: 106). Similarly, stereotypical depictions of blacks as extraordinarily lustful were soon related to the sexual behaviour of the apes, which were discovered in Africa around the same time of the first European encounters with black people. Since a very early stage, the so-called 'primitivism' of African peoples was represented through their alleged biological proximity to these animals, justifying a 'racial' hierarchy at the service of colonialist purposes. The figure of the uncivilised native was used as the axis for the opposition between 'civilised nations' and 'savages and barbarians': whereas the Old Continent represented civilisation and culture, colonised lands were depicted as the territory of primitivism, 'the "dark" side – forgotten, repressed and denied; the reverse image of enlightenment and modernity' (Hall 1992: 313-314).

The process of colonisation and conquest was the essential context for the subsequent scientific theorisation of 'race' (Moradiellos 2009: 112), justifying those myths of 'Otherness' that became 'the core component of European identity from the late nineteenth century onward' (Delanty 1995: 98). Scientific theories of 'race' or 'racialism' sprang from the evolutionary theories of Darwin, which gave the basis for new ideas of European 'racial' supremacy and a view of the colonised as biologically inferior (Delanty 1995: 96). Tzvetan Todorov (2000: 64) establishes the difference between racism and racialism as follows: whereas racism is 'a matter of *behavior*, usually a manifestation of hatred or contempt for individuals who have well-defined physical characteristics different from our own', racialism corresponds to 'a matter of *ideology*, a doctrine concerning human races'. Ali Rattansi (1994: 54) points out that scientific theories of race have two persistent characteristics: first of all, 'a biological definition of "race", therefore, "racializing" the body and conceiving of a population as having a commonality of "stock" and phenotypical features, such as coloration, hair type, shape of nose and skull'; secondly, 'attempts to create a *hierarchy* of races which, despite representing some "white" races as racially inferior to others, have consistently consigned "non-white" populations to the lowest rungs of the racial



ladder'. The theories of the German biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) are an example of racialism and how Darwinism was used to support such ideas. Despite his affiliation to evolutionism, Haeckel rejected the monogenetic origin of human races argued by Darwin in favour of a polygenetic theory, and established a division of humanity in twelve species and thirty-six races based in different traits such as skin colour and hair type. Haeckel considered that 'races' followed a hierarchy depending on their proximity to the apes, and maintained that 'racial' differences were biologically determined, to the extent that, in his view, the 'lower races' were incapable of acquiring the culture and intellectual abilities of white 'races'. He also supported the artificial selection of individuals within European society, advancing the eugenic programmes of Social Darwinists. As Hawkins (1997: 141) points out, Haeckel's theories did not appear in isolation, but on the contrary were shared by European and American scientists.

The production of 'racial' discourses of 'Otherness' is however not limited to colonial encounters in overseas territories. As Stuart Hall points out, 'the West also had its *internal* others: Jews, in particular, though close to Western religious traditions, were frequently excluded and ostracized' (1992: 280). The figure of 'the Jew' as a cultural construct – the representation of the dangerous 'stranger', always settled in a land to which s/he does not belong – has played an essential role in the articulation of Western modernity, as Hannah Arendt, for example, influentially argued in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1979, first published in 1951). The demonisation of the Jews must be seen as a continuous process spreading to most of Europe since Antiquity, for stereotypes against the Jews acquired their most common forms already at the beginning of Christianity. Subsequently, the spread of Christendom in Medieval Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire benefited the consolidation of a series of anti-Jewish myths such as the myth of a degenerate Judaism at the time of Jesus; the myth of a Jewish diaspora as God's punishment of the Jews for the Crucifixion; the myth of the Jews as Christ's killers; and the myth of Israel's rejection by God (Salazar 1991: 40). With the arrival of the Early Modern Era, as Delanty argues, 'secularised remnants of the Christian world-view, having survived the transition to modernity, continued to provide substance for new forms of European identity based as much on Christian humanism as on "occidental rationalism"' (1995: 65). Following Delanty, both these two projects included the repudiation of Judaism. Furthermore, the process

of nation-building, based on linguistic and ‘ethnic’ unification, provided the European nation-state with a sense of hostility to trans-cultural influences. The Jews, seen as ‘a people without a nation’ were excluded from national projects (Delanty 1995: 75).

Due to their successful adaptation to modernisation in the nineteenth century, the Jews were seen with suspicion and increasing hatred by urban and rural groups who had been negatively affected by economic and political changes (Beller 2007: 52). The image of ‘the Jew’ became a symbol of liberalism, capitalism, and modernity (Moradiellos 2009: 192). Anti-Semitism drew on these prejudices in order to produce a new image of ‘the Jew’ that was not the traditional enemy of Christendom – although it maintained physical and physiological stereotypes, such as the ‘Jewish nose’ and ‘the Jew as moneylender’ – but a scapegoat for all the ‘diseases’ of modernity, and therefore blamed for the degeneration and fall of civilisation (Moradiellos 2009: 193). ‘The Jew’ was seen as foreign and infectious blood in the ‘national body’ and felt as threat, a ‘problem’, the ‘Jewish question’ or *Judenfrage*, to which the only solution was their expulsion or complete annihilation in order to avoid ‘racial’ contamination, preserve the purity of the superior ‘race’, and impede the decline of Western civilisation.

Especially in relation to New York, references to multiculturalism are abundant in European views of the United States. Paul Morand devotes long passages of his travelogue *New York* (1929) to describe the co-existence of different nationalities in New York streets, where ‘there are no dividing lines between these races living within a few yards of each other, but nothing could mix them’ (Morand 1931: 85). Significantly, in this ‘round-the-world voyage’ – as Morand describes the route in the Bowery (1931: 85) –, the French writer was particularly taken by the presence of blacks and Jews. *Scènes de la vie future* (1930) by George Duhamel is also replete with references to the so-called ‘Negro problem’. In his view, segregation ‘should have been done at the start; that is, two or three centuries ago’, in order to avoid miscegenation (Duhamel 1974: 142-143). Duhamel’s account poses the alleged dangers of multiculturalism in ‘this big, mixed America where the races, brought face to face, have not sought to understand each other, and have not succeeded in loving one another’ (Duhamel 1974: 148).

In the following sections, I shall explore the influence of similar discourses of ‘Otherness’ in debates around national identity in early twentieth-century Spain. I will start by introducing the confrontation between *casticismo* and *europianización*, as well as the origins of the *regenerationist* projects. Next, I will show the role played by discourses of alterity in the reassessment of Spanish national identity at the time.

## **1.2 Spanish National Regeneration: Discourses of ‘Otherness’ in the Re-Invention of a National Identity**

Spanish national identity had become a heavily contested ground after the armed conflict with the United States in 1898. Spain’s defeat in the war and the end of the Empire brought into relief the weaknesses of the Restoration system and eased the way for peripheral regionalist movements to consolidate themselves politically, albeit to varying degrees of success, in the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia (Fox 1999: 21). Recent historians such as Sebastian Balfour (1995: 29) and José Álvarez Junco (1999: 73) have pointed out that the loss of the remaining overseas territories at the hands of a young and emerging world power challenged official views of Spanish identity. During the war, the press and ruling forces had encouraged a ‘sudden and late convulsion of national fervour’ (Balfour 1997: 61). As Ramiro de Maetzu relates in *Hacia otra España* (first published in 1899), many Spaniards saw the soldiers off in an atmosphere of exacerbated jingoism: ‘esta campaña puede costar la ruina [...] Y la gente discurre por las calles, vestida de fiesta [...] ante la inminencia de un espectáculo grandioso [...] Oigo un delirante ¡Viva España!, el viva asoma en mis labios’ (2007: 111). Spanish journalists praised the superiority of Spain over the United States not only regarding its military, but also – and especially – its highest moral values and prestige as a nation (Seregni 2007: 77). Accordingly, Spanish newspapers embarked upon a satirical campaign in which the adversary was embodied by the figure of a pig, an image that illustrated the depiction of American society as greedy and vulgar, based on the worship of the dollar. In contrast, Spain was identified as a lion, ‘emblema de una fuerza no corrompida por el dinero’ and of ‘la potencia de la monarquía española en el mundo’. Enric Ucelay da Cal (2000: 124) and Balfour (1995: 61) argue that, in comparison to European powers such as France, nineteenth-century Spanish liberalism had failed to consolidate a strong

sense of nationhood. The instability of Spain's political life, coupled with the progressive loss of overseas territories, had progressively weakened the country in economic terms and therefore hindered a process of modernisation and the consolidation of a strong nationalism (Moradiellos 2000: 110-120; Vincent 2007: 67). As Inman Fox also points out:

España llegó tarde a la socialización o “nacionalización” del pueblo. No se estableció, por ejemplo, un sistema nacional de escolarización pública hasta la segunda mitad del siglo (y aun entonces era poco eficaz); y el servicio militar no fue universal hasta 1911. En cuanto a símbolos, no existió una bandera nacional hasta 1843, ni un himno nacional hasta el siglo XX, y no había casi monumentos nacionales a principios de siglo. (1998: 55)

The war against the United States and the opposition between the capitalist ‘American pig’ and the spiritual and Catholic ‘Spanish lion’ provided an opportunity to consolidate a national identity that mirrored the values of the ruling oligarchy (Balfour 1996: 106). In contrast with the alleged materialism and moral degradation of Americans, the ‘Spanish race’ was portrayed as a ‘pure, warrior race, valiant, chivalresque and Christian’ (Balfour 1996: 06). Notions of ‘racial’ purity, bravery, Christianity, and chivalry can be easily associated with the *Reconquista* and the Spanish Empire, and therefore with the values of the Restoration, identified with a ‘traditional, rural, aristocratic Spain’, which ‘stood for a rejection of modernisation and a celebration of an unchanging utopia, a mythical Spain united to her Empire by the sacred bonds of Hispanism’ (Balfour 1996: 110-111). However, once the ‘lion’ was defeated by the ‘pig’, the Spanish identity promoted by the government and the press was exposed as little more than an evocation of past deeds, and the imperial rhetoric rendered as an empty artifice (Álvarez Junco 1999: 73; Balfour 1995: 29).

The nationalist campaign orchestrated during the war had therefore a contradictory effect. The outcome of the conflict provoked a crisis of legitimacy in the Restoration regime, and although the system would still be functional until 1923 – when it came to an end after Primo de Rivera's military uprising – ‘the relationship between state and nation became fractured, while that between state and citizen was only defined via intermediaries’ (Vincent 2007: 82). The diagnosis of the sense of crisis that permeated *fin de siècle* Spain given by the newly born Spanish intellectual class was highly pessimistic. Influenced by

positivist thought, and often resorting to medical jargon, they declared Spain as a degenerate and sickly organism that needed to be cured, that is, 'regenerated'. The term *Regeneracionismo* could therefore be seen as an umbrella term under which a series of literary and political responses to the crisis blossomed after 1898.

Concerns about Spain's degeneration and claims for its regeneration were however not new. As John Ardila (2007: 216-220) points out, before the military defeat by the United States, the idea of a Spanish crisis and claims for national regeneration had been reflected in texts such as, amongst others, Evaristo Ventosa's *La regeneración de la patria* (1860), Lucas Mallada's *Los males de la patria* (1890), Miguel de Unamuno's *En torno al casticismo* (1895), and Ángel Ganivet's *Idearium Español* (1897). Notions of degeneration and regeneration were directly linked to the failure to establish a strong sense of national identity. On the one hand, the lack of modernisation was gradually excluding Spain from the group of European powers; on the other, the imperial values that had sustained a coherent national identity had been eroded and undermined by the loss of the colonies. Already before the so-called Disaster, *regenerationist* remedies for Spanish decadence came into being as a dual response to modernisation and its effects on the Spanish identity, in the form of a 'conflict between tradition and modernity and the theme of Spain's relation to Europe, known as the project of *europización*' (Mermall 1999: 165). Traditionalist solutions for the regeneration of the country appealed to the recovery of Catholic and monarchic values, and the restoration of Spain's imperial past (Balfour 1995: 30; Mermall 1999: 164). This position was supported by Catholic fundamentalists, such as the polymath Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, who 'asserted a definition of Spanishness based on opposition to foreign, largely French, modernizing trends' (Labanyi 2005: 180).

The ideas contained in Menéndez Pelayo's *La ciencia española* (1876) and *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles* (1880-1882) would provide the backbone for the Catholic nationalism of the *Primorriverista* intelligentsia, and subsequently for Franco's dictatorship (Foard 1979: 93). *La ciencia española* reflected the author's rejection of the foreign and modernising ideals imported by the Krausists (Fernández García 2005:78). Menéndez Pelayo argued for the Catholic unity and essence of the Spanish nation and considered foreign influences as pernicious for the 'patria', arguing that 'la verdadera civilización está dentro del catolicismo' (1954: 200-201). *Historia de los heterodoxos*

*españoles*, understood by Foard as ‘an attempt to define the essence of this nation in terms of Catholic orthodoxy’ (1979: 90) follows the same ideology.

Traditionalist thinkers following Menéndez y Pelayo therefore argued that ‘la verdadera regeneración de España dependería de la restauración del orden corrompido por el liberalismo’ (Fox 1998: 188).

Contrary to this view, the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, founded in 1876 by Francisco Giner de los Ríos and inspired by the work of the German philosopher Friedrich Krause, represented a secularising and liberal movement. According to Antonio Molero Pintado, its members were ‘herederos directos del liberalismo ilustrado, que propugnan una reforma elitista y minoritaria, típica representante de la izquierda burguesa’ (1985: 10). The educational programme of the *Institución* was directly related to the regeneration of Spain, in this case in pedagogical terms (Molero 1985: 100; Vincent 2007: 86). As Giner de los Ríos declared in 1880, the main goal of his institution was that of the education of ‘hombres útiles al servicio de la comunidad y de la patria’ (Molero 1985: 64). In the following decades, the alumni of the *ILE* included prominent politicians, such as Manuel Azaña, Fernando de los Ríos, and Julián Besteiro, who all played a relevant role in the Second Republic, as well as many of the writers and intellectuals belonging to the so-called *Generación del 27*, including Federico García Lorca and José Moreno Villa.

The *ILE*’s educational projects, such as the *Residencia de Estudiantes* (founded in 1910) and the *Residencia de Señoritas* (founded in 1915) – the first organism in Spain for women’s higher education (Vincent 2007: 90) –, had their counterpart in institutions funded by the Church, such as the Catholic University at Deusto (1886), in which the *Asociación Nacional-Católica de Propagandistas* (ACNP) was founded. Catholic initiatives also sought the regeneration of Spain, ‘here understood as the restoration of Catholic morals and renewed religious faith’ (Vincent 2007: 91). As Vincent points out, neither of these projects became hegemonic. Instead, ‘the struggle to regenerate the nation soon became a struggle for the control of the state [...] while the competition between the *ILE* and the *ACPN* only emphasized how regeneration fragmented into exclusionary projects’, framing the plans for renewal either for the right or the left, with few attempts for a programme of national reform that integrated both sides (2007: 91).

Both projects resorted to the re-interpretation of Spanish history to support their view of national identity and of national regeneration. The liberals blamed the Habsburg reign – and hence the identification of Catholicism and monarchy as the principles of national identity, coupled with the disastrous loss of economic resources and human lives in the colonial wars – for the decadence of the Spanish nation. In contrast, the Bourbon Restoration, seen as a French ‘virus’ responsible for the Liberal Revolution, was for the traditionalists the culprit of Spain’s decay (Juliá 2004: 45). The opposition between these two grand narratives would be the pillar for regenerative alternatives in the aftermath of 1898, crystallising in the rhetoric of ‘las dos Españas’, the ‘true Spain’ against the ‘anti-Spain’, defended not only by fascist ideologues in the run up to the Civil War, but also by liberal intellectuals such as José Ortega y Gasset (Juliá 2004: 148-149). The re-interpretation of Spanish history and the consequent invention of both traditionalist and liberal narratives show the constructed nature of nationalising projects, as has been argued by theorists of nationalism such as Gellner (1983), Hobsbawm (1990), Kedourie (1993), and Anderson (2006), who regard nationalism as a top-down process in which an intelligentsia imposes a high culture – often disguised in the form of eternal traditions – to the rest of the population. Gellner, in particular, argues that ‘nationalism is *not* the awakening of an old, latent dormant force, though that it does indeed present itself. It is in reality the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply, internalized, education – dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state’ (1983: 48), and therefore, ‘it is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round’ (1983: 55). As a matter of fact, the rise of the intellectual class in Spain – one that was consciously aware of its influence on public opinion – took place at the turn of the century. This new intellectual class was embodied in public figures such as Miguel de Unamuno, Ángel Ganivet, and Ramiro de Maetzu. Continuing the controversy between Menéndez Pelayo and the Krausists, the dialectic between traditionalism and modernisation will be at the core of the debates around Spain’s regeneration, illustrated in two of the so-called foundational texts of the *regenerationist* program: Unamuno’s *En torno al casticismo* (1895) and Ganivet’s *Idearium español* (1897).

Unamuno’s text opposes the autarchic conception of national identity defended by his master Menéndez Pelayo (*casticismo*) with the need to integrate Spain in

Europe. Unamuno charges against the ‘official history of Spain’ promoted by the *casticistas* and their refusal to expose the Spanish state to European influence (2005: 148), proposing instead the existence of a cosmopolitan ‘tradición eterna’ or ‘universal’: the *intrahistoria* (2005: 143). Opposing the *casticista* ideal of preserving the integrity of the Spanish ‘race’ and its culture, Unamuno argues for Spanish integration into Europe since going against the ‘universal tradition’ would be akin to ‘querer destruir la humanidad en nosotros’, ‘ir a la muerte’, ‘empeñarnos en distinguirnos de los demás, en evitar o retardar nuestra absorción en el espíritu general europeo moderno’ (2005: 153). Unamuno’s cosmopolitanism must, however, be clarified. His claim for the Europeanisation of Spain responds to a project of liberal nationalisation. The text contains references to Rousseau and the social contract, and also to Ernest Renan’s view of nationhood as a ‘daily plebiscite’ (Unamuno 2005: 158-159). Following these premises, Unamuno proposes that a true *patria española* will emerge when the Spanish people decide to become a nation. He therefore gives importance to the idea of freedom and political association as the basis of nationhood. Nevertheless, Unamuno’s project of liberal nationalisation does not differ from *casticismo* in one fundamental aspect: he regards Castile, its language and culture, as the core of Spanish national identity and he devotes a significant proportion of his text to describing the role of Castile in the formation of the Spanish nation (2005: 156-182), and also to describing the Castilian character through its literature (2005: 183-342).

The text finishes with a diagnosis of the Spanish crisis that anticipates the ‘regenerative’ responses to the so-called Disaster. Spain is described as an impoverished, in fact a moribund country in a state of mental and moral degradation, as well as one weighed down by an inoperative political system. The solution given by Unamuno to the illness of the Spanish nation is twofold: ‘tenemos que europeizarnos y chapuzarnos en el pueblo’ (2005: 360). The author’s statement highlights the failure of the nineteenth-century liberal project to nationalise the Spanish people. Europeanisation implies the creation of a modern nation-state with a strong sense of nationhood, in which national identity emanates not from a Catholic and monarchic discourse, but from the democratic essence of the Spanish people, found in the *intrahistoria*:

sólo abriendo las ventanas a vientos europeos, empapándonos en el ambiente continental, teniendo fe en que no perderemos nuestra



personalidad al hacerlo, europeizándonos para hacer España y chapuzándonos en el pueblo, regeneraremos esta estepa moral. Con el aire de fuera regenero mi sangre, no respirando el que exhale. (Unamuno 2005: 361)

As one can see, in Unamuno's regenerative discourse, Europeanisation and modernisation imply a change in the political system, from monarchism to liberalism, from Catholicism to secularisation. However, and despite the calls for cosmopolitanism, the essence of national identity remains attached to a centralist view of Spain. This is not surprising, since European projects of nationalisation 'selected and generally imposed the culture and language of the dominant group within its territory and sought to create a single nation out of the various nations or parts of nations forming it' (Guibernau 2007: 23). Despite their differences, both national projects share some characteristics, as the closing sentence in Unamuno's text clearly shows:

¡Ojalá una verdadera juventud, animosa y libre, rompiendo la malla que nos ahoga y la monotonía uniforme en que estamos alineados, se vuelva con amor a estudiar el pueblo que nos sustenta a todos, y abriendo el pecho y los ojos a las corrientes todas ultrapirenaicas y sin encerrarse en capullos casticistas [...] ni en diferenciaciones nacionales excluyentes, avive con la ducha reconfortante de los jóvenes ideales cosmopolitas el espíritu colectivo intracastizo que duerme esperando un redentor! (2005: 362)

The references to a shared past, a common 'spirit', and the wait for a 'Saviour' would be recurrent in both liberal and traditional views of the nation and their answers to the crisis. As Jean-Claude Rabaté (2005: 94-103) explains, *En torno al casticismo* gave way in fact to a variety of political interpretations in the following decades such as fascist, falangist, and liberal.

Published two years after Unamuno's text, *Idearium Español* (1897) by Ángel Ganivet also dwells on the 'Spanish problem' and its solutions. Similarly to Unamuno, and comparing the country to a sickly organism, Ganivet argues that Spain suffers from a condition of 'abulia colectiva' (1996: 139). The use of biological metaphors to describe the state of the nation and concerns about 'racial' degeneration was in tune with similar concerns in Europe. Michael Richards (2004: 827) argues that Ganivet's notion of national 'abulia' was influenced by European views on degeneration, since 'he borrowed explicitly from doctors and psychologists like Henry Maudsley, Jean-Etienne Esquirol and Pierre Janet, and

implicitly from the pre-eminent Germanic theorist of degeneration, Max Nordau'. The analysis of the Spanish crisis is used by Ganivet in order to explore the essence of the national character, in which the opposition between traditionalism and Europeanisation plays again an essential role. Contrary to Unamuno's call to 'open the windows to the European air', Ganivet declares that 'una restauración de la vida entera de España no puede tener otro punto de arranque que la concentración de todas nuestras energías dentro de nuestro territorio. Hay que cerrar con cerrojos, llaves y candados todas las puertas por donde el espíritu español se escapó de España' (1996: 131). This assertion has been interpreted by Inman Fox as an appeal to abandon expansionist policies and look for a regeneration from within (1998: 130). However, and despite Ganivet's disapproval of Spanish colonial ventures in North Africa (1996: 129), the text is impregnated with a sense of nostalgia for Spain's imperial past and the praise of traditional values that, following Menéndez Pelayo, identify the nation with its Catholic essence. As the author declares:

en cuanto España se construya con carácter nacional, debe de estar sustentado sobre los sillares de la tradición. Esto es la lógica y eso es lo noble, pues habiéndonos arruinado en la defensa del catolicismo, no cabría mayor afrenta que ser traidores con nuestros padres, y añadir a la tristeza de un vencimiento, acaso transitorio, la humillación de someternos a la influencia de las ideas de nuestros vencedores.  
(Ganivet 1996: 53)

Despite the opposing views of national identity developing in these two texts, they both coincide in their exploration of Spain's 'collective consciousness', as Fox argues (1998: 129). Moreover, both essays lead to a similar conclusion, namely that *el problema de España* is mainly spiritual and that its solution relies on the awakening of the essential character of Spanish people, which is liberal, democratic, and cosmopolitan for Unamuno – hidden in the *intrahistoria* –, and embedded in traditionalist Catholicism for Ganivet.

### **1.2.1 The Degeneration of 'the Masses': Joaquín Costa's 'Iron Surgeon' and José Ortega y Gasset's European Elitism**

Racialist theory was received in Spain with concern, especially after the publication of Edmond Demolins' *À quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?*

(1897) translated into Spanish in 1899 (Seregni 2007: 102-102). As Inman Fox (1998: 12) points out:

la pérdida por los españoles de las colonias de ultramar y las derrotas de los franceses y los italianos en Sedán y Adua, frente a los triunfos de la Alemania de Bismark y de la Inglaterra victoriana, llevaron al diagnóstico de la decadencia de las naciones (o de las *razas*) latinas y la superioridad de las otras.

Fears of ‘racial’ degeneration were intensified by Lord Salisbury’s speech ‘Living and Dying Nations’ (1898). In his discourse, the British Prime Minister argued that nations could be divided in two opposite groups. On the one hand, ‘great countries of enormous power growing in power every year, growing in wealth, growing in dominion, growing in the perfection of their organization’; and on the other, ‘a number of communities which I can only describe as dying [...] Decade after decade they are weaker, poorer, and less provided with leading men or institutions they can trust, apparently drawing nearer and nearer to their fate and yet clinging with strange tenacity to the life which they have got’ (1898: 6). Although Spain was not directly mentioned in the speech, Spanish politicians understood Lord Salisbury’s words as an allusion to the situation of their country (Seregni 2007: 96). Nevertheless, the ideas expressed by the Prime Minister were not new. As Seregni (2007: 96) argues:

la idea de raza, con sus corolarios concernientes a la superioridad de algunas y a la degeneración de otras, estaba tan clara y presente en los debates de los políticos, en los discursos de los científicos y en los de los intelectuales que las declaraciones de Salisbury no hacían más que repetir conceptos ya asimilados.

Concerns about Spain’s degeneration and its analysis in racialist terms persisted in the decades following the war against the United States. Juliá (2004: 81) points out that views of ‘racial’ degeneration cannot only be assigned to the political events of 1898, but they must be also related to the arrival of modernising processes – industrialism and capitalism – in Spain. Following the precepts of Social Darwinism, the working class was regarded as weak and degenerated. Moreover, Spain also felt the strength and the violence of ‘the masses’, especially in events such as the *Semana Trágica de Barcelona* in 1909 – in which the working class revolted against the conscription for the war in Morocco –, the general strike in 1917, the so-called ‘Bolshevik triennium’

(1918-20) in Andalucía, and the strikes organised by the CNT (*Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores*) in Barcelona in 1919. As Luis Arranz and Mercedes Cabrera Fernando del Rey point out, especially between 1918 and 1921, ‘never had Spain seen so many strikes nor so much violence and terrorism’ (2000: 199).

Despite *regenerationist* grumblings about the health of the country, few practical solutions were in fact provided, and the proposals to change the political system made by politicians such as Joaquín Costa did not have an effect on the government. Frustration led the intellectuals to blame the people for Spain’s *condition*. Costa, in particular, turned to a desperate solution: if Spain were to avoid the calamity of social revolution, a leader had to emerge, an ‘iron surgeon’ who would operate on the sick body of the nation and restore its health (Balfour 1995: 28). In Costa’s view, the immobility of the Restoration system and the burden of *caciquismo* were hindering national development. Accordingly, he suggested that the authority of the parliament should be momentarily limited (Harrison 1979: 23). The ‘iron surgeon’ condenses in fact the distrust of Spanish intellectuals in ‘the masses’. As Santos Juliá (2004: 127) points out, ‘Costa, como en general los intelectuales del 98, no esperaba nada del pueblo, decaído, degenerado, sino que alguien le educase y le alimentase’.

Elitism and ‘racial’ degeneration are also core ideas in Ortega y Gasset’s analysis of Spain’s decline. In *La España invertebrada* (first published in 1921), the philosopher declares that it is his intention to outline ‘la gran enfermedad’ suffered by Spain (2007: 32). Ortega ultimately relates Spain’s decadence to ‘racial’ degeneration; he argues that ‘la raíz de la descomposición nacional está, como es lógico, en el alma misma de nuestro pueblo’ since ‘los pueblos degeneran por defectos íntimos’, and he concludes that ‘si la raza o razas peninsulares hubiesen producido un gran número de personalidades eminentes, con genialidad contemplativa, o práctica, es posible que tal abundancia hubiera bastado a contrapesar la indocilidad de las masas’ (2007: 136).

Ortega’s project of national regeneration combined Europeanisation with elitism. Instead of searching for a mythical lost national identity in the people, Ortega entrusted the new intellectual elite – ‘europea ya por educación, profundamente patriota por convicción’ (Juliá 2004: 153) – with the task of educating ‘the masses’. In contrast with the passivity and excessive pessimism of

his predecessors, Ortega articulated his project through an active presence in the political and journalistic life of the country. As Santos Juliá points out:

la manera orteguiana de presencia de intelectuales en la esfera pública como minoría selecta que penetra, educa y dirige a la masa, crea nación o patria e influye en los destinos del Estado [...] con una panoplia de instrumentos como periódicos, revistas, conferencias, ligas, corrió paralela a otras opciones, que oscilaban entre la propuesta de un partido de intelectuales y la entrada de intelectuales en partidos ya actuantes en política. (2004: 174)

Following previous regenerationist calls for Europeanisation, Ortega also saw Europe as the solution for the Spanish problem (Juliá 2004: 144). Similarly to the modernising stance defended by Unamuno in *En torno al casticismo*, Ortega considered that Spain ‘constituía un desvío de la civilización europea y que, por tanto, su solución no vendría hasta que volviera a encontrarse con ella’ (Juliá 2004: 145). However, going further than his Basque counterpart, Ortega would advocate not yet allowing European air to enter Spain, but rather ‘salir al exterior, ir al encuentro de Europa’ (Juliá 2004: 145). Consequently, for Ortega, the cornerstone of Spain’s regeneration would be the introduction of European science to Spain, since ‘en la falta de ciencia es donde radica la inexistencia de España, su inferioridad respecto a Europa’ (Juliá 2004: 145).

Social conflict and the weakness of the Restoration system – with thirty-four governments between 1902 and 1923 (Vincent 2007: 106) –, eased the way for the coup d’état led by Miguel Primo de Rivera in Barcelona on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1923, with the agreement of the King Alfonso XIII. On that very same day, Primo de Rivera published a manifesto in which ‘he outlined in superficial form a programme in keeping with the regeneracionista spirit so prominent since 1898’ (Tusell and Queipo de Llano 2000: 208). The manifesto blamed the political class – ‘los profesionales de la política’ – for ‘el cuadro de desdichas e inmoralidades que empezaron el año 98 y amenazan a España con un próximo fin trágico y deshonoroso’ (Primo de Rivera, quoted in Armesto 1997: 205). Making use of a loose interpretation of Joaquín Costa’s *regenerationist* doctrines, Primo de Rivera saw himself as the ‘iron surgeon’ who would cauterise Spain’s wounds (Vincent 2007: 108). Following the *regenerationist* rhetoric, military dictatorship was presented by Primo de Rivera as a provisional regime, in order to:

mantener el orden público y asegurar el funcionamiento normal de los ministerios y organismos oficiales, requiriendo al país para que en breve plazo nos ofrezca hombres rectos, sabios, laboriosos y probos que puedan constituir ministerio a nuestro amparo, pero en plena dignidad y facultad, para ofrecerlos al Rey por si se digna aceptarlos. (Primo de Rivera, quoted in Armesto 1997: 205)

Primo de Rivera's dictatorial government was welcomed by the Catholic Church and the traditionalists, who regarded the regime as a kind of resurrection (Vincent 2007: 106-107). Moreover, liberal intellectuals such as Ortega y Gasset initially supported the dictatorship, since Primo de Rivera's regenerationist programme through the tutelage of the people 'curiosamente formaba parte [...] del pensamiento liberal alrededor de la crisis de la Restauración, en el cambio de siglo' (Fox 1998: 175). Ortega was seduced by the prospect that the dictatorship could facilitate the consolidation of a renovated liberalism (Fox 1998: 179). Primo also gained the support of other members of the intellectual class such as Ramiro de Maetzu, Eugenio D'Ors, and Ernesto Giménez Caballero, whose political views were closer to authoritarianism or outright fascism.

However, in 1924 the harmony between the liberals and the regime was broken by the decision to remove Unamuno from his position as chancellor of the University of Salamanca. By 1925, when it became evident that the dictatorship was no longer a temporary measure, Ortega and the liberals withdrew their support for the dictator (Tusell and Queipo de Llano 2000: 216). As Alejandro Quiroga points out, from 1926 *Primorriverista* ideologues such as José María Pemán and José Pemartín provided the regime with an official doctrine based on:

un mensaje nacionalista español, que consolidó un canon patriótico católico ortodoxo y antiliberal, por primera vez defendido desde el poder, y un discurso político contrarrevolucionario, que vendrían a constituir las bases ideológicas del franquismo (2000: 197).

Despite the pervasive traditionalism of the dictatorship, the *regenerationist* measures taken by the regime in terms of industrial progress did contribute to the modernisation of the country to a certain extent. As Balfour points out:

the Spanish right also embraced notions of modernity. This was not the same modernity as the "Europeanization" envisaged by the regenerators [...] On the contrary, right-wing modernity in Spain was an effort to reconcile economic development with the preservation of tradition and hierarchy (1997: 233).

Favoured by the global economic boom of the twenties, the successful economic policy of the dictatorship helped the stimulation of industrial production, which increased by 40 per cent. Moreover, the working class enjoyed a level of continuity in employment rates and also the expansion of social security, although salaries tended to be reduced. Economic growth, in turn, facilitated the decrease of social turmoil (Tusell and Queipo de Llano 2000: 212).

The social stability provided by Primo's dictatorship helped the consolidation of avant-garde movements in Spain (Johnson 2003b: 164). In 1923, Ortega founded *Revista de Occidente*, in 1925 he published *La deshumanización del arte*, and from 1926 he promoted the publication of avant-garde narrative works in the collection *Nova Novorum*. *La deshumanización del arte* represents Ortega's attempt to understand and codify the principles of the 'new art'. Ortega's position towards new artistic modes is ambivalent, and in his conclusion he declares that 'se dirá que el arte nuevo no ha producido hasta ahora nada que merezca la pena, y yo ando cerca de pensar lo mismo' (Ortega y Gasset 1991: 85). The Spanish philosopher sees however the potential for the renewal of proceeding artistic forms which were excessively dependent on political debates:

todo el arte nuevo resulta comprensible y adquiere cierta dosis de grandeza cuando se le interpreta como un ensayo de crear puerilidad en un mundo viejo. Otros estilos obligaban a que se les pusiera en conexión con los dramáticos movimientos sociales y políticos o bien con las profundas corrientes filosóficas o religiosas. El nuevo estilo, por el contrario, solicita, desde luego, ser aproximado al triunfo de los deportes y juegos. (Ortega y Gasset 1991: 82)

Here, Ortega blatantly contrasts the lack of social and political implication of the avant-garde to the self-imposed messianic role of previous intellectuals.

According to the philosopher, young artists do not wish to have an impact on the people and lead 'the masses' anymore, but instead they focus solely on art in its purely aesthetic form: 'a un artista de hoy sospecho que le aterraría verse ungido con tan enorme misión y obligado, en consecuencia, a tratar en su obra materias capaces de tamañas repercusiones' (Ortega y Gasset 1991: 82). In spite of the contrast between the alleged political detachment of the avant-garde and the previous mission given by Ortega to the intellectuals as educators of 'the masses', he would support the production of experimental narrative texts in his *Revista de Occidente* and subsequently in the collection *Nova Novorum* (Pino 1995: 41).

Ortega's description of the avant-garde as a minority and elitist art shows in fact his loss of faith in the tutelage of 'the masses'. According to Ortega, avant-garde art highlights the difference between 'the masses', unable to understand it, and the refined taste of the *élite*:

a mi juicio, lo característico del arte nuevo [...] es que divide al público en estas dos clases de hombres: los que lo entienden y los que no lo entienden. Esto implica que los unos tienen un órgano de comprensión negado, por tanto, a los otros; que son dos variedades distintas de la especie humana. El arte nuevo, por lo visto, no es para todo el mundo, como el romántico, sino que va desde luego dirigido a una minoría especialmente dotada. (1991: 47)

Ortega's engagement with the avant-garde mirrors his disappointment with Spanish politics. Prior to Primo de Rivera's uprising, the King Alfonso XIII had rejected several proposals for the regeneration of Spanish political life presented in a manifesto signed by Ortega, Unamuno, Azaña, Marañón, and Menéndez Pidal, amongst others. After 1923, such disillusionment grew even stronger, to the extent that Ortega abandoned the political scene. Instead, in the following years:

Ortega reclama para el intelectual el ideal de su condición: relacionarse sólo con sus iguales, no ocuparse de política, vacar en sus intereses literarios o científicos: en esto acababa por el momento la concepción del intelectual como minoría selecta a la que sólo diez años antes había solemnemente convocado a la tarea de penetrar, educar y conducir a la masa. (Juliá 2004: 178)

Under the auspices of Ortega y Gasset, Spanish avant-garde novelists sought to create a new novel inspired by the scientific, technological, and artistic developments of the time. Following these premises:

la teoría de la relatividad, el perspectivismo filosófico, la nueva biología, el cine, la nueva música, la pintura cubista, el deportismo y el dinamismo maquinista, entran en la configuración temático-estructural de la nueva novela vanguardista o experimental (Fuentes 1984: 561).

Nevertheless, and despite their alleged lack of political engagement, Spanish avant-garde texts did also reflect European negative attitudes towards civilisation. Ana Rodríguez Fischer argues that, although Spain did not participate in the First World War, the conflict had a 'spiritual' impact on the country (1999: 17). Similar to other European states, the aftermath of the war was also experienced as 'una devastadora explosión de todo el caudal filosófico amasado durante la etapa



anterior al que se unían las múltiples intervenciones mecánicas entonces gestadas y realizadas en el siglo XX – telegrafía sin hilos, navegación aérea, automovilismo...’ (Fischer 1999: 21). The ideological crisis brought about by the conflict and its influence on daily life had an enormous impact in Spain, leading to economic, political, social, and cultural readjustments (Fischer 1999: 21). As McCulloch has pointed out in relation to Ramón Gómez de la Serna’s novel *Cinelandia* (1923):

despite Gómez de la Serna’s fascination with modernity, in *Cinelandia* there is also an underlying sense of despair at the homogenisation of the human form, and the suggestion that human experience is ultimately vacuous. The historian Oswald Spengler wrote about “The unanchored late man of the megapolis” who inhabited a world of growing commercialism, pervasive materialism, dissonance and fragmentation. The world depicted in *Cinelandia* is not distant from that decried by Spengler, capturing the loneliness of modern man who inhabits a burgeoning city, uprooted and alone. In this sense it is a novel very much of its time. (2007: 54)

In her comprehensive study *Ciudad y modernidad en la prosa hispánica de vanguardia* (2007), Beatriz Barrantes has shown how the arrival of modernity privileged the literary role of the city as the main location for the artistic exploration of the aforementioned changes, since ‘el artista ve la ciudad como una excelente materia prima para su obra porque, dentro de ella, queda definida la propia esencia artística moderna’ (Barrantes 2007: 18). Previous studies of Spanish avant-garde literature such as those by Buckley and Crispin (1973) and Fuentes (1984) have distinguished between two avant-gardes. Avant-garde novels written in the early 1920s supposedly celebrate modernity and radiate an optimistic praise of technology, while later works display increasing concerns related to mechanisation, capitalism, and urbanisation (Barrantes 2007: 102-103). Contrary to previous positions, Barrantes argues for the existence of a hidden anxiety surrounding materialism, the urban space, the crowds, and technology in most of the texts ascribed to the avant-garde canon (2007: 103). Among the examples discussed by this critic, we find *Sentimental dancing* (1925) by Valentín Andrés Álvarez, and *El profesor inútil* (1926) by Benjamín Jarnés. Criticism of modernisation in the avant-garde narrative will be stronger in subsequent years in novels such as *Locura y muerte de nadie* (1929) by Benjamín Jarnés, *La venus mecánica* (1929) by José Díaz Fernández, *Luna de copas* (1929) by Antonio

Espina, and *Hermes en la vía pública* (1934) by Antonio de Obregón, in which the city is presented as a dehumanising and alienating entity. Following Barrantes, ‘estamos ante la crisis del hombre moderno quien, a pesar de los optimismos vanguardistas, observa que los adelantos tecnológicos y el progreso no llenan el vacío existencial’ (2007: 111). These texts give expression to the tensions and contradictions brought about by the advent of a capitalist mass society dominated by the increasing mechanisation of modern life. As I will show in Chapter 2, these themes also have a prominent presence in Moreno Villa’s, Oteyza’s, and Camba’s New York narratives.

### **1.2.2 The Spanish Modern Woman and the Challenge to Submission**

Similarly to the European context, dominant discourse on gender in early twentieth-century Spain rested on the polarities man/woman, public/private, and reason/nature, condensed in the role of women as ‘Ángel del Hogar’ – the Spanish crystallization of the ‘Angel in the House’ trope (Kirkpatrick 2003: 30-31). Susan Kirkpatrick (2003: 32) and Rebeca Arce Pinedo (2008:116-117) explain the confinement of women to the private sphere as an expression of the values promoted by conservative and religious sectors, which resorted to traditionalist representations of womanhood in order to define a cultural identity based on the moral hegemony of Catholicism. The effects of modernisation, seen as ‘una época de extensión y multiplicación del Mal, producto del avance de la impiedad y del abandono del catolicismo’ were, according to the traditionalists, ‘la proliferación de los enemigos de la Iglesia Católica [...] y el desamparo de las mujeres, deshabilitadas hasta el punto de no lograr cumplir adecuadamente su sagrada misión de esposa-madre’ (Arce Pinedo 2008: 65). The idea of ‘hogar’ or ‘familia’ was essential for this position and it was women, as ‘Ángel del Hogar’, who were held responsible for guarding the traditional model and preserving Catholic values by conveying them to their children (Arce Pinedo 2003: 193). Indeed, the idea of national identity promoted by the right was that of ‘una España católica y tradicional, orgullosa de su pasado glorioso y sus antiguas instituciones [...] y de la unidad del Estado frente a las tendencias centrífugas’ (Arce Pinedo 2008: 192). The intimate relations between Catholicism and the right became especially evident during Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship, for which the ‘salvation’ of the

country depended on ‘la recristianización de la sociedad española’ (Arce Pinedo 2003: 156).

However, and despite the strong patriarchal mentality permeating the views of the Spanish Catholic Church, the man/woman opposition and the gendered division of spheres did not only respond to religious influences. As Bretz argues, the dichotomy between tradition and modernity is not a valid approach to understand the construction of gender in this period (2001: 375). For Spanish liberals too – from radical democrats to constitutional monarchists – the construction of a modern nation-state was linked to the reinforcement of a masculine moral order in which:

a female out of control was not only disorderly; she was dishonourable. And the protection of honour was in Spain, central to the quest of an appropriate marriage of liberty and order – two classic nineteenth century ideals that defined the struggle to forge a liberal state everywhere in modern Europe. (White 1999: 233)

When in 1929 the global economic crisis brought an end to Primo de Rivera’s regime, which had been unable to provide solutions for the devaluation of the peseta (Tussel and Queipo de Llano 2004: 212), the arrival of the Second Republic and its modernising project two years later was welcomed with great enthusiasm by the liberals. The ideologues of the Republic, heirs of Giner de los Ríos’ *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, undertook a profound transformation of the country, with special interest in the secularisation of Spain (Vincent 2007: 121). Republican modernising policies also focused on the expansion of civil rights, and the Constitution of 1931 ‘gave all Spaniards over the age of 23 the right to vote and established the complete equality of all individuals before the law, regardless of sex, race and social standing’ (Davies 1998: 105). However, even those liberals who emphasised that equality was a core characteristic of a progressive democracy feared that the feminine vote could result in an advantage for their right-wing rivals, an idea also shared by most Spanish Catholic conservative parties, who therefore voted in favour of the new law (Keene 1999: 330-331). This assumption stemmed from the idea that women, regarded as an infantile mass, ‘lacked the true qualities of political citizenship [...]’. Ruled by their emotions and weak in reasoning, they were generally presumed to surrender their vote to the better judgement of others’ (Alexander 1999: 350). Certainly,

prejudices of this kind were not exclusive to Spain but rather, as Gerard Alexander argues, can be ‘found in contemporary debates over female political participation and suffrage in Britain, France, Germany and Austria’ (1999: 350).

In Spain too, male fears of the ‘modern woman’ were prompted by the increasing entrance of women into public spaces, challenging previous hegemonic representations of womanhood embodied in the ‘Ángel del Hogar’ (Kirkpatrick 2003: 9; Barrantes 2007: 85). At the turn of the century, female Spanish thinkers and writers such as Concepción Arenal, in *La mujer del porvenir* (1993, first published in 1869) and Emilia Pardo Bazán, in *La mujer española* (2007, first published in 1874), influenced by John Stuart Mill – especially by *The Subjection of Women* (1970: 123-242, first published in 1869) –, had already denounced the subjugation of women to men and seen the need to incorporate women into civil society in order to modernise the country. Continuing the ideas of these two precursors of Spanish feminism, Spanish female writers such as Carmen de Burgos and Rosa Chacel claimed for the recognition of women’s rights in the 1920s and 1930s (Kirkpatrick 2003: 9). In *La mujer moderna y sus derechos* (first published in 1927), Carmen de Burgos describes the ‘modern woman’ as ‘otro tipo de mujer, flaca, con la cabellera cortada, la falda corta y el descote amplio, con las cejas depiladas, fumando un cigarillo y pintándose labios, mejillas y pestañas públicamente’ (2007: 269). The ‘modern woman’ described by Burgos resists complying with the limiting conditionings of patriarchy and regains ownership of her own body, a change also reflected by modern fashion in clothing, which liberates women from ‘los tirabuzones, la crinoline, el miriñaque, que aún hace un siglo se usaban’, since ‘toda esa indumentaria cara, pesante, embarazosa, difícil de llevar, es imposible para las mujeres que toman ahora, impulsadas por necesidades económicas unas, y por las costumbres otras, parte en la vida activa, en el trabajo y en los deportes’ (Burgos 2007: 261). This portrait reflects a new model of femininity in which women find liberation in the modern metropolis. As Barrantes argues:

mujer y modernidad se retroalimentan muy fructíferamente. Por un lado, el progreso tecnológico, la modernización industrial y la reconfiguración de los modelos urbanos determinan la transformación de la mujer y, por otro lado, dicha mujer se convierte en exponente semiótico: su nueva imagen es índice del grado de modernización, así como del progreso ideológico, de la sociedad española. (2007: 88)

Through their literary production, Spanish female writers unveiled the constructedness of biosocial thought. This is the case in ‘Esquema de los problemas prácticos y actuales del amor’ (1931), where Rosa Chacel challenges the dominant ideas expressed by George Simmel and spread in Spain by Ortega y Gasset. Chacel attributes women’s subjugation to ‘el peso de prejuicios religiososociales que la han abismado en sus innatas trabas fisiológicas’ (1931: 145), in a clear allusion to the reclusion of women to the private sphere and their essentialist role as mothers and wives. Ideas such as these anticipate the work of subsequent feminists, who consider that:

gender should be understood not as a ‘real’ social difference between men and women, but as a mode of discourse which relates to groups of subjects whose social roles are defined by their sexual/biological difference as opposed to their economic positions on their membership in ethnic and racial collectivities. (Yuval-Davis 1997: 9)

Whereas female writers considered the role of women as essential for the modernisation of the country (Barrantes 2007: 93), as part of a process at progress and liberation (Kirkpatrick 2003: 13), male intellectuals reacted against the ‘modern woman’, even amongst those who celebrated change in other areas, such as Ortega y Gasset (Bretz 2001: 205; Kirkpatrick 2003: 221; Barrantes 2007: 94). In Spain too, the animosity towards women was reflected in a prominent quantity of misogynist representations of women that expressed the anxiety that the instability of patriarchal structures provoked in men (Kirkpatrick 2003: 86). Similarly, the view of modernity given in the avant-garde novel written in the 1920s responds to a male gaze, since the leading role is usually played by a male character, ‘tipo *flâneur-dandy*, que vaga por las ciudades sin ocupación definida, en busca de aventuras amorosas y disfrute existencial’ (Barrantes 2007: 106). Female characters, on the other hand, are often identified with the conflicting and threatening effects of modernity. Marcia Castillo points out that:

en una serie de novelas pertenecientes a lo que se conoce como novela deshumanizada vanguardista española, muchos de los personajes femeninos funcionan como representación de la modernidad, como símbolo de los nuevos tiempos. Son, o bien afirmación de las bondades de la modernización y del progreso, o bien – y este caso es más frecuente – proyección de la vertiente demoníaca de la modernidad. Estos personajes se debaten entre el deslumbramiento de lo moderno y la catástrofe de sus consecuencias. Mujeres al volante de

un Packard, entregadas al deporte y a la vida de cabaret, que seducen a los hombres con la atracción de lo nuevo. (2003: no pages available)

As one can note, for both male liberals and traditionalists, women represented a force of nature to be controlled, since their freedom could jeopardise the programmes for national regeneration proposed by these two sides. As Sarah L. White argues, ‘at critical moments of political transition, the proponents of revolution – or reaction – depicted such woman as irrational, diseased, promiscuous, a threat to the integrity of the nation’ (1999: 233). Although liberals were more receptive to the equality of women – as shown by the initiatives carried out by the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* in order to provide them with access to higher education (Arce Pinedo 2003: 45-46) – they still distrusted women’s participation in politics.

The real modernisation of gender categories was therefore mainly left to women thinkers, and only few men truly supported the emancipation of women from the patriarchal system. As we will see in Chapter 3, Moreno Villa’s and Camba’s account of New York modernisation strongly reacts against the increasing independence of women in the United States. On the other hand, both Oteyza’s and Escoriaza’s narratives offer a counter-discourse that partially challenges the submissive role traditionally ascribed to women by patriarchy.

### **1.2.3 Racist Constructions of ‘Otherness’ in the Formation of Spanish National Identity: ‘The Black’ as a Subaltern ‘Other’**

Nostalgic reformulations of Spanish national identity after 1898 had the idea of a possible regeneration of the Empire at their core, not only in terms of colonial expansion in Africa, but also as a cultural re-conquest of the ‘lost’ American territories under the concept of ‘Hispanidad’. According to Balfour, traditionalist views of national identity stressed alleged cultural and spiritual (Catholic) connections between Spain and the former colonies:

during the Empire, bonds had been created between Spain and her colonies that were indissoluble, despite their secession from the mother country. These bonds were not merely cultural or linguistic but spiritual as well. They were condensed into the concept of Hispanism or *hispanidad*, an ill-defined system of values – honour, centralism, spirituality, hierarchy and so on. (Balfour 1997: 233)

The concept of 'Hispanidad' was however not exclusive to the traditionalist stance. José Luis Venegas (2009) has analysed, for example, the relevance of the project of Hispanism in Unamuno's thought. According to Venegas, Unamuno's intellectual enterprise of creating a transnational Spanish identity should not be seen in isolation, but rather as 'an integral component of most cultural programs for national regeneration at the turn of the century' for which 'the articulation of a transatlantic Hispanism [...] could restore the international prestige of Spanish culture while overcoming the traumas of four centuries of colonial domination' (2009: 453).<sup>7</sup> Certainly, the end of the Empire implied the end of the hierarchical relationship between the mainland and the colonies in economic and political terms. Nevertheless, nostalgic views of colonial domination based on constructions of 'race' did not disappear in Spain.

Racist discourses of 'Otherness' have played an essential role in the formation of Spanish identity since its origins. The consolidation of Spain as a geographical unity in 1492 was in fact the result of the *Reconquista* over the Moors, followed by the expulsion of those Jews who refused to convert to Catholicism. Spanish colonial endeavours also started in the same year with the so-called 'discovery' of America. The encounter with American natives was soon established as a dichotomy between coloniser and colonised. Tzvetan Todorov's study of discourses of 'Otherness' in *The Conquest of America* (1989) unveils the ambivalent nature of Columbus' description of indigenous peoples, which straddles between images of 'noble' and 'ignoble savages': 'indios inocentes, potencialmente cristianos, e indios idólatras, que practican el canibalismo, o indios pacíficos (que se someten a su poder), e indios belicosos, que merecen ser castigados de inmediato' (1989: 54). The outcome of Columbus' discourse is the same in both cases: the natives are seen as inferior to the coloniser and therefore they must be made to comply with his authority, either peacefully or by means of violence. Subsequent accounts of the natives by authors such as Bartolomé de las Casas, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, and José de Acosta continued the distinction between the civilised coloniser and the 'barbarous' colonised, seen as childish and

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<sup>7</sup> For a study of the literary concept of *Hispanismo* at the turn of the century, see John E. Englekirk's 'El Hispanoamericanismo y la Generación del 98' (1940).

innocent, in need of protection and control by the Spanish master ( Morales Guinaldo 2008: 98-108).

The authority of the coloniser derives from an alleged cultural superiority. Viewed in this way, the natives were seen as ‘seres despojados de toda propiedad cultural: se caracterizan [...] por la ausencia de costumbres, ritos, religión’ and hence are ‘culturalmente vírgenes, página blanca que espera la inscripción española y cristiana’ (Todorov 1989: 44). This assumed lack of culture served as justification for colonial expansion as an evangelising mission, assimilating the natives to Spanish religion, language, and customs and hence turning them into subjects of the Spanish Crown. This assimilation laid the foundation stone of the Spanish cultural Empire in the Americas, connected from its beginnings to a civilising ideal conceived as:

a reality in which the manifestations of human civilization reach a certain level and density, and which carries on, on that base and through its political and material power, a large-scale action of civilization and exerts a cultural and moral influence destined to remain alive beyond its time. (Galasso, quoted in Musi 2007: 82)

Moreover, as Todorov argues, spiritual expansion is connected to material conquest (1989: 52). Indeed, Spanish exploitation of American territories also became an essential source of income for the Spanish monarchy, which enabled further expansion and the creation of the Empire that served as the emblem of national identity in the centuries to come.

In the sixteenth-century, colonial exploitation of American natural resources such as sugar and tobacco in the Caribbean required a workforce that, after a century of domination, the colonisers could no longer find in the native population. Ellen Yvonne Simms points out that due to genocide, epidemics brought from Europe, and slavery amongst other reasons, the indigenous population in the *Virreinato de Nueva España* – which included territories such as Mexico as well as the Spanish East and West Indies – dramatically decreased from an estimated 27,650,000 individuals in 1519 to 1,075,000 by 1605. Opponents to the slavery of American natives such as Bartolomé de las Casas resorted to these astonishing figures in order to convince the Spanish crown of enacting the ‘New Laws’ in 1543, which forbade the use of indigenous population in hazardous labour by the *Encomenderos* (landowners). Paradoxically, the



liberation of the natives from land exploitation work led to the introduction of African enslavement in different territories of the Spanish colonial Empire such as New Spain, Central America, Peru, Hispaniola, and Cuba. Even those advocates of American natives were in favour of the enslavement of black people. They justified this position by referring to the alleged inferiority of the black 'race', yet regarded as physically stronger than the 'Indians', and therefore as cheap labour that could be exploited to death and easily replaced (Simms 2008: 230-231). Furthermore, whereas American natives were considered as 'good savages' who could be converted and assimilated, blacks were seen as 'el descendiente de Cam, criminal vicioso y bestial, destinado a la esclavitud' (Álvarez Chillida 2002: 217).

After the arrival of black slaves, social stratification in the colonies followed a 'caste system' based on racist hierarchy. On the top of such hierarchy was an élite of white Spanish born in the Peninsula, followed by the *criollo* of Spanish descent born in America, the native American, and persons of African descent (Acuña 2011: 23–24; Simms 2008: 232). This social system mirrored the previous situation of black people in Spain, where the end of the *Reconquista* had facilitated the contact with black Africans. From the fourteenth century onwards, Africans were used as slaves in the mainland, even before the colonisation of the 'New World' (Manzanas 1996: 252; Kicza 1992: 231-232). It has been argued, in fact, that the largest black population in Renaissance Europe was located in Spain (Martín and García Barranco 2008: 107). Accordingly, black people had a large representation in the Spanish literature of the Golden Age, in all literary genres, but especially in theatre (García Barranco 2010: 153-154).<sup>8</sup>

Spanish literary representations of blacks characterised them as intellectually and socially inferior, as brutes closer to animals than to humans (Santos Morillo 201: 27). Margarita García Barranco points out that literary production of the period unveils racist preconceptions of the blacks who lived in Spain in a situation of marginality due to:

- a) su situación jurídica, pues muchos de ellos carecían de libertad, eran esclavos; y los que no, o lo habían sido (libertos), o bien eran descendientes de mujeres esclavas; b) su origen étnico-geográfico, motivo de exclusión en una sociedad fuertemente xenófoba; c) el color de la piel, asociado implícitamente a la esclavitud, elemento

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<sup>8</sup> See also Baltasar Fra Molinero's *La imagen de los negros en el teatro del Siglo de Oro* (1995).

estigmatizador por sí mismo, independientemente de los factores anteriores. (2010: 154)

Common stereotypes of black people promoted in Golden Age Spanish literature included ‘el negro pendenciero’, ‘el negro como niño’, ‘las aficiones musicales del negro’, ‘el negro lujurioso’, ‘el negro como animal’, and ‘el negro cristiano’ (Santos Morillo 2011: 28-41). As one can see, such literary representations vary from a ‘positive’ innocence to a range of emphatically negative views. Invariably they strengthen the subaltern position of the blacks in relation to their white master, and hence:

su consideración como bárbaros salvajes e infantiles dignos de risa y de desprecio, que son felices en su ingenuidad animal y que, por tanto, hay que civilizar, proteger, moralizar, adoctrinar y enseñar la lengua del amo que es la única que tiene prestigio. Todas estas funciones las cumplía la institución de la esclavitud, que se cargaba así de sentido y utilidad ya que permitía civilizar al negro a cambio de su trabajo – elemento civilizador por excelencia – y de su sumisión. (Santos Morillo 2011: 41)

The connections between racist views of ‘the black’ as inferior to the white man and their location in the social ladder as slaves unveil the intersection between racism and class division. The construction of ‘racial’ difference in the West was in fact parallel to the development of class ideologies in European countries; therefore, the combination of colonialism and racism responded to social divisions between those who were seen as ‘fit to govern and those fit to be ruled’ (Fenton 1999: 83).

Racist stereotypes of ‘the black’ promoted in Golden Age literature had a further purpose, that of creating the illusion of purity in the Spanish ‘race’ and cultural homogeneity in the Peninsula. In her analysis of Francisco de Quevedo’s poem ‘Boda de negros’, Mar Martínez Góngora states that Spanish society of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century:

se halla constantemente enfrentada a las dificultades de establecer una diferencia neta entre el cristiano viejo y un “otro”, de origen judío o musulmán, cuya presencia amenaza el ideal de unidad religiosa e integración en el cuerpo del Estado español’ (2005: 264-265).

‘The Jew’ and ‘the Muslim’ represented an internal ‘Otherness’ often difficult to identify due to centuries of ‘racial’ and cultural mixing; however, the ‘racial’ category ‘black’ – based on skin colour rather than religious difference – allowed

the invention of a 'pure' Spanish whiteness that hid the threatening 'impurity' embodied by 'invisible' internal 'Others'. In Martínez Góngora's words:

el poema "Boda de negros" demuestra la necesidad del sujeto de la época de producir una imagen que actúe de contrapunto racial y facilite la afirmación de su pureza étnica. El desarrollo del estereotipo racial en las letras españolas se relaciona con las dificultades de dicho sujeto a la hora de distanciarse de un "otro," judío o musulmán, cuya semejanza pone en peligro la constitución de su propia identidad. (2005: 283-284)

Racist stereotypes of 'black inferiority' in Spain would persist throughout the following centuries and enter the twentieth century almost intact, as the analysis of this thesis' case studies will show. The connections between 'race', 'class', and 'national identity', deeply ingrained in Spanish history and literature, would also remain a pivotal element in the construction of the Spanish 'self' at the turn of the century. Whereas slavery had been progressively abolished in those Latin-American Republics which had reached independence during the nineteenth century, slavery came to an end in Puerto Rico and Cuba in 1873 and 1888 respectively. This fact is indeed symptomatic of the role played by nostalgic views of the Empire in the reassessment of Spanish identity brought about by the loss of overseas territories.<sup>9</sup> These two remaining colonies not only represented 'la herencia de un pasado glorioso', but also 'una fuente de riquezas y un emporio digno de ser conservado' (Hernández Ruigómez 1988: 30); needless to say, slavery was a key element in the exploitation of the plantations. As Theresa A. Singleton points out, Cuba, in particular, 'became the center for the slave trade and plantation slavery in the nineteenth-century Caribbean' (2001: 110). Racist representations of 'the black' as primitive, lazy, in need of protection and/or control did not fade in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as the following statement from Antonio Cánovas del Castillo in 1896 shows:

todos los que conocen a los negros le dirán que en Madagascar, como en el Congo y en Cuba, son perezosos, salvajes, inclinados a obrar mal, que hay que manejarlos con autoridad y firmeza para obtener algo de ellos. Esos salvajes no tienen otros dueños que sus instintos, sus apetitos primitivos. (quoted from Domínguez Burdalo 2006: 322)

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<sup>9</sup> For a complete study of the abolitionist process in Cuba and Puerto Rico, see Mario Hernández Sánchez-Barba (1985) and Consuelo Fernández Canales (1987).

José Domínguez Burdalo has discussed the racist undertones behind pro-war discourses during the Spanish-Cuban conflict. In particular, he argues that the expression ‘negra ingratitud de los cubanos’ commonly used by those politicians in favour of military actions on the island, was directed at characterising all Cubans as ‘negros’ (2006: 322). The application of racist stereotypes to the rebellious colony underscores the struggle to maintain a position of authority for the declining Spanish Empire, as the location of Cuban insurgency within the parameters of the ‘inferior Other’ keeps alive the illusion of Spanish superiority. ‘The black’ was in fact not seen as a member of the imagined Hispanic brotherhood promoted by regenerative discourses, and not even by Unamuno, who criticised the imperialistic connotations of Hispanic celebrations such as the *Fiesta de la Raza* (Venegas 2009: 455). Unamuno’s Hispanic project was based on a cultural notion of ‘race’ in which the Spanish language was the essential bond that united the former colonies and the mainland in an enduring cultural community. Following Domínguez Burdalo, Unamuno’s view of Hispanism ‘liga lengua con cultura, palabra con hispanidad’ and therefore ‘reincide también en la negación del concepto de raza en su acepción étnica, además de apuntar al mestizaje como ideal proceso de síntesis’ (2006: 330). Under this light, Native Americans and creoles were seen as Spaniards by Unamuno due to their belonging to a Spanish linguistic community. Blacks, on the other hand, were excluded from this community. They certainly spoke Spanish in the former colonies; nevertheless, in the case of ‘el negro’, Unamuno ‘no mostró hacia él la misma consideración que con indios y mestizos, llegando en muchos casos a defender, o al menos a entender, la esclavitud que especialmente tuvieron que padecer’ (Domínguez Burdalo 2006: 330). Unamuno’s view of ‘the black’ in fact relapses into stereotypes based on binary oppositions such as civilisation/primitivism and culture/nature, as well as contradictory images of innocence/violence. The following quote, extracted from Unamuno’s review of the novel *En el país de los Bubis* (1931) by José Mas, illustrates his racist stand: ‘esos niños grandes, lúbricos y crueles, borrachos y embusteros, que son los negros, y capaces, sin embargo, hasta de la santidad, pero de una santidad casi

vegetal, constituyen uno de los más grandes misterios de la historia' (quoted in Domínguez Burdalo 2006: 335).<sup>10</sup>

As one can see, 'the black' remains in a subaltern position consolidated in the Spanish imaginary through the continuous repetition of stereotypes, which simultaneously preserve illusions of 'racial' hierarchy and purity directed to strengthen a national identity precisely weakened by the end of Spanish rule in America.

#### **1.2.4 Philosephardism, Anti-Semitism, and National Regeneration**

In a recent special issue of the *Journal of Hispanic Studies* entitled 'Revisiting Jewish Spain in the Modern Era' (2011), editors Daniela Flesler, Tabea Alexa Linhard, and Adrián Pérez Melgosa argue that the intention of the volume is to explore 'particular instances in which Spanish/Jewish junctures provide new insights into Spain's modernity' since 'while the presence of Jews certainly was minimal until the late twentieth century, Jews, real or imaginary, were important figures in the debates that were shifting the nation's present and future' (2011: 1). As Isabelle Rohr (2011: 63-64) points out in an article included in this special issue, Sephardic Jews in particular gained significant prominence in nostalgic revisions of Spanish national identity, especially after the publication of Ángel Pulido's *Españoles sin patria y la raza sefardí* (1905). In his book, Pulido laments the persistence of 'nociones adquiridas desde la infancia sobre los judíos, con sus legendarios defectos de raza, y las falsas ideas acerca de las sociedades europeas en que viven muchos de esos llamados intelectuales de nuestro país, que nunca cruzan las fronteras', and argued for reintegration of the Sephardic Jewish community to the Spanish nation (1905: 5). The encounter with Sephardic Jews in North Africa during the Spanish protectorate in Morocco in 1912 also encouraged Philosephardic campaigns, promoted not only by Pulido but also by intellectuals such as Carmen de Burgos and Unamuno. Following Bretz (2001: 217), 'the rewriting of the past and the redefinition of modern Spain accompanies a revision of Jewish-Spanish relations and a desire to foster mutual understanding and revive the commingling of cultures that characterized early Spanish society'. Resorting to the medical jargon common in regenerationist discourse, Pulido blamed

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<sup>10</sup> *En el país de los Bubis*, recently re-edited by Ediciones del Viento in 2010, narrates the author's autobiographical experience in Africa.

Spanish degeneration on the expulsion of the Jews, since it had provoked a ‘bloody amputation’ and a ‘long and painful haemorrhage’ in the Spanish body (Rohr 2007: 15). In Pulido’s view, ‘racial’ mixture between Spanish and Sephardic Jews in the Middle Ages had improved both ‘races’; the expulsion of the Jews had therefore triggered not only ‘racial’ degeneration in Spain, but also economic decline, and the restitution of this lost element of the national culture would prompt Spain’s regeneration (Rohr 2007: 16). Philosephardism was also strongly defended in conservative and proto-fascist circles. One of the champions of the campaign was Ernesto Giménez Caballero, avant-garde prose writer who turned to fascist positions, especially after his visit to Mussolini’s Italy in 1923. Before becoming an instrument of Fascist propaganda, *La Gaceta Literaria* – journal directed by Giménez Caballero – promoted ‘las principales facetas ideológicas del filosefardismo de los años veinte y treinta’ (Rehrmann 1998: 54). Rehrmann argues that such attitudes responded to ‘el prestigio de la “culturocracia” sefardí’, the belief that the persistence of the Spanish language in the Sephardic community reinforced the ‘greatness’ of the Spanish culture (1998: 51). Bernd Rother also stresses the fact that Spanish Sephardic Jews represented a nostalgic view of medieval Spain, of ‘el amor eterno por España, lo que mostraba la supremacía de la cultura española. Lo mismo que por ejemplo “El Cid”, también los sefardíes representaban la mítica época de la grandeza española’ (1999: 621). Giménez Caballero’s Philosephardism can be therefore interpreted as a concept closely linked to the project of *Hispanismo* aimed at regenerating a national culture severely questioned after the ‘Disaster’. As Michal Friedman argues:

“Sepharad” played a central role in the efforts made by Spain’s political and intellectual vanguard and Giménez Caballero in particular to elaborate a vision of a New Spain and Hispanic identity in the wake of the loss of Empire in 1898 and shortly before the outbreak of Spain’s civil war in 1936. Such efforts, and the elaboration of Hispanidad in this context, are connected to the reemergence of an imperial agenda in Spain and the rise of “scientific racism” and Orientalist discourse. (Friedman 2011: 36)

As a matter of fact, the sympathy shown by the traditionalists towards Sephardic Jews did not stop the consolidation of anti-Semitic attitudes in Spain. The sort of Spanish Philosephardism promoted by Pulido was in fact strongly criticised by

Catholic sectors, as shown by the publication of anti-Semitic texts such as *La cuestion judaica en la España actual y en la universidad de Salamanca* (1906) by Joaquín Girón y Arcas, several anti-Semitic articles published in Catholic magazines such as *La Ciudad de Dios* between 1904 and 1905, and *Arte de reconocer a nuestros judíos* (1916) by Peiró Menéndez as well as the creation of the *Liga Nacional Antimasónica y Antisemita* in 1912 (Álvarez Chillida 2002: 274-278). Modern anti-Semitism would become entrenched in Spain especially after the arrival of the Second Republic, with the rise of the radical right. The three political groups brought together under the anti-liberal right – *Acción Nacional*, the monarchists, and the Carlists – shared the view of Spain as an essentially Catholic nation, similarly to the Fascist parties that would unite in 1934 as *la Falange Española de las Jons* (Álvarez Chillida 2007: 182). The Jews were identified by these groups with new national threats such as Socialists, Nationalists, Freemasons, and Republicans; it is during this period when the idea of a Jewish conspiracy ‘dominada por las fuerzas de la logia y de la sinagoga, siguiendo un camino que conducía directamente al comunismo, tiranía judía ya plenamente establecida en Rusia’ was spread by anti-liberal parties. Reflecting on the myth of the Jewish conspiracy, the anti-Semitic press orchestrated several campaigns that ‘denounced’ an alleged Jewish invasion in Spain, that of the Sephardic Jews and also German Jews arriving since 1933 (Álvarez Chillida 2007: 184). Spanish anti-Semites resorted to historical prejudices such as the ‘Christ-killer’ stereotype which encouraged the image of ‘the Jew’ as an enemy of Christendom and therefore of Spain.

Furthermore, anti-Semitic attitudes in Spain must not be solely related to political projects of national regeneration in the twentieth century, but also to the historical persistence of the stereotype of ‘the Jew’ – deeply ingrained in the Spanish social and cultural imaginary since the Middle Ages – as an ‘internal Other’ against which Spanish identity was constructed. Despite the historical emphasis placed on their expulsion, not all Jews abandoned Spain in 1492, since many of them decided to convert to Catholicism. Jaime de Salazar y Acha points out that, in fact, ‘la corte de Isabel y Fernando era un hervidero de conversos antiguos, conversos recientes y judíos practicantes y – todos ellos – gozando de la más íntima confianza y simpatía de los soberanos’ (1991: 391). Many of the *conversos* belonged to rich and influential families; some of them also followed

ecclesiastical careers, for the Church was ‘el único estamento en el que a nadie se le exigía demostrar sus orígenes familiares, sino sólo su formación y su piedad’ (Salazar y Acha 1991: 291). Moreover, converted Jews became an urban minority group of artisans, merchants, scribes, and doctors, separated from the majority of the Spanish population at the time, mainly formed by farmers and shepherds. It was precisely the presence of the *conversos* in positions of power that fostered a wave of antipathy from both the Church and the *castellanos viejos*; the latter, in particular, lacked the education and economic resources possessed by the *conversos*, and could not therefore compete socially with them. Such hostility would be the backdrop against which the first *estatuto de limpieza de sangre* was established in 1449 (Salazar y Acha 1991: 292). The notion of purity of blood implied ‘el requisito de demostrar, al que aspira a un cargo o a ingresar en una determinada institución, que no tiene ningún antepasado conocido, por lejano que sea, judío o musulmán, y no está, por tanto, infectado con su sangre’ (Salazar y Acha 1991: 293), and hence became a marginalising instrument that reversed the social position held by converted Jews (Benbassa 2010: 21). Social marginalisation was reinforced by the use of negative stereotypes about ‘the Jew’, which included that of the cowardly, arrogant, and cunning traitor (Monsalvo Antón 1985: 120). Notably, ‘the Jew’ was represented as materialistic and as a usurer, whose patrimony was the result of the extortion of the Christians (Monsalvo 1985: 126). Other stereotypes stemmed from religious prejudices that had their roots in the beginning of Christianity, such as the accusations of ritual crimes, the use of magic, and association with the devil. Physical stereotypes such as the aquiline nose, secret skin or blood diseases suffered by ‘the Jew’, and even the possession of a little tail, were in fact related to their alleged diabolical nature (Álvarez Chillida 2002: 40). These negative images of ‘the Jew’ were promoted by popular literature, such as the *refranero popular* (Monsalvo Antón 1985: 122), and the *Romancero* (Álvarez Chillida 2002: 67-68), which ingrained anti-Jewish representations in Spanish literary and social imaginary, establishing an identitarian opposition between the ‘true Spanish Christian’ and the ‘impure’ and internal Jewish ‘Other’ that would last until the twentieth century. As Álvarez-Chillida points out, ‘la identidad definida contra el moro y el judío ha perdurado en gran medida en la mentalidad popular española, y ha dejado una enorme huella



en diferentes movimientos políticos e ideológicos de los siglos XIX y XX' (2002: 60).

I propose that the persistence of anti-Jewish constructions of 'Otherness' as an identitarian device in the Spanish social imaginary becomes evident in the depictions of the United States present in the Spanish press before the 1898 war. In these portrayals, American capitalism was regarded as contemptible materialism, opposite to the moral and spiritual values of a Spanishness deeply intertwined with Catholicism (Seregni 2007: 71). In a reductive and stereotypical fashion, Americans were above all identified with money and materialism, hence recurrently depicted as a morally degraded and greedy people. Such a stereotype is illustrated by the following example provided by Seregni, taken from the magazine *Nuevo Mundo*: 'Hijos de la torpe usura/ y del negocio inhumano/ sólo el cobrar les apura' (2007: 73). I argue that references to usury and inhumanity can be related to anti-Semitic constructions of 'Otherness', a fact that is strengthened by the characterisation of Americans as 'pigs'. Significantly, this is an image that recalls the *Judensau* ('Jewish pig') that characterised Jews 'as no better than animals' since the Middle Ages (Beller 2007: 13).

As I will show in Chapter 4, Spanish New York narratives reflect the pervasiveness of discourses of 'race' in the construction of Spanish national identity. On the one hand, whereas Moreno Villa and Camba's texts draw on notions of 'racial' hierarchy to describe the situation of black people in the United States, Oteyza's novel challenges the racist opposition between the white Spanish master and the black subaltern. Similarly, the old archetype of 'the Jew' as materialistic and representative of urban capitalism will shape the perception of American society in Spanish literary accounts of New York by Moreno Villa, Escoriaza, and Camba, which are moreover not exempt of other anti-Semitic stereotypes.

### **1.3 Early Twentieth-Century Spanish New York Narratives**

Similarly to the European case, the United States became a recurrent theme in Spanish letters during the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> The sheer vastness of this corpus,

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<sup>11</sup> See table in Appendix.

especially in the form of travelogues, but also in poetry and narrative fiction, is a testament to the undeniably expanding interest awakened by the development of the United States in Spain. In particular, a flurry of narrative texts took New York as their focus, such as those by Mariano Alarcón (1918), Eduardo Criado Requena (1919), Luis Araquistáin (1921), Rómulo de Mora (1922), Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (1924), Joaquín Belda (1926), José Moreno Villa (1927), Teresa de Escoriaza (1929), Edgar Neville (1929), Jacinto Miquelarena (1930), Luis de Oteyza (1931), Julio Camba (1932), and Pedro Segura (1935). Despite their specific location in New York, the city often works in these texts as a metonymy of the entire country, therefore obliterating the cultural diversity one can encounter in the vast territory of the United States. The view of the country given in the aforementioned works shows a variety of perspectives, such as: a strong denunciation of American increasing imperialist policies in the rest of the continent and the danger they pose to European countries (Araquistáin); a light, *costumbrista* description of the city (Alarcón, Belda, Miquelarena, and Segura); an apocalyptic view of the metropolis as expression of fears towards miscegenation (Escoriaza); an avant-garde celebration of the United States as a young country (Blasco Ibáñez, Neville); a sarcastic criticism to modernisation (Camba); ambiguity towards the benefits of incorporating the American model to Spain (Criado, Moreno Villa); and a stronger focus on the progress represented by the United States, especially in terms of individual freedom (Mora, Oteyza). However, and in spite of their differences, these texts share a view of the United States as a young country without tradition, still in the process of becoming a nation – sometimes characterised as ‘primitive’ –, which is compared to the long history and cultural heritage of European civilisation. Furthermore, in this view of New York and by extension of the United States, three points of tension recurrently appear with more or less intensity: mass society and mechanisation, the increasing emancipation of women, and multiculturalism. As the cultural and historical context given in the previous sections of this chapter shows, the persistent focus on these particular aspects of American society mirrored uneasy reactions to the challenges brought about to class, gender, and ‘racial’ constructs by modernising processes, not only in the United States but also in Europe, and in Spain in particular.

In relation to the theme of mechanisation and mass society, New York is described as a ‘colmena humana’ (Belda 1926: 19), and American people as a ‘masa anónima’ (Araquistáin 1921: 16). The metropolis is also depicted as ‘[una] máquina de trabajo’ (Miquelarena 1930: 1957), where ‘todo es automático’ (Criado Requena 2004: 132). Moreover, the emergence of a dehumanised mass society and New York’s mechanisation are commonly seen in these texts as two phenomena that are directly connected:

la fluidez de la masa sólo puede lograrse a fuerza de máquinas. Todo está aquí mecanizado, sujeto al maquinismo. Es rara la relación humana directa. El hombre apenas puede comunicarse con el hombre sino por el intermedio de una máquina. (Araquistáin 1921: 20)

Secondly, all these texts contain – often in derogatory and sarcastic terms – references to the increasing access of women to the public sphere and their refusal to comply with the patriarchal authority represented in the figures of their husbands, as in the following excerpt taken from Criado’s text:

en todo el mundo no hay mujer menos femenina que la americana; parece creada solamente para imitar y explotar al hombre; ella no gusta de los quehaceres domésticos, ni de las obligaciones del hogar [...] El padre o el marido no pueden influir ni encauzar su vida; las leyes la protegen de un modo tan exagerado que el hombre ha de dejarla hacer su voluntad para evitarse el ridículo. (2004: 79)

Araquistáin also argues that ‘rara será la mujer norteamericana – habría que buscarla lejos de los grandes centros de población, en los distantes núcleos rurales – que no hable alguna vez al día de su “independencia”, como anhelo o como lograda realidad’ (1921: 92). According to these texts, the growing presence of women in the workplace, on occasions even holding higher positions than men (Belda 1926: 36), leads to the impression that ‘el hombre’ has been ‘empequeñecido por la arrogancia y la independencia de la mujer’ (Miquelarena 1930: 157).

Finally, New York is presented as the epitome of cosmopolitanism, where ‘se hablaba el inglés, pero también se hablaba el italiano, el castellano, el chino, el polaco y otras lenguas más o menos enrevesadas. Y todas ellas se hablaban, no de una manera esporádica [...] sino como se hablaban en los países respectivos’ (Belda 1926: 117-118). The coexistence of peoples from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds is presented in different ways. Criado’s text, for example,

provides an aestheticised view of the Orient in which Chinatown is depicted as a mysterious neighbourhood (2004: 126-130). Belda, on the other hand, describes New York as a metropolis containing several cities and strengthens the fact that ‘a la grandeza total de la urbe no han sido sólo los Americanos los que habían contribuido’ (1926: 118). The prevailing racism of early twentieth-century American society is also tackled in some of these texts, such as in Araquistáin’s (1921: 12). Furthermore, the encounter with American Jews is described through negative archetypes, as we can see in the following dialogue from Neville’s novel:

- Clorato, ¿te acuerdas de ese chico moreno que salía conmigo? Pues resulta que es judío [...] ¿Te casarías tú con un judío? [...]
- Yo, no.
- ¿Odias también a los judíos?
- De ninguna manera, me divierten, y tengo muchos amigos que lo son.
- Entonces, ¿por qué crees que no se debe casar una con un judío?
- No tengo razones muy precisas. Tal vez el pensar que te hará niños judíos, pues cada día te darás cuenta de que son niños judíos. Además, tu marido disimulará sus características de raza mientras le quede el deseo de agradarte, cosa que en nosotros es natural. Para él eso será un esfuerzo. Cuando se canse se dejará llevar por su instinto [...] cambiará tus muebles por otros, y venderá tus trajes usados a las criadas, y tendrá una serie de amigos muy sucios, con barbilla.  
(Neville 1998: 234-235)

In this thesis I suggest that the identification between American society and these three aspects becomes particularly visible in the four case studies studied here, as we can infer from the depiction of New York in these texts archetypically as a ‘niña violenta’ (Moreno Villa), ‘el crisol de las razas’ (Escoriaza), ‘la ciudad de la anticipación’ (Oteyza), and ‘la ciudad automática’ (Camba). Rather than an ‘objective’ or accurate view of New York, these four images work as symbols – *third images* – of America, encapsulating Spanish anxieties towards modernisation.

## 1.4 Conclusion

As I have shown in this chapter, discourses of ‘Otherness’ have played a vital role in the construction of both European and Spanish identities. In particular, the opposition between a white-bourgeois-civilised-man representing ‘the West’ versus a feminised non-white-primitive ‘Other’ has been consistently directed to

justify a series of hierarchical relationships based on social constructs such as ‘class’, ‘race’, and ‘gender’. By identifying ‘the West’ with civilisation, in opposition to the ‘primitive Other’, the European ‘self’ has been constructed around illusions of difference in which Western civilisation is invested with the authority to dominate those who are allegedly ‘inferior’.

However, the development of Western modernity in the form of modernisation gave way to a paradoxical result at the turn of the century: not only did technological and industrial achievements lead to the barbaric and traumatic experience of the First World War, but they also empowered and gave visibility to the external and internal ‘primitives’ who were supposed to comply with the authority of the ruling ‘class’, the ruling ‘gender’, and the ruling ‘race’. As ‘the Others’ advanced in the conquest of their erased rights, challenges to elitism, patriarchy, and ‘racial’ superiority were regarded as signs of involution and regression to primitivism, of the degeneration and imminent fall of Western civilisation. Fears of degeneration were strengthened by the emergence of a new world power on the other side of the ocean, in the land of the colonised, which also challenged Europe’s supremacy as the peak of progress. Probably more worrying than the economic and military power of ‘the Big Other’ embodied by the United States, was the fact that American growth was precisely seen as the result of the processes that were threatening civilisation in Europe: a mechanised and capitalist mass society; the increasing independence of women from patriarchy; and ‘racial’ heterogeneity in which ‘the Jew’ was an exponent of American capitalism and ‘the black’ – despite remaining in a subaltern position – was threatening the ‘purity’ of the white ‘race’. For European thinkers and writers, the United States – often represented metonymically by New York as the embodiment of pure modernity – became an anticipated image of the future, a symbol of the catastrophic effects that modernisation would have in Western civilisation.

At the same time, Spain was facing the last stages of a long process of imperial decline that Spanish intellectuals similarly described resorting to the semantics of degeneration. The loss of the remaining overseas territories in the war against a newly-born nation without historical tradition not only undermined Spanish international prestige, but also worsened a crisis of national identity. The idea of Spain as a historically powerful nation had been inextricably attached to

its colonial possessions; without the Empire, the varnish of the prevailing rhetorics of national grandeur wore off the symbols that had been worshipped throughout the centuries: the Reconquest, the ‘discovery’ of America, and the mythicised view of a pure, warrior, and Catholic Spanish ‘race’. According to the Spanish intelligentsia, national decline was the result, on the one hand, of ‘racial’ degeneration, prompted by the effects of industrialisation. On the other, the ‘Spanish problem’ reflected the exhaustion of the Restoration system and liberal Parliamentarism, rotten by the influence of *caciquismo* and corruption. As I have shown, two hegemonic positions – *casticista* and *Europeizante* – battled to impose their particular projects of national regeneration, and therefore their view of Spanish identity. In both cases – either as the origin of Spain’s decline or the panacea for the ‘illness’ of the country – Europe and modernisation were fundamental concepts. However, even those liberal intellectuals who claimed the need to modernise Spain could not avoid facing the crisis that Western modernity was suffering.

First of all, Spanish national identity had also relied on constructions of ‘Otherness’, in order to maintain the alleged superiority of the Catholic ‘race’ that had reconquered the Peninsula from ‘the Moor’, purged its territory from the pernicious influence of ‘the Jew’, and subdued ‘the Indian’ and ‘the black’ for colonialist purposes. In spite of philosephardic campaigns and the culturally overarching project of *Hispanidad*, all these ‘racial’ archetypes survived in the Spanish cultural and social imaginary through literary representations, amongst others.

Furthermore, the idea of a degenerated ‘race’ as well as concerns about the strength of popular protests also reflected the elitist character of the Spanish intelligentsia in the early twentieth century. ‘The masses’ had to be educated and/or indoctrinated, that is, civilised. Like the colonised, they were seen as primitive, degenerated, and out of control. The solution for Spain’s ‘condition’ was therefore either a strong leader, an iron surgeon, or the formation of an elitist educated minority that would bring light to the caverns of the peasants and the working class.

Finally, both the Catholic *casticistas* and the secularising *Europeizantes* remained attached to a biosocial conception of ‘gender’, in which women were seen as unfit to participate in civil life due to their supposed irrationality and

excess of sentimentality. In both cases, the ‘gender’ category ‘women’ must not only remain under the authority of the protective patriarch and fulfil her docile, loving, and submissive role as ‘Angel in the House’, but also become the representation of the male order itself, as emblem of the patriarchal Spanish nation.

I have shown that Spanish writers also turned their eyes to the United States, and especially to New York, and produced similar representations of this city as the image of a future dictated by ‘the masses’, dominated by capitalism and technology, in which ‘racial’ and cultural boundaries became blurred, and where the ‘modern woman’ threatened patriarchal authority. Going back to the initial question posed at the beginning of the chapter, I propose that the prominent interest awakened by New York in early twentieth-century Spanish literature responds to the tensions and contradictions brought about by the crisis of national identity after the end of the Empire, and the subsequent struggle for modernity in the country. New York reflected the destabilising effects of modernisation in the social structures that underpinned the Western concept of civilisation, constructed from the opposition to a series of internal and external ‘Others’. Ambivalent responses to the arrival of modernisation in Spain mirrored similar anxieties, which in the Spanish case must also be understood within the particular historical, cultural, and social circumstances that followed the collapse of traditional views of national identity and subsequent efforts to restore the prestige of the country.

The next three chapters will be devoted to the study of the responses to New York’s modernisation in Moreno Villa’s, Escoriza’s, Oteyza’s, and Camba’s texts, with a focus on the three aspects that in my view represented a challenge to the re-invention of Spanish national identity in the first decades of the twentieth century: mass society and mechanisation, women’s emancipation, and multiculturalism. The following chapter will commence the textual analysis of the chosen body of works, by looking at the reactions towards mass society and mechanisation in Moreno Villa’s *Pruebas de Nueva York*, Oteyza’s *Anticópolis*, and Camba’s *La ciudad automática*.

## Chapter 2. The Hidalgo against ‘the Masses’: the Challenge to the Classist Nation

In tune with the image of the United States as ‘the Big Other’ developed in Europe during the first decades of the twentieth century, Moreno Villa’s, Oteyza’s, and Camba’s New York narratives draw strongly on a vehement criticism of mass society. The mechanisation of life, embodied by New York’s innovative architecture, is presented in these texts as a sign of social involution. Americans are described as mass of dehumanised individuals, standardised by capitalism, the machine, and the means of mass production. Consequently, in all three texts, the United States are characterised as a primitive society, where ‘the masses’ have taken control over the intellectual élite. Fears of regression towards primitivism reflected the widespread belief in the imminent demise of Western civilisation. At the same time, the power acquired by this menacing internal ‘Other’ in the United States is contrasted with Spain’s elitist social structures, where intellectuals such as José Ortega y Gasset defended the pre-eminence of a leading minority in the task of regenerating the nation.

In this chapter, my examination of these three New York narratives will focus on the connections between the rise of this threatening ‘Other’ and the crisis of Spanish national identity. Teresa de Escoriaza’s *El crisol de las razas* will be left out of my analysis here. Although Escoriaza’s novella includes references to technology – in particular, to means of transport such as the automobile and the underground –, this text gives greater emphasis to issues of gender and ‘race’, which I will analyse in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively.

The main question I will address in Chapter 2 is: how do reactions against mechanisation and mass society given in these texts reflect the contradictory positions towards modernisation represented by the two hegemonic projects of national regeneration in Spain?



## 2.1 ‘Cirujanos de Siempre-Mata y Nunca-Salva’: Spain’s Modernisation Beyond *Regeneracionismo* in *Pruebas de Nueva York*

*Pruebas de Nueva York* opens with a drawing by Moreno Villa which can be seen as a symbol of the attitudes towards the city that we will find in his travelogue:

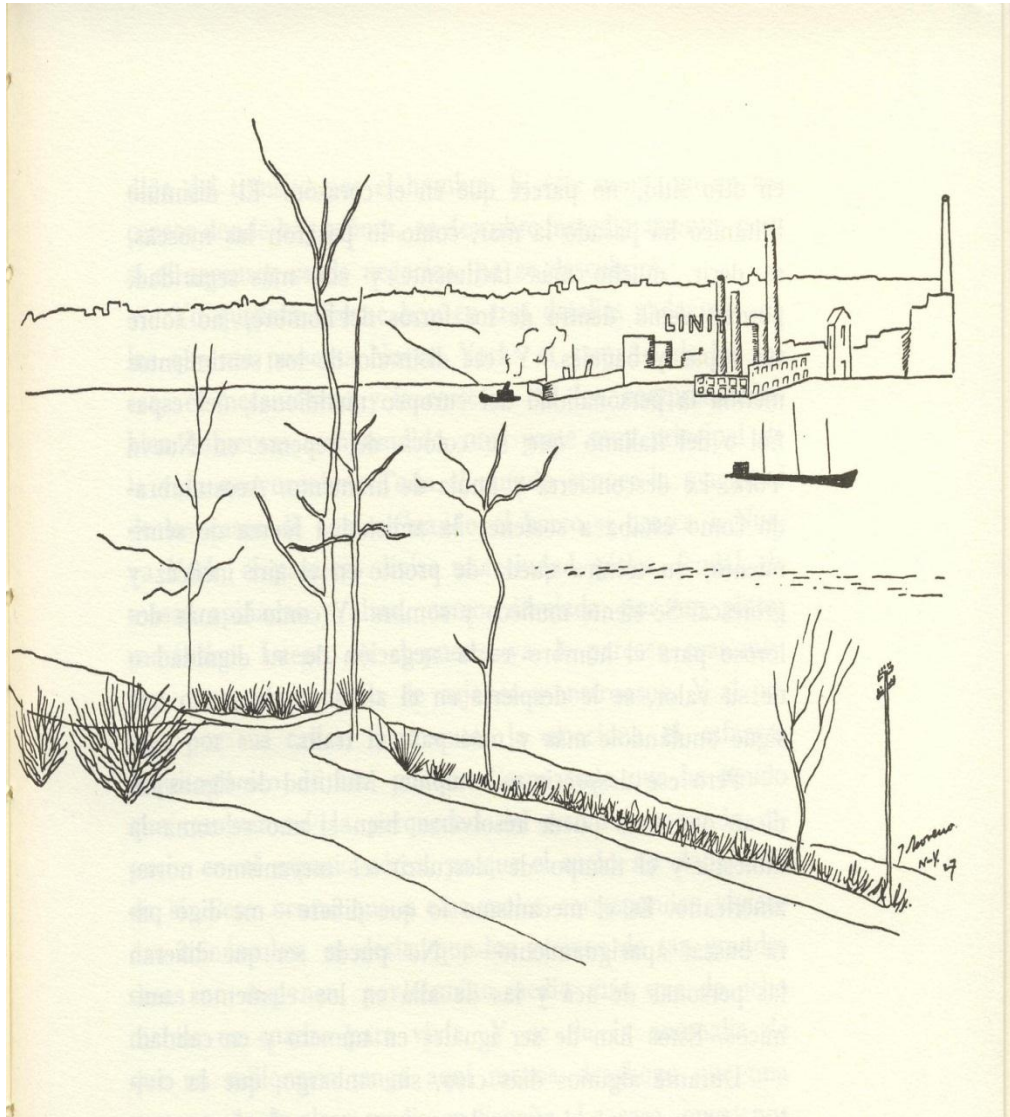


Figure 1

New York’s skyline is drawn as an imprecise, almost ghostly silhouette, which creates an impression of distance. A factory, located at the front of the vague outline of the metropolis, dominates the scene. On the other side of a wide river – probably the East River –, we find a close-up of a more precise portrayal of dying nature, where leafless and fragile trees look like skeletons but resist

disappearing.<sup>12</sup> The picture is therefore dialectic in nature in that it exhibits two opposing realities. On the one hand, the factory is an image of modernisation, the symbol of an emerging and powerful new civilisation based on technological progress and industrialisation. On the other, the dying trees seem to evoke the decadence of Spain, and also perhaps the rough Castilian landscape continuously revived as the essence of Spanish national identity in the literature of the first decades of the twentieth century. I argue that such symmetrical arrangement anticipates the sort of duplicity that the reader will encounter in the text. The illustration as a whole can be said to stand for the opposition between ‘Us’ – Spain, Europe, the Old Continent – and ‘Them’ – New York, the United States, a new civilisation.

Moreno Villa’s account of New York places strong emphasis on the innovative architecture of the city, as opposed to the historical value of the Castilian ruins. Moreno Villa’s analytical approach to New York’s urban landscape is not accidental. In the same year of his visit to the city, he was appointed *secretario de redacción* of the magazine *Arquitectura*, to which he also contributed with a series of articles until 1933 (Huergo 2010: 19). He also wrote several essays about architecture for other publications, such as *La Gaceta Literaria* and the newspaper *El Sol* (Tomás Llavador 2010: 15).<sup>13</sup> José María Tomás Llavador has even argued that Moreno Villa was ‘el primer crítico de arquitectura moderna de España’ (2010: 12). Moreover, architecture was of great interest to the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, which not only invited some of the most prestigious architects of the time to the *Residencia de Estudiantes* – where Moreno Villa lived and worked –, but also encouraged the study of Spanish popular architecture (Guerrero 1999: 14-16). Reflecting contemporary debates around national identity, architectural tendencies in 1920s Spain were represented by two opposing views. On the one hand, a cosmopolitan and innovative vocation willing to integrate modern European influences into the national ‘artistic personality’; on the other, a stand

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<sup>12</sup> Moreno Villa’s drawing resembles a series of views of the East River painted in the mid-1920s by American artist Georgia O’Keefe as well as Edward Hopper’s *East River* (1923). Despite the similarities, the Spanish writer does not refer to either of these painters as an influence. The drawing also presents a mysterious word, ‘Linit’ superimposed on the image of the factory, which could be a misspelled form of ‘Limit’ or ‘Lignite’.

<sup>13</sup> Moreno Villa’s articles and reviews about architecture remained overlooked by scholarship until 2010, when Humberto Huergo Cardoso collected them in the volume *Función contra forma y otros escritos sobre arquitectura madrileña 1927-1935*.

that defended a ‘natural’ evolution of the Spanish style that should result in a national *casticista* architecture, the so-called *estilo español* (Sambricio 2000: 22-23). Spanish advocates of modern architecture such as Leopoldo Torres Balbás, former student of the department of archeology in the *Centro de Estudios Históricos* (Calatrava 2007: 42), did not reject Spanish tradition, but rather the idea of national architecture based on a nostalgic recreation of the past. Instead, they searched for ways of accommodating Spanish popular architecture to functionalist tendencies in vogue in Europe, in order to ‘buscar una solución al problema de construir viviendas económicas e higiénicas’ (Sambricio 2000: 44). As Unamuno’s *En torno al casticismo* and Ortega y Gasset’s *La España invertebrada* show, Europeanisation projects did not abandon the myth of a Spanish national identity as the expression of the Castilian character. Similarly, those architects educated in the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, such as Torres Balbás, argued in favour of a combination of Spanish architecture with European influences. Torres Balbás’ article ‘Mientras labran los sillares. Las nuevas formas de la arquitectura’ (1918), in which the architect criticises the so-called *estilo español*, is in fact reminiscent of Unamuno’s theory of a ‘true’ *casticismo*. Torres Balbás states that, ‘al lado de este falso casticismo, que ignora la evolución de nuestra arquitectura [...] hay otro vital y profundo que desdeña lo episódico de una arquitectura para ir a la entraña, y que fiado en su personalidad, no teme el contacto con el arte extranjero, que puede fecundarle’, and therefore argues for the opportunity to ‘traducir en formas modernas el espíritu tradicional de la arquitectura española’ (1918: 31-34). A similar attitude was shown by Moreno Villa in his articles about architecture. As Huergo points out:

la empresa de Moreno Villa siguió tres derroteros: la crítica del historicismo y los estilos regionales; la reinención de la tradición arquitectónica española a partir de nuevos puntos de arranque que enlazan con las nuevas tendencias; y, sobre todo, la promoción de los jóvenes arquitectos madrileños en torno a un criterio de escuela, la por él bautizada “escuela madrileña” de arquitectura. (2010: 21)

As I will show next, Moreno Villa’s depiction of New York’s buildings and urban planning stems from the debate between modern and traditionalist architectural tendencies developing in Spain at the time. Drawing on the widespread view of the United States as a young country without history, Moreno Villa argues that the lack of architectural tradition allows the continuous demolition of old buildings:

en los pueblos nuevos [...] como Nueva York [...] no existe la venerable ruina. Y si algún edificio pretende alcanzar el rasgo de la veneración, lo derriban inmediatamente para levantar sobre su base uno más a tono con el tiempo y más eficaz en todos los sentidos. La construcción que tenga veinticinco años se mira con recelo y se la señala enarbolando imaginaria piqueta. (1989: 20)

On the contrary, for ‘old civilisations’ such as Spain, ‘venerable ruins’ represent the memory of the nation, which must be preserved and respected:

hoy existe ya una responsabilidad histórica en los países viejos. Si éstos planearan a lo yanqui, no quedaría memoria del pasado arquitectónico ni urbano. Por fortuna para los yanquis, aquí no hay paredes respetables, y con su procedimiento no las habrá nunca. (22)

Behind these two divergent concepts of urban planning lies an opposition between a modernising will of change and the stagnating weight of history. In contrast to the Spanish dependence on its past, New York represents a society in constant flux. The rooms of the skyscrapers are in fact described as ‘interiores de gran navío’, due to ‘las pequeñas dimensiones de los cuartos y a la abundancia de madera. Después de todo, marinos fueron los hombres que aquí llegaron, y navío es toda la isla de Manhatam [*sic*]’ (23). The image of Manhattan as a vessel suggests a visual comparison with the elongated shape of the island, as well as the idea of New York as a city in permanent motion. Its founders were ‘marinos’ and like sailors New Yorkers continue to navigate, not in space anymore but in time, embarked on an unstoppable voyage towards the future, fearless of roots and conventions, constant and destructive. On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, Spain remains static, paralysed by the burden of derelict, yet steady ancient buildings, remnants of a shipwrecked past conditioning the present in its significance as national heritage.

The view of American architecture given in the text straddles self-distance and pragmatic appreciation. ‘Vengo a creer que la demolición y mudanza responden a un principio de limpieza’ (20), declares the writer. Urban cleanliness is seen as an expression of innovation and progress: ‘si los neoyorquinos piden constantemente nuevas casas para su “confort”, hay que derribar las de ayer, levantar las de mañana, con todos los adelantos conseguidos en el intermedio’ (21). However, in Spain the historical value of old edifices seems to prevail over urban improvements:

cuando van a España, estos norteamericanos genuinos fruncen el ceño ante la suciedad y no les quedan ojos para comprender lo otro. Nosotros amamos Toledo, a pesar de sus cosas, porque lo miramos con sentido histórico; pero el hombre que lo mire con sentido higienista, o un principio imperativo de limpieza no puede hacer la vista gorda como nosotros. (21)

Moreno Villa's allusion to Toledo as archetype of the historical Spanish city echoes the image of the Castilian landscape as expression of national identity in writers such as Unamuno, Azorín, and Baroja. Carlos Larrínaga points out that for these writers, 'el paisaje no debía ser transformado. En el paisaje, tal como era, sin alteraciones, se daba el verdadero encuentro de la identidad colectiva del pueblo español'. Consequently, in their writings, 'la tierra, en especial Castilla, tiene alma. El paisaje era, pues, una vía para adentrarse no sólo en lo geográfico, sino también en el espíritu' (2002: 186). The increasing industrialisation of Spanish cities such as Bilbao, Madrid, and Barcelona was regarded with distrust by Baroja and Azorín, for example. In *Camino de perfección (Pasión mística)* (1901), Baroja describes the industrial city, 'aquella gran capital con sus chimeneas', as 'el monstruo que había de tragar a los hermanos abandonados' (1972: 13-14). Similarly, in *Diario de un enfermo* (1901), Azorín shows his discontent towards Madrid's increasing industrialisation by stating that 'hay una barbarie más hórrida que la barbarie antigua: el industrialismo moderno, el afán de lucro, la explotación colectiva'; furthermore, in his eyes, industrialisation entails 'el bienestar de las presentes generaciones a costa de las luchas y sufrimientos de las generaciones pasadas' (1975: 383). The dramatic transformation of the urban landscape is seen by these writers as a threat to the essence – 'the soul' – of Spanish national identity at the hands of the capitalist forces of modernisation. Consequently, their literary interpretation of cities such as Toledo, which remained untouched by industrial progress, dwelled on their immobility as expression of an eternal national character. For these authors, the Castilian landscape embodied a Golden Age located in the Middle Ages, before the national decline, 'el momento privilegiado en el que se formó y cuajó la nacionalidad española' (Larrinaga 2002: 187). As Miguel Ángel Lozano argues, such literary rendition resorted to the French literary trope of the 'death town' that gained popularity in *fin de siècle* European literature and represented a reaction towards industrialisation (2000: 23-24). Lozano points out that since the nineteenth-century:

las ciudades iban perdiendo – para algunos – su encanto íntimo, una identidad que procedía de su tradicional organización social y de su idiosincrasia artística y cultural, para convertirse en esas modernas metrópolis que elevaban edificios, alineaban calles a cordel, manchaban el cielo con chimeneas, suplantaban con sirenas el secular sonido de las campanas, y alejaban de su centro a los desfavorecidos de la fortuna para relegarlos a los arrabales de la miseria y la desesperanza: todo un despliegue de arrogancia y mediocridad burguesas, deshumanización cruel y fealdad estética, en nombre de lo útil y racional. (2000: 20-21)

The ‘death town’ trope became an expression of nostalgia for a Golden Age, a lost civilisation, and was commonly applied to ‘ciudades que destacaban por su antigua magnificencia, convertidas, a pesar de hallarse aún habitadas, en una especie de gran museo sugerente y evocador’ (García Pérez 2008: 120-122).

In spite of his defence of Toledo as representative of Spanish history, Moreno Villa’s stand remains ambiguous. Expressions such as ‘a pesar de sus cosas’ and ‘hacer la vista gorda’ also convey a certain criticism of the immobility – even death – caused by the will to preserve essentialist notions of national identity purely based on a mythicised past. The following lines confirm and strengthen such disparagement:

muchos de nuestros hombres inteligentes – no digo ya el vulgo – consideran risible tener por ideal la limpieza. A lo sumo, conceden que sea un ideal femenino. Discrepo y discrepo. Puede ser un ideal tan grande y complejo como cualquier otro. Aunque parta de la limpieza material simplemente. (21)

In contrast with the interest in desolate moors and ruins expressed by Spanish authors such as Baroja and Azorín (‘nuestros hombres inteligentes’), descriptions of New York’s urban landscape as the continuous rebirth of the skyscraper, representative of innovation as a destructive force, echo the language of the avant-garde. As José María del Pino points out:

los vanguardistas tienen prisa en destruir, y más que planes de construcción cuentan inicialmente con propósitos demoledores. Prueba de este impulso son las declaraciones manifestarias, donde se acude con placer a imágenes de voladuras y derribos: piquetas, bombas, incendios. (1995: 2)

In *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia* (1925), Guillermo de Torre defined the Spanish avant-garde movement labelled under the term *Ultraísmo* as ‘un movimiento simultáneamente derrocador y constructor’ based on ‘esta idea

elemental de ruptura y avance [...] este deseo indeterminado y abstracto de iniciar una variación de formas, faros y estilos, descubriendo otros arquetipos estéticos y creando nuevos módulos de belleza' (2001: 73). Torre also highlights the avant-garde rejection of classical forms and of the conception of art as eternal, since 'el artista actual debe aspirar a que su arte – renovador, destructor y constructor – sea reconocido y valorado en su misma época' (2001: 43). At the same time, parallel disdain towards the 'vulgo' ('the uneducated masses') also connects Moreno Villa's remarks to the dehumanised elitism of the 'new art'. In his article 'Casa "honesta" en Madrid', published in *El Sol* in 1928, the author develops a similar idea when describing a house designed by Rafael Bergamín: 'es lógico que la masa se oponga al arte puro; un arte a base de relaciones justas entre sus elementos y a base de que éstos sean simples, no es arte para el vulgo, hoy por hoy a lo menos' (Moreno Villa 2010: 128). The similarities between Moreno Villa's words and Ortega y Gasset's treatise *La deshumanización del arte* are evident. Furthermore, the characterisation of destructive cleanliness as feminine in derogatory terms also reflects views of vanguard fiction as 'effeminate' by some critics of the time, in contrast with the masculinity embodied by the realist novel (Spires 2000: 205). Therefore, in contrast with the essentialist search for an eternal tradition in the motionless Castilian landscape, New York seems to embody the modern metropolis which became the spatial location par excellence of Spanish avant-garde narrative: a city that embodies a 'pure present', characterised as an unstoppable movement, 'la mutación constante, el flujo inagotable de las gentes, las imágenes, los acontecimientos' (Fernández Cifuentes 1993: 52-53). In the avant-garde novel, the countryside obsessively revisited by the intellectuals at the turn of the century 'ha sido reducido a un espectáculo rápido y ajeno que se contempla un momento por la ventanilla del tren o del coche, los vehículos que trasladan al ciudadano de una a otra cosmópolis' (Fernández Cifuentes 1993: 53). Similarly, the encounter with New York's modern architecture leads Moreno Villa to question the symbolical value of ancient Spanish monuments and dilapidated buildings:

en los pueblos antiguos, como son los nuestros de España, la casona, el palacio, el hospital ruinosos claman al cielo y a los Poderes, y si no consiguen que los hombres restañen las heridas que el tiempo les infirió, consiguen ir tirando, ir arrastrando su penosa vida, siendo refugio incómodo de militares, hospicianos y familias en declive. No

falta la piedad; falta el dinero. Si no fueran más que cuatro docenas de monumentos... Pero son centenares. (19-20)

Images of the Castilian ruins as endowed with the essence of the national soul are now rendered just as the consequence of economic scarcity, in opposition to the financial wealth and progress embodied by the skyscrapers. In line with architects such as Torres Balbás, Moreno Villa is at pains to acknowledge the benefits of a more 'hygienic' urban planning. However, a few pages later, the writer reacts against the impact that such an ideal of cleanliness has in American society:

el corazón podrá estar o no en desacuerdo con la demolición y la limpieza; pero la razón se pone de su lado sin vacilar. Este fenómeno me ocurre con muchas cosas de América; las comprendo y las alabo; pero me despido de ellas. Y es que todos los arquetipos de vida son humanos, es decir, falibles. No hay uno solo que sirva para las fuerzas contradictorias que integran la vida. Yo puedo admirar el procedimiento que usan los yanquis para limpiar las fachadas ennegrecidas por el hollín de las fábricas y de la humedad; su pulverizador de arena me parece más eficaz y rápido que el nuestro de la piqueta; yo puedo admirar la limpieza de conducta, la limpieza moral que este hombre de faz abierta y limpia observa en sus relaciones conmigo; pero no puedo sentir entusiasmo en lo [*sic*] "cabarets" "pasteurizados" de Nueva York, donde se bebe agua y se paga muy caro para evitar gente bohemia, ni con esa franquicia de que goza la mujer desde que apuntan sus instintos. En estos dos casos falla el ideal de limpieza; no sirve. Estropea o desvirtúa. El "cabaret" requiere más franquicia, y la niña, menos. Y si al decir esto resulta demasiado español, mejor. (23-24)

Whereas New York's industrial modernisation is understood by Moreno Villa as a sign of progress, the writer regards excessive 'hygiene' in social life as dehumanising. The reference to 'gente bohemia' can be read as an allusion to the intellectual class, whose distinctive individuality and unconventional views distinguish them from the 'the masses'. Contradicting his previous disagreement with views of cleanliness as feminine, Moreno Villa seems to imply here that the Prohibition law has turned the masculinised public space of bars into not only a standardised location, but also a feminised place, where the intellectual élite represented by bohemians has been expelled in favour of the feminised 'masses'. In this view, capitalism has undermined the distinguished status of the intelligentsia, since social acceptance depends not on intellectual prestige, but solely on money. Moreover, the allusion to the excessive freedom of women ('franquicia') can be related to women's emancipation, an aspect that I will



analyse in detail in Chapter 3. Both aspects are seen as damaging ('estropean') for the national character, an idea which is also confirmed in the closing sentence: 'y si al decir esto resulta demasiado español, mejor'. Moreno Villa does in fact establish a direct connection between the skyscrapers and the transformation of social structures, especially the family, in New York. 'La casa', he argues, 'muestra una de las características de Nueva York: la magnitud unida a la estrechez. Casas gigantescas a la vez que estrechas' (15). The writer compares the height of the skyscraper with the small size of the apartments, a characteristic that he relates to the fact that 'la gente vive fuera de ellas más que dentro' (15). The house is seen by Moreno Villa as the centre of the family life, which is in turn identified with the role of women as 'casada', as he explains in a subsequent article entitled 'Casa y casada' (1928). In this article, the writer establishes a parallelism between Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* and Le Corbusier's architectural ideal of a 'perfect house'. According to Moreno Villa:

en ningún lenguaje se funden como en el español los conceptos de mujer y de casa para crear ese término tan sustancioso y concreto y elocuente que se dice "casada". Mujer casada es mujer que se casa, que se encasa, que la comparte con el varón y que se hace casa ella misma. (2010: 120)

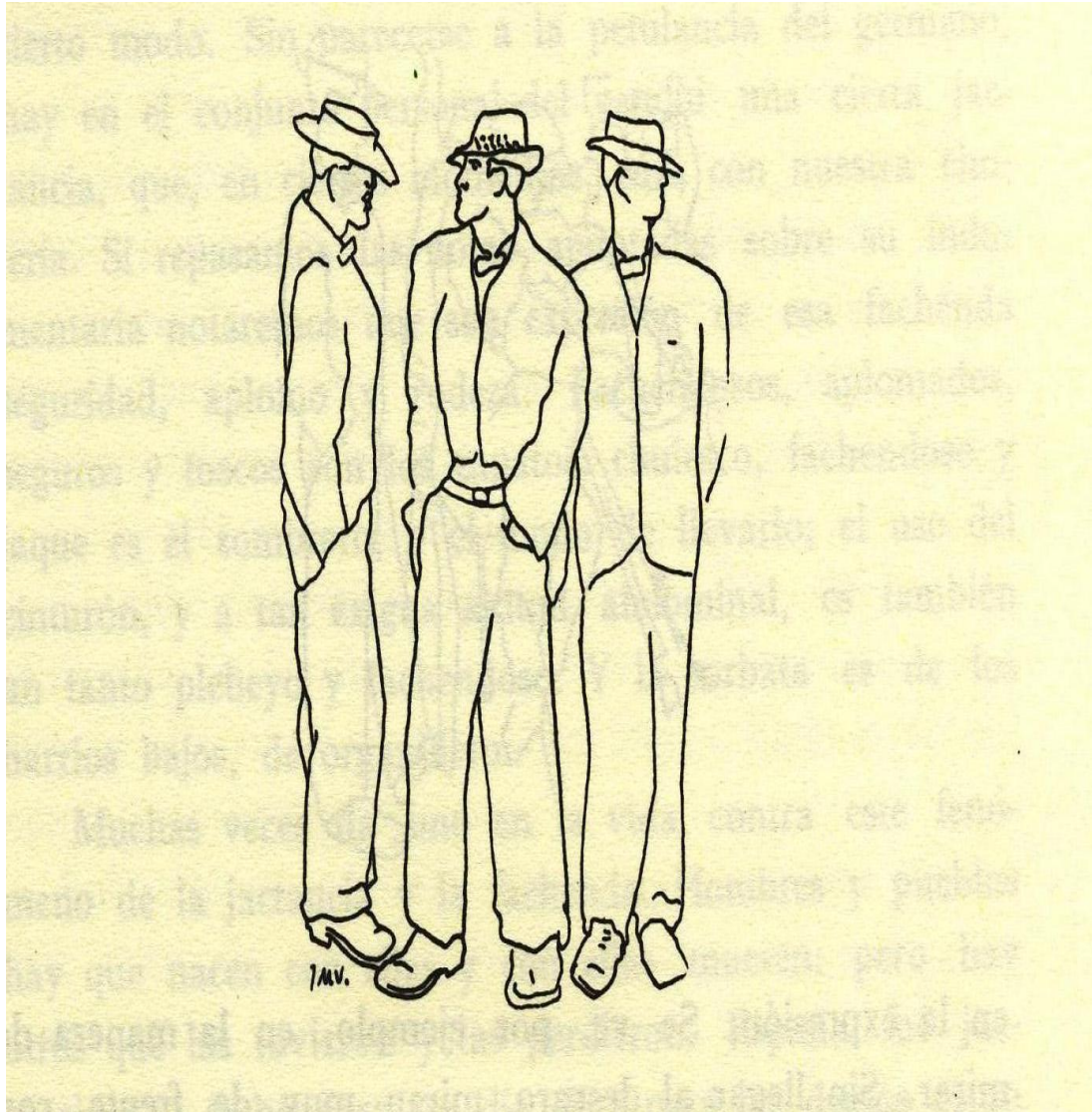
I shall leave the analysis of the gender issues raised by this quotation to the next chapter. Nevertheless, it is worth noting how the writer relates the perfect wife described by Fray Luis – in many ways a precedent to the 'Ángel del Hogar' – and the house itself, not only implying that the family home is the space 'naturally' designated for women, but also that the success of the family depends on the symbolic merger between 'la casa' and 'la casada'. In the United States, however, the role of the house as the sanctuary of family values is threatened by social change:

el vivir fuera – incluso para comer – trae consigo muchas cosas importantes: independencia entre los miembros familiares, administración particular y ajuste previo de las horas en los días venideros [...] cada individuo – hombre o mujer – anda por su cuenta, hace su vida, se paga sus gastos, elige sus amistades y lleva un calendario donde apuntar las citas y quehaceres de la semana. Por todo esto, el hogar no existe; la casa es un refugio donde, si se encuentran los familiares a una hora del día, se dicen las cosas de sopetón, sin calma ni recreo. (15-16)

The loss of the house as family home implies the dismantlement of the family and therefore of the national community in a society dominated by the frantic rhythm of life, and by the machine. In 'Casa y casada', Moreno Villa argues that 'la mujer, sin perder en esencia, dejará de ser la casada; y la casa tal vez llegue a ser como quiere Le Corbusier: "La máquina para vivir"' (2010: 121). Similarly, in *Pruebas de Nueva York*, the writer states that 'la casa misma es una máquina, un número de la serie de máquinas' (55). The reference to Le Corbusier's concept of the house as la *machine à habiter* suggests that the disappearance of the house as a family home not only leads to a change in women's role as wife but also to dehumanisation:

yo creo firmemente que la falta de intimidad es una desgracia para el hombre. Sin ella no profundiza en nada. Hay que entregarse con fuerza, regularidad y abstracción para penetrar en cualquier cosa. Y si el neoyorquino o la neoyorquina siguen muchos años en el plan de hoy acabarán siendo gentes superficiales, mecánicas y desnaturalizadoras. (27)

Moreno Villa also explains the accelerated pace of modern urban life in New York as a consequence of the concepts of 'magnitud' and 'estrechez'. Resorting to a parallelist comparison, the author argues that time in the city is scarce because the distances are enormous (16). The solution to this problem is the use of 'la mecánica', and for that reason, 'New York se entrega al mecanicismo' (16). First of all, regarding the means of transport: 'el *tempo* de la ciudad es un *tempo vivace*, acelerado; lo mismo en sentido horizontal que vertical, corren los expresos subterráneos y aéreos y funcionan sin tregua los ascensores y descensores' (16). Moreover, the telephone 'viene a sustituir al criado' (16), and the machines have also substituted collectors in the tram, where 'no se le paga a un cobrador, sino a un aparato', and waiters in self-service restaurants, which are dominated by the presence of a variety of mechanical artifacts: 'en unos se empuja, en otros se tuerce, en otros se tira; en unos es una palometa, en otros un botón, en otros una palanca' (16). The writer regards the mechanisation of life with distrust. New York is described as 'un mecanismo' (8) and '[un] engranaje' (32), where 'todo es número, incluso los hombres. Y la diferenciación es difícil' (53), since 'la masa humana es uniforme [...] el conjunto humano es bastante gris en la calle' (31). This alleged lack of individuality is also reflected in an illustration that depicts three American men:



**Figure 2**

All three men in the drawing wear similar clothes, are comparably tall, and have similar facial features. In the description that accompanies the drawing, Moreno Villa states that:

quiere tener el yanqui más gruesas los [*sic*] extremidades de los pies, los dedos, que todas las razas del mundo. Para facilitar el desarrollo del pie en tal sentido confecciona calzados de punta muy ancha [...] que imprimen a las extremidades inferiores del hombre un sello de rudeza [...] No hay que buscar lo típico yanqui en la cara. No existe la cara yanqui. Conviven allá en América las caras judías, alemanas, rusas, inglesas, noruegas, italianas, etc. Nueva York es un índice de caras, como casi todo lo americano; pero el molde al que aspiran sus hombres acaba por imprimirles cierta uniformidad en la expresión. (56-58)

In both the text and the illustration, Moreno Villa suggests that American men are becoming increasingly standardised. He also alludes to their lack of intelligence and spirituality: ‘la idiotez moral de este conglomerado humano [...] la falta de gracia en la gente [...] del marasmo espiritual dominante’ (45). The United States are described in fact as a ‘primitive’ society (42, 63). In the writers’s view, such primitiveness stems from the dehumanisation caused by the machine, and by the consequent acceleration of urban life in a society dominated by capitalism that denigrates the intellectual class: ‘los de “cejas altivas” como llaman aquí despectivamente a los intelectuales, no pueden aplicar acento alguno al carácter de Nueva York. Ni los artistas. Unos y otros requieren “tempo lento” para dar sus frutos’ (32). I propose that the image of a mechanised mass that works according to the rhythm established by the machine-city, where the intellectual class has been dispossessed of any influence in social life, reflects fears of ‘the masses’ out of control in Europe and Spain. Without the imprint of the intellectuals – the leading minority –, American society becomes an amorphous group in which individuality is lost in favour of standardisation and capitalism. In addition, Moreno Villa argues that the ‘capitalist greed’ that drives Americans to devote all their time to work, has a negative impact on their health:

montado en un concepto viejo, si se quiere; montado en una ilusión vana, yo soy más señor que ese hortera de hoy, millonario de mañana. Ese hortera que monta [...] dos veces o cuatro al día en el tiznado “subway”, con cara de hombre reventado, destripado, “desnervizado”, aniquilado. ¿Para qué los dólares, si a los cuarenta años estoy en la ruina que veo? [...] Prefiero paladear la vida y comunicar su grandeza y complejidad a los otros, aunque me falten dólares [...] prefiero ser hidalgo de migajas, y mucho tiempo, a ser ganapán desriñonado y con oro. (33)

According to the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, ‘hortera’ was the name given to shop assistants in certain shops in Madrid, and ‘ganapán’ was the term used for ‘hombre que se gana la vida llevando recados o transportando bultos de un punto a otro’.<sup>14</sup> Both terms are pejorative adjectives that denigrate the labour of the working class, in opposition to the decadent ‘hidalgo’, a poor nobleman with no occupation. The rise of the ‘hortera’ challenges the elitism of the ‘hidalgo’, whose social position derives not from work but from inherited

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.rae.es/rae.html> <Accessed 10th July 2011>.

privileges. Moreno Villa's stance therefore opposes social elitism – 'un concepto viejo'–, with class mobility fostered by capitalism in the United States. Moreover, I argue that the 'hidalgo' serves as a strong symbol of Spanish national identity, alluding to Cervantes' *Don Quijote*. The reference to the 'hidalgo' conveys a rejection of capitalism, which implies the disintegration of a concept of national identity based on the alleged idealism and spiritualism of the Spanish nation. As Christopher Britt indicates, intellectuals such as Costa, Ganivet, Unamuno, Maetzu, and Ortega y Gasset:

did not only seek to make sense of modern Spain's decline from Empire but to also offer to their compatriots an imaginative program for national and imperial regeneration. They identified Spain's new role in the modern world with the idealistic mission undertaken by Don Quixote [...] Inspired by the example of Don Quixote's quest to recuperate the Golden Age of chivalry, they suggested that modern Spain also needed to revive its chivalric values and seek to recuperate its Golden Age. (2005: 6)

Moreover, the armed conflict with the United States was also interpreted by these intellectuals as 'a conflict between the archaic spiritual, moral, and civilizing ideals of the Spanish Empire and the progressive technological and economic ideals of an increasingly secularised Anglo-American Empire' (Britt 2005: 2).

Moreno Villa's account of New York does, however, strive to overcome discourses of 'Otherness' that shaped European and Spanish perceptions of the United States. Throughout the book, one can perceive the struggle between the preconceived system of representation that initially influences his view of American society, and the acceptance of the fact that technological progress makes of the United States a more advanced and richer country in comparison to Spain's stagnation. Breaking with the archetype of Americans as primitive and mechanised people that he follows in some parts of the text, the writer also states that:

cuantas veces hablo ahora con paisanos míos sobre el carácter norteamericano encuentro cierta disconformidad. Las ideas que manejan unos y otros son en muchos casos certeras; pero desde un punto de vista. Si me dicen que el americano es un hombre primitivo, no puedo aceptarlo del todo; si me dicen que es duro, insensible, mecanizado, etc., me inclino a distinguir, a paliar conceptos tan recortados [...] Y yo creo que en el yanqui no debo considerar si le falta ternura, sentimiento u otras virtudes nuestras, sino atender a las virtudes que ellos han desarrollado por encima de nosotros. (41-42)

The expression ‘las ideas que manejan unos y otros’ seems to point to the existence of a preconceived discourse of the United States as ‘the Big Other’, dominated by the machine and ‘the masses’. Nevertheless, Moreno Villa tries to go beyond this *third image* in order to undertake a multilayered analysis. Although this task is flawed from the start – since he does not deny the idea of Americans as rough and primitive –, the writer strives to find a positive interpretation of such alleged primitivism. With the intention of reconciling opposite views, he interprets American ‘primitivism’ as a consequence of the eagerness and capacity to ‘transformar todo lo recibido’ (48). Similarly to the desire of constant progress and change that characterises New York’s architecture, he argues that the American man ‘tenía que voltearlo, revolverlo y hasta ponerlo del revés [...]; tenía que rehacer [...]; tenía que trasegar y refundir [...]; tenía que derribar, tumbar [...]; tenía que cambiar’ (48). Therefore, according to Moreno Villa, the United States departed from the civilised delicacy of its European roots in order to create a more efficient, stronger, and happier civilisation (48). As a matter of fact, when he returns to Spain, Moreno Villa perceives his own country as weak and poor in comparison to the United States:

toca el barco en Vigo. La belleza de este hombro de España no impide que al desembarcar me parezca endeble la casa, el tren, el servicio de comedor y algunos otros detalles. Mi visión de España en América no era ésta; puede ser que cambie a su vez ahora mi visión de Nueva York desde aquí. ¿Cuántas caras tiene la verdad? (49)

The author notes that the ‘truth’ is a constructed artifact, and that reality is polyhedral. When he compares Americans to Spaniards, he argues that ‘en este “pueblo bárbaro” que yo dejo hay un nivel de formas o formalidades sociales, indudablemente más elevado [...] Nadie es entrometido; a nadie le importa la vida ajena; nadie se lanza a consideraciones y juicios sobre lo que no conoce’ (51). The inverted commas in ‘pueblo bárbaro’ imply that the writer is questioning the construction of Americans as primitives that he had developed in previous chapters. It is the Spaniards who now take on the appearance of barbarians: the binary opposition between Spain and the United States which had been constructed throughout the book has been reversed. On the train to Madrid, the writer has a conversation with a traveller who had never been to the United States but nevertheless ‘soltó por la espita indiscreta de su boca lo que “pensaba” de

Nueva York. No llegaban a majaderías, se quedaban en lugares comunes, en noticias mancas recogidas de otros viajeros y contertulios' (50). Moreno Villa thus reacts to a depiction of New York based on preconceptions. The use of inverted commas in 'pensaba' suggests that this man's opinion about New York is not his own, but an amalgamation of preconceived clichés, in turn shaped by discourses of 'Otherness'.

However, by the end of the book, Moreno Villa is still unable fully to overcome prevalent stereotypes of American 'primitivism', as he combines this archetype with a feminised image of New York by referring to the city as 'la niña violenta': 'escritores, viajeros y simples lectores hablan del primitivismo norteamericano. Yo lo que hago es incorporar ese concepto; llamarle "niña" y "niña violenta" para luego bautizar así a la metrópolis más inquietante y violenta del mundo actual' (63). In the use of the word 'niña' resounds the characterisation of non-Europeans as childish and inferior, in contrast to the alleged superiority of the 'civilised West'. This image also applies the hierarchical opposition between man and woman – and therefore between culture and nature – to New York. As Loomba argues, images of America or Africa as feminine 'positioned these continents as available for plunder, possession, discovery and conquest' and consequently, 'from the beginning of the colonial period till its end (and beyond), female bodies symbolise the conquered land' (1998: 151-152). Finally, 'violence' also refers to savagery, to nature out of control, as traditionally applied to the West's 'Others'. New York remains, consequently, in a position of inferiority to that of Europe. Nevertheless, the persistence of such discourses in Moreno Villa's text does not stop him from developing a closer and more empathic understanding of the United States:

soy, por moverme en terrenos del espíritu y del arte, idólatra de lo que tiene niñez, intrepidez y violencia. Estoy en alma con Nueva York, con Picasso y con Lindberg. Sus caminos llevan a los golpes, a los fracasos, pero llevan, y a veces llevan a las victorias, y siempre llevan a la emoción. (63-64)

The writer identifies now with the city and the modernisation it represents. 'Niñez', 'intrepidez', and 'violencia' are in this extract positive qualities that contrast with the defence of tradition which the writer upholds in previous chapters. I argue that the reference to 'caminos' is an allusion to a move forward,

a call for change; by saying that ‘sus caminos llevan a los golpes, a los fracasos, pero llevan’, the writer acknowledges the need to embrace modernisation as the only way to combat stagnation. Furthermore, the view of the United States as a cold and mechanised society has given way to emotion and spirituality. The frantic rhythm of the urban life that was so frightening at the beginning of the book is now accepted, even missed, as the writer is confronted with his own anxiety towards the barren Castilian landscape:

después que la luz clara de la meseta castellana nos define lomas, árboles, bestias, senderos, nubes; después que el silencio se hace carne o cuerpo, alimento; después de sentir la tranquilidad, nos sobrecoge un sano terror a ella. Y como pelota rebotada salimos en busca de la violencia, de Nueva York, de la intrepidez, de la irresponsabilidad, de la Flapper, de la niñez. (64)

The book’s prologue, written almost a year after Moreno Villa’s stay in New York, encapsulates this change of perspective:

ir a Norte-América no es una *Empresa* para hombre alguno. Para el español, sí. Tendrá la culpa el dinero, tendrá la culpa otra mermedad [*sic*] de esas que a cada paso nos descubren los curanderos de la patria, cirujanos de siempre-mata y nunca-salva. Qué buen signo sería que los españoles sonrieran al presentarles como pavorosa aventura ese viaje de diez días de agua. Nuestros literatos y científicos, al recibir invitaciones de allá, se tientan las ropas y piden oro y moro para dejar su emplazamiento. Eso prueba que miran como descomunal empresa el viaje, con ánimo enteco de gordo Sancho. Yo quisiera verlos sonreír ante la oferta sencilla de los dólares suficientes para ir, vivir, ver, comprender y regresar. Vale la pena el oro; tanto como el oro, si no más. Y pelarse a bordo las greñas de los siglos, y zambullir catedrales, monumentos, historia, en las aguas atlánticas, aunque sea por seis semanas, término frecuente para ingleses y norteamericanos. (8-9)

In the first lines of the quotation, the writer refers to Spain’s poverty and backwardness and criticises *regenerationist* projects: the play on words ‘los curanderos de la patria, cirujanos de siempre-mata y nunca-salva’ is an obvious allusion to Joaquín Costa’s idea of a ‘cirujano de hierro’ appropriated by Miguel Primo de Rivera, and to the elitist attitude of the Spanish intelligentsia. The immobility of Spanish intellectuals is characterised as the attachment to a frail – ‘enteco’ – concept of national identity, which the author subverts by replacing the ‘hidalgo’ *Don Quijote* with his partner, the peasant Sancho. Instead, Moreno Villa proposes to get rid of the weight of history and tradition and to move forward, and



‘comprender y regresar’, bringing some fresh air – ‘orear’ – from American modernisation.

## **2.2 *Anticópolis*: a Polyphonic Account of New York’s Modernisation**

Whereas the view of American modernisation given in *Pruebas de Nueva York* evolves from initial ambivalence to final acceptance of some of its principles, *Anticópolis* offers a multilayered perspective of the city from the start. Written mostly in free indirect speech, the presence of the narrator in the novel is scarce, and the opinions about ‘the Big Other’ emanate from the words of the characters. As Beatriz Barrantes (2006: 72) points out, ‘el universo multidireccional que se describe en *Anticópolis* va un paso más allá de la constatación moderna de la verdad tecnológica y se coloca en la categoría de una nueva *episteme*, donde cada personaje desarrolla su propia “verdad”’. Following Bakhtin’s definition of ‘polyphony’ (1984: 6-7), the characters’ voices are endowed ‘with equal rights and each with its own world’, and they are ‘not only objects of authorial discourse but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse’. Consequently, polyphonic novels give special relevance to the characters’ view of the world (Bakhtin 1984: 6-7). According to David Lodge (1990: 86), a polyphonic novel can therefore be defined as a ‘novel in which a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects, without being placed and judged by an authoritative authorial voice’. This does not imply the complete absence of the narrator, but a different function in comparison to the monologic narrator: rather than transforming others’ consciousnesses into objects of the narrative discourse, the narrator of the polyphonic novel re-creates other consciousnesses as fully valid and unfinalised voices engaged in dialogue (Bakhtin 1984: 65-68).

The views of modernisation given in the novel can be summarised in two main positions that, to some extent, reflect hegemonic projects of national regeneration in Spain at the time. Following Barrantes:

Luis de Oteyza utiliza una estrategia de tipo oposicional, sobre todo en la figura de doña Jesusa, de manera que Nueva York queda redefinido a lo largo de la novela en función de la ciudad de Oviedo. Nueva York es el símbolo del progreso y la modernidad, frente al tradicionalismo conservador de Oviedo [...] la totalidad de los individuos que aparecen

en *Anticópolis* defienden los ideales modernos, frente a doña Jesusa, quien queda aislada en defensa de la tradición. (2006: 57)

As the religious symbolism of her name indicates, Jesusa embodies *casticista* notions of national identity. In the opening lines of the novel, the narrator defines this character as ‘aquella archiespañola doña Jesusa tan apegada a nuestras costumbres’ (2006: 85). Furthermore, the choice of Oviedo as Jesusa’s city of origin is not accidental. Oviedo, under the name of Vestusta (‘ancient’, ‘old-fashioned’), has the iconic status of being the location of Leopoldo Alas’s novel *La Regenta* (1885) (Sieburth 1990: 2). Alas’s text reflects the first decade of the Restoration system, ‘con todo lo que tiene de supervivencia de lo viejo, de falseamiento de lo nuevo, y de aspiración auténtica al cambio’, and it depicts ‘una sociedad en la que la Revolución burguesa no se ha consolidado, no ha destruido el antiguo régimen, sino que pactando con él, se dispone a vivir una colosal mentira: disimular bajo una costra moderna los modos de vivir tradicionales’ (Oleza 1995: 58-59). New York represents for Jesusa the negation of the traditional values associated with Vestusta, and consequently she ‘odiaba a la grande y populosa ciudad con sus cinco sentidos, con todos los pensamientos de su mente y con todas las emociones de su alma’ (104). She detests the height of the skyscrapers ‘para los que han de usarse los ascensores que en la bajada revuelven el estómago’ (104-105), and means of transport such as the underground and the elevated railway ‘para Jesusa constituían un verdadero tormento’ (105). Jesusa is also repulsed by the noises ‘insufribles en todas partes de Nueva York’ and by the street lighting and neon signs: ‘la noche, Señor, debe ser oscura. ¿Para qué hacerla más luminosa que el día?... Los que colocaban aquellos anuncios deslumbradores ya podían anunciar en los periódicos “como Dios manda”’ (105). Reflecting her traditionalist world view, Jesusa’s abhorrence of technology and mass society responds to moral reasons:

los consideraba [urban means of transport] una brutalidad y una indecencia. Sí, era brutal meter en los vagones a seres humanos, a seres vivos, apretándoles como si fuesen cosas insensibles e irrompibles, y era una indecencia que un hombre quedase pegado a una mujer, ¡incrustado en una mujer! Doña Jesusa, que llegó a Nueva York bastante apetecible aún, tuvo motivos para saber la indecencia que eso encierra. Y luego, cuando sus niñas fueron creciendo, las vio muchas veces ruborizarse y palidecer, palideciendo y ruborizándose ella paralelamente. (105)

She acknowledges the material benefits of technological progress – when she needs to pay an urgent visit to one of her sons she even states that ‘lo que es teniendo prisa, el subway resultaba la gran cosa’ (201) –, but the challenge to social conventions is regarded by Jesusa as a moral involution that provokes the regression of New Yorkers to a state of primitivism:

Los rascacielos. Las vías especiales para autos, los trenes por debajo y por encima del piso... Y los ascensores y montacargas, y la calefacción y la radio... Todo lo material será progresivo, aunque a mí no me guste. Pero lo moral, ¡de ninguna manera! En eso aquí, lejos de progresar, se retrocede. [...] Anticuada me llaman mis hijas, ridiculizándome [...] Yo, moralmente, no me quedo antigua. Los que se hacen antiguos son esos, según ustedes, anticipados. ¿Anticipados?... Es decir, ¿avanzados?... Marcharan, pero hacia atrás. Porque lo que logran es retroceder. Y retroceder hasta los orígenes, hasta el salvaje y hasta el mono [...] Lo que usted considera hombres anticipados y mujeres anticipadas, doctor – fallaba doña Jesusa –, yo no puedo considerarles ni hombres ni mujeres [...] Solamente machos y hembras. (187)

Despite Jesusa’s characterisation as an ignorant and naïve woman – especially through her children’s words –, her reasoning does in fact respond to common stereotypes of the United States as a primitive country developed by thinkers such as Ortega y Gasset, who argued that ‘yo siempre, con miedo de exagerar, he sostenido que [the United States] era un pueblo primitivo *camouflado* por los últimos inventos’ (2007: 201, emphasis in the original). The agreement between Jesusa’s traditionalist stand and Ortega’s opinions, the main defender of the need to Europeanise – and therefore modernise – Spain in the early twentieth century, unveils the similar influence of discourses of ‘Otherness’ in both *casticista* and Europeanising projects of national regeneration. Moreover, Jesusa’s views, which are interspersed with references to Darwin’s theory of evolution – ‘retroceder hasta los orígenes, hasta el salvaje y hasta el mono’ –, mirror fears of degeneration in Europe. American materialism and moral laxity are, according to this character, opposite to the ethical refinement achieved by civilisation. Therefore, she considers her moral conventions as the result of progress, and the transformation of such values as the path to dehumanisation:

explicaba la tesis del retrogradismo, declarándose “producto de la civilización”. Para doña Jesusa, el origen de sus escrúpulos y de sus pudores en la civilización estaba. Por la civilización, por ese verdadero avance a través de los siglos, dejaron de ser brutales los

hombres y las mujeres deshonestas. En cambio, ¿de dónde procedía aquello de obtener la riqueza y el goce como se pudiese?... La conquista del oro a tiros no es sino equivalente de la lucha por la vida a mazazos, a dentelladas. El aplacamiento del deseo, sin que el amor siquiera medie, no constituye otra cosa que simple contacto sexual. Y a la horda o a la manada habría que acudir para encontrar acciones semejantes. (187)

‘Civilisation’ involves for Jesusa two specific principles: patriarchy and social elitism. On the one hand, her criticism of New York’s moral involution is directly related to the subversion of the compliant role of women as ‘Ángel del Hogar’ that she represents. As I will show in detail in the next chapter, Jesusa strongly reacts against the implementation of the companionate marriage and divorce laws, birth control, and above all, the freedom of women to have sexual relationships without the social imperative of marriage in New York. All these practises entail a challenge to the patriarchal family, which Jesusa – in tune with both traditionalist and modernising stands in Spain – regards as a product of civilisation and the basis of the Western nation. The reference to ‘simple contacto sexual’ reflects the fear of women as ‘nature out of control’, free to break with a conservative notion of love that chains them to the authority of their husband. Without such authority, the stable cornerstone that the family represents for patriarchy runs the risk of faltering and collapsing, leading to the disintegration of a civilisation established on hierarchical oppositions such as man/woman. On the other hand, we can interpret the reference to the alleged inhumane materialism of American society in a twofold way. ‘La lucha por la vida’ – an expression that is reminiscent of Spencer’s ‘the survival of the fittest’ – suggests the confrontation with rigid class divisions. Contrary to the prevalent social elitism of Spanish society, the American ideal of egalitarianism and equal opportunities, which allows the poor to become rich and the rich to be ruined, clashes with a social system in which class is fixed and established by inheritance. The importance given by Jesusa to social status is underscored by her reaction against the suggestion made by Mariíta – her youngest daughter – that the youngest of her sons, Pepín, could earn some money by doing the washing up in a restaurant:

¿Fregar platos?... Ésa no es ocupación para un hijo mío. Me consideraría deshonrada [...] Explicó a continuación por qué no podía ser [...] Sus hijos no debían olvidar que pertenecían a una de las familias más nobles de Asturias, tierra de los hidalgos. Aunque

lejanos, eran parientes del marqués del Valle de Noreña. E iba a ponderar el disgusto que ese ilustre personaje tendría al saber que uno de sus familiares se dedicaba a menesteres tan bajos. (122)

Similarly to Moreno Villa's opposition between 'el hidalgo' and 'el hortera', I argue that Jesusa's attitude mirrors the view of Spain as repository of aristocratic values. One must not forget that the starting point of the *Reconquista*, one of the great myths of the *casticismo*, has been traditionally located in the mountains of Asturias, and regarded as:

una épica que unía en una empresa común a una raza indómita de auténticos hispanos, perennes defensores de sus creencias desde que los romanos llegaron a sus dominios, especialmente cántabros y astures, con la sangre renovadora de los germanos, civilizada por su contacto con Roma, y sobre todo, por su conversión al catolicismo. (Menéndez Bueyes 2001:13)

Social degradation from a lineage allegedly connected to an aristocratic past would imply, therefore, rupture with a hierarchical class division created by 'civilisation'. Applying the same reasoning to the opposition between 'civilised' and 'primitive' societies, the former ones, such as Spain, supposedly remain in a position of authority thanks to the privileges granted by their long history and tradition. The United States, by contrast, is seen as a society where such moral and social principles are not respected, and hence as an 'uncivilised' country.

The reference to 'la horda' and 'la manada' also connects Jesusa's words with the widespread image of 'the threatening masses', seen as a barbarous and amorphous entity closer to animals than to human beings. In this view, without the control of the élite, civilisation returns to a primitive stage, to a jungle where individuals follow their instincts rather than a set of prescribed moral conventions. Jesusa's allusion to American 'primitivism' does in fact remind, once again, of Ortega y Gasset's concerns about involution conveyed in *La rebelión de las masas*:

la civilización no está ahí, no se sostiene a sí misma. [...] En un dos por tres se queda usted sin civilización. ¡Un descuido, y cuando mira usted en derredor, todo se ha volatilizado! Como si hubiese recogido unos tapices que tapaban la pura naturaleza, reaparece reprimada la selva primitiva. La selva siempre es primitiva. Y viceversa: todo lo primitivo es selva. (2007: 152)

At the same time, the link made by Jesusa between violence and materialism – ‘la conquista del oro a tiros’ – also refers to the criminality caused by the Prohibition law, one of the aspects of American society commented upon in the novel. Carlos, one of Jesusa’s sons, does in fact become a gangster himself after Antonio’s death. His view of materialism is completely opposed to the one represented by his mother. He argues that ‘he sido siempre tan honrado como puede serlo cualquier marqués. Y si fregué platos fue porque necesitaba dinero. Me puse a ganarlo y eso no es deshonesto. [...] Lo único deshonesto es no ganar dinero’ (123). Prohibition and organised crime are issues discussed by Jesusa and Felipe Muñiz, an Argentinean journalist also known as *el Milonguero* because of his ironic remarks about New York society.<sup>15</sup> Resorting to an acid sense of humour, Muñiz unveils the contradictions of the double standards in play surrounding the consumption of bootleg alcohol and the racketeers:

se han publicado, y con gran éxito de venta, por cierto, las *Memorias de Al Capone* [...] Mientras se lee esta obra, el protagonista inverna muy tranquilo en su paradisíaca isla finca de Miami. Si algún policía va por allá, es en funciones de vigilancia: ¡con objeto de impedir que le roben al propietario las flores del parque! (167)

Muñiz’s criticism, devoid of religious implications, adds another layer to the polyphonic character of the novel. *El Milonguero*, who refuses to learn English ‘¡por patriotismo!’ (125), represents a denunciation of American imperialist policies in Central and South America. As he declares, ‘hasta mí [...] no extienden los gringos su influencia sobre la América del Sur’ (125). His statements about New York are, however, endowed with a strong sense of humour, and therefore with ambiguity:

además de hablar siempre en castellano, siempre hablaba horrores de Nueva York, lo cual acababa de hacer agradable oírle para doña Jesusa. Ya comprendía ella que aquel guasón del *Milonguero* todo lo que decía era bromeando. Sin embargo, consideraba que, con sus bromas, cantábales las mayores verdades a los neoyorquinos muy justamente. (125)

In fact, and in spite of his sardonic comments about the United States, he agrees with the decision to stay in New York taken by Jesusa’s children: ‘sí, Oviedo debe

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<sup>15</sup> Apart from being a ‘composición musical folclórica argentina’, the word ‘milonga’ is also used in colloquial language as a synonym for ‘engaño, cuento’ (<http://www.rae.es/rae.html> <Accessed 28th August 2011>).

de ser un agujero sin salida [...]. Nueva York tiene que resultar menos malo. Pero no mucho menos, ¿eh? No vayáis a creeros...' (126). I see Muñiz's contradictory statements about the United States condense the ambivalence that permeates the novel: the opinions given by the characters are presented in conflict, offering a multifaceted perspective in which none of their voices is privileged.

Don Antonio, Jesusa's deceased husband, embodies a more positive view of New York. He decides to abandon the comfort of his petit bourgeois life in Oviedo, guaranteed by an inherited income and a stable job, and take his entire family to the American city. In spite of his secure existence in Spain, don Antonio did not feel fulfilled. He considered himself a great inventor, an activity that he developed outside his professional occupations. According to the narrator, Antonio suffers from delusions, since he is in fact 'un inventor y un proyectista, pero de los que inventan cosas perfectamente inútiles y proyectan asuntos descabellados del todo' (93). Unable to find investors in his home town, and in a state of 'demencia frenética', he realised 'de súbito modo y con claridad deslumbrante' that 'Nueva York era su tierra prometida' (97), where his talent would be finally rewarded. Once in the United States, although his projects never succeed, he immediately falls in love with New York. In contrast to the negative reaction of his wife:

no le impusieron temor aquellas recias moles [the skyscrapers] al hallárselas enfrente emergiendo del mar cual acantilados gigantes, ni se sintió abrumado por su pesadumbre sombría cuando introdujose luego en los profundos cañones que más bien que calles forman. Como no le produjo pasmo que esas calles, abismáticas bajo la altura de los edificios que las flanquean, se prolongasen sin término, y no le causó trastorno sentirse metido entre la muchedumbre que por ellas circula torrencialmente. [...] Ésa, la presentida y anhelada, fue para don Antonio la ciudad disforme. (98-100)

This dystopic view of the city given by the narrator turns don Antonio's admiration into a comical delirium, reminiscent of the Spanish literary figure par excellence, *Don Quijote*. Similarly to the effect that books of chivalry produce in Cervantes' character, the impression caused by New York in don Antonio is described as 'el neoyorquino embrujo, que enajenar llega facultades mentales más sólidas que las de aquél previamente enloquecido' (101). One could substitute the windmills that Don Quixote mistakes as giants in Cervantes' novel with the gigantic height of New York's buildings. As in Moreno Villa's travelogue, the

parallelism between these two characters – as we already know, don Antonio descends from a *hidalgo* – can be interpreted as a reference to the political use of *Don Quijote* as expression of Spanish national identity.

Although don Antonio does not renounce his traditional values – as the narrator states, ‘fiel al tradicionalismo netamente español, era cabeza de familia, hispana del todo, más todavía, por entero ovetense’ (110) – nor does he react against American technologism; rather, he is fascinated by the dynamism of the city:

la admiró en todo, pues a quien se ama apasionadamente en todo se admira, incluso en las imperfecciones que tiene [...] El tránsito mareante y los ensordecedores ruidos de Nueva York [...] los consideraba cosa deleitosa. Arrollado por el gentío, que las calles vierten en alguna de las avenidas sobre las que el *elevated* pasa con estrépito, se mantenía firme junto al que le acompañase, para gritarle a la oreja:

— Hay movimiento, ¿eh?... ¡Hay vida! (100)

In tune with the references to movement in Moreno Villa’s text, I argue that don Antonio’s praise of New York’s frantic rhythm must be seen in contrast to the view of Spain as a ‘dead organism’ promoted by *Regeneracionismo*. In this case, the figure of Don Antonio/Quixote goes beyond a nostalgic view of a immobile past and fearlessly embraces modernisation as a source of progress and therefore of ‘vida’: against the backdrop of Spanish poverty, New York is for Antonio ‘la ciudad prodigiosa’ where ‘para cuantos algo pretenden, a algo aspiran, en algo sueñan [...] es donde esta eso. Y con la *chance* y la *opportunity*, eso y más será alcanzado’ (101-102). In addition, the elitist ideal represented by the *hidalgo* is replaced by don Antonio’s immersion in the American ‘mass’.

Nevertheless, don Antonio never succeeds in his business endeavours, and, ironically, ends up teaching Spanish language and literature, despite the fact that ‘sólo conociera al autor del *Quijote* de oídas y de su lengua sabía únicamente hablarla... con acento asturiano’ (103). His failure as well as the constant references to his insanity, gives an impression of don Antonio as an ambiguous character. On the one hand, he represents an absolute acceptance of modernisation. On the other, such acceptance is undermined by the narrator’s allusion to New York as a dystopic city as well as by don Antonio’s madness. As a matter of fact, Antonio dies of ‘congestión’ (104), a cerebral congestion probably provoked by his mental condition. Since this word also refers to



overcrowding, one can say that his death is caused by the excessive internalisation of New York's continuous movement in his brain. His death is however painless, and Antonio passes away with a smile that carves out his insanity in his deceased body:

al caer fulminado por la congestión, la sangre que se le cuajara en el cerebro debió solidificar su pensamiento constante, porque la crispadura facial del cadáver adoptó forma de sonrisa. Era que, aun muerto, don Antonio aguardaba, sonriendo confiadamente, la llegada de la notoriedad inmensa y de los millones múltiples. (104)

His manic fascination with modernisation, bereft of any criticism, leaves the reader with an ambivalent impression. New York embodies life, movement, and progress, but at the same time all these aspects lead to the death of the character. Antonio's happiness relies on the illusion of a prosperity he nevertheless never achieves in life, rendering the economic success promised by American capitalism as a chimera.

In contrast with Antonio's hallucinatory perception of the city, Doctor Jiménez embodies a rational defence of New York's modernisation. Jiménez is a Puerto Rican doctor to whom Jesusa turns for advice after Antonio's death. The dialogue between these two characters highlights the contrast between traditionalism and modernisation that permeates the novel. Acting almost as a psychoanalyst – Jesusa does in fact end up dying after a mental breakdown – Jiménez tries to show to her the benefits of social change as well as the unstoppable expansion of modernisation to the rest of the world, including Spain. In his view, New York represents not only an advance regarding technology but also in relation to morality:

admite usted el progreso material [Jiménez says to Jesusa]. Ya me concede algo. Y habrá de concederme todavía que el moral existe igualmente. Repare en que mis anticipados abandonan ciertas convenciones... Dejan con ello libres los instintos. Pues bien, progreso moral constituye el no ser hipócritas. (188)

Jiménez's counterdiscourse inverts the relation between civilisation and tradition. The morality represented by Jesusa echoes in fact the hypocrisy of the Restoration, as reflected by Leopoldo Alas in *La Regenta*:

en gran parte, este mundo vetustense está atiborrado de lujuria: la procesión en la que desfila la Regenta de nazarena es motivo de una tremenda erotización pública. [...] Las fiestas religiosas, con la

consiguiente acumulación de gente en las iglesias, son el punto elegido por toda Vestusta para rozarse, empujarse, entrechocar, mezclarse con una promiscuidad de rebaño enloquecido. Si se organiza toda una conspiración para hacer caer a Ana, es porque nadie soporta la idea de una “decencia” auténtica. (Oleza 1995: 60-61)

Indeed, the analysis of Vestusta’s repressed sexuality offered by Juan Oleza has points in common with Jesusa’s criticism of the ‘indecent’ of New York’s means of transport. Opposed to the false decency promoted by traditionalism, for which the repression and concealment of sexual desire is seen as the product of civilisation, Jiménez regards progress as a movement towards individual freedom and the overcoming of atavist conventions. Accordingly, Jiménez especially dwells on aspects related to women’s sexuality, as I will show in Chapter 3.

The term ‘Anticipolis’, as epithet for New York, is coined precisely by the doctor. In his view, New York is the mirror of the future, an avant-garde city, a new civilisation in which material progress goes hand in hand with social change:

según la teoría de Jiménez, Nueva York se anticipaba. Iba delante, muy por delante de todas las demás ciudades en la marcha hacia lo futuro. Tanto materialmente, con la audacia de sus construcciones, como espiritualmente, con el frenesí de sus habitantes. Nueva York debiera llamarse Anticipolis, por ser la ciudad de la anticipación. (186)

Jiménez justifies the violence of *los anticipados* – a term used by the doctor to refer to New Yorkers – as a result of their fight against obsolete conventions. He compares New Yorkers to the pioneers who ‘civilised’ the Far West:

no puede, por tanto, juzgarse aún a los anticipados. Y menos juzgarlos con arreglo a las antiguas codificaciones. Son como fueron los *pioneers*. Aquellos, en su avanzada, abrían camino. Talaban la selva para pasar y combatían contra cuanto el paso cerrábales. Si se les hubiese juzgado entonces, hubiera sido necesario condenarles por destructores de vidas vegetales, animales y hasta humanas. Hoy se les glorifica porque civilizaron el lejano Oeste. Actuales pioneros, estos anticipados luchan para imponer al mundo entero una nueva civilización. Cuando triunfen, dejarán de pelear. Entonces terminarán sus excesos. Y también entonces habrá de reconocerse lo beneficioso de que se excedieran. (224)

As one can see, the opposition between civilisation and primitivism is again reversed. Following the logic of the comparison established by the doctor, the jungle that obstructs the way of the pioneers is not the result of a process of involution – as argued by Jesusa – , but rather the weight of tradition, which is

seen here as a set of uncivilised moral practises that hinders the achievement of individual freedom. Nevertheless, one must note the colonialist undertones behind Jiménez's praise of the violent move forward represented by modernisation, in which the pioneers of European ancestry 'bring' civilisation to the 'primitive' native Americans, whose life is 'destroyed' in the name of advancement. As he also argues, 'el progreso no es malo nunca, aunque traiga alguna consecuencia mala, malísima, perversa. Trae, en cambio, infinitas consecuencias excelentes. Sobre que las consecuencias no se aprecian hasta el fin' (223). In comparison with don Antonio's blind admiration for New York, Jiménez's modernising ideal does not shy away from acknowledging the negative side of progress. However, he argues that the benefits exceed the downsides.

The doctor believes that the path opened by this new civilisation will also soon inexorably reach Spain:

le aseguró que, como Nueva York, iban siendo ya muchas ciudades. Lo serían, al cabo, todas [...] Jiménez sostuvo que hasta Oviedo. E indicó [...] que, si a Oviedo volviese, no lo encontraría como cuando salió de allí. También Oviedo había cambiado [...] rascacielos acaso no tuviese todavía, pero [...] casas nuevas se construían con más pisos que se construyeron los viejos caserones, haciendo notar que los rascacielos, con ser lo más visible, no son lo más característico de Nueva York, como lo probaba que el que otras cosas producían mayores reacciones en el sentir forastero de doña Jesusa. (190-191)

In contrast to the conflicting nature of the debates around modernisation in Spain at the time, Jiménez is not suggesting Europeanisation as the solution for Spanish backwardness, but taking this argument a step further, he argues that social change as well as technological advances will inevitably affect the country. Such an assertion turns the aforementioned debate as a sterile discussion. From his words we can infer that the question is not whether to incorporate Spain into modernisation, but rather, that Spain must accept the unavoidable movement towards a society in which those aspects that provoked a negative reaction in Jesusa will replace moral conventions that have supported patriarchy and elitism.

The end of the novel emphasises the ideas defended by Jiménez. Able neither to understand nor to adapt herself to New York's modernisation, Jesusa suffers a schizophrenic fit. She collapses due to her failure to keep her family within the Spanish traditional morality she has internalised and has been instructed to perpetuate. Rosa, the eldest daughter, works as a fashion model and has an intense

social and sexual life; Juan, the eldest son, marries an American woman who is pregnant by another man; Carlos gets involved in organised crime, and also divorces his wife; Mariña starts a lesbian relationship with an older woman; and finally, Pepín changes his religion to become a Protestant priest. Catholicism and the patriarchal family, pillars of traditionalist Spain, are thus dismantled by the new civilisation. Moreover, Jesusa's crisis is aggravated by the hostile environment of the city:

cerraba los ojos para no ver el tráfico torrencial y se tapaba los oídos para no sentir el ruido tumultuoso. Mas, aun yendo de ese modo, cegada y ensordecida, constantes estremecimientos la agitaban. Era que el hálito poderoso de la urbe daba en ella, imprimiéndole ese temblor. (248)

I see in Jesusa's overexcitement, caused by the excessive number of stimuli coming from the crowds, an echo of George Simmel's essay 'Metropolis and Mental Life' (1903), where the German philosopher and sociologist compares the different responses of the human psyche to rural and urban environments. According to Simmel, the transient nature of urban life, and therefore the constant bombarding of violent stimuli to which the individual is exposed by the crowds, can result in mental disorders:

if the unceasing external contact of numbers of persons in the city should be met by the same number of inner reactions as in the small town, in which one knows almost every person he meets and to each of whom he has a positive relationship, one would be completely atomized internally and would fall into an unthinkable mental condition. (2002: 15)

Jesusa ends up paralysed, and her ill body becomes gradually weaker, until she dies. The diagnosis given by Jiménez goes beyond physical explanations and resorts to psychological ones – 'el estudio del alma' (249) –, concluding that 'si cesó la vida de aquella mujer, fue porque no pudo acompasarse a la juntamente bárbara y civilizadora manera de vivir de quienes ocupan esa atrevida avanzada hacia el futuro que es la ciudad de la anticipación' (249). Following the interpretation of Jesusa as a symbolical character that embodies *casticista* views of Spanish national identity, I would like to propose that her fatal ending can be seen in turn as an apocalyptic warning about Spain's degeneration. Before dying, Jesusa is secluded in a room, where 'al amparo de toda influencia exterior dejó de estremecerse' (248). Isolation does not however stop her physical decline and her

organism ends up paralysed. Her efforts to preserve tradition and her inability to adapt to modern times can be therefore compared to an essentialist notion of Spanish national identity that was impervious to foreign influences. The implicit moral in Jesusa's death is therefore that Spain needs to open its doors both to technological and social modernisation, since modernisation will eventually arrive to the country, and if the ankylosed articulations of the social body are not renovated, the nation will also perish: whether good or evil, moral or immoral, the progress embodied by New York is unstoppable, and Spain needs to free itself from 'las antiguas codificaciones' and embrace the future.

Nevertheless, the closing sentence of *Anticópolis* maintains the ambiguity towards modernisation that pervades the novel. Resorting to an oxymoron, New York's 'anticipated society' is characterised by the narrator as both primitive and civilising. Furthermore, and despite their different attitudes towards New York, both Antonio and Jesusa pass away after a mental fit caused by the impact of progress in their minds. Consequently, and thanks to its polyphonic nature, the novel offers a mosaic of the views on modernisation in Spain at the time. The final decision as to whether the incorporation of technological progress would bring social advances to Spain or endanger its national values is therefore left to the reader.

### **2.3 Mass society and Mechanisation as a Threat to Social Elitism in *La ciudad automática***

Similarly to the image of New York as an 'advanced city' given in Oteyza's novel, the American metropolis is seen by Julio Camba as the embodiment of a 'pure present' that also represents the future in comparison to the rest of the world:

visto desde Nueva York, el resto del mundo ofrece un espectáculo extemporáneo, semejante al que ofrecería una estrella que estuviese distanciada del punto de observación por muchos años luz: el espectáculo actual de una vida pretérita, quizás envidiable, pero imposible de vivir porque pertenece ya a la Historia. Es el momento presente sin más relación con el porvenir que con el pasado. El momento presente, íntegro, puro, total, aislado, desconectado. Al llegar aquí, la primera sensación no es la de haber dejado atrás otros países, sino otras épocas, épocas probablemente muy superiores a ésta, pero en todas las cuales nuestra vida constituía una ficción porque ninguna de ellas era realmente nuestra época. (1960: 10-11)

In *La ciudad automática*, New York's modernity is again encapsulated by the innovative aspect of its architecture. In an assertion that recalls Moreno Villa's text, Camba also contrasts the new architectural style represented by the skyscraper with European buildings:

el hecho de que el rascacielos haya adquirido un desarrollo tan rápido en América yo creo que no obedece tanto al deseo de superar las normas arquitectónicas tradicionales como al más modesto y sencillo de destruirlas; pero el resultado es el mismo, y América empieza ya a tener una arquitectura propia. ¿Llegará esta arquitectura a ser en su día lo que han sido en los suyos la gótica o la románica? (63)

Nevertheless, in this case the reference to destruction is not linked to innovation, but rather to involution: 'por mi parte, opino que sí, que llegará a eso y a mucho más. Para mí el porvenir de América es un porvenir de termitera, lo mismo que su pasado – civilizaciones maya, incaica, etc.–: una perfecta organización social y una arquitectura formidable' (63). The view of New York given by Julio Camba juxtaposes present and past, modern and pre-Columbian eras. Paradoxically, the future of the United States – and hence of modernisation – implies a return to the past. Accordingly, Camba turns round the image of New York's architecture as ground-breaking, and portrays the skyscrapers as old buildings:

¿de qué pasado remoto salen todos estos espectros? ¿A qué tumbas prehistóricas han sido arrancadas unas momias semejantes? ¿Qué diluvio universal ha conseguido evadir tales dinosaurios arquitectónicos? [...] no hay en todo el orbe estructuras que produzcan mayor impresión de arcaísmo y vetustez. (59)

Resorting to sarcasm, the writer draws on the idea of American fickleness, of their need for constant change, to the extent that skyscrapers age rapidly because they are soon superseded by new and improved versions:

las pirámides egipcias no son viejas. Al contrario [...] constituyen todavía la última palabra en cuestión de pirámides, y quien habla de las pirámides egipcias habla de los templos mayas, o de las catedrales románicas o góticas. [...] hoy un *rascacielos* de hace diez años resulta tan anticuado por dentro como por fuera. Consideren ustedes que el *rascacielos* es una máquina, y que las máquinas envejecen en cuanto son superadas por otras. (59-60)

The idea of the skyscrapers as machines, also present in *Pruebas de Nueva York*, adds yet another element to the paradox created by Camba. Whereas the 'immobility' of ancient constructions is regarded as an indication of eternal youth,

the constant progress of technology implies continuous ageing. I suggest that behind Camba's sardonicism lies a fear of mechanisation and modernisation as a regression to primitivism. In the following description of New York's urban landscape, the impressive height of the buildings and the colourful beauty of the city lights are simultaneously identified with a futuristic scene and with the image of a primitive society:

Nueva York, por lo demás, tan apretado entre sus dos grandes ríos, con sus enormes estructuras arquitectónicas y con la orgía de sus iluminaciones, es la ciudad más plástica del mundo, y el espectáculo que ofrece desde lo alto del Chrysler no tiene ponderación. ¡Qué maravilla, señores! Hasta que subí al Chrysler yo no había tenido nunca la emoción del mundo moderno, y estoy por decir que tampoco había tenido la del mundo antiguo, porque, en fin, la visión tan que se alcanza desde allí es tan extraordinaria que lo mismo puede servir como anticipación de lo futuro que como una reconstrucción de lo pasado. Uno sabe, naturalmente, que aquello es Nueva York, pero buscándole a Nueva York un término de relación, tan pronto se va al año 2200 de la Era Cristiana como al 1500 antes de Jesucristo. (67-68)

New York is compared to societies that pre-existed the Spanish invasion of America, and were subdued under the name of progress and civilisation. At first sight, it seems that Camba praises these indigenous cultures – ‘perfecta organización social’, ‘arquitectura formidable’ (63) –, but a closer look unveils the perversity of his logic. In his view, the United States will not only never reach the refinement of Western civilisation, but it is in fact doomed to regress to its primitive origins almost atavistically: ‘los Estados Unidos se jactan mucho de su modernidad, pero cuanto más se separan de Europa más tienden a identificarse con las civilizaciones aborígenes del Continente’ (69). Such identification of the United States with a supposedly uneducated and primitive society reinforces the view of Europe as the cradle of progress, with the intention of strengthening the alleged superiority of ‘the West’, threatened by the manifest development of ‘the Big Other’. Moreover, the distrust towards technology in European countries as a source of dehumanisation and one of the reasons for the decadence of Western civilisation, influences Camba's perception of the United States as a society in which exacerbated modernisation provokes the involution to a pre-civilised state.

In tune with fears of degeneration and dehumanisation in Europe, Camba sees the gigantic stature of American architecture as an expression of massification: ‘es una civilización de masas y no de individuos. Es una civilización de grandes

estructuras arquitectónicas. Es una civilización de insectos' (69-70). According to the writer, in New York, 'las hormigas, sin dejar de ser hormigas, crecen y adquieren la proporción espantosa de seres humanos' (68). The comparison between 'the masses' and insects is not accidental. Like insects, the 'swarming masses' (Berman 1999: 28) were seen to be acting as a group, lacking individuality and intelligence. And, as we have seen, Camba sees American architecture as a termite mound:

y ya sé que los insectos gozan actualmente de gran reputación, pero a mí me parece tan sólo un resultado de la influencia que América ejerce en el mundo. Yo creo que en este asunto hay dos normas a seguir: una, la de observar a los insectos, y al ver que tienen, por ejemplo, una organización social más perfecta que la nuestra, atribuirles una inteligencia superior a la humana; otra, observar a los seres humanos y, al verles proceder como insectos, deducir que proceden de una manera estúpida. (70)

The previous quotation contains a reference to the studies of the life of insects carried out by Jean Henri Fabre (*Social Life in the Insect World*, 1911) and Maurice Maeterlinck (*The Life of the Bee*, 1901). The writer later mentions the work of these scientists:

por mi parte, yo no acepto más que esta última norma, por mucho Fabre y por mucho Maeterlinck con que se venga, y no es que los insectos me parezcan idiotas. Me basta, sencillamente, con que sean insectos. La idiotez, en último término, es una forma, aunque negativa, de la inteligencia humana, y los insectos, por el hecho de ser insectos, no sólo quedan al margen de nuestra inteligencia, sino que quedan también al margen de nuestra idiotez. (70)

Camba refuses to accept the idea of a society in which the individual – Ortega's 'minorías selectas' – must comply with the wishes of a multitude that allegedly acts like an indissoluble being. This idea, widespread in Europe, is also present in George Duhamel's *America the Menace* (1931):

in the United States, that far Western land which has already made us aware of the promises of the future, what strikes the European traveller is the progressive approximation of human life to what we know of the way of life of insects [...] the same submission of every one to those obscure exigencies which Maeterlinck names the genius of the hive or of the ant-hill. (1974: 194)

The characterisation of 'the masses' as 'insects' creates an opposition between the multitude and the individual – 'the intellectual' –, in which the former is depicted



as an unintelligent and primitive 'Other' that threatens the order established by civilisation, that is, the hegemony of the minority. The fear of a society that turns into a swarm or a termite mound is also a theme developed by Ortega y Gasset in *La rebelión de las masas*. The Spanish philosopher dreads to think that a similar type of organisation would take root in Europe and lead to the end of civilisation:

la cosa es horrible, pero no creo que exagera la situación en la que van hallándose casi todos los europeos. En una prisión donde se han amontonado muchos más presos de los que caben, ninguno puede mover un brazo ni una pierna por propia iniciativa, porque chocaría con los cuerpos de los demás. En tal circunstancia, los movimientos tienen que ejecutarse en común, y hasta los músculos respiratorios tienen que funcionar a ritmo de reglamento. Esto sería Europa convertida en termitera. (2007: 68)

Similarly, Ortega also relates the rise of a mass society to the construction of gigantic buildings, and compares his contemporary age to the decline of ancient civilisation such as the Roman Empire:

este es el hecho formidable de nuestro tiempo, descrito sin ocultar la brutalidad de su apariencia. [...] Si hemos de hallar algo semejante, tendríamos que brincar fuera de nuestra historia y sumergirnos en un orbe, en un elemento vital, completamente distinto al nuestro, tendríamos que insinuarnos en el mundo antiguo y llegar a su hora de declinación. La historia del Imperio romano es también la historia de la subversión, del imperio de las masas, que absorben y anulan a las minorías dirigentes y se colocan en su lugar. Entonces se produce también el fenómeno de la aglomeración, del lleno. Por eso, como ha observado muy bien Spengler, hubo que construir, al modo de ahora, enormes edificios. La época de las masas es la época de lo colosal. (2007: 87)

Ortega alludes to Spengler, who also saw in the mammoth buildings of the modern city a symptom of decadence. The Spenglerian Cosmopolis is a symptom of the final stage of civilisation, in which 'the Culture-man whom the land has spiritually formed is seized and possessed by his own creation, the City, and is made into its creature, its executive organ, and finally its victim' (1926: 99). The German philosopher argues that the destiny of such a colossal metropolis is its own annihilation and the final destruction of the civilisation from which it was originated:

this, then, is the conclusion of the city's history; growing from primitive barter-centre to Culture-city and at last to world-city, it sacrifices first the blood and soul of its creators to the needs of its

majestic evolution, and then the last flower of that growth to the spirit of Civilization and so, doomed, moves on to final self-destruction. (1926: 107)

Capitalism and mechanisation are regarded by Camba as the main factors for the rise of ‘the masses’ in the United States. Most of his criticism towards ‘la ciudad automática’ is based on his rejection of ‘la serie’ and ‘la producción en cadena’, which in his view create a dehumanised society of enslaved individuals. The dominant principle of American industry is, according to the writer, ‘estandardizar a los hombres para poder estandardizar las mercancías’ (126). One of Camba’s main concerns is the erasure of individuality in favour of a standardised society, where – in an image that reminds of Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* – machines and human beings subvert their nature and become ‘máquinas humanas y ciudadanos mecánicos. *Robots* que parecen personas y personas que parecen *Robots*’ (142). This seems to be the fate of the modern world. In his belief, there are two different civilisations – Russia and the United States – that will rule the rest of the world on this premise, since for Camba there are no differences between capitalism and communism:

no hay más que un obstáculo que pueda oponerse a la americanización del mundo: Rusia. Si el mundo logra liberarse de la dominación capitalista americana será para caer fatalmente bajo la dominación comunista rusa y viceversa [...] Ambas representan la máquina contra el hombre, la estandardización contra la diferenciación, la masa contra el individuo, la cantidad contra la calidad, el automatismo contra la inteligencia. (87)

Camba fears the state’s control over the individual: ‘que se empiece por estandardizar a los hombres o que se proceda al contrario, el resultado es igual. La libertad desaparece, y no ya la libertad política de hablar o votar, sino la libertad humana de ser de un modo u de otro’ (89). However, and despite his defence of individual rights, the writer distrusts American democracy. His view of New York as a mechanical city relies on the fact that ‘toda América es una gran maquinaria donde el movimiento de cada persona está siempre determinado por el movimiento de otra, donde todo funciona o se para a la vez’ (141). This is his primary concern, as he states: ‘al hablar, como hago tan a menudo, del carácter mecánico que tiene la vida en América, no quiero decir precisamente, que aquí haya muchas máquinas o que se haga todo a máquina. Eso sería lo de menos’

(140-141). As one can note, the United States are seen as a mechanism whose movement is determined by the combined action of the group, not by individual decisions imposed by the minority. Once again, concerns about the growing power of ‘the masses’ in the political sphere match with Ortega y Gasset’s distrust of a democratic system in which ‘the masses’ resist the authority of the political élite:

al amparo del principio liberal y de la norma jurídica podían actuar y vivir las minorías. Democracia y ley, convivencia legal, eran sinónimos. Hoy asistimos al triunfo de la hiperdemocracia en que la masa actúa directamente sin ley, por medio de materiales presiones, imponiendo sus aspiraciones y sus gustos. Es falso interpretar las situaciones nuevas como si la masa se hubiese cansado de la política y encargase a personas especiales su ejercicio. Todo lo contrario. Eso era lo que antes acontecía, eso era la democracia liberal. La masa presumía que, al fin y al cabo, con todos sus defectos y lacras, las minorías de los políticos entendían un poco más de los problemas públicos que ella. Ahora, en cambio, cree la masa que tiene derecho a imponer y dar vigor de ley a sus tópicos de café. Y dudo que haya habido otras épocas de la historia en que la muchedumbre llegase a gobernar tan directamente como en nuestro tiempo. Por eso hablo de hiperdemocracia. (Ortega y Gasset 2007: 86)

We can perceive such an elitist attitude in several chapters of *La ciudad automática*. When describing the American ‘restaurantes automáticos’ (self-service restaurants), Camba declares:

al principio yo miraba en él a todo el mundo con esa alegre familiaridad con que suelen mirarse las gentes en los parques de recreo [...] pero pronto comprendí que los americanos no van al restaurante a divertirse, sino – por absurdo que parezca –, para comer, de buena fe y con una entera convicción. Para ellos el restaurante automático es, a más [*sic*] de un sitio donde se puede hacer una buena comida, rápida y económicamente, una institución democrática, en la que ningún hombre tiene que servir a otro hombre. (37)

The mockery of egalitarianism is evident. The rupture of social boundaries subverts the fixed class system where the writer perceives himself to function.

The same attitude is applied to leisure activities:

toda la vida americana se inspira en los mataderos de Chicago [...] el procedimiento que se usa aquí para divertir a la gente es, sencillamente, el mismo que se utiliza para matar cerdos: [...] usted va en su cadena, poco más o menos con la misma alegría que los pobres cuadrúpedos en los *Stok-Yards* [*sic*] de Chicago [...] No tiene usted iniciativa. No tiene usted libertad. (136-137)

This comparison between the abattoirs and leisure activities is, I argue, tantamount to a rejection of mass culture. As Huyssen points out:

mass culture as we know it in the West is unthinkable without 20<sup>th</sup> century technology – media techniques as well as technologies of transportation (public and private), the household, and leisure. Mass culture depends on technologies of mass production and mass reproduction and thus the homogenization of difference. (1988: 9)

Camba's rejection of democratic forms of entertainment, accessible to all the citizens and not only to the 'educated minorities' shows a concern with the emergence of a new form of culture and the need to distinguish it from high forms of art, a process that Huyssen illustrated through the metaphor of 'the Great Divide' (1988: viii). Mass culture is seen as the art of the internal 'Other', which, once more, threatens the foundations of Western culture. Following Huyssen, 'modernism constituted itself through a conscious strategy of exclusion; an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture' (Huyssen 1988: vii). The rejection of forms of mass culture is therefore a 'time-worn strategy of exclusion' (Huyssen 1988: vii) that aims to maintain the distinction between the élite and the multitudes.

Significantly, within his examination of American society, Camba inserts an entire chapter devoted to criticising the education policies of 'la joven República española' (95). This chapter, entitled 'El analfabetismo, cantidad positiva', comprises a tirade against the efforts of the Republican government to reduce illiteracy in the country. By contrast, Camba regards the suppression of illiteracy as a threat to the essence of the Spanish 'race':

muy bien que en los Estados Unidos, el país de los trajes hechos y las ropas hechas, la gente utilice también pensamientos de fábrica. En este país el desarrollo de la instrucción primaria está justificado por la necesidad de destruir el pensamiento individual, pero España es el país más individualista del mundo, y no se puede ir así como así contra el genio de una raza. Ahí cada cual quiere pensar por su cuenta, y hace bien. (96)

In tune with the search for *lo esencial* in turn-of-the-century Spanish intellectuals, Camba argues for preserving the integrity of 'the Spanish soul', which he identifies with 'esos marineros y labradores que, no sabiendo leer ni escribir, enjuician todos los asuntos de un modo personal y directo, sin lugares comunes ni ideas de segunda mano' (96). Camba's point of view seems to stress the need to

protect the uneducated Spanish peasants from the alleged pernicious influence coming from the liberal intellectuals of the Republic, or even from foreign ideas:

en España sólo los analfabetos conservan íntegra la inteligencia, y si algunas conversaciones españolas me han producido un placer verdaderamente intelectual, no han sido las del Ateneo o la *Revista de Occidente*, como las de esos marineros y labradores [...] Convendría dejar ya de considerar el analfabetismo español como una cantidad negativa y empezar a estimarlo en su aspecto positivo y de afirmación individual contra la estandarización del pensamiento. (96)

References to the Ateneo and to the *Revista de Occidente* point Camba's criticism at intellectuals such as Ortega y Gasset, who argued for Spain's Europeanisation. Moreover, the writer associates the supposed benefits of illiteracy as repository of a 'true Spanishness' with colonial expansion in America and therefore with the imperial myth at the core of *casticista* views of national identity:

Pizarro firmó con una cruz el acta notarial en que comprometía a descubrir un imperio llamado Birú o Perú [...] Y no es que Pizarro haya descubierto el Perú a pesar de ser un analfabeto. Es que, probablemente, sólo muy lejos de la letra de molde se pueden forjar caracteres de tanto temple. (97)

Camba's reference to Pizarro connects his criticism towards universal literacy with his previous comparison between the United States and pre-Columbian civilisations, such as the Incaic one. The identification between the conquistador and uneducated people reinforces the imperial rhetoric in which the mythicised peasant embodies the values of bravery, and 'racial' purity promoted by *casticista* notions of national identity. Such a construction perpetuates the Spanish alleged superiority and spirituality not only over the supposedly barbaric peoples dominated in the so-called 'discovery' of America, but also in relation to the menacing 'new primitivism' contradictorily embodied by American modernisation. However, the writer is also aware that 'ningún país puede mantenerse en pleno analfabetismo. Alguien tiene en él que saber de letras y números, como alguien tiene que saber de leyes, alguien de ingeniería, alguien de medicina, etc.' (97). The solution given by Camba is blatantly based on pure elitism:

mi ideal con respecto a España es éste: mientras no se descubra un procedimiento para que sean los analfabetos quienes escriban, que el arte de leer se convierta en una profesión y que sólo puedan ejercerlo

algunos hombres debidamente autorizados al efecto por el Estado.  
(97)

The contradiction is obvious. Although the writer considers that a sort of ‘true wisdom’ resides in the poor illiterate people, only a few individuals should be granted access to education and therefore to knowledge. Such individuals are, evidently, an élite of intellectuals. As one can note, this idea clashes with the previous assertion according to which only illiterate people preserve their intelligence. Rather, following Camba’s logic, they must be kept under the authority of the state, which is an alleged consequence of American standardisation criticised by the writer. Eventually, his ideas coincide with those of the intellectuals he despises: a leading minority must be in power.

Furthermore, limited access to education by a minority also guarantees economic and therefore classist differences between the élite and the people. American capitalism and mass production facilitated the democratisation of consumer goods, the access of the working class to technological advances, and its participation in the economy of the country. As Camba states in relation to the aftermath of the Wall Street Crash of 1929:

todos estos pequeños menestrales – los limpiabotas, las criadas, los chicos de recados, etc. – se sacaban por aquel entonces sus buenos cien o doscientos dólares una semana con otra, y la vida no tenía limitaciones para ellos. [...] si las gentes no pudieran arruinarse aquí de la noche a la mañana, tampoco podrían enriquecerse de la mañana a la noche. (15)

However, such class mobility is not possible in Spain, where class division responds to a ‘natural order’:

cuando se enriquece un pobre en España o cuando se arruina un rico parece que se hubiera subvertido, no ya el orden social, sino el propio orden de la Naturaleza. [...] En España uno es rico o pobre como es alto o bajo, chato o narigón y de ojos negros o de ojos azules. Es rico o pobre, generalmente por herencia y por una herencia que tiene todos los caracteres de la herencia fisiológica. (16)

The reference to an inherited social position reminds us of Moreno Villa’s diatribe against the *hortera* and the *ganapán*, as well as the aristocratic stand personified by doña Jesusa in *Anticópolis*. In this light, the contradictions behind the view of the United States as a civilisation in the process of regression to primitivism through mechanisation and massification displayed in *La ciudad automática*

unveil the danger that similar processes could entail for the elitism of Spanish society. Standardisation – which can be also identified with Americanisation – would erase the remnants of Spain’s imperial glory, still alive in the Spanish character embodied by the mythical figure of the wise and brave peasant, free from foreign influences, seen as a symbol of a pre-industrialised society and therefore of the Old Regime. Consequently, Spanish people must remain attached to a fixed social position determined by inheritance and nature. Otherwise, they would turn into the primitive and dangerous ‘masses’, which, through their demands for social equality, would destroy the culture and the social system that supports the hegemony of the ruling élite.

## 2.4 Conclusion

In these three texts, New York – and by extension the United States – is depicted as a futuristic society both with respect to its technological advances and to the transformation of social practises, which, contradictorily, is regressing to primitivism. The initial premise from which Moreno Villa’s, Oteyza’s, and Camba’s New York narratives depart is similar: American technological excess has produced a new type of society in which the accelerated pace of the metropolis, the mechanisation of daily life, mass production, class mobility, and democracy have subverted the social order created by civilisation in Europe. The leading minorities have succumbed to ‘the masses’, giving way to a dehumanised ‘swarm’ where difference and individuality are erased in favour of an allegedly blunt and grey equality. As we have seen, similar concerns had been already expressed by European and Spanish intellectuals, notably by José Ortega y Gasset. Therefore, the views of mechanisation and massification developed in these three case studies must be inscribed within the European crisis of modernity and the crisis of national identity in Spain. Such a connection, however, manifests itself differently in each text.

First of all, *Pruebas de Nueva York* offers a fluid perspective. Initially, technological innovation, as embodied by the skyscrapers, is regarded with ambivalence when compared to Spain. Moreno Villa seems to praise the developments of New York’s architecture from a functionalist point of view. However, he reacts against the consequences of such advances in social life,

which threaten the elitist authority of the intellectual minority and challenge the patriarchal family, seen as the basis of the national community. Furthermore, preconceptions of the United States as a primitive society lead the writer to portray New Yorkers as a violent ‘mass’ lacking individuality. However, the advantages of progress become especially visible for the writer after his return to Spain, where discourses of ‘Otherness’ are questioned by the poverty of his own country. Although Moreno Villa never abandons such a discourse completely, by the end of the text there is certain empathy with New York, and concerns about the threat posed by mass society and mechanisation to Spanish national identity are substituted by criticism of *regenerationist* projects and the view that the country could benefit from modernisation.

*Anticópolis* presents a polyphonic view of New York, in this case through the different opinions about modernisation expressed by the characters of the novel. The strongest rejection of technology and social change comes from doña Jesusa, who represents a traditionalist notion of Spanish national identity. However, her criticism of New York as a civilisation in a process of involution towards primitivism is also in tune with concerns about mass society as the cause of Western decadence expressed by liberal intellectuals such as Ortega y Gasset. This fact unveils the role played by discourses of ‘Otherness’ in the construction of European identity, which liberal projects of national regeneration saw as the solution for Spain’s backwardness. Her husband don Antonio, on the other hand, represents a different perspective, that of an unconditional surrender to the promises of American capitalism. The role played by modernisation in the fatal ending of both characters, stresses the multilayered structure of the narration, in which there is not a clear positioning for or against New York, but rather, the acceptance of the inexorable influence of modernisation in the rest of the world. That is precisely the stand defended by Doctor Jiménez, who offers a more rational and balanced analysis of New York. Jiménez supports the social change brought about by modernising processes, which is not regarded as involution but, on the contrary, as inevitable progress. Although he is also aware of the negative effects – mostly temporary – that such processes can provoke, in his view Spain too will benefit from its influence. Consequently, *Anticópolis*’ multiperspectivism works as a testimony of the different positions towards modernisation in Spain.



Finally, *La ciudad automática* represents a strong declaration against mechanisation, mass society, and standardisation. The comparison between New York and pre-Columbian civilizations is used by Julio Camba to elaborate on the widespread view of the United States as a primitive society. In tune with intellectuals such as Ortega y Gasset and Spengler, the writer sees the rise of ‘the masses’ and New York’s colossal buildings as indications of a civilisation in decline. Camba focuses his concern especially on the standardisation of the individual by the means of mass production. At first sight, it seems that the writer defends freedom and individuality against the control of the citizens by the state. However, a closer analysis unveils his criticism towards equality and therefore democracy. In his opinion, mass society embodies the threat both to social elitism and to the specificity of an alleged purity of the Spanish character, representative of a traditionalist notion of national identity encapsulated by Spain’s imperial past. His traditionalist attack on the education policies of the Second Republic, however, ends up converging with the ideas of the liberal intellectuals he criticises. In the end, Camba’s criticism of technology and massification is the expression of modernist concerns about the erosion of the opposition between the élite and ‘the masses’ caused by capitalism, democracy, and mass production.

In tune with concerns of the subversive power of ‘the masses’, the views of women’s emancipation given in these texts also reflect fears of involution and social destabilisation. In this case, as I will show in the next chapter, women’s access to the civil sphere – epitomised by the figure of the American ‘modern woman’ – was seen as a threat to the patriarchal system behind both traditionalist and liberal conceptions of Spanish national identity.

### **Chapter 3. Images of the Modern Woman: the Challenge to the Patriarchal Nation**

All four New York narratives studied in this thesis grant substantial attention to the theme of women's emancipation in early twentieth-century United States. The challenge to patriarchy brought about by modernisation was seen by male European thinkers as one of the reasons for the alleged 'decline of the West'. The role of women as essential agents in the preservation of the essence of national identity was threatened by their entrance into the public sphere (Loomba 1995: 215-126, Yuval-Davies 1997: 145, Peterson 2000: 66). Similarly, in Spain, patriarchal values were at the core of Spanish national identity, for traditionalists and liberals alike. On the one hand, traditionalists regarded women's emancipation as a menace to the Catholic family values embodied by 'el Ángel del Hogar', also seen as the essence of the country's identity. Liberals, on the other hand, saw the entrance of women into the public sphere as endangering the principles of European modernity that they aimed to introduce in Spain, as their opposition to female suffrage in 1931 illustrates. The view of New York and modernisation developed in José Moreno Villa's and Julio Camba's travelogues takes issue with the rise of a new type of woman, opposite in many ways to the conception of femininity promoted by the patriarchal establishment in Spain. In both Teresa Escoriaza's and Luis de Oteyza's narratives, this 'modern woman' is embodied by one of the main characters.

The main question in this chapter shall be: how do New York narratives showcase the centrality of gender in modernist debates about Spanish national identity? I will examine the contradictory and ambiguous reactions towards the American woman shown in the Spanish New York narratives analysed in this thesis, with reference to the debates about the role of women in society provoked by a new type of femininity that was also becoming increasingly visible in Spain.

### **3.1 *Pruebas de Nueva York*: ‘La Niña Violenta’ and The Subversion of Marriage**

In *Masculine Domination* (2001), Pierre Bourdieu argues that the opposition male/female is presented ‘in the whole social world’ as ‘normal’ and ‘natural’, ‘inevitable’, as the ‘the right order of things’ (2001: 8). ‘Sexual difference’, socially and culturally constructed as a power relation in which the category ‘man’ holds a position of authority over the category ‘woman’, is seen by Bourdieu as the expression of a symbolic order that ‘naturalises’ masculine supremacy:

the strength of the masculine order is seen in the fact that it dispenses with justification: the androcentric vision imposes itself as neutral and has no need to spell itself out in discourses aimed at legitimating it. The social order functions as an immense symbolic machine tending to ratify the masculine domination on which it is founded. (2001: 9)

In *Pruebas de Nueva York*, such a ‘natural order’, according to which women – constructed as passive, weak, and irrational beings – must be docile to men – constructed as active, strong, and rational – is strongly challenged by the increasing independence of women in the United States. The archetypal American woman is described by José Moreno Villa as a rebellious figure who refuses to accept the ‘natural’ authority of men: ‘oigo decir a la mujer americana que ella toma lo que quiere y en el momento que lo desea; que no se entrega, ni se da, sino que agarra’ (1989: 17). According to the writer, American women refuse to give themselves submissively to men; rather, it is the man who is dominated by the woman: ‘el hombre se resigna a ser tomado. Es justamente lo contrario del héroe tradicional. Quien monta el caballo y rapta al amante no es el doncel sino la doncella’ (17). In the latter statement, blatantly charged with sexual symbolism, the opposition established by patriarchy between men-active/women-passive is inverted. It is women who ‘ride the horse’ and ‘kidnap their lover’, whilst men are depicted as weak and submissive. The author’s disapproving tone on this point shows the nature of sexual and sentimental relationships between men and women within the patriarchal order of Spanish society at the time: socially and sexually ‘broken in’ by men and therefore culturally constructed as passive beings, Spanish women are supposed to be ‘taken against their will’. Indeed, sexual references are not accidental. As Bourdieu points out, masculine social control makes itself

manifestly visible in the cultural construction of sexuality as expression of a gendered hierarchy in which male authority is identified with activity and women's subjugation with passivity:

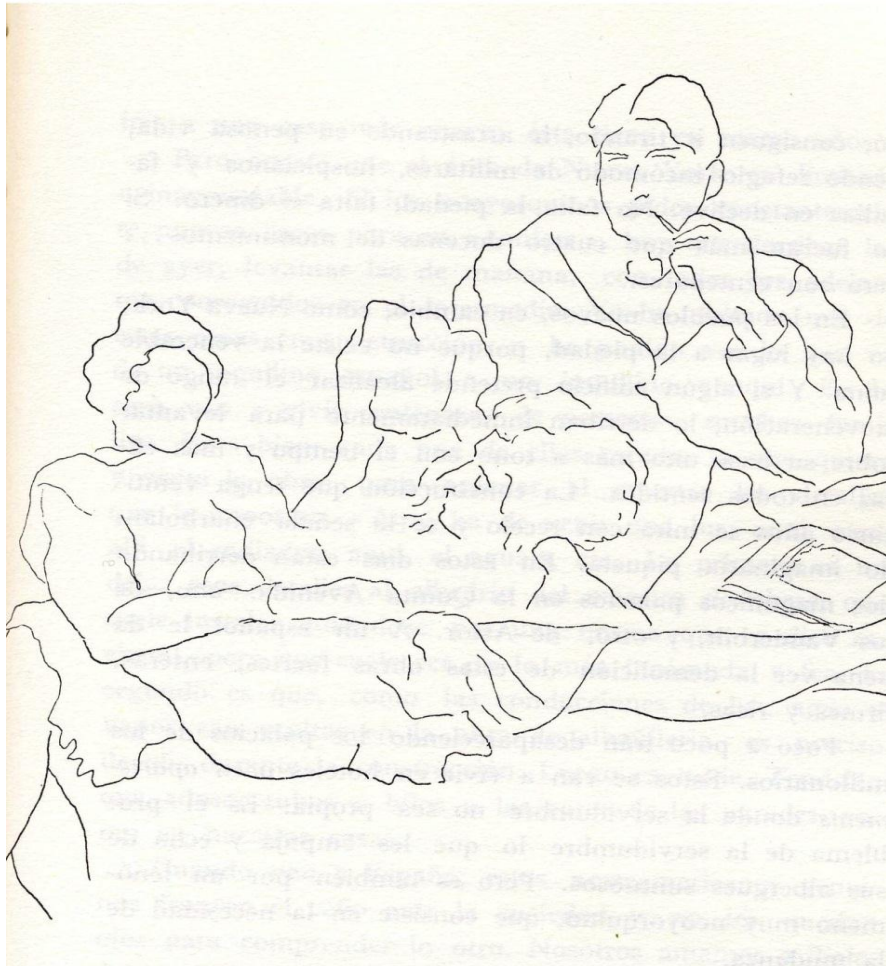
if the sexual relation appears as a social relation of domination, this is because it is constructed through the fundamental principle of division between the active male and the passive female and because this principle creates, organizes, expresses and directs desire – male desire as the desire for possession, eroticized domination, and female desire as the desire for masculine domination, as eroticized subordination or even, in the limiting case, as the eroticized recognition of domination. (2001: 21)

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, the paradigm of 'sexual difference' translates socially into the gendered division between the private and the public spheres, and the seclusion of women in the family home in their roles as wives and mothers. In the previous chapter, I have also referred to the identification between 'the house' and 'the wife' made by Moreno Villa in his article 'Casa y casada' (1928), where the writer draws on traditionalist stereotypes of womanhood embodied by 'la perfecta casada' trope popularised by Fray Luis de León. In tune with the ideas articulated in this article, in *Pruebas de Nueva York* Moreno Villa expresses discontent towards the challenge to the submissive role traditionally ascribed to women in marriage, when he states that 'esta frase indica con máximo relieve hasta qué punto se han subvertido aquí los valores matrimoniales' (17). Breaking with the 'right order of things' symbolically imposed by patriarchy, in 1920s United States – and according to Moreno Villa – women are not only regarded as men's equals, but they are even located in a position of superiority:

consecuencia de esto es la frase Americana de "cincuenta y cincuenta" (*fifty, fifty*), que quiere decir: seamos partes iguales, tengamos el cincuenta por ciento en todo. Emblema igualitario que inventado por ella o por él, manifiesta el alza femenina y la baja del hombre. (17)

In a recent study analysing current racist attitudes in the United States, Michael I. Norton and Samuel R. Sommers (2011), argue that the 'emerging belief in anti-White prejudice' by White American people in the past years is the result of the view of 'race equality' as a 'zero-sum game' (2011: 215), by which 'Whites [...] now believe that this progress is linked to a new inequality – at their expense' (2011: 217). According to these scholars, 'affirmative action policies designed to

increase minority representation' are perceived by White Americans as a loss of their own rights, therefore leading to a 'belief in a new, generalized anti-White bias' (2011: 217). Moreno Villa's negative response to gender equality can be similarly explained by Norton and Sommers's theory. Gender equality means for the author the rise of women to the detriment of men, for it implies a diminishment of the power imposed by the latter through patriarchal domination. Once again, we can deduce that for Moreno Villa the erosion of men's social preponderance goes against the sexual hierarchy promoted by a patriarchal system masquerading as 'naturalness'. The writer regards gender parity as an invention, and therefore, I suggest, as an anomalous demand. This idea is reinforced by Moreno Villa's drawing appearing two pages after the previous quotation:



**Figure 3**

In the image we see a man and two women. The man dominates the scene, conveying a sense of protective superiority over the two women sitting next to him. Furthermore, I suggest that the book that rests in the man's legs reflects the patriarchal opposition between men's reason and women's irrationality. By complementing his argumentation with this kind of visual material, the writer is showing the reader the contrast between the Spanish 'natural' order and the American 'unnatural' one. In contrast with the image of male dominance represented in the picture, Moreno Villa emphasises his view that civil equality between the two sexes in the United States (fifty, fifty), leads to the superiority of women over their other halves:

podrá no cumplirse, es decir, podrá no tener más valor que de prototipo o ideal; pero si no se cumple es porque la mujer tiene el cincuenta y cinco por ciento. Notemos de paso el carácter matemático o mercantil del emblema; la diferencia que va de nuestra "media naranja" a este tanto por ciento americano. (18)

The supposed 'mercantilism' of gender parity reflects male anxieties towards the increasing access of women to the job market, since women's economic independence would debilitate the power relations maintained by patriarchy. Hence the difference between the American 'fifty, fifty' and the Spanish 'media naranja' to which the writer refers. The latter is a Spanish expression that alludes to the perfect sentimental match, which however does not imply the equality of both sexes in social and economical terms. Therefore, Moreno Villa's criticism of the English idiom comes from its interpretation as equality both in the private and in the public spheres, granted by women's 'usurpation' of the civil roles traditionally and 'naturally' ascribed to men in patriarchal societies. This alleged 'female superiority' is illustrated by the writer in a subsequent section of his travelogue, when he describes a scene in a shoe shop in which men are portrayed as women's servants:

¡Qué franqueza de piernas! Con qué amorosa sencillez calzan y descalzan los dependientes. Qué despreocupación de piscina hay en la sala inmensa y poblada. Los horteras aportan el cenicero [...] para la fumadora; traen unos zapatos negroides, de marcadísima fantasía; sacan y meten el calzado con acompañamiento de lentas y suaves razones, sin lascivia, con natural agrado. Miles de piernas se levantan y se cruzan como un imposible charlestón, de figuras sentadas. ¿Dónde está el hermetismo? ¡Ah!, pero todas hacen lo mismo. No hay,

pues, indecencia. Esas piernas son “unas piernas”; total, números de la serie. (54)

In New York, the feminine body enters into the forbidden space of public premises, where men are at women’s feet, and act merely as servants who bring the goods and ashtray dutifully to their female masters. Significantly, in this scene it is the woman who smokes – in comparison to the man smoking a pipe in the drawing –, a practice traditionally reserved for men. However, in the writer’s eyes, women remain objectified, depicted as a pair of fetishized legs. Although Moreno Villa highlights the lack of obscenity in the public exhibition of women’s legs – which would have probably been an unthinkable occurrence in the Spanish context of the time –, his words are still charged with sexual references: ‘con qué amorosa sencillez calzan y descalzan’, ‘sacan y meten el calzado con acompañamiento de lentas y suaves razones’, ‘miles de piernas se levantan y se cruzan’. The writer seems to be unable to detach his view from that which constructs women as sexual objects. Moreover, the women depicted by Moreno Villa remain faceless: they are just part of a mass of legs that follow the same movement, ‘números de la serie’, obviously alluding to mass production — *producción en serie* —, and hence unveiling the connections between modernist fears of ‘the masses’ and of ‘the modern women’ as argued by Andreas Huyssen in *After the Great Divide* (1988: 52).

Whereas the American woman is depicted as a strong dominatrix, the inversion of gender roles seems to be fully accepted by men, who are in fact given ‘feminine’ characteristics: ‘¿se resiente el hombre de tal estado de cosas? No se advierte. La mujer le exige mucho y le mima luego. Con frecuencia se oye decir a una esposa hablando de su marido: “¿No es dulce él?”’ (18). Breaking with traditional stereotypes of womanhood and manhood, women are here described as strong and men as soft, docile, and in need of protection. According to Bourdieu (2001: 22) ‘it can be understood that from this point of view, which links sexuality and power, the worst humiliation for a man is to be turned into a woman’. In this light, a ‘feminised’ man is a man stripped of his authority. Elaine Showalter (1996: 8) points out that the *fin de siècle* crisis brought with it ‘a crisis of identity for men’, since the erosion of ‘sexual difference’ rendered masculinity as a culturally constructed role:

the stresses of maintaining an external mask of confidence and strength led to nervous disorders, such as neurasthenia [...] What was most alarming to the *fin de siècle* was that sexuality and sex roles might no longer be contained within the neat and permanent borderlines of gender categories. Men and women were not as clearly identified and separated as they had been. (1996: 9)

In tune with Showalter's argument, Moreno Villa swiftly clarifies his own words, in order to preserve the 'external mask of confidence and strength' and reassure that despite the subversion of gender roles, American men have not yet lost all their masculine qualities:

esta misma mujer que le quiere por su dulzura, le quiere por lo que guarda todavía de hombre tradicional, de protector, defensor y refugio. Es decir, que la mujer americana quiere un marido que sea fuerte entre los hombres y débil ante ella; débil ante su voluntad. La relación es, pues, compleja por lo mismo que se halla en un momento de transición. Aunque parezca un poco violenta la comparación, diría que la mujer quiere que su hombre sea para todos un rascacielo [*sic*], y para ella un *apartement* [*sic*], es decir, que sea grande al exterior y pequeñito en lo íntimo. (18)

Contradictorily, the writer states that American women love traditional masculine qualities such as men's protective instinct, and at the same time, that women wish for men to be weak and small under female authority. Both statements cancel each other out, since masculine subjugation would destabilise such a protective role. I suggest that the contradiction in Moreno Villa's words captures male angst towards women's emancipation at the time, which led to incongruous reactions by men: on the one hand, a fear of the threat posed by rebellious femininity, and on the other, a reaffirmation of male power (Showalter 1996: 10). Furthermore, the comparison made by the writer between men, the skyscraper, and the apartment, seems to complete the subversion of gender roles taking place in the United States. Instead of the merger between wife and house in 'casada', here it is the man who is identified with the household. As we already know from the previous chapter of this thesis, Moreno Villa's ambivalent opinion of New York's architecture leads him to compare the magnificent appearance of the skyscrapers with the narrowness of the small apartments contained within: the *machine à habiter* where family life barely exists, provoking the 'denaturalisation' of personal relationships. Following traditionalist views of womanhood such as 'la perfecta casada' and the 'Angel in the House', the identification between 'women'



and ‘house’ is essential for the stability of the family home, basis of the national community. Strong women who abandon their sacred role of ‘reproducers of the nation’ to enter the public sphere are therefore seen as a threat to the sexualised hierarchy that supports the nation, and to the same family values that perpetuate ‘sexual difference’.

The view of American women as ‘uncontrolled’, a symbol of chaos and disorder, is encapsulated in the image of ‘la niña violenta’. As I have already mentioned in Chapter 1, this is the sobriquet given by Moreno Villa to New York and the United States. In his opinion, ‘la niña violenta’ is an expression of the alleged violence and ‘primitivism’ of American society: ‘ella es así porque así es Nueva York y toda la gran República’ (61). The characterisation of this ‘niña’ corresponds to the widespread image of the flapper, a beautiful and athletic woman, independent and determined:

Esa niña es adorable. Junto con sus encantos físicos tiene otros de carácter interior capaces de embaucar también. Alta y elástica, dura y blanda en sus puntos y según leyes de perfección, limpia, y acariciada más que guarecida en telas que son velos, sin memoria ya de camisas, corsés, fajas ni piezas de la tradicional indumentaria, va y viene, monta y baja con nervio seguro, sin retemblores de carne flácida y sin apariencia de dudas intelectuales. Con ímpetu gimnástico irrumpe en todas las [*sic*] órdenes de la vida. (61)

Moreno Villa’s words recall Carmen de Burgos’ description of the new attire wore by the ‘modern woman’, and the writer also acknowledges the entrance of this new woman to the public sphere (‘en todas las órdenes de la vida’). However, Moreno Villa clarifies that ‘esa niña vive en los Estados Unidos al lado de un sinfín de otras que son femeninas, dulces o modocitas [*sic*], pacatas u ordenadas, como las de cualquier país’ (61). According to the writer, ‘la niña violenta’ ‘se destaca de tal modo que acaba siendo el hito diferencial [...] la cifra más característica de los Estados Unidos’ (61). Certainly, and in spite of Moreno Villa’s seeming efforts to circumscribe the increasing independence of women to American society, the emergence of the ‘modern woman’ was not a phenomenon limited to United States. Showalter (1996: 38) points out that ‘on the eve of the twentieth-century [...] the image of the New Woman was widespread in Europe’. In Spanish society too, the ‘modern woman’ was becoming increasingly noticeable in the 1920s. As Susan Kirkpatrick (2003: 9) states:

lo más visible para los contemporáneos fue la aparición en los núcleos urbanos de un nuevo tipo social: la Mujer Moderna independiente e intrépida, quien, con su cabello cortado a lo garçon y su falda corta, se negaba a aceptar las restricciones tradicionales que mantenían a la mujer española fuera de las universidades, las profesiones y los espacios públicos donde se desarrollaban los negocios de los hombres.

Nevertheless, Moreno Villa is at pains to stress that the ‘modern woman’ is an exception in Spain, where the norm is the ‘typical’ Spanish woman: ‘nuestra “niña bien” no puede, en ningún momento, aceptarse como cifra de la mujer española’ (61). The archetypical Spanish woman is in fact described by the writer in opposition to the American girl:

No todo español estimará su belleza, porque nosotros estamos acostumbrados a juzgar por la cara, más que por el cuerpo. Nuestra raza lo pide así. Nuestras mujeres llevan la belleza en la cara: en los ojos, en la boca, en la frente, en el dibujo de la nariz, en la expresión viva y temperamental, que no siempre es larga ni profunda. La belleza yanqui es más repartida. Fluye, como un impulso, de extremo a extremo. Tal vez no complete, con rasgos de perfección, ninguno de sus miembros, pero consigue un total más armonioso. (61-62)

Once again, women are categorised by the writer as sexual objects, defined by the male gaze and by their sexual attributes. Furthermore, women’s beauty becomes the embodiment of the – allegedly – most significant characteristics of their respective nations: the movement and dynamism of American society, and the temperament of the Spanish ‘race’, calm and immobile like the Castilian landscape:

es una belleza dinámica, que arrastra nuestros ojos el recorrido entero, al viaje de circunvalación. Se aparta completamente de la belleza tradicional española que invita – no al viaje – sino a la contemplación de un punto, de una parte de la persona, solicitando reposo, estabilidad. (62)

A few lines later, Moreno Villa acknowledges the appearance of a new femininity in Spanish cities: ‘ya sé que nuestras niñas de hoy también se preocupan de la línea’ (62). However, he insists on an essentialist, almost eternal, image of the Spanish woman as representative of the Spanish ‘race’: ‘pero pienso en la raza, no el tipo de mujer metropolitana que se aproxima al tipo cosmopolita’ (62). And even such a ‘metropolitan Spanish woman’ cannot be compared to her American counterpart:

de todos modos, si pensase en ésta diría que está muy lejos de la niña neoyorquina y por una razón que no se improvisa: porque toda la soltura de movimientos, toda la energía, decisión y hasta violencia de la niña norteamericana es externa e interna a la vez. (62)

The writer implies that despite the change of women's appearance in Spanish cities, the internal characteristics of the 'race' remain unchallenged: Spanish women are portrayed as lacking dynamism, and therefore as passive and submissive. 'Race', as expression of the national character, is hence seen as a static entity, in which the subversiveness of the 'modern woman' cannot leave an imprint. In contrast, similarly to the lack of historical roots that allows American architecture to destroy and innovate, the American woman is free to move, with energy and decision, since she is not chained to patriarchal conventions: according to Moreno Villa, American women 'amarán al padre y al marido y al novio, pero en cuanto noten que obstaculizan el desenvolvimiento [*sic*] de su voluntad – a su voluntad le llaman "su vida" – se plantarán violentamente [...] no hay entrega total, no quiere haberla' (62). In Moreno Villa's view – informed by Western discourses of womanhood –, women must give themselves completely to their husband, to the master they must serve as wife and mother of his children.

In tune with views of the United States as a 'primitive' society, the subversion of sexual hierarchy is explained by the triumph of 'female primitiveness', identified with irrationality, nature, and violence, over an alleged 'male rationality' that created civilisation:

Cultiva el movimiento radical y primitivo del corazón, pero – aquí lo grave – odia las consecuencias del corazón. Le aterra la fidelidad, le aterra la maternidad. Como alma primitiva detesta esos conceptos elaborados por la civilización. A veces llego al extremo de creer que aborrece todas las palabras que en español terminan en "dad": caballerosidad, generosidad, caridad, piedad, sentimentalidad. Todas son trabas para su violencia. (63)

As one can see, if women refuse to comply with masculine domination – presented as a product of civilisation –, and to fulfil their role as wife ('fidelidad') and mother ('maternidad'), they are seen as an 'alma primitiva'. Moreover, the concepts that Moreno Villa mentions at the end of the paragraph are attributes of the traditional woman or 'Ángel del Hogar'. First of all, 'caballerosidad' refers to the protective treatment that women must receive in the public space, where they must remain under the authority of masculinity. Secondly, 'generosidad',

‘caridad’, and ‘piedad’ allude to the obligation of ‘the Angel’ to give herself to others: father, brothers, husband, and children, and by extension, to the whole national community she represents. Finally, ‘sentimentalidad’ is a reference to women’s weakness and also to their irrationality. Consequently, I argue that ‘la niña violenta’ is an image that condenses male fears of female rebelliousness, associated with concerns about decadence and degeneration. Nevertheless, and in spite of her violence, the American woman remains a child. Her challenge to patriarchy is therefore undermined, and presented almost as a tantrum. Once again, masculine insecurity leads to a contradictory image, in which the alleged threat to civilisation posed by ‘violent women’ is however presented as infantile behaviour.

As I have noted in the previous chapter of this thesis, Moreno Villa does not shun a sense of open-ended ambiguity in his view of New York and of modernisation. Despite his rejection of the subversion of patriarchal hierarchy, he also declares himself to be on the side of ‘violence’, which he sees as an expression of emotion and youth. Again, these are two archetypal characteristics given to women by patriarchy and linked to the view of women as irrational beings. However, in this case, the writer praises these features and associates them with spirituality, artistic sensitivity, and intrepidity (63). The ambiguity of his statements is acknowledged by the writer, who declares himself to be confused:

En esta hora de intrepidez y confusión, el mejor nauta no es nauta de olas, sino de nubes. Pero, atendamos a un punto: ese nauta, como esa niña violenta, irrumpen en la confusión fijos los cinco sentidos y las siete virtudes o talentos en una sola presa, como el águila. En una sola presa, sin acordarse de la de ayer, ni pensar en la de mañana. Como los buenos cristianos, después de todo, sólo buscan el pan del día. La niña violenta coge la fruta del momento, y le desagrada mañana que le recordéis la fruta de ayer. (64)

In this obscure and contradictory paragraph, ‘la niña violenta’ seems to embody the *collige, virgo, rosas* Latin trope, ‘la invitación a una muchacha a gozar de su juvenil belleza, antes de la llegada de la vejez’, which is also reminiscent of Garcilaso de la Vega’s Sonnet XXIII: ‘coged de vuestra alegre primavera/el dulce fruto, antes de que’l tiempo airado/cubra de nieve la hermosa cumbre’ (2007: 116). ‘La niña’ is endowed with Christian values (the seven virtues), and is compared to a ‘nauta’, a term that suggests navigation and movement, and also

leadership and guidance. Bearing in mind Moreno Villa's criticism of *Regeneracionismo* in the prologue of his travelogue, the intrepidity of 'la niña' and her interest solely in the present could imply a praise of modernisation as a detachment from old-fashioned values, in order to overcome the stagnation represented by the dusty past. However, she is also compared to an eagle, a free and violent bird of prey, whose target is not specified. Her aggressive behaviour could denote an excessive power in sexual relations with men, who are a prey at the mercy of the eagle, and discarded after she has indulged herself in the pleasure of the moment. 'La niña' would therefore remain as an irresponsible girl and a dangerous force. I suggest that the ambiguity of this image unveils the contradictory attitudes towards modernisation conveyed in Moreno Villa's travelogue. On the one hand, he seems to identify with characteristics such as movement, dynamism, and therefore change, acknowledging the benefits that American modernisation could bring to Spain. On the other hand, however, he is reluctant to accept the modernising role played by the 'modern woman', whose independence is seen as a threat to male authority, and to a patriarchal conception of the Spanish nation.

### **3.2 *El crisol de las razas*: Tearing the Veil of Patriarchy**

In *El crisol de las razas*, we are made witness to the power exerted by a Russian man, Boris Zinovief, over two female characters: his wife, Helen, and a Russian singer named Sonia. Boris has increasingly neglected his wife since he has become obsessed with the 'Slavic sensuality' of the Russian woman, who suffers the sexual harassment of her admirer. I suggest that these two women initially represent opposite archetypes of womanhood. On the one hand, Helen is characterised as following the stereotype of the American woman: independent, educated, and fully integrated in the civil sphere. Sonia, on the other hand, embodies a fantasised image of womanhood as object of male sexual desire. As I will show throughout this section, such archetypes are however challenged and finally subverted.

Noticeably, neither of the characters of the novella is Spanish nor are there any references to Spain. Considering that the text was aimed at a Spanish audience, the absence of Spanish characters or explicit references to Spain can be explained

by the strong censorship applied to popular publications by Primo de Rivera's regime. Gonzalo Santonja (1989: 10) points out that:

preocupado por la honda penetración de 'ideas peligrosas' en los ambientes populares a través de periódicos, revistas, colecciones de novela o folletos de muy diversa índole, el general Primo de Rivera se apresuró a imponer un rígido sistema de censura previa para las publicaciones periódicas, haciendo, sin embargo, caso omiso de todos aquellos libros que alcanzasen un mínimo de doscientas páginas. El dictador estaba persuadido de que su precio (cinco pesetas frente a los escasos céntimos de la prensa), mas el carácter cultural y socialmente elitista de las librerías, les convertía en objetos de lujo y, en cuanto tales, innacesibles para los segmentos mayoritarios de la población, que era donde él buscaba atajar la propagación del mal.

By locating the story in New York, the gender issues developed in the text avoid direct confrontation with the traditionalist concept of womanhood promoted by Primo's establishment. Nevertheless, I argue that the novella engages surreptitiously with contemporary debates surrounding the role of women in the Spanish society of the time.

Boris Zinovief represents the power of patriarchy. He is characterised as a rich Russian Jew who treats women as sexual objects. Although he has lost interest in his wife, he nevertheless wants to retain Helen in his ivory palace of Riverside Drive, an 'enorme mansión' described as a 'suntuosa morada' (1929: 4). While Helen must remain inside the house, Boris leaves for the darkest neighbourhoods of the city, in order to seduce Sonia, an eroticised object from which the magnate only wishes to obtain sexual satisfaction. Both women are trapped in spaces dominated by men. Helen is meant to stay in a place owned by Boris, where she is also a property of the Russian. Sonia, on her part, is ensnared in the public space of the cabaret, at the mercy of men's authority.

In spite of her seclusion in the family home, Helen is portrayed as an intrepid, rebellious, and independent woman, who does not resign herself to losing the adoration she once received from her husband: 'una nube pasó por los ojos limpios de Helen [...], sacudió su hermosa cabeza como una fierecilla indómita. Era un gesto de rebelión, de desafío, del odio experimentado por el que no se somete, por el que no se resigna' (8). As in *Pruebas de Nueva York*, the 'modern woman' incarnated by Helen is characterised by her aggressiveness. I suggest that the reference to 'fierecilla indómita' alludes to the Spanish title for Shakespeare's

*The Taming of the Shrew*.<sup>16</sup> As in Shakespeare's play, it seems that the narrator imbues this character with a sense of resistance towards her husband's authority. Nevertheless, Helen remains a 'fierecilla', just a small animal, irrational, and under the control of her male master.

Helen's resentment towards her husband is not provoked by love but by her wounded pride. She is portrayed as a woman accustomed to being adored by men, even to governing them, as we can see in a paragraph that is reminiscent of Moreno Villa's statements about 'la niña violenta':

¡Ah!, ¡pero hasta aquí habíamos llegado!... Todo tenía sus límites.  
¿Verse suplantada por otra mujer..., ella, Nell..., una  
norteamericana..., cuando es ley en los Estados Unidos que las  
mujeres han de ser las reinas y ellos se rendirán a sus plantas?... (10)

Accordingly, Helen is willing to win back Boris' admiration and regain her position of dominance:

¿El divorcio? ¡Tampoco! Desertar era una cobardía... Ni una venganza  
ni una separación podrían satisfacer a su orgullo pisoteado... Una  
reivindicación era lo que necesitaba; reconquistar a su marido,  
atraérselo de nuevo, rendirle otra vez a sus pies y hacerle proferir  
aquellas palabras suplicantes. (10)

As one can note, Helen is not against divorce because of her religious beliefs or a traditional view of family. She does not wish to separate from Boris because that would imply weakness, and she is ready to show her strength and determination. Similarly to the 'subversion of marital values' mentioned in Moreno Villa's travelogue, here is a woman who wants to 'kidnap the man' and subdue him to her authority.

However, although she rejects the idea of divorce, Helen's economic and emotional subjugation is the result of the conditions of her matrimony. She married Boris because she was dazzled by his wealth, as the narrator states:

La vanidad le había empujado a casarse con aquel judío poseedor de  
una inmensa fortuna, que la obsequiaba con preciosos ramos de flores,  
con costosas cajas de dulces y la agasajaba llevándola a los  
restaurantes más lujosos, causando con estos éxitos el asombro y la  
envidia de sus compañeras de promoción en el *college*. Y ahora

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<sup>16</sup> As Juan Jesús Zaro (2007: 72) points out, the first translation of *The Taming of the Shrew* as *La fierecilla domada* by Manuel Matoses dates from 1895. The text was first staged in Madrid in the season 1918-1919 (Dougherty and Vilches de Frutos 1990: 66). It is therefore likely that this adaptation was known to Escoriaza.

purgaba aquel pecado de soberbia, viéndose herida en lo más interno de su amor propio. (8)

In the narrator's opinion, Helen has fallen into two of the capital sins: vanity and avarice. Boris' material possessions:

fueron para ella, frágil Eva, lo que la manzana del árbol de la Ciencia, del Bien y del Mal para la madre de la humanidad. Y las promesas tentadoras de Boris Zinovief tuvieron el mismo resultado que las de la serpiente del Edén: hicieron caer a Helen en la tentación. (9)

In contrast with the strength assigned to Helen by the narrator earlier on, here she is portrayed as weak and unable to turn down the temptations offered by the devilish Boris. However compared to Eve, an archetype of disruptive womanhood, Helen is in this case a victim. I argue that the subversion of Eve's symbolism turns the 'sins' committed by Helen into a betrayal of women's emancipation both in the United States and in Spain. As Susan Kirkpatrick (2003: 9) points out, the reception of the archetype of the 'modern woman' by middle and high class urban women in Spain fostered the emergence of a group of female intellectuals that played a prominent role in social, political, and cultural advances. However, by marrying Boris and becoming reliant on his wealth, Helen has renounced the benefits of her education and her economic independence. She has become one of Boris' possessions, confined in 'el regio palacio de Riversida [*sic*] Drive' (9), and despite being 'reina y señora' of several mansions and owning 'los esplendido [*sic*] automóviles Pierce Cerrow, Cadillac y Stuts' and 'valiosas joyas de casa de Tiffany, que realzarían su belleza' (9), Helen is a prisoner little more than another 'beautiful object' in Boris' hands. In comparison with the alleged gender equality of American married couples, the treatment that Helen receives from the Russian tycoon is humiliating, a vestige of a primitive patriarchal tradition, foreign and uneducated, that clashes with the civil equality achieved by women in the United States:

aquellas compañeras que la envidiaban, ahora todas casadas con muchachos de su clase y de su país, que las consideraban como saben considerar a las mujeres los norteamericanos; aquellas sus amigas le compadecían seguramente y quién sabe si en el fondo se reían con cierta satisfacción al comparar su situación actual con sus triunfos de muchacha. (8)



Yet, in spite of her education and rebellious character, Helen seems to be unable to break with the domination imposed by her foreign husband, since the battle to recover her pride will not be a confrontation with the man who has abandoned her but, but on the contrary, with Sonia, a woman who is also a victim of Boris' authority: 'para conseguir esto era menester derrotar a su rival, y, para derrotarla, necesitaba antes conocerla. No sería seguramente aquella rusa ni más hermosa ni más inteligente... ¡A ver cuál podía más!' (10). Even in Helen's words we can detect a reflection of the sexual objectification carried out by the patriarchal view represented by her husband ('no sería seguramente aquella rusa ni más hermosa'). She also adds 'ni más inteligente'. Helen, as we have seen in a previous quotation, had access to higher education. In fact, the reference to Helen's past as a university student signals the entrance of American women in education, therefore indicating the progressive collapse of the dichotomy man-culture-reason/women-nature-irrationality in the United States.

Helen is therefore simultaneously depicted as weak and strong, dependent and independent. She could break with patriarchy, divorce her husband and regain her lost freedom. And indeed, she wishes to bend Boris' authority. Nevertheless, her efforts are directed at restoring a position of dominance ('reconquistar a su marido, atraérselo de nuevo, rendirle otra vez a sus pies y hacerle proferir aquellas palabras suplicantes') that was only possible before her marriage. Marrying a rich Jewish man such as Boris is presented in the novella as a prison, although disguised as a materialistic Eden, from which Helen cannot escape.

In order to gather information about her female rival, Helen embarks on a trip to the night club located in the Bowery, where Sonia performs her show. She leaves the solitude of her imprisonment in the walls of Boris' palace, moving away from the limits denoted by the feminised private space, to be part of the hustle and bustle of the streets. She penetrates into the public space, and travels by car through New York:

Una caravana de automóviles, todos llevando la misma dirección, bajaban por Broadway hacia la parte de esta enorme calle denominada, "Via Blanca". Ya, antes de llegar a Columbus Circle, notábase en la oscura bóveda de la noche los reflejos que de la fantástica "Vía" se desprendían. Iban penetrando en el foco, la claridad les envolvía, los eléctricos zig-zags de los anuncios les hería [*sic*] la vista y el estruendo de las bocinas que impacientes reclamaban paso libre, y el rumor de la alegre muchedumbre que se dirigía a los

restaurants y a los teatros, turbaban el silencio de sus almas abrumadas. (12)

However, her conquest of this open space is not yet complete. Although she is travelling in her own car, she is not the one driving. The steering wheel is in Joe's hands:

sentados el uno junto al otro en el elegante automóvil de Helen, abandonaban el silencioso sector residencial, dirigiéndose hacia "Down Town", hacia la "ciudad de abajo". Nelly había cedido su puesto habitual al muchacho, que ahora llevaba el volante. Estaba demasiado nerviosa para guiar su coche. (11-12)

Joe is Boris' young nephew – half Russian Jewish, half Norwegian, and educated in the United States –, and Helen's best friend and loyal ally in the Zinovief family. Helen not only needs Joe's protection to go to the dangerous neighbourhood, but she is also portrayed as 'too nervous' to drive, a fact that echoes the dichotomy men-rationality/woman-irrationality. Helen has however 'cedido su puesto habitual', implying that she used to be in control. Boris' pernicious influence seems to have provoked in her a regression to a state of 'childish femininity' that contrasts with her former strength as American woman.

Nonetheless, when they approach the Bowery, Joe is reluctant to carry on the journey. At this point, traditional gender roles are inverted, and while Joe is afraid to enter this area of the city, Helen shows her courage and decision:

atravesaron calles y mas calles, aminorando la velocidad en el cruce de la [sic] calles de mayor circulación: la 42, la 34, la 23. Al llegar a esta última, donde se halla Unión [sic] Square, Helen rompió el silencio para decir a Joe que torciera hacia la izquierda. Pero éste paró en seco el automóvil y rehusó terminantemente obedecerle.

– ¡Por ahí no, Nelly!

En aquella zona estaba el barrio chino y el aun más peligroso de Bowery. [...]

– Pues bájate. Iré yo sola...

Sin insistir, pues en el acento decisivo con que su tía había pronunciado aquella frase vió [sic] que todo cuanto dijera para hacerla desistir de su propósito sería inútil, encogióse de hombros, en un gesto de resignación, y volvió a poner en marcha el automóvil. (12)

The ambiguity of Helen's character is manifest here again. She is too fragile to drive in a state of nervousness, but at the same time she dominates the situation.

Moreover, Joe – a masculine presence that Helen, ‘as a woman’, needs to enter into the darkest places of the metropolis – is like puppet in her hands. The same contradiction characterises Helen’s entrance to the ‘Agit Punkt Club’, the place where her opponent sings and which her husband frequents. She acts intrepidly, in opposition to the fearful attitude of her young friend:

Ya frente al edificio, Joe detuvo a Nell suplicando:

– Pero Nell, ¿no desistes?

Nelly, por toda contestación echó hacia atrás la cabeza, con aquel gesto enérgico que denotaba en ella una resolución inquebrantable; bajó los escalones de piedra que le separaban de la entrada del club, y, cubriéndose el rostro con la gasa, abrió resueltamente la puerta. (15)

However, she still needs to be in the company of a man to enter the night club. I suggest that such necessity derives from the fact that the club is located in an ‘uncivilised’ and ‘primitive’ area of the city, populated mainly by Jewish immigrants coming from Easter Europe. The structures of patriarchy are still very prominent in this neighbourhood, where the civilised American society is taken over by – according to the narrator – the violence of Jewish culture: ‘en este barrio se cobija toda la gente maleante de la gran metropolis [...] el corazón de Nueva York, constituye la denominada Ciudad Judía, por ser el elemento hebreo el que allí predomina’ (14). As an American ‘modern woman’, Helen has already been admitted to the public sphere, and she is respected by American men and by the laws of her country. Consequently, the threat to civilisation – here identified with the United States – comes from the anti-Semitic view of Judaism as a strange and ‘infectious’ influence.

The club is depicted as a highly masculinised space, full of the smoke that comes from the cigars, and where the only women are Helen – an intruder –, and Sonia – who sings to entertain the masculine audience. The place is entirely devoted to men’s pleasure:

un vaho sofocante de atmósfera cargada por el humo del tabaco e [*sic*] las pipas y los vapores espirituosos de las bebidas, hízola detenerse un instante. Mas pronto se rehizo [...] Y agarrando a Joe por un brazo, arrastróle hacia una mesa vacía [...]

– Nell, mira, ahí está, exclamó de pronto Joe, señalando una mesa ocupada por cuatro hombres, vestidos de smoking, y de la que partían ruidosas carcajadas. (15)

Helen feels dizzy because of the masculine atmosphere of smoke and spirits, an ambience to which according to a patriarchal view, women only belong as an 'object' displayed for men's delight. However, Helen soon regains her strength, and, as happened in the car, she controls Joe's movements ('agarrando a Joe por un brazo, arrastróle'). She therefore demonstrates her power in the public space, where she, as a 'modern woman', feels at ease.

The show commences, and Sonia appears on stage. In her first appearance in the story, the Russian singer is portrayed as an almost supernatural being, a symbol of a mythicised view of womanhood, closer to a deity rather than to a real girl:

Avanzando lentamente hacia el centro de la sala, al compás de la música, tenía, en efecto, más de aparición sobrenatural que de artista de café-concert. La tiara de esmaltes de campesina rusa que coronaba su cabello, de un negro azulado, era como un nimbo que iluminaba aquel rostro perfecto, dando a su palidez reflejos de nácar. Avanzaba como hipnotizada, la mirada profunda de sus ojos negros, inmensos, perdida en la lejanía del vacío. Con aquella actitud extática, la belleza sublime parecía sustraerse a aquel ambiente turbio y grosero. Avanzaba erguida, haciendo ondular suavemente en armoniosos movimientos su cuerpo estatuario [...] como si los brutales deseos que a su paso despertaba nada tuviesen que ver con ella. (16-18)

Her performance is also illustrated in the novella's front cover, based on an illustration by Enrique Varela de Seijas (Figure 4). The description of Sonia's concert evokes representations of woman as a mysterious 'femme fatale', so emblematic in the work of *fin de siècle* painters ascribed to the Decadent movement, such as Alphonse Mucha and Gustav Klimt. As María Peckler (2003: 51) points out, 'ese decadentismo se plasma en Klimt a través de sus numerosas y peculiares figuras femeninas: mujeres bellísimas, enigmáticas, seductoras, imbuidas de perversidad y fatalismo'. Similar images can be also found in Spanish painters. Hermenegildo Anglada-Camarasa's painting 'La Sibila' (1913), for instance, is reminiscent of Klimt's female characters (Peckler 2003: 58). These paintings, as well as the literary worldview of *fin de siècle* poets such as Rubén Darío, condense the ambiguity of the images of womanhood constructed during this period: 'por un lado, la mujer ideal ligada a la naturaleza, sumisa, defensora de su pureza, por otro, la mujer perversa, artificial, sexualmente fuerte, defensora de su independencia' (Luna Sellés 2002: 168).



Figure 4

Sonia embodies a sexual fantasy for the cabaret's audience, who perceive the singer as an object available to satisfy an exclusively male desire. I suggest that this perception reflects the double moral towards sexuality promoted by patriarchy in Spain, where 'los hombres recurrían al espacio público para satisfacer sus pasiones más bajas, mientras que las mujeres debían permanecer en penitente castidad dentro del hogar doméstico' (Luengo 2008: 209). At the same time,

Sonia also represents purity in a corrupted space, therefore inverting the recurrent archetype of woman as perverse in the *fin de siècle* artistic imaginary. She is defenceless against the perverse sexual desire of the audience, which violently invades the stage when the show is over:

En el paroxismo del entusiasmo, todas aquellas gentes precipitáronse al parquet, y Nell pudo ver que era Boris Linovief quien, alcanzando a la artista en su huida, la cogía por la cintura, mientras que el resto de aquella muchedumbre furiosa retrocedía como fiera dominada por la mirada del domador. (19)

Sonia is therefore in need of protection from the animal-like mass of over-excited men. Noticeably, whereas Boris is depicted as a ‘domador’, the out of control audience is referred to as a ‘fiera dominada’, an image that recalls Helen’s previous characterisation as ‘fierecilla indómita’. I suggest that this parallel illustrates the extent of Boris’ power in both the private and the public sphere. The Russian tycoon considers Sonia to be another of his possessions, and in the primitive society where he seems to be the ‘Alpha male’, he exerts his authority in order to protect his prey from his competitors.

After the turmoil, Sonia goes back to her humble home, ‘un miserable tugurio, al calor de que despedían las brasas de una palangana vieja’ (21), where she lives with her grandfather Iván. I argue that by showing the mysterious singer in her misery, ‘depojada de sus brillantes galas’ (21), outside the space of the cabaret where she is seen as a ‘femme fatale’ and a sexualised object, the narrator goes again beyond the dichotomy purity/perversity previously discussed. Consequently, the pictorial and literary representations of women carried out in *fin de siècle* art, are shown to be an expression of male desires and anxieties. As Jordi Luengo López (2008: 204) points out,

las mujeres que vivieron a finales del siglo XIX y principios del siglo XX, no sólo eran esclavas de los roles atribuidos a su propio sexo, sino que, además, eran objeto de representación de un abstracto imaginado por la mente masculina, careciendo, pues, de una auténtica representación real.

Sonia tells the events of the night to Iván, and we learn that she had to be protected from Boris’ sexual harassment by Joe: ‘me inspira miedo ese hombre, abuelo [...]. Esta noche, si no fuera por un joven que me ha protegido, no sé que hubiera sido de mí...’ (21). Her grandfather reacts with rage: ‘¡Pues no volverás a

cantar más! Si te salvé de las garras del príncipe Sergio Mohilev, ¡Dios sólo sabe a costa de qué sacrificios!, no ha sido para dejarte caer en manos de ese perro judío’ (21). The narrator relates how Prince Sergio’s lustful advances were the reason why they had to leave their country, and also how Iván lost his health, since he had the duty of protecting Sonia from the dangers of the Prince’s desires: ‘cual perro fiel, el viejo Iván, había estado siempre vigilando su más precioso tesoro: Sonia, y acechando al ladrón que quisiera arrebatarlo. Y había llegado el momento de defenderla; pero el ladrón había resultado ser un lobo fiero’ (23). Echoing *Little Red Riding Hood*’s tale, sexual desire is characterised as a ‘wolf’ from which Iván — ‘a loyal dog’ — must protect her virginal granddaughter, portrayed as a possession of his grandfather. Sonia’s sexuality is therefore ‘rightfully’ owned by a patriarchal figure, which must guard her from the dangers of both other men and her own sexual drive.<sup>17</sup> Ivan’s attitude is graphically shown in a drawing by Varela de Seijas (Figure 5), which recalls Moreno Villa’s illustration discussed in the previous section of this chapter (Figure 3). Sonia is on her knees with her face on her grandfather’s lap. He is smoking a pipe and showing a protective attitude. The drawing reflects a traditionalist conception of womanhood, according to which Sonia must remain ‘immaculate’ so her virginity can be handed untouched from her father to her husband. Only by doing this can she fulfil ‘the right order’ of sexual relations: her sexual organs must remain pure in order to undertake the task of ‘reproducing the nation’. In a similar manner, her morality must also be impeccable, so she can convey the values of patriarchy to her offspring; otherwise, she would be relegated from the social order and would turn from ‘mother’ into ‘whore’, therefore be barred from the decency of the family home and condemned to satisfying men’s sexual needs in public spaces. This is the biggest threat posed by Boris, a Mephistophelean character to whom Sonia could sell her soul and body in order to obtain wealth, just as Helen did. As the narrator states in relation to him, ‘nunca en sus atenciones el protector había llegado a propasarse; mas, sin embargo, aquella mirada sombría, aquella sonrisa cínica, le turbaban, y su exagerada obsequiosidad le repelía’ (32).

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<sup>17</sup> Jack Zipes (1993: 78) argues that *Little Red Riding Hood*’s tale concerns the regulation of sex roles and sexuality: ‘Where order and discipline reign [...] young girls will be safe both from their own inner sexual drives and outer natural forces. Inner and outer nature must be brought under control, otherwise chaos and destruction will reign’.



**Figure 5**

The description of Boris' attitude matches with Sonia's previous experience in her homeland with the Russian Prince, who also tried to get closer to the singer by giving her expensive presents. Ivan, however, 'no se dejó engañar [...] Sabía lo que significaban los obsequios del amo a su nieta; había podido leer todo lo que de pecaminoso había en aquellas miradas golosas con que aquél envolvía a la linda campesina'. (21). I suggest that a correlation between wealth and slavery permeates the relationships between men and women in the novella. The reference to Prince Sergio's tyranny is in fact complemented by a subsequent scene in which Sonia's dreams of 'escenas pastoriles, en la campiña fértil de una Rusia libertada y próspera, todo ello envuelto en un ambiente de paz, de bienestar y de abundancia' (26). This allusion can only be understood in relation to the 1917 Russian Revolution, as a monologue by Iván confirms:

– ¿Siguen los campesinos Rusos apoderándose de las tierras? [...] Sí; el príncipe Sergio se habrá visto despojado de sus inmensas



propiedades [...] Todos – continuaba – Litivsky, Chaupof, Rodzianko, cultivarán ahora sus propias tierras... El príncipe Sergio Mohilev, había seguramente perecido a sus manos... (24-25)

I suggest that the presence of Russian characters in the novella is not accidental, but rather reflects the interest awakened in Spain by the Bolshevik Revolution.

Víctor Fuentes and Manuel Tuñón de Lara (2006: 41), point out that:

la gran difusión de la literatura soviética en España es un fenómeno de gran interés sociológico y cultural, todavía por estudiar: entre 1926 y 1936, sólo de novelas, se publicará cerca de un centenar de títulos. La preferencia del lector español por estas novelas revela la semejanza de sus necesidades, anhelos y aspiraciones con las que, inspirados por la gesta del pueblo ruso en sus primeros años de revolución, supieron plasmar los escritores y artistas soviéticos con gran talento creativo.

*El crisol de las razas* therefore captures the influence of Russian literature and the context of the 1917 Revolution in Spain. Significantly, women's emancipation was also part of the principles of the Bolshevik party, as Sheila Fitzpatrick (1994: 86) argues:

the Bolsheviks supported the emancipation of women, as most members of the Russian radical intelligentsia had done since the 1860s. [...] there was a general assumption that women and children were potential victims of oppression within the family, and that the family tended to inculcate bourgeois values. The Bolshevik party established special women's departments (*zhenotdely*) to organize and educate women, protect their interests, and help them to play an independent role.

Simultaneously, the text constructs a discourse against patriarchal and class domination. In the United States, the magnate Boris perpetuates such subjugation, in the face of which Sonia has no alternative but to offer her sensuality in order to subsist; even her grandfather 'se daba cuenta de lo que significaba que Sonia dejara de cantar... El hambre... El frío... La muerte...' (23-24). The nature of anti-Semitic connections between capitalism, patriarchy, and Judaism in the text will be subjected to much closer scrutiny in the next chapter.

Since Ivan cannot protect Sonia anymore due to his physical condition, she has accepted the protection of a dancer from the club, Fomitch.<sup>18</sup> The dancer is described as a simple-minded and jealous man who wishes to have the privilege of being her exclusive protector. That night, however, Sonia did not need his

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<sup>18</sup> There are constant vacillations in the name of this character: Fomitch (25), Fomiteh (24), Tomich (42). I have chosen the first one since it is the variation used in most cases by the narrator.

services, since she was protected by Joe – with whom she has fallen in love – and Fomitch feels threatened in his role as Sonia’s guardian: ‘mañana y siempre’, he tells the singer, ‘yo sólo he de ser el que te conduzca a casa por la noche...’ (25). As one can see, the Russian singer is at the centre of a network of protection and control. Sonia is allegedly in danger because of men’s intentions, but she must also comply with the authority of her male masters. Only Joe seems to respect her:

¡Era correspondido en su amor!... Sonia le había abierto su corazón, y le había confesado sus sentimientos respecto a él, en un lenguaje desconocido que no había oído nunca entre las mujeres que frecuentaba. Ni en boca de las jovencitas refinadas que acudían a los bailes de la Universidad, ni de los labios de las mujeres galantes de ‘The Midnigert Frolies’ [*sic*], ni entre las dama linajudas amigas de Nell... Esta mujer enigmática, que tenía a la vez el candor de una niña, cuando escuchaba sus palabras de amor, el apasionamiento de la hembra, cuando era ella la que las pronunciaba, y la crueldad de una fiera, cuando amenazaba defendiendo su amor, ponía en ebullición toda la sangre de sus venas. (33)<sup>19</sup>

In contrast to the perception of Sonia as a sexual object, an embodiment of an erotic male desire associated with perversity, Joe is able to see the purity of the young singer. Furthermore, he is not afraid of Sonia’s ‘unleashed’ sexuality, of the ‘fiera’ inside her. I argue that the combination of these two characteristics, purity and sexuality, dismantles the ‘angel’/‘whore’ dichotomy constructed by patriarchal discourse. When she is in Joe’s company, Sonia also subverts the passivity of her role as ‘protected’, to become an active individual who defends – and hence protects – her own feelings and sexual desires. One must however note the distinction made by Joe between American women and Sonia’s ‘mysterious’ sensuality. As I will show in the next chapter, Joe’s attraction towards Sonia responds to a great extent to a ‘racial’ empathy between the two lovers. Joe finds in Sonia the passion supposedly inherent in the Russian ‘race’. Joe’s own Russian blood, which until that moment had been obscured under American education, seems to be awakened by the singer’s ‘apasionamiento’.

Eventually, compelled by her financial needs, Sonia accepts Boris’ proposition of singing for him at the ‘White Eagle’, one of his luxurious residences in Long Island (36). Boris’ offer is a manoeuvre seemingly directed at seducing Sonia, and he is preparing the scene in order to attack her like a bird of prey. ‘Ya es tiempo

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<sup>19</sup> ‘The Midnigert Frolies’ seems to be the name of a club, likely a misspelling of ‘Midnight Follies’.

de que me muestres alguna gratitud' (37), he tells Sonia, who is set up by the wolf. At the same time, Helen – who has found out about Boris' private show – also heads to the mansion with the aim of dismantling her husband's plans. When Joe learns about the situation of the two women, he realises the danger they both are in: 'era menester llegar pronto para evitar aquel encuentro. Era preciso salvar a Sonia del lazo que le había sido tendido y a Nell de la venganza de su marido, que sería implacable...' (36). Like the hunter in *Little Red Riding Hood*, he turns into the 'hero' of the story, a representation of 'male governance' that must save women from their fall (Zipes 1993: 81).

Once she arrives at the 'White Eagle', Sonia is left in a room in order to dress up for the show. There, she finds another woman asleep on the bed: Helen. Recalling the Prince from *Sleeping Beauty*, Sonia admires Helen's 'rostro de facciones perfectas', and 'por ese misterioso poder de atracción no tardó Nell [...] en abrir los ojos' (38). The two women face each other, and Helen has a 'diabólica idea' (39): she wants to pretend to be Sonia in front of Boris, so she can either seduce or humiliate him in front of his friends:

– [...] si hoy no conquisto a Boris con este golpe de audacia, a lo menos me habré vengado, poniéndole en ridículo ante sus amigotes, que aplauden su conducta despreciativa hacia mí y que celebran sus éxitos con las demás mujeres... ¡Ah, cuando me acerque con el rostro cubierto le daré un abrazo, y luego la *dama velada* se descubra!...

Y esta diabólica idea le hizo prorrumpir en una carcajada irónica...  
Bien se presentaba su plan de venganza. (40)

Sonia accepts, seeing an opportunity to run away from Boris' grasp. Immediately, Helen dresses in the singer's clothes, covering her face with a veil. She contemplates herself in the mirror, and in contrast to her usual cold American temperament, it seems that she has also acquired Sonia's Slavic passion:

contemplábase en el espejo, transfigurado su rostro por la fiebre de la ansiedad, adquiriría aún mayor belleza con el brillo de los ojos y el rojo encendido de las mejillas. Era aquella una expresión de la que solía carecer su semblante de una fría palidez. (40)

Thanks to their unexpected encounter, their roles are inverted. Helen becomes a sensual woman and Sonia wears 'el traje sastre de Nell' (41), an urban piece of clothing that imitates men's suits and therefore is the opposite of the singer's 'traje de campesina' (40).

Del Lowenthal and Robert Snell point out that, according to Hélène Cixous, ‘Woman is like Sleeping Beauty, the dormant negative subject, until kissed by the man. She is always therefore subordinated to his desire; only his wanting to kiss her will bring her to life’ (2003: 136). Madrilena Papachristophorou also states that ‘the passivity of Sleeping Beauty, caused by the eternal magic sleep’ leads her ‘to embody perfect femininity in the form of marriage and maternity’ (2008: 883). By assuming Sonia’s role, Helen wants to truncate the patriarchal dream and gain control in her relationship with Boris. As she did in the night club, she covers her face with a veil. In their characteristic ‘bodily’ vocabulary, Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément (1996: 145) explain patriarchy as ‘a kind of vast membrane enveloping everything [...] We have to know that, to change the world, we must constantly try to scratch and tear it’. Similarly, I suggest that Helen – who hides her face in order to *unveil* her true identity to her husband –, wishes to tear the ‘membrane’ of patriarchy. However, in tune with the constant ambiguity of this character, Helen’s plan also entails a submissive view of her own sexuality. Her primary goal is to seduce her husband, and although she resorts to audacity in order to achieve such an objective, she also wants to become the contrary of what she is: from the independent ‘modern woman’ she is transformed into the sexualised object represented by Sonia on stage.

Helen’s plan will in fact end in tragedy. Before she can uncover her face, she is shot dead by Fomitch in an act of jealousy, since the dancer wrongly believes that Sonia is finally going to give herself to Boris (42). Helen dies in her husband’s arms, and not even Joe, the ‘hero’, can save her from such a terrible ending. Joe has not only failed in his role as male protector but he also needs to be protected by Sonia, for his is initially mistaken as the murderer: ‘abrazando a Joe como para protegerle [...] sin acusar al que de un modo erróneo la amaba, y defendiendo al que era su amor, repetía: – ¡Buscadle! ¡Buscadle! ¡Este [*sic*] no ha sido!’ (42). I see the disorder of this last scene as representative of the transformations undergone by the two main female characters in the novella. On the one hand, Helen refused to divorce her ‘primitive’ husband and break with his patriarchal authority. Her rebellion was therefore flawed from the start since she would anyway remain economically dependent on her husband and therefore one of his possessions. As the narrator suggests in the opening pages of the text, Helen’s mistake is to marry a foreign man, to fall for the fortune of a Jewish

mogul. Her tragic death consequently warns the reader about the dangers of miscegenation: by entering a culture that is not her own, Helen lost her independence. Sonia, on the other hand, ends the novella in the arms of her perfect sentimental partner. Joe is not only half Russian – and therefore one of her own kind – but has also grown up in the United States. In comparison to his uncle Boris, Joe has been brought up in a culture in which women are respected. Furthermore, in the final scene Sonia wears Helen's clothes, and acts in a protective way towards Joe. She therefore has broken with the network of protection surrounding her and has gained control of her own fate, initiating the way to leave patriarchy behind and become a 'modern woman'.

### **3.3 *Anticópolis*: the Modern Woman against the Angel in the House**

In Luis de Oteyza's novel, gender issues are also presented by juxtaposing two archetypal characters. Jesusa, as we saw in the previous chapter, represents the traditionalist values embodied by the 'Ángel del Hogar' trope. Her daughter Rosa, on the contrary, epitomises the American 'modern woman'. However, the confrontation between these two women does not start until don Antonio passes away. While he was alive, and in spite of his passion for New York's modernity, Antonio Nieto maintained a patriarchal hierarchy within his family, where he was the highest authority. As the narrator states:

Antonio tenía impuesta, con energía, la patriarcal costumbre de comer todos juntos. Salvo él, que en su clase de patriarca hacía lo que se le antojaba, únicamente a los dos chicos mayores, como trabajaban en la parte baja de la ciudad, les era permitido faltar a los almuerzos. (2006: 110)

Although Antonio declares his admiration for New York's modernity, such admiration is limited to the public sphere, and in the domestic space his authority mirrors the patriarchal social structures of Spanish society at the time. The father imposes his norms and only the men of the family are allowed to work outside the home, whereas the women continue their mother's pattern: they are devoted to domestic chores and subjected to a sexual hierarchy.

The attitude of the Spanish 'patriarca' contrasts with New York's customs in family life as described in the text. Don Antonio is defined by Mr. Sanders – the father of Carlos' girlfriend – as 'un padre troglodítico' (16). Sanders also

compares the differences in parenting between the United States and Europe: ‘lo que pasa – decía – es que los chicos tienen miedo de usted. Estos padres europeos... Se creen ustedes en tiempos de los romanos. Cuando el padre era el tirano de la familia. Y hoy esto no puede ser así, señor. ¡No se puede!’ (115). His attack on the patriarchal structures of the Old Continent reverses the opposition between American ‘primitiveness’ and European civilisation. As we will see shortly, a similar opinion will be held by Doctor Jiménez.

The situation in the Nieto home changes radically after Antonio’s death, when Jesusa’s children revolt against her intentions of taking her family back to Oviedo, since they identify with the American lifestyle and hence want to remain in New York. The head of the rebellion is Rosa, who is described as ‘la más inteligente de los hermanos’ (123). By assuming the leading role, she takes over her deceased father’s position, even over the privileges previously given to the elder sons. In fact, Rosa’s first decision, despite her mother’s disapproval, is to allow the women of the family to work outside the home:

Sí mamá, trabajaremos nosotras. Ya lo debíamos haber hecho. Sobre todo yo, que desde que salí del Colegio no hago más que aburrirme. Aquí ni los cuidados de la casa distraen a la mujer, porque siendo casas tan pequeñas, están arregladas en seguida. Por eso, todas las mujeres ejercen oficios o carreras en Nueva York. Ha sido una ridiculez que no se me haya dejado trabajar. (120)

Rosa’s explanation for the incorporation of women in the job market in New York still contains traces of a patriarchal worldview, as she believes that the primary occupation of the female members of the family is to attend to domestic chores. However, her attitude represents the break with Spanish traditionalism undertaken by the ‘modern woman’. Rosa’s behaviour in the public sphere goes against traditional views of womanhood as a ‘dangerous force’ that needs to be controlled by men. She finds a modelling job in a boutique, a professional occupation that ‘a doña Jesusa le parecía una abominación’ (132). Showing her body in a public space implies for her mother, ‘un peligro tan grave, más grave aún’ than Carlos’s involvement in New York’s organised crime, since Rosa’s job ‘amenazaba no a la vida, sino a la honra’ (141). Jesusa’s reasoning – which recalls Ivan’s attitude towards Sonia in *El crisol de las razas* – follows the logic of patriarchy, according to which the virginity of young women runs the risk of being inappropriately snatched from their body, and thus must be protected, confined in the ‘secure’

space of the family home, and safeguarded from the dangers of public places. E. Ann Kaplan (1992: 47-48) argues that the identification of the mother figure with patriarchy responds to the ‘master-slave psychic phenomenon’ by which slaves identify with their masters once freed. In a similar way, ‘mothers take out their subjection to their husbands on their children’. Nevertheless, Rosa does not fear entering those masculinised spaces, which in New York have been already conquered by the ‘modern woman’. She not only works by exposing her body to masculine and feminine gazes, but also frequents the company of men during the night, which she spends in bars and clubs. Again, Jesusa disapproves of her daughter’s behaviour, since for her, ‘las costumbres que Rosa había adoptado resultaban de perdición.’ (141). Jesusa is especially concerned about Rosa’s male companions, since she ‘empezó a salir por las noches, regresando en ocasiones de madrugada’ (141) and was invited to go ‘a lugares de diversión. A cenas, a bailes y quién sabe dónde más. Y una muchacha sola con un hombre’ (144). Rosa is, however, quite categorical. There is no harm in what she does, because she is always in control: ‘pues a donde me proponen y acepto yo’ (144); in spite of her Spanish background, Rosa considers herself an American woman:

a las mujeres de allá hay que guardarlas entre muros para que no se vayan a acostar con el primero que les hace un guiño. A lo que parece, no están esperando más que eso, las santas benditas [...] Las mujeres de aquí somos muy diferentes. Y así vamos muy seguras a todas partes con santos, con hombres y hasta con demonios. Tan seguras estamos solas como las de allá rodeadas de madres, tías, amigas y demás chaperons. No hay el menor cuidado de que nos suceda nada.  
(145)

The above excerpt offers a twofold insight into the opposition between modern and traditional social structures. First of all, Rosa refers to the protection received by women in the Old Continent, not only by men, but also by older women, often primordial actors in the maintenance of the patriarchal system (Yuval-Davies 1997: 37). American women, because of their independent character, and thanks to civil rights that guarantee gender equality, are however free of any danger when they are in the company of men. Secondly, the extract highlights different views about sexuality. In Spain and Europe, women are treated as ‘santas benditas’, and their ‘virtue’ must be defended from the threats posed by men and by their own sexual drive. Resorting to sarcasm – which is her way of dismantling Jesusa’s

stubborn stagnation in traditionalism –, Rosa argues that European women must be protected because they are willing to have sexual intercourse with any man. The mordant affirmation by which she turns the ‘santas’ into nymphomaniacs unveils the hypocrisy of patriarchy regarding female sexuality.

Such hypocrisy is also criticised by Doctor Jiménez in one of his conversations with Jesusa. Whereas the latter maintains that ‘las mujeres no somos iguales a los hombres, ni en eso [Jesusa is referring to sexual intercourse] ni en nada’ (182), Jiménez argues that ‘las mujeres son ustedes iguales a los hombres en todo y, si el concepto de igualdad admitiese superlativo, diría que son “igualísimas” en eso’ (183). The Puerto Rican doctor maintains that the inequality suffered by women is based not on physical and psychological differences between men and women as argued by patriarchal order, but are instead the result of social conventions, ‘las costumbres’ (183). Moreover, he declares that ‘sexual difference’ is a strategy used by men in order to submit women to their will, and, given that it does not respond to nature but it has been artificially constructed, it can also be overcome:

Me va usted a hablar de una costumbre que obliga a la mujer a contener sus impulsos sexuales; a estar sometida en eso, que no admite sumisión, bajo el dominio egoísta y estúpido del hombre. Podría oponer que costumbre tal es bárbara, cruel... Podría demostrarlo con pruebas irrefutables [...] Le diré sólo que las costumbres cambian, añadiendo que tal costumbre ha cambiado. (183)

As one can note, Jiménez regards sexual submission as a primitive practice, hence challenging the opposition between American ‘primitivism’ and European/Spanish ‘cultural refinement’. In order to support his theories, the Doctor alludes to Judge Lindsey’s innovative proposals for a ‘companionate marriage’ in the United States:

El matrimonio de compañía es, simplemente, un estado conyugal sin que los cónyuges hayan de convivir ni dar vida a nuevos seres y pudiendo divorciarse por sólo el mutuo consentimiento. Así habitarán separados, si carecen de medios para montar casa; con el control de la natalidad evitarán las paternas responsabilidades; y, en caso de haberse equivocado al creer su cariño duradero, se desligarán fácilmente. (190)

In *The Revolt of Modern Youth* (1925) and *The Companionate Marriage* (1929, first published in 1927), marriage revisionists Ben B. Lindsay and Wainwright Evans ‘denounced the evils of unscientific, authoritarian attitudes and sexual



repression, promoted the goodness and importance of sexuality, especially for women, and called for greater freedom for young couples' (Simmons 2009: 106). As it might be expected, Jesusa reacts fiercely against such ideas, which she regards as 'la legalización del concubinato y de las prácticas que matan al germen' (190). Attached to a traditionalist view of womanhood, for Jesusa divorce and birth control are immoral practices, since they contradict both the unconditional submission of the wife to her husband and also the primary role of women as 'reproducers'. On the contrary, Rosa argues that thanks to economic emancipation, American women do not have to marry a man in order to become a fulfilled individual. Furthermore, they can even have sexual relations without the blessing of the marital union:

por ahora no pienso casarme. Estoy muy bien como estoy y no veo por qué cambiar [...] Y aunque no me casase nunca, no tendría importancia. Gano ya mi vida y siempre la podré ganar. A lo que parece, las mujeres en España no encuentran otro medio de vivir, sino ese del casamiento [...] No lo necesito para nada. Ni para... Bueno, ya sabes... De modo que sabes que para nada me hace falta un marido. Para nada en absoluto. (179-180)

I propose that women's independence from men in New York is also alluded to in the cover of the first edition of the novel, designed by Federico Ribas (Figure 6). The image shows a young woman, located at the forefront and therefore highlighting the relevant role female characters play in the novel. She wears modern and elegant clothes that provocatively show her legs, and walks alone in the public space, moving in the opposite direction than the man behind her, therefore suggesting a departure from masculine authority. Furthermore, her defiant look at the viewer strengthens the rebelliousness of the character, which refuses to be an object constructed by the male gaze.

Jesusa disapproves of her daughter's independence, and would have preferred that Rosa 'esperase tranquilamente en su casa a contraer matrimonio. Nunca estuvo ella conforme con que las mujeres trabajasen fuera de su casa. Claro que allí era costumbre...' (133). The different status of women in Spain and the United States is reflected by an anecdote told by Rosa in order to mock Spanish backwardness. In a satirical manner, she refers to a Spanish married couple who have just arrived in New York, and, once settled in the city, 'siguiendo la práctica, al parecer corriente en su tierra, el esposo dio una paliza a la esposa' (157). As the

story carries on, ‘el ruido de los golpes, más que las quejas de la víctima, que recibía el maltrato con cierta resignación, atrajo a los vecinos’ (157).

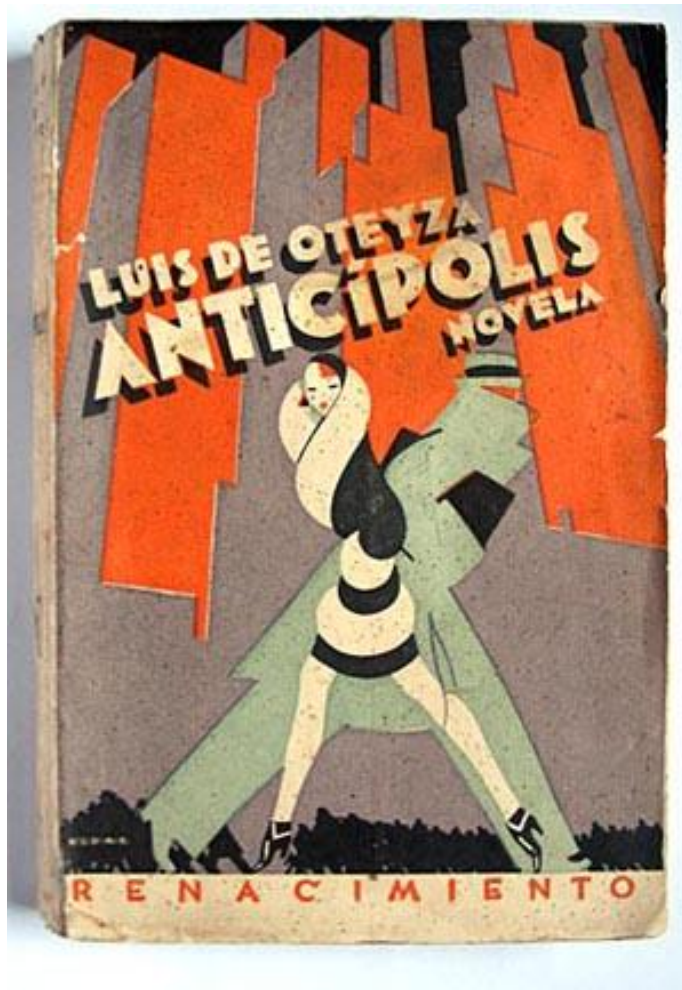


Figure 6

Eventually, a policeman is called to the scene and arrests the husband, who reacts with surprise and outrage: “pero si es mi mujer”, alegaba en clase de justificante completo [...] “De modo que aquí no puede uno pegar a su mujer? [...] ¡Bonito país!” (157). The narrator refers to the story as ‘el chascarrillo del compatriota que llevó de España la costumbre de pegar a su mujer’ (157). The comical tone given to this tale of abuse highlights the violent treatment received by women in Spain. The narration itself also unveils the acceptance of such a practice by women themselves (‘la víctima, que recibía el mal trato con cierta resignación’), a fact confirmed by Jesusa’s opinion:

Doña Jesusa, cuando Rosa acabó el cuento, estuvo tentada de sostener que, efectivamente, si allá los maridos pudiesen pegar a sus mujeres y

también los padres a sus hijas, algo más derecho andarían muchas señoras y señoritas que andaban bastante torcido. (157)

As one can see, Jesusa is completely subdued by patriarchy, to the extent that she considers that domestic violence is the way of maintaining ‘the right order of things’. Rosa, however, rejects the barbarity of her nation of origin. In reference to Jesusa, she states that ‘después de todo, no tenía la culpa, la infeliz, de haberse educado en una nación retrasadísima’ (179). The allusion to education is, I argue, highly important, since it is related to the demands for women’s education by Spanish female thinkers of the time, such as Rosa Chacel and Carmen de Burgos. According to feminist writers, Spain’s modernisation would only be achieved by allowing women access education and the end of ‘sexual difference’. Their ideas were not only distrusted by the establishment and by most male intellectuals from both traditionalist and liberal positions, but also by those women educated to preserve the same values that were oppressing them, represented in the novel by Jesusa. As Antonio Gramsci and Pierre Bourdieu have shown, power is not only imposed through force but also through persuasion. Gramsci’s notion of ‘hegemony’ adequately captured how the subaltern class learns to see society through the eyes of their masters, as consequence of their education and their place in the system (Burke 2007: 131). Gramsci developed his theory to explain relations of subalternity between social classes. However, ‘hegemony’ can also be a productive concept in relation to other cases of subalternity, such as the West/East opposition, as Edward Said proved in *Orientalism*. I propose that we can also apply Gramsci’s notion to the acceptance of patriarchy by women, and their zeal for preserving the system to which they are subjected. Similarly, Bourdieu sees the imposition of the dominant culture on subaltern groups as a ‘symbolic violence’, that is, a process by which they acknowledge the culture of the ruling class as legitimate and their own culture as illegitimate (Burke 2007: 133). In this case, Bourdieu does not only limit his concept to class relations, but his views also complement his analysis of ‘masculine domination’ (Bourdieu 2001: 1-2).

Significantly, having failed to preserve the values of traditional morality in her daughters – in her view corrupted by the immorality of the ‘evil city’ –, Jesusa becomes obsessed with the ‘salvation’ of her granddaughter:

entre los hombres feroces y las mujeres impúdicas de Nueva York, dentro de la ciudad monstruosa, perversa, maldita, vivía doña Jesusa temiendo y odiando. Bien que el deber sagrado de cuidar a la nieta la sostenía contra el espanto, y la esperanza de huir con ella la alentaba para el aborrecimiento. El plan de la abuela consistía en aguardar a que la niña creciese, vigilando su educación, aislándola de malas relaciones, guardándola celosamente en cuerpo y alma. Y luego, un día, pretender que deseaba ir a despedirse de su patria, de su ciudad, y solicitar a la muchachita que la acompañase [...]. Para lograr tal resultado, feliz, glorioso, con paciencia podría aguantarse mucho. ¡A Nueva York misma, incluyendo cuanto y a cuantos contiene! Todo eso [...] aguantaba la abuela por salvar a la nietecita. (238)

Jesusa believes that the only way of fulfilling her role of ‘reproducer’ (‘lograr tal resultado, feliz, glorioso’) is to educate her granddaughter according to the values of patriarchy, protecting her from modernising influences (‘guardándola celosamente en cuerpo y alma’), and therefore continuing the family line started by her husband Antonio. As a matter of fact, Antonio’s surname (‘Nieto’) suggests the idea of continuity thanks to the persistence of family values and their communication to the descendants as a way of preserving the identity of the community. Therefore, the importance of ‘rescuing’ the granddaughter even goes beyond the ‘salvation’ of the child itself: once educated according to ‘the right order’, she will be able to perpetuate its values in her own offspring, and the morals of the patriarchal nation will be thus preserved.

Jesusa hopes to take her granddaughter back to Spain, where she believes the child would be safe from the malign influence of the debauched American society. Nevertheless, according to Jiménez, the threat to patriarchy posed by modernisation goes beyond the borders of the United States. The Doctor argues that women’s emancipation will eventually spread across the entire planet, including Spain:

Digo con absoluta claridad que la mujer en Oviedo, como en toda la superficie del globo terráqueo, conseguirá la emancipación económica, que es lo que produce su liberación total. Y escapada la mujer de la esclavitud a la que le sometió el hombre, en cualquier sitio será igual que aquí, si no es más que aquí. Créalo usted, señora. (191)

Jiménez argues that Spain’s modernisation, embodied by social changes that will highly affect women’s role in society, is unstoppable. Those changes were in fact already being made visible in Spain by feminist Spanish intellectuals and activists and their efforts to give women the legal rights that will turn them into full

citizens, equal to men. I argue that Jiménez's pro-modernising ideas and Rosa's rebellious attitude suggest a counter-discourse against the pervasive power of patriarchy in the Spanish society at the time. Echoing the view of gender roles given in *El crisol de las razas*, *Anticópolis* seems to propose that the challenge to patriarchy must not only come from the active awakening of women to the subjugation imposed by the 'naturalness' behind which masculine domination is disguised, but also from male intellectuals, who must also leave old-fashioned stereotypes of womanhood behind in order to acknowledge the falseness of the paradigm of 'sexual difference'.

Moreover, the reference to marriage reformers such as Lindsay certainly situates *Anticópolis* within the debates about marriage and sexuality developed in United States between 1910 and the Second World War, when:

a range of activists, writers, and thinkers reconceived women's sexuality and the marriage relationship in response to major social shifts. Increased female employment, higher education, and voting rights were undermining older images of women as frail and innocent. Public panic over venereal disease evoked calls for sex education for both girls and boys. And after a century of Americans' private practice of fertility control, birth control advocates were asserting publicly that contraception should be legalized. Thus began a contentious public conversation that resulted in a new vision of women's sexuality and relation to marriage in the United States, one that became the predominant, though certainly not the only, cultural ideal by the 1940s. (Simmons 2009: 4)

Efforts to change social conventions, however, unveil the persistence of patriarchal rule in the United States at the time. As Simmons (2009: 111) points out, in the early twentieth-century, conservative Victorian values still exerted a strong influence in official culture, whereas the challenge to traditional views of sexuality sprang mainly from popular culture (2009: 11). Therefore, rather than a reality already 'in place', as presented in the texts studied in this thesis, the challenge to 'sexual difference' in 1920s-1930s New York should be seen as a change in progress. In this light, the opposition between patriarchal Spain and a sexually liberalised United States carried out in the novel is rendered as too simplistic. As a matter of fact, in the United States too, jocular portraits of older women identified with conservative values such as Jesusa, were commonly used in popular culture to criticize the excessive puritanism promoted by the American establishment:

The mocking of sexual repression (something that continues today as a powerful weapon of ridicule and judgment against critics of sexualized culture) blossomed during the 1920s in popular culture. The critics used these images of repression to indicate the absence of a scientific outlook and thus a lack of modernity in their targets. [...] delineators of flapper marriage created many more female characters who dramatized excessive female power as stereotypically puritanical and controlling older women. These character types, from the laughable to the threatening, undermined the legitimacy of sexual control and the Victorian style of respectable womanhood. Images of women were most common, although men were sometimes depicted as antisexual. (Simmons 2009: 144)

Moreover, the distinction made by Rosa between the traditionalism of European women and the modernity of American ones also overlooks claims for women's emancipation, feminist activism, and the increasing visibility of new forms of womanhood in the Old Continent, including Spain. Rosa's generalisation of European and Spanish women as 'traditionalist' can be interpreted as an ideological maneuver in order to highlight the burden that sexual prejudices impose upon the modernisation of Western societies, especially that of Spain. Similarly, I propose that the radical opposition between the modern Rosa and the traditionalist Jesusa established in the text, mirrors Jiménez's defence of the violent move forward represented by New York's modernisation (see Chapter 2 of this thesis). In order to achieve gender equality in Spain – essential for the complete modernisation of the country – the 'modern woman' embodied by Rosa must act fiercely and with no mercy against the traditional figure represented by her mother. As in Virginia Woolf's speech *Professions for Women* – delivered in 1931, the same year in which the first edition of *Anticípólis* was published – the Victorian 'Angel in the House' must be killed with the purpose of stopping the cycle of patriarchal submission perpetuated through old-fashioned archetypes of womanhood.

Nevertheless, the counter-discourse embodied by Rosa and Jiménez does not supersede completely the sexual hierarchy and patriarchal world view against which it seems to be directed. First of all, both Jesusa and Rosa are symbolic constructions representing an entire community and its national values. Whereas Jesusa is the embodiment of *casticista* views of Spanish national identity, Rosa incarnates modern America and possibly the Spain of the future. They therefore remain archetypes of womanhood that do not stand as individuals but rather as the

masculine illusion of 'the motherland'. Besides, Rosa's excessive aggressiveness towards the exaggerated ignorance of her mother establishes an antagonistic relationship between both women, and therefore a conflict that remains unresolved. Consequently, although Jesusa's passing can be understood as a plea for social change in Spain, this interpretation simultaneously leads to a dead end. Jesusa's fatal ending seems to obviate that the submissive attitudes of women are a consequence of the symbolic violence exerted on them by patriarchy. Kaplan (1992: 46) points out the antagonism between mother and daughter developed in early feminist literature, in which the former is blamed for 'women's ills'. Similarly, Jesusa is seen by Rosa as an enemy that needs to be defeated in order to free herself from the chains of patriarchal authority. Jesusa is however a victim who dies because of her refusal to go against her own submission, and the text does not offer any solution for the subjugation suffered by these women.

Moreover, and in tune with the polyphonic character of the text that I have explored in the previous chapter, Jesusa's delirious view of New York caused by her mental breakdown also suggests a critical view of American capitalism, criminality, and sexual indecency:

Allá todo se compraba y se vendía. Mabel vendería a su hija, y nada como comprársela, pagando lo suficiente... ¿Qué mayor destino para el dinero que Carlos ganaba de criminal modo?... Y de no bastar ese dinero, ella buscaría más. Aquel dinero que, cometiendo infamias mayores, ganaran sus otros hijos: el del conformismo de Juan y el de la abjuración de Pepín. Y también por la fuerza... Que Carlos, al frente de su banda, robase a la niña y matara a la madre y a cuantos se opusieran. Caso de que él tuviera que emplearse en distintos asesinatos, ella misma cometería éstos. Con que la [*sic*] diesen una pistola, un automóvil y algunos bandidos para cubrirse la retirada. O, asimismo, satisfaciendo los vicios de Mabel... Rosa podía cederla [*sic*] los amantes que la [*sic*] sobraban. Y si, cansada de hombres, quería probar con las mujeres, se le ofrecería Mariíta. Ella prestaríase a servirle de encubridora, de tercera, ¡como ya había hecho! (247-28)

In contrast with Jiménez's utopic view of New York as 'Anticópolis', for Jesusa the city turns into an 'Anti-polis', an unsettling dystopia ruled by greed, violence, chaos, and debauchery. Although Jesusa's hyperbolic misunderstanding of New York's society can be potentially interpreted as a mockery of sexual repression, the end of the novel can also be read as an apocalyptic warning against the pernicious effects that modernisation would inflict on the Catholic and

traditionalist order represented by *casticista* views of Spanish national identity. In an almost diabolical manner, Jesusa – the allegedly pure and chaste ‘Ángel del Hogar’ – is eventually corrupted by the violent and indecent influence of modernisation in order to protect her granddaughter from the same corruption in which she finally agrees to participate. Her symbolical death would therefore condense *casticista* fears of the ‘malefic’ impact of modernisation, which would twist the ‘purity’ of the Spanish identity, leading to its final disappearance.

### **3.4 *La ciudad automática*: ‘The American Girl’ or the Goddess of Chaos**

In *La ciudad automática*, Julio Camba regards gender equality in the United States as the effect of ‘special laws’, which have allegedly been passed in order to protect women (1960: 108). However, the writer sees such regulations as unnecessary, since ‘the American girl’ – the name given by Camba to American women – already held a position of superiority over men:

la chica americana es, sin disputa, la más guapa del mundo [...] La cosa es mucho más seria de lo que parece, amigo lector. No estamos en presencia de unas chicas más o menos monas, sino de unas mujeres de cuerpo entero, tan extraordinariamente hermosas, que uno no se atreve casi a levantar la vista hacia ellas. Parecen seres de una especie superior, y aun cuando se ponen a mascar goma lo hacen con un aire y una majestad de diosas. (108)

‘Seres de una especie superior’, ‘majestad de diosas’: both descriptors locate American women on a superior level, different from *mankind*. Yet once more, women are transformed into sexual objects, mythical figures whose alleged power emanates from their supernatural beauty. Moreover, Camba erases the face from this ‘American girl’, who turns from a singular being (‘la chica americana’) into a plurality of women (‘unas chicas’), a generalised entity and not a real individual. This is an image that echoes views of womanhood promoted by Spanish male polymaths at the time, such as Ortega y Gasset, who in 1923 argued that ‘la personalidad de la mujer es poco personal, o dicho de otra manera, la mujer es más bien un género que un individuo’ (Ortega y Gasset 1947: 433). Camba’s flagrant alignment with patriarchy also leads him to provide a similarly generalised depiction of Spanish and French women:



La madrileña tendrá los ojos más bonitos y la parisiense tendrá la nariz más remangada. Ésta será más graciosa, aquella más picaresca, la otra más elegante, etcétera; pero si las chicas de aquí o de allí pueden vencer en detalle a la chica Americana, sería preciso que se reuniesen todas y combinaran sus diversos encantos para vencerla en conjunto. (108)

In the above excerpt, ‘madrileña’ stands for all women in Madrid, possibly in all Spain, and ‘parisiense’ represents all Parisian and French women. Camba fosters rivalry between women – as his repeated use of ‘vencer’ shows – as though they were meant to be enemies to themselves. Such a rivalry is however only related to their beauty – there is not a single mention to their intellectual capacities –, and hence to their bodies. Therefore, it seems that Camba is implying that women cannot be a real danger to ‘rational’ and ‘educated’ men. Contradictorily, he also declares that women’s ‘superiority’ poses a threat to men’s authority, as we can infer from expressions such as ‘la cosa es mucho más seria de lo que parece’ and ‘uno no se atreve casi a levantar la vista hacia ellas’. I propose that the depiction of women as superior beings is a subterfuge used by Camba in order to criticise legal equality between the two sexes, as becomes evident in the following paragraph:

Ahora bien, ¿creen ustedes que las mujeres de esta categoría necesitan unas leyes especiales que las protejan? Yo me explicaría más bien todo lo contrario, esto es, que los senadores se reuniesen en Washington para garantizar contra ellas la vida y hacienda de los hombres; pero, ¿qué defensa necesita aquí la mujer? ¿Qué peligro puede suponer para ella el pobre ciudadano que se pasa el día en la oficina y al que no queda nunca una hora libre para el deporte ni para la lectura? (108-109)

Similarly to Moreno Villa, Camba sees gender equality in ‘zero-sum’ terms, as the decadence of masculine power; hence his description of man as a ‘pobre ciudadano’ whose patrimony (‘hacienda’) and legal rights (‘vida’) are in peril. However, and despite Camba’s complaint of men’s defencelessness in the face of ‘the American girl’, the way in which the writer constructs his discourse unveils the pervasive strength of the patriarchal order. First of all, the text is clearly addressed to a masculine audience, as we can infer from the allusion to the reader as ‘amigo lector’. The writer is assuming that only men would be reading his text, therefore questioning women’s intelligence and rationality. Furthermore, I propose that the reference to ‘la lectura’ as a masculine activity is – as in Moreno

Villa's drawing (Figure 3) – a symbolic marker of the 'natural' differences between the sexes promoted by patriarchy, and reflects the limited access that women had to education in Spain at the time. Secondly, the legal system that allows the increase of rights for women is also ruled by men, 'los senadores', since laws establish social order and can only be devised and approved by 'rational' beings. Therefore, and following such reasoning, women can only access the privileges of civil life to men's permission. Finally, Camba lays out a clear-cut distinction between women as 'beautiful objects' and men as citizens ('pobre ciudadano'). Excluding women from citizenry, the writer reinforces the line that separates the public from the private sphere, since only citizens are in possession of the legal rights that entitle them to participate in public affairs. As one can see, although Camba protests against women's 'superiority' in the United States, his words are showing the actual hegemony of men.

Moreover, I argue that the reference to American woman as 'the American girl' is also an expression of a patriarchal world view. The denomination of those allegedly 'powerful women' as 'girls' is a way of maintaining men's dominance, since the image of women as childish strengthens the idea of femininity as irrational and in need of parental protection. Furthermore, it also unveils the constructedness of gender categories, in which the image of women changes according to men's criteria: they are seen as goddesses when men's authority is threatened, but at the same time they are depicted as children in order to justify such authority.

'The American girl' is also a variant of the image of woman as embodiment of the United States. Not in vain, the writer states that 'la gran creación de América es la *american girl*, o chica americana' (108), itself also an allusion to the mechanical reproduction of consumer goods. The writer wonders, '¿Cómo es posible [...] que un producto tan fino y depurado se haya logrado en serie, como los coches Ford o las plumas Waterman?' (108). Camba sees American women as the objects manufactured in mass production chains: they are all the same, without any trace of individuality. This 'American girl' therefore represents the means of mass-production, the dehumanisation, and the mechanisation of the United States. Whereas in Moreno Villa's travelogue 'la niña violenta' crystallised the perception of the United States as a violent civilisation, Camba's 'American girl'

works as a metonymy of New York as the ‘automatic city’ and, extensively, of the United States as a mechanical society.

The ideal solution given by the writer in order to stop women’s supposed ‘revolt’ against ‘the right order of things’ is even more explicit. In Camba’s view, women should be enslaved:

En una colectividad donde los hombres se diesen verdadera cuenta del hecho que constituyen unas mujeres tan guapas, se hubiese comenzado por reducirlas al estado de esclavitud, lo que valdría la pena por sí mismo, y sería, además, una medida de precaución contra trastornos sociales; pero aquí se ha procedido al revés y el resultado es que las mujeres, no sólo parecen diosas, sino que lo son efectivamente. Son diosas y, convencidas de su condición divina, no hay nada en el mundo que las arredre. (109)

I argue that the radical and overtly sexist solution proposed by the writer is in truth not an innovative answer but rather a defence of the slavery exerted by patriarchal order. One can note the sexually charged insinuation given by Camba when he declares that women’s slavery ‘valdría la pena por sí mismo’. Although he does not develop his thought, we can infer that in that state of slavery, women would be obliged to serve men’s needs to all extents. The writer reacts against the recognition of women as subjects instead of objects. Camba is pleading for the return of women to their role as sexual objects, always available to men. As Jordi Luengo (2008: 208) states, in Spain the idea of femininity promoted by patriarchy implied women’s sexual subjugation to men, who ‘las convertían en siervas para su propia satisfacción, sobre todo, a nivel sexual [...] Se había ideado para las mujeres españolas una feminidad que las situaba en una posición de auténtico servilismo hacia sus compañeros sentimentales’. Camba argues that in the United States ‘se ha procedido al revés’. Paralleling the ideas expressed by Morero Villa, Camba considers the situation of American women as a subversion of ‘the right order’ that has led to an ‘unnatural’ situation, in which the ‘beautiful objects’ have turned into almighty, divine-like, subjects. Freed from the chains of masculine domination, women are seen by Camba as a potential source of ‘trastornos sociales’; once more, women’s emancipation is seen as the catalyst for chaos. According to a patriarchal view of womanhood, the alleged irrationality and aggressiveness contained in the feminine body make women unfit for civil life. Such violence is also evocative of Western fears of ‘the masses’ analysed in the

previous chapter. Without masculine control, women grab aggressively and without fear whatever it is they want: ‘no hay nada en el mundo que las arredre’. One may ask, however, of what should women be afraid. The answer is, I suggest, the authority given to men by their reputed rationality. Women’s rebelliousness is in fact regarded by Camba as a foolish act of ignorance. This is highlighted in a subsequent comparison between women’s fearlessness and the alleged naivety of the ‘primitive’ tribes of America:

Toda la intrepidez y toda la audacia de la *american girl* se explican como se explica la serenidad de Atahualpa cuando los jinetes españoles, corriendo a pleno galope por la llanura de Caxamarca, se pararon en seco tan cerca de él, que uno de los caballos le manchó con su hocico el manto real. Las personas del séquito de Atahualpa, que no habían visto nunca un caballo, se hicieron instintivamente atrás; pero el inca no pestañeó siquiera. Desde su nacimiento le habían dicho que era invulnerable, y como hasta aquella fecha no lo había vulnerado nadie, estaba plenamente convencido de su invulnerabilidad ante todos los monstruos conocidos y desconocidos. Pues, como para el inca Atahualpa, para la *american girl* tampoco existen peligros. (109)

The comparison is not accidental. As I have shown in the previous chapter of this thesis, Camba compares the United States to pre-Columbian cultures in order to explain his view of American involution to primitivism. Likewise, here he establishes a parallel between a symbolical embodiment of the United States, ‘the American girl’, and the story of an Incan king. In an irrational and superstitious manner, Atahualpa believes that he is indestructible. Similarly, women – according to the writer – think of themselves as goddesses, a pagan character therefore also associated with superstition. However, Camba’s statements are once more deceitful, and those who seem to be in power are actually subjected to someone else’s authority. Although Atahualpa was the king of the Incas, he was imprisoned by the conquistadors led by Francisco Pizarro, and subsequently killed.<sup>20</sup> In a similar way, women – despite their ‘delusions of grandeur’ – remain being children, and subdued, after all, to masculine domination. The sarcastic tone adopted by the writer is also to be noted. The sense of mockery that permeates the whole chapter devoted to the American woman in *La ciudad automática* – from

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<sup>20</sup> For a complete account of Atahualpa’s story, see John Hemming’s *The Conquest of the Incas* (1993: 23-70).

women's exaggerated power to Atahualpa's story –, reinforces the idea that for Camba public life is still a man's world.

In Atahualpa's tale, the Inca is not afraid of any danger, and nor is the 'American girl'. However, what kind of 'monsters' does she have to face? In the next paragraph, I suggest, Camba provides the answer:

Es una chica sana, alegre e intrépida, que puede fumar dos cajetillas diarias, bailar cien bailes y beber quince *cocktails*; una chica que exhibe sus piernas ante todos los hombres con la misma despreocupación con que podría exhibirlas ante unos animales familiares, a los que no les interesara nada el espectáculo. (109)

One can deduce that the 'modern women' is adventurous and courageous because she dares to enter a dangerous territory, for whose perils she may not be at all prepared, as the naïve and irrational being that she is supposed to be. Indeed, such a terrifying space is the public sphere, where 'the American girl' behaves like a man – smoking, drinking, and dancing – and refuses masculine protection, since she owns her own body and sexuality ('exhibe sus piernas con la misma despreocupación con que podría exhibirlas ante unos animales familiares'). On the contrary, women's bodies under patriarchal rule belong to men (fathers and husbands) and therefore should not be exposed in public to male competitors. Consequently, the nudity of women's legs could be perceived as a sexual innuendo, a threat to their 'virtue'.

The writer finishes his chapter on 'the American girl' with an ambiguous and contradictory statement. Camba points out that 'a pesar de unas leyes que le dan toda clase de facilidades para la estafa, suele ser la mejor amiga y la mejor compañera del mundo' (109). I argue that the use of the word 'estafa' is related to Atahualpa's story, the end of which the writer does not provide: Atahualpa was executed, accused of treason by the conquistadors (Hemming 1993: 77). As shown in Chapter 2, indigenous people were seen by the Spanish colonisers as unable to cope with the rules of civilisation and hence often portrayed as malicious and deceitful. Unlike the Inca, who betrayed Pizarro's trust, American women seem to be more honest and 'civilised', since they do not take advantage of the 'opportunities' given to them by the law. However, Camba does not state that 'the American girl' is always reliable, but only that she usually is ('suele ser'). Consequently, I argue that despite appearing to come to terms with women's

emancipation, Camba's words hide a warning. The reference to Atahualpa's story mirrors the distrust aroused by the 'modern women' in Spanish male intellectuals. Like the Inca, who embodies the apparent naivety and innocence of indigenous people, women can be 'la mejor amiga y la mejor compañera', a reminiscence of the myth of the 'good savage'. However, the civilised man must be careful, since their friendship can turn into betrayal and order can become chaos, leading to disastrous consequences such as social disorder.

### 3.5 Conclusion

As I have sought to demonstrate in this chapter, the representation of the American 'modern woman' carried out in José Moreno Villa's, Teresa de Escoriaza's, Luis de Oteyza's, and Julio Camba's New York narratives reflects male anxieties about the increasing appearance of Spanish women in the public sphere and the resulting challenge to patriarchal notions of national identity. In all the case studies, whether the aim is to preserve or dismantle the subjugation of women to patriarchy, womanhood is constructed as a symbol, an image of something other than mere individuals: goddesses, mothers, daughters, purity and evil, traditionalism and modernisation, the family, and the nation. Women do not really have a voice of their own in these works. Despite the fear of chaos and degeneration, patriarchy is still very much in control. I suggest that this unveils the masculine gaze behind the construction of both Spanish national identity and gender categories.

First of all, the image of 'la niña violenta' constructed by Moreno Villa in *Pruebas de Nueva York* condenses the violence and aggressiveness with which male intellectuals associated changes in sexual and social conventions. Moreno Villa's view of women's emancipation as the subversion of the 'natural order' imposed by patriarchy unveils the pervasiveness of masculine domination, according to which women must remain in a passive role as 'reproducers' and controlled by men's authority. The focus of the writer on the alleged inversion of 'matrimonial values' taking place in the United States shows the persistence of the 'Ángel del Hogar' trope in Spanish society at the time. Women's entrance into the public sphere and their participation in civil affairs were seen by Moreno Villa as an attack on men's 'natural' authority, hence the depiction of American women as

violent and of American men as docile. Furthermore, the writer resorts to images of womanhood as a 'national emblem'. 'La niña violenta' is seen as the expression of American modernisation: the rupture with the past, the means of mass-production, and the dynamism of life in the metropolis. Although the 'modern woman' was also becoming visible in Spain, Moreno Villa identifies the Spanish 'race' with a traditionalist view of womanhood, embodied by the archetypical 'Spanish woman', who is depicted as passive and submissive. Such identification reveals the patriarchal world view behind views of Spanish national identity promoted by male intellectuals at the time. Moreover, in spite of Moreno Villa's eventual acknowledgement of the benefits that modernisation could bring to Spain and his criticism of projects of national regeneration, the writer is unable to accept the active participation of women in the very same modernising process he seems to finally praise.

Teresa de Escoriza's *El crisol de las razas* represents an attempt to challenge patriarchal discourses by exploring the potential impact that popular narratives could have on the Spanish readership. On the one hand, I have suggested that Helen's voluntary submission to marriage is depicted as a threat to the independence achieved by bourgeois educated women. Helen renounces the benefits of higher education and becomes economically dependent on a foreign husband who wants her to remain in the family home. Instead of being an active member of civil life, equal to men, the 'modern woman' embodied by Helen goes back to the old fashioned feminine role of the 'Angel in the House'. I propose that her fatal ending is presented as a warning against the pernicious consequences of interracial marriage, and to the allegedly degenerative consequences that the influence of a 'primitive' Jewish patriarchal society could inflict on modern societies. On the other hand, the image that Sonia projects to men during her show is the expression of a male gaze that juxtaposes the 'whores' of the lower classes to the 'pure virtue' of the middle class 'Angel'. Rather than an image of perversity, as epitomised by *fin de siècle* art and literature, Sonia is, however, unveiled to be a deprived woman who needs to play the role of an eroticised sexual object in order to survive poverty. Her final refusal to become one of Boris' possessions suggests that lower class women can gain control of their own sexuality in order to break with patriarchy. The role of men in this process also seems to be seen as essential. Joe symbolises a new masculinity, sensitive and

respectful to women's individuality. The veil of patriarchy must therefore not only be torn by women but also by men themselves, who must go beyond the sexualised archetypes of femininity constructed by the male gaze in order to see women in their whole complexity. The traditional prototype of manhood is represented by Boris, whose behaviour towards women reflects the hypocrisy of the patriarchal system. He loses sexual interest in Helen once she becomes his wife and she must therefore comply with the role of the chaste and pure 'Angel'. Consequently, he seeks for sexual pleasure outside the house, where he treats women as sexual objects at his disposal. The symbolism of this character is however highly problematic, for the oppressive patriarchal authority he represents is associated with Judaism. I will analyse the anti-Semitic character of the novella in the next chapter.

Following the polyphonic premises established by the narrative style of *Anticípulis*, Luis de Oteyza's novel presents the clash between modernisation and traditionalism through the juxtaposition of two archetypes of womanhood. On the one hand, Rosa embodies the challenge to patriarchal structures undertaken by the 'modern woman' in America, and the possibility for a similar change in Spain. On the other hand, Jesusa represents the traditional role ascribed to women in Spain as the 'Ángel del Hogar'. Rosa's aggressive attack on the values defended by her mother suggests the need to violently and actively overcome the unnatural man/woman dichotomy and the consequent seclusion of women in the role of 'reproducers of the nation', in order to embrace the complete modernisation of Spain. Such a view is also argued by a male figure, Doctor Jiménez, who represents the need for male intellectuals to also challenge patriarchy. Nevertheless, the counter-discourse suggested by Rosa's and Jiménez's modernising stance relies on an antagonistic attitude towards Jesusa, who is in fact a victim of the symbolic power exerted by patriarchy. Her death, although it seems to imply the need to accept modernisation and overcome 'sexual difference', also neglects the conflictive acceptance of submission by a great part of the Spanish feminine population at the time. Furthermore, and due to the polyphonic character of the novel, her fatal ending can be also interpreted conversely. The impact of modernisation on the 'Ángel del Hogar' role would thus represent a threat to the Catholic and traditionalist essence of the Spanish



character argued for from a *casticista* standpoint. In both cases, women are set to play an essential role in the re-definition of Spanish national identity.

Finally, in *La ciudad automática*, Julio Camba elaborates a sexist and misogynist approach to womanhood. His apparent opinion of American women as ‘goddesses’ invested with power over men does in fact reflect the perception of the ‘modern woman’ as a threat to masculine domination by male intellectuals. In tune with Moreno Villa’s ideas, women’s alleged supremacy in the United States is seen as going against the ‘right order of things’. Gender equality is therefore regarded by the writer as the result of a loss of power by men. Camba’s view on womanhood indeed epitomises the construction of women as irrational sexual objects who must comply with men’s authority and satisfy their ‘manly needs’. According to this view, women are irrational beings who must be controlled by patriarchy and who are unfit to participate in the public sphere – hence the threat to social order posed by the ‘modern woman’, as suggested by Camba. However, despite the alleged power of the American woman, she is depicted as a girl, thus undermining the threat posed by her violent rebellion against patriarchy. Camba’s paternalistic attitude, coupled with his view of the ‘American girl’ as a creation of mass production, not only unveils the strength of the patriarchal order that has been supposedly subverted, but also the connections between masculine domination and elitist fears of ‘the uncontrolled masses’. Moreover, the comparison established by the writer between women and pre-Columbian societies also shows the links between patriarchal views of national identity and racist discourses that justified colonial domination. This aspect will be analysed in depth in the following chapter, which looks at the challenges posed by the multicultural character of American society to essentialist notions of national identity as a homogeneously ‘racial’ community.

## Chapter 4. Racialism versus Multiculturalism: the Challenge to Ethnic Nationalism

Along with the rise of mass society and women's emancipation, the representation of American society in the New York narratives of José Moreno Villa, Teresa de Escoriaza, Luis de Oteyza, and Julio Camba centres visibly on the consequences of multiculturalism in the United States. In this chapter, I shall analyse the issue of 'race' brought up by the contrast between Spanish ethnic nationalism and American multiculturalism in these texts, and the relevance of 'race' and 'racial' hierarchies for the re-invention of Spanish national identity following the demise of the Empire.

Several chapters of *Pruebas de Nueva York* and *La ciudad automática* analyse the 'contaminating' influence of African Americans in American society as well as the alleged Jewish roots of capitalism and modernisation. On its part, *El crisol de las razas* can be read as a strong declaration against miscegenation, and particularly against the supposed damaging influence of Eastern European Jews. Finally, Luis de Oteyza's *Anticipolis* suggests a more flexible approach to national identity, and in so doing, it departs from the three other narratives as a text that engages with Spanish national discourses of the period in a more fluid and forward looking fashion.

My analysis will focus on two main questions: how does the view of American multiculturalism as represented in these texts reflect the divergent – and conflicting – projects for national identity unfurling at the time in Spain?; and what is the role played by discourses of 'racial Otherness' in the re-elaboration of Spanish national identity in the early twentieth century?

#### 4.1 *Pruebas de Nueva York*: ‘Black Dots’ on the ‘Jewish City’

In the last chapter of *Pruebas de Nueva York*, entitled ‘Puntos Negros’ (1989: 65-68), José Moreno Villa argues that black people and their culture have a strong influence on white Americans. The metaphor ‘black dots’ is used by the writer in order to highlight this impact: ‘con estos puntos aludo a los individuos de raza negra que motean el país cuadrulado de los Estados Unidos. Puntos negros que deberían figurar en la bandera yanqui alternando con las estrellas rojas [*sic*]’ (65). As he does throughout his travelogue, Moreno Villa declares his intention to offer an objective approach on the subject:

no se trata de simpatía ni antipatía en este momento, sino de apuntar lo que veo. Y lo que veo se puede resumir en esto: el negro actúa desde la cabeza hasta los pies del yanqui. Es posible que éste no se dé cabal cuenta de ello, pero en la historia futura de la civilización americana quedará patente, si el historiador no se venda los ojos por antipatía.  
(65)

However, the expression ‘puntos negros’ is used as a byword for what Moreno Villa sees as blacks’ harmful influence on American culture. Moreover, the writer avoids engaging in the debates about ‘race’ taking place in the United States at the time, as he states next: ‘no se ofendan mis amigos de Nueva York. No siento debilidad por ellos, ni voy a enfocar ceñudamente el problema que aportan a la sociedad’ (65). I propose that Moreno Villa’s intention to present his opinions as ‘neutral’ constitutes a statement in itself. By refusing to engage with the pervasive racism of early twentieth-century American society, the writer actively avoids the question of ‘racial’ inequality. I therefore suggest that Moreno Villa’s conscious silence is as important as his open statements. His reference to the ‘problema que aportan a la sociedad’ obviously alludes to the so-called ‘Negro problem’, or ‘Negro question’, both terms that reflected the uneasiness of white Americans with the increasing visibility of blacks thanks to Abraham Lincoln’s ‘Emancipation Proclamation’ in 1863 and the victory of the North over the South in the American Civil War in 1865. The concept appeared for the first time in Hollies Read’s *The Negro Problem Solved; or, Africa as She Was, as She Is, and as She Shall Be: Her Curse and Her Cure* (1864). In this text, the author poses the question of what should be done with former black slaves freed after the Civil War. Read’s impracticable solution was to send them to Africa (Hollandsworth

2008: 6). Indeed, despite the abolition of slavery in 1865 and the ratification of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1870, which guaranteed suffrage to all American men regardless of their 'race' (Gamber 2010: 305), racism was not eradicated in the United States. Klaus P. Fischer (2006: 49) points out that in the 1890s, 'race' relations:

steadily deteriorated despite the fact that the country was passing through an age of reform associated with movements such as populism and progressivism. Jim Crow laws started raining down on helpless African Americans, beginning with separate places on railroad and cars and waiting rooms in railway stations. Next came segregation on steamboats and streetcars.

In 1916, escaping from the segregation policies of the South and attracted by the job opportunities offered by the Northern industry, around two million African Americans migrated to the cities of the North, West, and Midwest (Turner-Sadler 2009: 104). As Laurie Lahey points out, the so-called 'Great Migration' resulted in 'significant economic, social, and political changes for the United States' (2010: 787-788). New York, in particular, grew into the American city with the biggest black population in the country, with 60,000 African Americans in 1910-1920 and rising to 327,706 in 1920-1930 (Grant Meyer 2001: 32). Their arrival in the North was received with increasingly violent racist displays. Although segregation was illegal, discrimination was perpetuated in the form of a 'de facto' segregation: whites reached informal agreements in order to reduce job and housing opportunities for blacks, who despite having the right to vote had little political visibility, since the majority of elected officials were white and ignored their African American counterparts (Turner-Sadler 2009: 104). The working conditions in the factories were also radically different for white and black Americans; as Turner-Sadler argues:

although African Americans could earn more money in the factories, there was discrimination in hiring. [...] In good economic times, factories hired African Americans. However, when the economy took a downturn, they were the first to be let go. In addition, African Americans were given jobs with dangerous working conditions. Some of these jobs exposed them to intense heat and fumes in the factories. Sometimes these conditions could cause injury or death, particularly in the steel industry. Whites, however, enjoyed the higher-skilled and better-paying jobs. (2009: 104-105)

Moreno Villa not only chooses to turn a blind eye to ‘racial’ discrimination, but also blatantly aligns himself with Anglo-Saxon Americans, whom he refers to as ‘mis amigos’, and declares not to have any inclination (‘debilidad’) towards blacks, who are constantly referred to in his text as ‘a problem’ and are located in a position of subalternity. I propose that, in tune with the fear of ‘the masses’ and concerns about women’s emancipation, black people’s influence on white Americans is presented in the text as a threat to the ‘right order of things’. I suggest that the text reflects views of the United States as a country where white supremacy is endangered by ‘racial’ intermixing, leading to degeneration (see Chape 1 of this thesis). Moreno Villa alludes to the unawareness – in opposition to ‘cabal’ – of white Americans to the influence of black people, and to the consequences it may supposedly have for a civilisation that is seen as not yet complete but still in the making. The impact of black culture on American culture is in fact described by the writer as a silent and hidden process: ‘[the black] no se engalla, no levanta cabeza; siente que su escalafón social es ínfimo; pero allá en el fondo de su conciencia le sonreirá la satisfacción de ver que actúa sobre el pensamiento y la sensibilidad de los hombres rubios y fuertes’ (65). Once again, far from regarding ‘racial’ inequality as a problem, the submission of black people is depicted as a subterfuge used in order to slip their ‘primitive’ influence secretly into the white man’s ‘civilised’ physique. In colonial discourse, it is precisely the supposed ‘perversity’ or ‘evilness’ of the colonised that justifies the control exerted by the coloniser. Following Alberto Memmi:

whenever the colonizer adds, in order not to fall prey to anxiety, that the colonized is a wicked, backward person with evil, thievish, somewhat sadistic instincts, he thus justifies his police and his legitimate severity. After all, he must defend himself against the dangerous foolish acts of the irresponsible, and at the same time – what meritorious concern! – protect him against himself! (2003: 126)

Nevertheless, Moreno Villa seems to imply that in the United States, and thanks to emancipation from slavery, the subaltern has been allowed the same rights as the ‘civilised’ master: he can participate in the political life of the country, and he is economically independent. And although he remains peacefully in his ‘natural’ position, socially subjected to the white man, equality has given to his/her ‘primitivism’ a gateway into civilisation. Similar to Julio Camba’s comparison between American women and Atahualpa’s deceitfulness (analysed in the

previous chapter of this thesis), Moreno Villa suggests that blacks cannot be trusted; even if they seem to be docile, their presence in the civil sphere entails a threat to civilisation.

The reference to ‘hombres rubios y fuertes’ is indeed reminiscent of what Steve Fenton (1999: 87) denominates ‘the ideology of a super-race and the vision of a white “Aryan” people as the pinnacle of a racial hierarchy [...] commonly espoused throughout the Western world in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’. The strength of the Anglo-Saxon ‘race’ is however undermined by the ‘surreptitious influence’ of the blacks, who despite of their alleged inferiority are able to leave their imprint on American society. As one can note in the following paragraph, the writer appears to imply that such unnatural subversion of the ‘racial’ hierarchy could not happen in Spain, despite the contact between blacks and Spaniards in the colonies:

sin saber por qué, le adjudicaba yo a todo negro que veía el conocimiento del español y, con ello, un cierto parentesco; pero esta falsa emoción, que sin duda tiene su raíz [*sic*] en que Cuba fué [*sic*] nuestra, y que de niño vi negros que castellanizaban y hasta influían en el cante “jondo” con sus “habaneras”, “rumbas” y demás, no acaba de seducirme. No me casaría con una negra. (65)

Following the concept of ‘Hispanidad’ developed by regenerationist projects, it seems at first that Moreno Villa identifies language with national identity, establishing a linguistic brotherhood between the mainland and the colonies. Such kinship is, however, soon rendered by the writer as ‘false’. As was shown in Chapter 1 of this thesis, ‘the black’ was excluded by Spanish intellectuals such as Unamuno from the ‘indissoluble bonds’ that had been allegedly created between Spain and its colonies. Furthermore, and contrary to the American case, Moreno Villa argues that blacks did not influence Spanish culture, but they rather assimilated the language – and hence the culture – of the coloniser (‘castellanizaban’). The only traces of their influence are limited to music, in particular in the ‘cante jondo’, which has been traditionally defined as the purest expression of flamenco music (Lefranc 2000: 19). Flamenco, rumba, and habanera are musical styles produced by peripheral cultures, namely colonial cultures and gypsy culture in Spain. Moreno Villa is hence establishing a parallelism between two communities that were located outside the canonical definition of Spanish ‘racial’ identity, which consequently remains ‘pure’,

‘untouched’ by the ‘primitive’ influence of black culture. In addition, the writer rounds off his digression with the purportedly conclusive remark that ‘no me casaría con una negra’. His outright rejection of ‘interracial’ marriage can be read as an expression of fear towards ‘racial’ contamination. Marriage implies blood kinship and ‘racial’ mixture. The marriage of a white man with a black woman therefore leads to the alteration of ‘racial’ hierarchies: the colonised black would be then integrated into the kinship of the white master. Moreover, his descendants would be ‘tainted’ by the alleged biological inferiority of the colonised: the Spanish ‘race’ would be ‘corrupted’ and the integrity of the nation in peril of degeneration. I suggest that the allusion to marriage is directly connected to the supposed ‘problem’ that blacks pose for American society. Although the anti-miscegenation laws first enacted in the United States in 1664 were abolished after the end of the Civil War, the 1880s saw the reenactment of laws against interracial marriage, especially in the South (Johnston 2010: 230). However, and despite the fact that ‘many whites [...] clearly feared social and economic equality would follow political equality’, New York never had laws against ‘interracial’ marriage (Lemire 2002: 2). Therefore, this is a city where ‘racial contamination’ is not only a threat, but is also sanctioned by law. Again, I suggest, Moreno Villa challenges the alleged superiority of the Anglo-Saxon and Aryan ‘races’, who are in turn covertly depicted as weak enough to allow an ‘inferior race’ to corrupt their kind. In this light, the writer is playing a double game. On the one hand, Moreno Villa neither questions the foundations of racist attitudes towards blacks in the United States, nor goes against racialist classifications that locate them in the lowest rungs of the evolutionary ladder. On the other, he seems to be surreptitiously refuting the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon ‘race’. I argue that this seeming contradiction can be explained by the impact that racialist theory had in Spain at the turn of the century. As I have shown in Chapter 1, theories about the superiority of some ‘races’ over others – as expressed by Edmond Demolins in *À quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons?* (1897) and Lord Salisbury in his speech ‘Living and Dying Nations’ (1898) – were received by Spanish intellectuals and politicians with great anxiety. The loss of the colonies, the end of the Empire, and the chaotic political and social situation of the country, were seen as symptoms of an ‘illness’ affecting the national body that was leading the Spanish nation towards degeneration. In addition, if the loss of Cuba following the

intervention of the United States was seen as the turning point for Spanish decadence, it also highlighted the emergence of the American nation as a world power. The victory of the United States in the Spanish-American war reinforced worrying theories surrounding Anglo-Saxon superiority over the Latin ‘races’ promoted by authors such as Demolins, who argued that:

el gran peligro [for the Latin ‘races’] no era localizable en Alemania sino en Inglaterra, y sobre todo en Estados Unidos. El “enemigo” de los latinos era el individualismo de la raza anglosajona que habitaba Estados Unidos, país a la cabeza del progreso económico, industrial y social. (Seregni 2007: 102-103)

Responses to Anglo-Saxon superiority not only dwelled on the catastrophist view of Spain developed by regenerationist writers, but in some cases it also took the shape of a violent diatribe against the Americans. As we already know, during the Spanish-American war, the United States were portrayed as a country based on greed and materialism. Furthermore, polymaths such as Ramiro de Maeztu also reacted strongly against theories of Anglo-Saxon superiority contained in Lord Salisbury’s speech. In *Hacia otra España* (1899), Maeztu declares:

¡Llámenos enhorabuena Salisbury pueblo agonizante [...]! Pienso en las muchedumbres sajonas, ebrias y brutales, sosteniendo en fuerza de alcohol una vida de animalidad dóciles al látigo de la policía, pero desenfundadas en cuanto se les sueltan los grilletos, pienso en el color pálido del obrero de Liverpool, o de Manchester [...], en la mujer sajona, de cuerpo seco y alma enjuta, y me sonrío [...] Podrán los cañones de los yanquis cerrar el libro de nuestra historia colonial; podrán poner término provisionalmente a nuestras gloriosísimas conquistas; pero la conquista ha sido sólo uno de nuestros múltiples destinos [...] rascando un poco en la agrietada superficie social, se encuentra siempre el pueblo sano y fuerte, fecundo y vigoroso. (2007: 126-127)

In the decades following the war, depictions of American society as ‘primitive’, dehumanised, and dominated by ‘the masses’ – as I have shown in Chapter 2 – also undermined the American economic, industrial, and social progress argued by authors such as Demolins. In tune with these antagonistic reactions, I suggest that Moreno Villa’s account of the influence of blacks in American society is aimed at reversing the ‘racial’ hierarchy between Anglo-Saxon and Latin ‘races’. Hence the use of ‘amigos’ to refer to Americans: Anglo-Saxons and Spaniards are shown to be members of the same ‘race’, the European white one, in opposition to the black ‘Other’. Moreover, whereas in Spain the degeneration of the white



'race' comes from its own flaws and can therefore be regenerated, Anglo-Saxon Americans are in danger of 'biological regression' due to their contact with an inferior 'race'. Consequently, their alleged superiority is turned by Moreno Villa into weakness when compared to the alleged 'racial purity' of the Spanish people.

This idea is reinforced by the nature of the influence that black people are supposed to have in American society. According to the writer, 'el negro sirve al yanqui con sus "cánticos espirituales"'. El negro sirve al yanqui con sus ritmos y danzas. El negro pone al servicio del yanqui su persona como criado humilde' (65). First of all, it must be noted how the depiction of black people developed by Moreno Villa follows Western stereotypes of subalternity, such as the alleged sensuality and musical skills of the colonised:

ninguna blanca se abraza con el negro para bailar. Pero el bailarín negro será quien imponga la danza. Y este aspecto de la sensualidad entra en América por él. Por eso digo que actúa sobre los pies y las piernas del americano. Y como a fuerza de danza se adquieren maneras y detalles dinámicos que caben en lo que ya no es danza, sino movimiento general, ademanes de la vida cotidiana, se puede notar en que en las chicas intrépidas hay "monadas" que son negroides, piruetas gráciles que no heredaron de las paquidérmicas razas rubias. Se comprende la risa enormemente blanca del negro del "jazz". [...] Sabe que todas las noches su virtud hace bailar al mundo entero, y con una embriaguez desconocida de nuestros padres, envolviendo y electrizando a las naturalezas báquicas [...] No puedo imaginarme cómo serían los Estados Unidos sin "jazz". Creo que es una de las cosas que más unifican su fisonomía. Es posible que este sello que pone la raza negra a las múltiples razas de los Estados Unidos sea momentáneo, transitorio; pero nadie sabe las derivaciones que trae una influencia momentánea si es fuerte. (66)

In spite of the pervasive racism of early twentieth-century American society and segregation policies – which are not directly alluded to but only insinuated in the first line of the excerpt – the writer argues that blacks 'impose' their culture on white Americans thanks to jazz music. Once again, this is an 'underhanded' influence that penetrates in the Anglo-Saxon 'race' through one of its alleged flaws: the excessive use of alcohol ('naturalezas báquicas'). Inebriated by liquor, and enraptured by the rhythm of the music, Americans seem not to be aware of the influence of 'the black', who is again depicted through images of laughter. Like a master puppeteer acting in the shadow, the spell of his arcane music moves the legs not only of the Americans, but also of the entire world. The weakness of

the subaltern is here turned into strength ('virtud'),<sup>21</sup> and the white master has lost his mind, intoxicated by the obscure arts of the black dancer. Moreno Villa's description of the effects caused in Americans by the influence of jazz is not entirely original, but reflects similar concerns in American society at the time:

jazz received a fair amount of negative press in the late 1910s and then became an object of a moral panic during the 1920s. Some whites feared jazz because it was rooted in black culture, because it played a role in facilitating interracial contact, and because it symbolized, in racially coded terms, the intrusion of popular tastes into the national culture. [...] Not only were African Americans becoming more visible members of American urban society, as a result of the Great Migration, but they were becoming more vocal in their political demands as well. (Porter 2002: 9)

Nevertheless, the writer neglects the political impact that jazz could have for the demands of social equality raised by black activists at the time, or the racist fear of cultural contact by white Americans, and instead focuses on the alleged degenerative effect that black culture exerts on the Anglo-Saxon 'race'. Significantly, he highlights the pernicious consequences that the exposure to jazz causes in the American 'modern women', here denominated 'las chicas intrépidas'. By entering the public space of the jazz club, American women not only subvert gender hierarchy, but also become 'infected' by black music, which extends its influence to their daily life, turning them into 'monadas negroides'. I propose that the word 'monada' contains a twofold reference in this context. The R.A.E. Dictionary gives several meanings for this term, including: 'acción propia de un mono', 'acción impropia de persona cuerda y formal', 'acción graciosa de los niños', and 'cosa fútil impropia de mayores'.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the use of this adjective casts women as child-like and innocent, justifying their subordination to patriarchy. At the same time, this word also defines blacks in similar terms, legitimising in this case 'racial' hierarchy. Secondly, I argue that the choice of 'monada' is also reminiscent of racialist theories that proclaimed the biological proximity between apes and the black 'race'. Consequently, it seems that due to their contact with black culture, American women are a step down in the evolutionary ladder and regress to a state of primitivism. Such an allegedly

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<sup>21</sup> According to the Real Academia Española, two of the meanings of virtud are 'fuerza, vigor o valor' and 'poder o potestad de obrar' (<http://www.rae.es/rae.html> <Accessed 5th August 2011>).

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.rae.es/rae.html> <Accessed 5th August 2011>.

degenerative effect in women is in turn poisonous for the whole 'race', since their role as 'reproducers of the nation' is also 'contaminated'. Loomba points out that

the fear of cultural and racial pollution prompts the most hysterical dogmas about racial difference and sexual behaviours because it suggests the instability of 'race' as a category. Sexuality is thus a means for the maintenance or erosion of racial difference. Women on both sides of the colonial divide demarcate both the innermost sanctums of race, culture and nation, as well as the porous frontiers through which these are penetrated. (1998: 159)

In tune with Loomba's argumentation, Moreno Villa's words not only suggest a cultural influence – which therefore 'damages' the values women are supposed to pass on to their children – but also sexual 'contamination'. American women under the influence of jazz are described as 'negroides', since their movements have not been inherited from the 'blond races'. This remark can be connected with the previous rejection of interracial marriage. The writer seems to suggest that miscegenation is already taking place in New York, where even women who seem to be Anglo-Saxon could be in fact black women under the 'disguise' of their pale skin and fair hair. This suggestion is indeed reminiscent of the 'one-drop rule', a colloquial term used in the United States at the time to imply that even one single drop of 'black blood' was enough 'to construct a person as black' (Yuval Davies 1997: 50). According to the writer, the influence of the black 'race' is so strong in the United States, that it unifies the appearance of the entire country, hence taking over the 'purity' of the Anglo-Saxon 'race'. In this context, the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxons is turned by the writer into weakness, and their 'race' as vulnerable, and susceptible to degeneration. Spanish views of the United States as an individualistic, materialistic, 'primitive', and dehumanised society led to the stereotype of Americans as cold individuals, lacking sensuality and spirituality. This is seen by Moreno Villa as precisely the 'crack' through which blacks allegedly penetrate in the Anglo-Saxon 'race'. The depiction of American Anglo-Saxons as 'paquidérmicas razas rubias' denotes lack of grace in dancing, opposite to the 'natural' sensuality of the blacks. One must note how the writer does not use the adjective 'white' to refer to Anglo-Saxons, which is substituted by 'blonde'. Moreno Villa's choice of words highlights the opposition between Anglo-Saxon and Latin 'races' that the writer is trying to disarm. By resorting to the contrast between blond and dark hair colour, he seems to establish a difference

between both 'races', also implying that Latin one has a sensuality of its own and is therefore 'complete'. On the contrary, since white Americans lack these qualities, they are not 'protected' against the 'contagious' influence of black music. And if jazz provides Americans with the sensuality they lack, spirituals also have a strong impact in the American soul:

desconozco la profundidad a que alcanzan estas "espirituales" en el alma Americana. Pero me inclino a que no es pequeña, porque tal vez no hay arte más penetrante que el de la música. Por este camino de la sensualidad actúan igualmente los negros en el yanqui. [...] Las ceremonias de estos negros bautizados tienen un color tan aparte, que lo ritual parece recién inventado. Como en sus danzas y en sus cánticos, hay en sus ceremonias cristianas una exótica fusión de elementos. En sus cánticos alternan los elementos bíblicos con los populares, bulevarderos y callejeros del día [...] Tal vez parezca poco americano el acento místico. Desde luego, no creo que sea el que mejor lo defina hoy en el mundo; pero lo que yo quiero asentar es únicamente que el negro actúa sobre la vida yanqui. (67)

One characteristic of the portraits of the United States carried out by the Spanish press during the Spanish-American War was that of associating the alleged materialism of American society with Protestantism, in opposition to the alleged spirituality of the Catholic Spanish monarchy (Balfour 1996: 110). Moreno Villa's words seem to perpetuate such a stereotype, since he argues that in the United States the only source of spirituality comes from the blacks. It is, nevertheless, an impure spirituality, the result of mixing Christian elements with secular influences taken from popular culture. Consequently, not only do Anglo-Saxon Americans have to resort to black spirituality to fill the emptiness caused by the materialism of their society, but what they get is a contaminated product. Such reasoning strengthens again the view of the Anglo-Saxon 'race' as incomplete, weak, and corrupted. And showing this is Moreno Villa's chief purpose, as he states in the last sentence of the above paragraph.

Despite their impact in American society, black people remain tied to a position of 'racial' and class inferiority. According to Moreno Villa, the third path taken by their influence is in fact their service as 'criado humilde' (65):

los negros, en su mayoría, se dedican al servicio doméstico. Ellos friegan los cristales de los rascacielos, suben y bajan los ascensores, sirven a la mesa [...] son cocineros, intérpretes, mozos de labores secundarias, sino ínfimas [...] la influencia que puedan ejercer desde peldaños tan rasos no será de la calidad de las otras, pero se hace

sentir. [...] Por otra parte, es evidente que el criado influye en el amo, y sobre todo, en el ama. Que lo confiesen las señoras españolas, o sus maridos. Cuántas hay que, a fuerza de convivencia con las criadas, no se diferencian de éstas más que en la etiqueta de los vestidos. Las americanas no corren este peligro; en primer lugar porque no paran en la casa; pero hay que creer en la influencia de las cosas todas, por humildes, calladas y sumisas que sean. La mera presencia, si es sostenida o constante, acaba por influir sobre uno. (68)

As one can see, Moreno Villa does not question the racist nature of this social division, seen as ‘natural’ and necessary due to the presumed ‘racial’ inferiority of African Americans. Furthermore, the writer argues that the very presence of blacks has a pernicious effect (‘este peligro’). Noticeably, the writer argues again that women in particular have a tendency to be easily influenced. The danger of ‘racial’ contamination is, in this case, depicted as even more threatening, since it is located in the family home, the basis of the national community. Moreno Villa soon reminds the reader of the subversion of gender roles in the United States (‘las americanas [...] no paran en la casa’), but nevertheless warns about the perils entailed by the silent and constant influence of the blacks in the private sphere.

In spite of his blatantly racist attitude towards African Americans, the writer concludes this chapter by stating that Spaniards show a lesser degree of disdain towards their ‘servants’ than Americans do towards blacks:

nosotros no desdeñamos a nuestros servidores, o, al menos, con el desdén que los americanos a los negros; pero es porque reconocemos la hermandad. Los americanos se sienten de otra estirpe, y esto les defiende del influjo; pero ellos no saben por dónde se cuele éste. Hay un refrán ruso que dice: “Echad la naturaleza por la puerta, que ella entrará en vuestra casa por la ventana”. Y a los americanos cabría decirles: “Despreciad a vuestros inferiores, que ellos os enseñarán el canto y el baile, la sensualidad y gracia refinadas”. (68)

Once more, class divisions seem to be sustained by a ‘racial’ hierarchy that is never questioned. It is not, however, clear to whom Moreno Villa refers by ‘nuestros servidores’. The mention of ‘hermandad’ suggests that he alludes to the relationship between Spain and the colonies. On the contrary, the writer argues that Americans do not consider black people as part of their national community (or ‘hermandad’), but they rather see them as members of a different ‘family’ (‘estirpe’), alien to the American nation. This is a surprising and contradictory comparison, because Moreno Villa’s own statements, which never question

‘racial’ discrimination, show the pervasiveness of racist discourses in Spain. I propose that, once again, the writer aims to construct the Anglo-Saxon ‘race’ as weak. Americans have lowered their ‘defences’, to the extent that they believe that the subaltern is no longer a threat. They are not even aware of the danger posed by the influence of black people, and thus are prone to be ‘contaminated’. Furthermore, the writer subverts the relation of power between the white ‘master’ and the black ‘subaltern’: due to the incompleteness of their ‘race’, Anglo-Saxon Americans need to be taught by African Americans – here portrayed as representatives of a ‘refined’ culture – how to express their sensuality through music. In contrast, one can infer from the writer’s reasoning that ‘racial’ contamination would never take place in Spain. First of all, because both Catholic spirituality and Latin sensuality are regarded as an intrinsic part of the Spanish ‘race’, therefore considered as ‘complete’ and safe from external influences. Moreover, class division in the Spanish colonies was based on a strict caste system that ‘prevented’ the ascent of blacks to higher positions of the social ladder. In the Spanish overseas territories, ‘nature’ – one may note the comparison made by the writer between ‘vuestrs inferiores’ and ‘la naturaleza’ – remained under the authority of the ‘civilised’ coloniser. In the United States, seen already as a country in a process of involution due to the subversion of class and gender hierarchies by ‘the masses’ and the American ‘modern woman’ respectively, ‘racial’ egalitarianism will eventually allow the ‘primitive Other’ to destroy civilisation (‘entrará en vuestra casa por la ventana’).

Consequently, Moreno Villa suggests that the increasing visibility of African Americans in New York and the acknowledgment of their civil rights by the American government – despite the pervasive racism of its society – are signs of the weakness of the Anglo-Saxon ‘race’. By doing that, the writer not only challenges contemporary theories about the inferiority of the Spanish ‘race’, but reinforces the essential values of Spanish national identity promoted at the time, such as spirituality and ‘racial’ purity.

A similar emphasis on ‘racial’ difference is placed by Moreno Villa in his analysis of the visibility of Jewish people in New York, a city that he defines as ‘el prototipo de la ciudad hebrea’ (33). This denomination relies, according to the writer, on the commercial character of the city:

La metrópoli de Nueva York es, por su índole, comercial hasta los tuétanos. Y para un español – que, como español, es poco viajero –, nada tan extraño como una ciudad judía y negociante. Comienzan por sorprenderle los rótulos públicos en algunos establecimientos piadosos, como Hospital del Monte Sinaí, Asilo para las Hijas de Israel. Como el español tiende todavía a creerse en su patria esté donde esté, no comprende tales rótulos al primer momento. Se restriega los ojos y se pregunta cómo ha podido salir a la superficie este poderío israelita. Poco a poco va viendo luego que el acento principal de la ciudad es eso: poderío comercial. Todo es aquí negocio. Las tiendas y los despachos es lo que hay que ver en Nueva York. (31-32)

Moreno Villa identifies Judaism with trade and business, following stereotypes such as those of ‘Jewish avarice’ and of the Jew as ‘moneylender’ (Moradiellos 2009: 123-127). Moreover, it also seems that Moreno Villa extends the traditional identification between Jews and usury to American capitalism (‘poderío comercial’), which he sees as an expression of Jewish ‘nature’ (‘su índole’). The writer contrasts the materialism embedded in American society, due to the alleged effect of Judaism, with the (Catholic) spirituality characteristic of Spanish identity. Moreno Villa argues that whereas in New York ‘domina el grupo de negociantes y la febrilidad del negocio’, Spanish people instinctively react against such materialism:

El español viajero, sin tener negocio que le preocupe, siente alrededor, bajo sus plantas, sobre su cabeza, y hasta en las entrañas, una trepidación incómoda que le va echando y empujando de todas partes, como diciéndole: Es pecado pararse a contemplar; anda, que no podrás volver si no tomas el ómnibus que pasa. (32)

Money and business are seen by the writer as a sin to be rejected by the spiritual nature of the Spanish traveller, who feels himself to be an outsider. The writer emphasises the surprise (‘nada tan extraño’, ‘se restriega los ojos’) and uneasiness (‘una trepidación incómoda’) caused in him by the visibility of Judaism in New York, where ‘the Jew’ – Spain’s archetypical ‘internal Other’ – is not a stranger. On the contrary, in New York, it is the Spaniard who feels himself to be the ‘Other’. I argue that the writer’s amazement also derives from another long established stereotype in Western culture: the ‘wandering Jew’. As Moradiellos (2009: 157) explains, the legend of Asheverus or Cartaphilos, ‘the wandering Jew’, refers to the alleged story of a Jewish shoemaker who insulted Christ on his way to the Golgotha. As punishment for his offense, Asheverus was condemned

to wander around the world until Judgment Day. The legend became a symbol used in a variety of artistic representations and literary works, referring to the Jewish Diaspora. In a state of exile since early times, the Jews have been hackneyed by their constant movement as a ‘nation’ – a ‘race’ – without a state, always strangers in a foreign land. The Spaniard, on the other hand, is depicted by Moreno Villa as ‘poco viajero’: his ‘race’ and national identity are an expression of his ‘natural’ geographical origin, to the extent that ‘tiende todavía a creerse en su patria esté donde esté’; his homeland travels with him and is part of his identity. The Jews, however, are seen as a ‘race’ of wanderers that, even when established in a given territory, not only are they – and always will be – foreigners, but also a minority. Nevertheless, in New York they seem to be a majority, a fact that disconcerts the writer, hence his allusions to the visibility of Judaism in the streets of the city.

Moreno Villa’s allusion to the Jewish name of those ‘establecimientos piadosos’ is not accidental. In fact, this allusion to religion takes the reader back to the *Reconquista*, regarded as a historical milestone in the Catholic formulation of the Spanish identity:

because the conquest of the Moorish kingdoms achieved in the thirteenth century came to be seen both as a national war of liberation and as crusade, there was a special holiness, a special Christianness and Catholicism, in Spain’s very existence. [...] That holiness and therefore national identity too seemed inherently threatened by the survival of Muslim or Jew in the kingdom and especially by secret Jews or Muslims, huge numbers of double-faced people existing in the nationalist and Catholic imagination as only pretending to be Spanish and Christian. Their expulsion appeared as the consummation of the struggle for Spanish identity. (Hastings 1997: 111)

Indeed, not all Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, since those who consented to be converted to the national religion were allowed to remain in the Spanish Kingdom. However, according to Salazar y Acha (1991: 292), ‘una gran mayoría de los conversos practicaban su religión secretamente’. On the contrary, the text suggests that in early twentieth-century New York, Jews do not need to hide their confession, since the materialistic principles of American capitalism (‘poderío comercial’) allow them to carry out their commercial activities (‘poderío israelita’) without moral restrictions. In addition, I argue that the connections between movement (the ‘wandering Jew’) and capitalism (the ‘Jewish avarice’)



are fused into another stereotype that arose in the nineteenth century and characterised Jews as a ‘symbol of modernisation’:

los judíos cosecharon el odio y el resentimiento de aquellos grupos urbanos y rurales que percibían con desconfianza y angustia el nuevo curso de los acontecimientos o se habían visto perjudicados por el rápido ritmo del cambio histórico. Para todos ellos, el judío se convirtió en el símbolo del liberalismo, del capitalismo, y en suma, de la Modernidad: los agentes y beneficiarios de unas transformaciones y de un nuevo sistema que tanto los hacía padecer y sufrir. (Moradiellos 2009: 192)

As we have seen in Chapter 1, ‘movement’ is seen by Moreno Villa, Camba, and Oteyza as an expression of modernisation. The relation between these two terms is also present in Moreno Villa’s references to Jewish people. The author states that New York is a city dominated by anxiety and permanent movement, which he sees as an expression of the Jewish influence in the metropolis:

tal angustia, ¿es hija de Nueva York por ser esta ciudad marcadamente judaica, o no? Siempre he creído [*sic*] que la inquietud es una de las más profundas virtudes y defectos de la raza judía, y por eso veo en Nueva York el prototipo de ciudad hebrea. Como español y como europeo, rechazo ese dinamismo, a pesar de lo conveniente que pueda ser para mí, para el otro y para la Humanidad. (33)

‘Angustia’ and ‘inquietud’ are seen by the writer as distinctive features of the ‘Jewish character’. However, Moreno Villa seems unable to discern whether such restlessness, and therefore movement and modernisation, is a virtue or a fault. On the one hand, his association between New York’s modernisation and Judaism follows discursive preconceptions based on fixed oppositional features such as materialism/spirituality, insider/outsider, and Catholic/Jew, traditionally used to determine Spanish identity. Therefore, by establishing ‘how the Jews are’, Moreno Villa is also resorting to a specific conception of Spanish national identity, reminiscent of the opposition between Spain’s Catholic spirituality and American amoral materialism carried out by the Spanish press before the 1898 war. However, throughout his travelogue Moreno Villa criticises Spain’s immobility and eventually acknowledges some of the benefits of modernisation. This view leads him to question his own words, or rather, the system of representation that is moulding his view of New York. As he says, ‘las reacciones y contrareacciones llevan a términos injustos e improcedentes. Esta fogocidad [*sic*] andaluza que me brota me conduce a donde no quiero: a ponderar la

pasividad española y la indigencia' (33-34). Ultimately, he declares that American capitalism also has some positive aspects:

cuesta mucho entender algo de los matices y pequeñas divergencias de ideales, y cuesta mucho más aún transmitirlos. Es muy fácil repetir el lugar común, despectivo en boca hispana, de que al yanqui no le interesa más que el dólar [...] Pero es muy difícil comprender que en esto del dinero hay un ideal noble [...] Quiere los dólares para vivir confortablemente y perfeccionar todo lo que le rodea. Para tener baños y jabones, tapices y butacas, libros y cuadros, buenos manjares y buenos médicos, buenos aparatos y excelentes profesores, trenes rápidos, etc [...] Los quiere para obras benéficas y para que a sus hijos no les falte nada en su formación. (34)

'Cuesta mucho entender', 'es muy difícil comprender', he says. He admits that Spanish views of the United States are limited by preconceptions ('el lugar común, despectivo en boca hispana') and tries to go beyond such discursive limitations. Later on, he states that 'esto [the use of money to create a better society], que es tan sencillo de decir y que parece común al instinto general humano, sospecho que al español no le parece ideal, ni siquiera decoroso' (34). The opposition between American materialism and Spanish spirituality is still in force here, but it seems that Moreno Villa is now positioning himself on the other side. Modernisation – condemned a few lines earlier – becomes 'common sense', as opposed to the Spanish conception of materialism as a sin ('decoroso'). I argue that the writer's ambivalence reflects the struggle between the *casticista* imperative of preserving the essence of Spanish national identity and liberal calls for Europeanisation. Although Moreno Villa does not abandon notions of 'racial' purity in which 'the Jew' is still constructed as the embodiment of materialism against which the alleged spirituality of Spanish identity is defined, the contrast between Spain and the United States in economic terms leads the writer to question the validity of the preconceptions about American society. Furthermore, his view of Spain is also challenged, to the extent of qualifying Spanish ideals as contrary to the 'instinto general humano'. As seen in Chapter 2, the writer eventually encourages Spanish intellectuals to go beyond *regenerationist* notions of Spanish national identity, to travel to the United States, and witness the benefits that American modernisation could bring to their country.

## 4.2 The Source of Chaos: ‘Jewish Evilness’ and ‘Racial’ Degeneration in *El crisol de las razas*

As its title suggests, *El crisol de las razas* places a strong emphasis on the effects of multiculturalism and ‘racial’ mixture in American culture. Importantly, issues of ‘race’ in the text centre upon the alleged negative influence of Eastern European Jews in American society. The novella contains abundant references to the stereotypes of ‘the Jew’, which are especially concentrated in the figure of Boris Zinovief, described as ‘un hombre enjuto, de tez pálida y nariz aguileña. Lo más característico de aquella fisonomía era la mirada, una mirada penetrante, sombría y fría’ (1929: 15). As I have shown in the previous chapter, Boris is portrayed as a diabolical force – he is referred to as the ‘snake’ that seduces the pure and angelical Helen, who is in turn described as an ‘Eve’ succumbing to the temptations offered by his fortune. Apart from blatant allusions to the physical peculiarities ascribed to ‘the Jew’ – such as the aquiline nose –, Boris is also described as a selfish and greedy tycoon, embodiment of ‘the Jewish avarice’:

aqueellos eran los suyos, los que se reunían en los antros de la parte baja del este de la ciudad: emigrantes de los países eslavos, la mayoría pertenecientes a la raza maldita, y muchos de ellos gentes sospechosas... ¿Es que, acaso, no se hablaba también de los procedimientos misteriosos empleados para acumular aquella fabulosa fortuna? (9)

Going even further, the narrator insinuates that Slavic Jews are criminals, (‘gentes sospechosas’), and so is Boris, since he has probably obtained his capital through illegal means. Be such means usury or otherwise, the narrator seems to imply that Boris’ fortune is tainted by the sins of his ‘raza maldita’. I argue that this allusion to the Jews as immigrants also refers to trope of ‘the wandering Jew’. The presence of such stereotype becomes clearer some pages later, when the Jewish neighbourhood of the East River, ‘la Ciudad Judía’ (14), is described as ‘la Babel de Nueva York’ (14), where ‘los diversos elementos eslavos: rusos, polacos, checos [...]’ gathered ‘por afinidades de raza, costumbre y aficiones, ya que no por la lengua, pues en aquella zona se hablan todos los idiomas derivados del eslavón’ (14). The reference to the Babel myth confers this area with an aura of doom, destined to end up in chaos and tragedy, in tune with the characterisation of Jewish people as ‘la raza maldita’. This expression perpetuates the stereotype of the Jews as ‘Christ killers’ and therefore damned to roam for eternity.

Boris is demonised throughout the novel due to his Jewish origins, not only by the narrator, but also by other characters. First of all, Ivan refers to him as ‘ese perro judío’ (21). In his study of early anti-Judaism, Raúl González-Salineró (2000: 154-155) points out the presence of similar depictions in the first centuries of Western civilisation in which ‘los judíos aparecían relacionados e identificados con animales a los que se asociaba con una connotación especialmente negativa’, such as poisonous snakes, wolves, and foxes. Moreover, Helen also alludes to Boris’ cultural background in order to explain her husband’s attraction towards New York’s underworld: ‘abandonada por su marido, ¡por un ruso... ¡por un judío!.. que llevaba el escarnio hasta arrastrarse por los tugurios más inmundos del barrio del Este y rodearse con gentes maleantes, con salvajes procedentes del oriente de Europa’ (8). The contrast between the United States and Eastern Europe (‘el oriente’) is blatantly based on the duality ‘West’/‘East’, where the first term of the opposition stands for ‘civilisation’ and the second for ‘primitivism’ (‘salvajes’). Furthermore, the stereotype of ‘Jewish primitivism’ is endowed in this case with violence and malice (‘gentes maleantes’). Such primitivism is the result of innate and irrational instincts, whose influence in American society eventually leads to chaos and death. The dangers of multiculturalism and miscegenation are therefore embodied by Boris, who is pointed at by the narrator as partially responsible for Helen’s murder:

su mirada, libre de aquel punto de cinismo, era más sombría que nunca. Aunque en cierto modo era él el causante de aquella tragedia espantosa, no por ello se consideraba responsable. Todo era obra de la fatalidad que, caprichosa, se empeña en mezclar unas razas con otras, sin hacer caso de sus afinidades, produciendo así daños irreparables. (42-44)

Boris – and by extension Jewish people – function in this text as a scapegoat for Helen’s fatal ending. As we know, the real murderer is Fomitch, Sonia’s Russian bodyguard, who accidentally kills the American woman in a fit of jealousy. Fomitch is described by the narrator as ‘aquel ser anormal’ with a limited intelligence: ‘la limitada comprensión de Tomitch’, ‘el cerebro angosto del danzarín’ (42). It seems therefore that the narrator is using Fomitch’s mental handicap to exonerate him from his crime. Even Sonia, knowing that Fomitch is responsible for the tragedy, decides not to accuse him (‘sin acusar al que de un modo erróneo la amaba’, 42). Furthermore, there is no real substantial argument

to blame Boris for the murder. In spite of the diabolical image given of him by the narrator, and his sexual insinuations to Sonia, the novella does not account for any factually dishonest action committed by the Russian mogul. He never manages to fulfil his sexual desires with the singer, and he even declares that his sole purpose is to promote her musical career, as he tells Joe:

has de saber [...] que me intereso por esa muchacha, Sonia, que vengo trabajando cuanto puedo para hacer de ella una cantante de primer orden. Así que en ningún modo consiento que te entremezcles en este asunto, ya que por ningún concepto le convendría que un estudiantillo se interpusiese en su carrera. Sin contar que a ti tampoco te conviene, porque, además de que no estás en condiciones de poderla proteger, debes dejarte ahora de aventuras y no pensar más que en tus estudios.  
(28)

His devious intentions towards Sonia are in fact insinuated by characters such as Iván, who associates Boris with another Russian character, the Prince Sergio Mohilev. Boris is here presented as the embodiment of an oppressive patriarchal hierarchy and the novella carries a strong defence of women's emancipation. Therefore, 'the Jew' is not only falsely blamed for 'racial' degeneration, but also for perpetuating the barbarous practice of masculine domination in American society. In addition, not even the rumours about the 'mysterious procedures' by which Boris obtained his fortune are ever confirmed. Consequently, I argue that since the beginning of the novella, the narrator provides the readership with a negative image of the Jewish tycoon. As a result, the reader can accept Boris' (false) blame without remorse: even if he were not guilty, he would deserve to be so.

The perceived disastrous effects of miscegenation are also conveyed through the 'racial' construction of the other characters. First of all, both Helen and Sonia are presented as the feminine embodiment of their respective 'races' and nations. On the one hand, Helen is depicted according to the stereotype of the American girl: blonde, beautiful, independent, and rebellious. On the other hand, Sonia is portrayed as the archetype of the Russian woman: dark-haired, mysterious, superstitious, and passionate. Sonia is in fact presented as an exemplary representative of her 'race', especially when she sings, since in her singing 'el alma doliente de toda una raza' (19) is condensed. As one can note, the psychological features of these two characters are conditioned by their particular

‘race’ and culture. As we have seen in the previous chapter of this thesis, when Helen disguises herself in Sonia’s clothes, her American coldness is temporarily transformed into Slavic passion and excitement (40). However, in spite of the disguise and of her momentary awakening to sensuality, she cannot completely embrace the Russian passion incarnated by the singer, since ‘no sabía hacer diferencia entre estos sentimientos, que se adquieren con la educación, y otros que, innatos, suelen ser condición de otras razas’ (41). Helen is therefore unable to understand the nature of her husband’s ‘race’ because she belongs to a different one, which has been moulded by education (civilisation), in opposition to the ‘natural’ attributes inherited by the Russian ‘race’.

Secondly, I argue that the construction of Joe Zinovief’s ‘race’ represents a highly problematic, yet illuminating case. Born in New York from the union between a Russian Jew (Boris’ brother) and a Norwegian woman, and orphan since a very early age, Joe was raised by Americans and received an American education both at school and at university (6). At the beginning of the story, the narrator stresses the fact that he has barely been in contact with the Russian side of his family. Therefore, both thanks to his Nordic appearance – inherited from his mother – and his education, Joe ‘hubiera podido pasar muy bien por un *American fellow*, por un chico yanqui’ (6). One must note the relevant use of the subjunctive in the previous sentence. Joe could have been mistaken for an American man, but, in truth, he is not one of them. Despite his physical traits, his American mentality, and the fact that he was born in the United States, he is ‘tainted’ by his ‘racial’ origins: although ‘en nada se parecía Joe a los Zinovief’, his surname ‘no admitía duda alguna sobre su origen de judío ruso’ (6). I argue that Joe’s character is fundamental to understanding the conceptions of ‘race’ exposed in the novella. He is depicted in positive terms, as a noble young man provided with an ‘espíritu sano y bueno’ (11), psychological characteristics that seem to come from his mother’s ‘race’ and his education. The strength of his Russian blood is, however, too powerful. Joe’s contact with his original culture in the East River area – a culture that he has not learnt but naturally inherited from his ancestors –, produces in him an intense effect. In a similar way to the rest of the Slavic people gathered to see Sonia’s performance, he is haunted by the Russian singer’s magnetism. Amidst the crowd, only Helen is not captivated by the show:

Sólo Nell no participaba de la corriente magnética establecida por la melodía [...] También Joe parecía extasiado. La actitud de éste, que era de los suyos, fué [*sic*] la que más le extrañó, porque, como ella, tampoco el joven comprendía las palabras de aquella canción. Pero acaso sentía la melodía rusa; tal vez esta música, que a ella la dejaba fría, encontraba un eco en el alma del muchacho y despertaba en su sangre el calor de aquella raza. (18)

The previous extract is constructed around two oppositions that unveil the idea of ‘race’ developed by the narrator, namely those encapsulated by the semantic correspondence between ‘frío’/‘calor’ and ‘comprender/sentir’. Firstly, Helen is not affected by the ‘magnetic’ influence exerted by the song because the music is completely alien to her, a product of an altogether different culture that she cannot understand, and the warmth of this culture radically contrasts with the coldness of her intellect. Joe, however, falls immediately under the spell of the Russian melody, a surprising fact for Helen, since she considers him as ‘one of her own’. However, Joe is deeply conditioned by his ‘racial’ origins. The music produces in him a real awakening – in contrast with Helen’s fake transformation –, triggered by a feeling that he cannot understand, deeply rooted in his own self. The contact with his father’s culture does in fact produce in Joe a decisive change. As his uncle reminds him the day after, ‘de fuego es la sangre del ruso, también debes recordar, que por tus venas corre de esa misma sangre; por lo cual sería muy de temer que en ese encuentro estallara el chispazo de la pasión’ (28). Soon, and despite Boris’ warnings, Joe falls in love with Sonia:

la aventura de la víspera, que había dejado como un resquemor en el corazón del joven, era ahora una llama voraz. [...] el temperamento ardiente del ruso le abrasaba, derritiendo todo el hielo que, por su madre pudiera haber en él, y aniquilando la sangre fría, producto de una educación norteamericana. (28-29)

As one can see, his father’s Russian blood prevails over his mother’s ‘racial’ inheritance, implying that – and following a patriarchal conception of ‘race’ – the paternal genetic inheritance is stronger than the maternal one. Moreover, the influence of nature is also more powerful than education. Whereas the latter is an artificial product of civilisation that can be ‘undone’, the kinship established by blood is permanent and inescapable.

Finally, *El crisol de las razas* concludes with an explicit diatribe against miscegenation. The narrator refers to New York as:

la urbe monstruosa donde afluyen los ambiciosos, los perseguidos y desamparados por la fortuna de los países más apartados del mundo; [...] la metrópoli gigantesca donde se encuentran todas las razas y cada una de las variantes de éstas; [...] la nueva Babel donde se hablan todos los idiomas y todos los dialectos del universo; [...] ese crisol de razas, que es Nueva York, donde son lanzados unos con otros hombres y mujeres de todas las religiones y de todas las costumbres, sin que llegue a operarse esa fusión deseada, que se pretende tenga por resultado la constitución de la raza fuerte, de la raza superior por excelencia. (44)

The above allusion to the mixture of different ‘races’, languages, cultures, and religions is preceded by a negative qualification given to the city (‘monstruosa’, ‘gigantesca’, ‘nueva Babel’, ‘crisol de razas’), therefore implying that all these concepts are fixed and immobile ‘truths’, and that their alteration is a deviant act against ‘the right order of things’. Although the United States are depicted as a modernising society in terms of gender equality, it is also presented as a nation in danger of ‘racial’ degeneration. This view is confirmed by the final destiny of the characters. On the one hand, Helen is accidentally killed because she is married to a man from a different ‘race’ and, moreover, from a different social class. Boris is not only depicted as a member of a despicable ‘race’ but also as socially inferior since his current social position is not his natural place in society – in contrast with Helen’s – but has been acquired thanks to murky activities. As we can see, ‘race’ does not only establish cultural boundaries but also a social hierarchy, and Boris has surpassed these limits with disastrous consequences. On the other hand, the relationship between Joe and Sonia reaches a happy ending. They share the same ‘racial’ origins, and therefore they are perfectly suited for each other. Noticeably, the narrator not only simplifies Joe’s multiculturalism at the end – it seems that he ends up being purely Russian – but also establishes the preponderance of ‘race’ over education.

The last words of the narrator also convey a concern about the creation of a ‘superior race’ which is, I argue, an expression of contradiction and confusion. European and American policies to avoid ‘racial’ degeneration through the implementation of eugenic programmes were not based on the mixture of ‘races’ but rather on the ‘purification’ and ‘cleansing’ of the white ‘races’ and the ‘extermination’ of ‘degenerate races’ such as the Jews (Moradiellos 2009: 203-204). The narrator’s reference to the constitution of ‘la raza fuerte, la raza superior



por excelencia' (44) is therefore supported by a misunderstanding of these policies, since such a 'superior race' would be the result of miscegenation between individuals who the narrator depicts as 'corrupted'. I see the confusion and contradiction expressed in the last paragraph of the novella as a token of the increasing influence of racialist theories in Spain at the time. The text criticises the creation of a 'superior race' in the United States, therefore echoing concerns about 'racial' theories declaring the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon 'race' over the Latin one. The narrator does not, however, criticise genetic experiments or 'racial' cleansing, but rather condemns miscegenation and the coexistence of different cultures in the same geographical territory, therefore mirroring the identification between 'nation' and 'race' promoted by Spanish ethnic nationalism. Following this reasoning, the novella would therefore suggest the existence of a 'Spanish 'race', in tune with nationalist projects defended by both *casticista* intellectuals ascribed to *Primorriverismo* such as José María Pemán, José Pemartín, Ramiro de Maetzu, and Ernesto Giménez Caballero, and liberal polymaths such as Miguel de Unamuno and José Ortega y Gasset. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on the negative influence of Eastern Jews would not only reflect the increasing entry of modern anti-Semitism in Spain – influenced by similar attitudes in other European countries – but perpetuate the image of 'the Jew' as Spain's archetypical 'Other'. The warnings about the alleged damaging effects of miscegenation would therefore not be limited to the dystopian image of New York's melting pot given in the text, but also to the degenerative influence that the Jewish 'race' would supposedly entail for the 'purity' of the Spanish nation.

### **4.3 National Identity beyond 'Race' in *Anticópolis***

As I have shown in previous chapters, *Anticópolis* illustrates the clash between Spanish traditionalism – embodied by doña Jesusa – and American modernisation – represented by Jesusa's children, and especially by Rosa. In the following pages I will show how Jesusa also encapsulates fixed notions of 'race' and 'nation' whereas her children illustrate new and fluid forms of identity that challenge the reductive views of Spanishness emanating from ethnic nationalism.

As we already know, doña Jesusa finds a way of alleviating the distress caused by New York in the conversations with Jiménez. The Doctor plays the role of

adviser, almost a therapist, and tries to convince the traditionalist Jesusa of the benefits of modernisation. Hence, the relationship between these two characters is based on a power relation that emanates from knowledge. On the one hand, Jesusa is depicted as ignorant, stubborn, and incapable of dealing with new social challenges. Doctor Jiménez, on the other hand, is an educated man – as his title shows – who sees modernisation as a necessary struggle on the way to human progress. The ideas expressed by this character are essential to understanding the conflicts exposed in the story; the term ‘Anticópolis’, which gives its name to the novel, is in fact coined by him. The opposition between educated man/ignorant woman could be considered as an expression of patriarchal hierarchy. However, I suggest that this is not the case. Jiménez is, in fact, a staunch defender of women’s emancipation. Therefore, I argue that the opposition between Jiménez and Jesusa is based on a different conflict. In the first pages of the novel, Jesusa describes the Doctor as ‘casi un compatriota ese amable puertorriqueño, aunque fuese un poco oscurito, el pobre, como la mayoría de tales subciudadanos estadounidenses lo son. Ella siempre sintió grandes simpatías hacia el bueno del doctor Jiménez’ (2006: 88). Jesusa’s statement follows the idea of ‘la España grande’, the Hispanic cultural and linguistic unity between Spain and the former colonies. She sees the Doctor almost as a fellow citizen especially because they share the same language: ‘el orador hablaba muy dulcemente, en castellano además’ (88). Within the Empire there were, however, first and second class subjects. The colonies were subdued by the power of the Spanish mainland, and the (black) colonised was ruled by the (white) coloniser. I propose that the mainland is here represented by Jesusa and her protective attitude towards Jiménez, who due to his black skin (‘un poco oscurito’) is seen by the Spanish woman as childish and innocent (‘el pobre’, ‘el bueno del doctor Jiménez’). The Doctor himself continues this allegory – the protective motherland and the naïve colonised – in another chapter of the book, where he tells Jesusa about his childhood:

fue en mis tiempos de muchacho, cuando Puerto Rico pertenecía a España. Se trataba de una señora peninsular, de familia noble y origen provinciano. Era tan tradicionalista como usted, tan intransigente como usted y tan bondadosa como usted. Protegía a mi madre, una pobre mulata casada con un dependiente de su marido [...] A mí me protegió también, costeadando mi educación. Usted me la recuerda mucho. Hasta se le parece en lo físico, siendo en lo espiritual idéntica.

De aquí mi simpatía hacia usted [...] Y también el que sepa su forma de pensar, sus modos de sentir. (182)

In the previous extract we can see the hierarchical opposition between coloniser (white, rich, educated, strong) and colonised (black, poor, ignorant, in need of protection). In the relationship between Jiménez and Jesusa, such opposition is, however, reversed. First of all, when Jesusa comes along to the Doctor's office, she is looking for shelter and protection from New York's 'primitiveness'. Moreover, Jesusa's mulishness defines her as child-like, unable to understand the world around her. Jiménez, on the contrary, is the voice of modernisation, and treats Jesusa with a teacher's patience when he tries to make her realise that her ideas are based on preconceptions. As he states, 'Nueva York no es tan odioso como los prejuicios de los forasteros lo suponen' (87). I would like to propose that by empowering Jiménez (the colonised, the black, the weak), the narrator unveils the constructedness of racialist discourses of 'Otherness' on which Spanish national identity was premised. The reader is therefore introduced both to a challenge of taken-for-granted 'truths' (the superiority of white 'races') and also to criticism of a view of Spanish identity based on 'racial' purity.

This is not the only challenge posed by the novel with regard to 'race'. I suggest that the notion of national and cultural identity as inherited and permanent is questioned by the contrast between Jesusa's understanding of national identity as a fixed concept and her children's adaptation to American society. On the one hand, Jesusa regards identity as emanating from a geographical origin: 'ahora, hijos míos, nos volvemos a nuestra tierra' (118), she tells her children after Antonio's death. The spatial deictics used by Jesusa to refer to Spain and New York also show her strong attachment to her homeland. Throughout the novel, she refers to New York as 'allí' (106, 145) and 'allá' (157), showing her spatial detachment from the city. For her children, on the other hand, New York is always 'aquí'. They have grown up in the city and therefore consider themselves more American than Spanish. As the narrator states:

porque el efecto del *melting-pot*, que a la aluvial urbe ha dado tanta unidad de vecindario como cualquier aldea sin forasteros pueda tener, ese acrisolamiento de razas, que con la reunión de todas las de la Tierra forma para Nueva York una bien definida, se había producido en ellos haciéndolos perfectos neoyorquinos. No lo eran más que en potencia; pero para serlo de acción, lo cual deseaban con anhelo de

sus almas y ansias de sus cuerpos, sólo les faltó, hasta entonces, que la hispana autoridad del padre dejase de pesar sobre sus conductas. (118)

In the passage above we can recognise a similar terminology to the one used in Escoriaza's novella ('ese acrisolamiento de razas'). However, I argue that in this case the connotations are rather different. Indeed, the narrator still resorts to the concept of 'race', but in his words there is no negative judgment of 'race' mixture. Instead, identity is shown to be a fluid concept, subject to transformation, not only as a consequence of external influences, but also as the product of human will. This attitude contrasts with fixed conceptions of national identity, delimited by an inherited geographical origin and a shared language, culture, and ancestry. This is a view attached to pre-conceptions, which considers notions such as identity, nation, 'race', and culture as natural; it is therefore almost like a religious faith. Jesusa's attachment to tradition is in fact explained by the narrator in these terms: 'era probado que en la ciudad de la anticipación aquella mujer, tan apegada a lo constituido, tan devota de lo consagrado por el tiempo, no podía vivir' (224). Jesusa does not question the validity of traditional values. She is a 'devotee' of such conceptions, which are, in her view, the only legitimate possibility. One of the aspects of New York to which she reacts is in fact the variety of cults practised in the city. During her husband's funeral, 'se le ocurrió de pronto que en las habitaciones contiguas se rogaba a otros dioses de otros muertos que eran herejes o acaso judíos. Dios, su Dios, el verdadero Dios, no escucharía las preces que de semejante edificio salieran' (90). I propose that the references to a 'true Catholic god' and to the Jewish people are connected to the Imperial rhetoric that preceded the 1898 war. This rhetoric was recuperated afterwards by 'a revitalized traditionalism, propagated by the Church, the Carlists and conservative élites, which drew on the myths of the Reconquest and the conquest of the New World and emphasized the civilizing Christian mission of Spain' (Balfour 1997: 94). A few pages earlier, in a sarcastic way, the narrator compares Jesusa to 'la reina Juana de Castilla' (86), daughter of the so-called Catholic Monarchs, architects of Imperial Spain based on religious bigotry and not only responsible for the conquest and domination of the American territories, but also for the expulsion of the Jews from the Peninsula. Jesusa's identification with traditionalism does therefore imply the view of Spain as a religious and 'racial' homogeneous community, and the construction of an illusory purity of the Spanish 'race' by

opposition to the Jewish archenemy. In addition, one must note the sardonic comparison between Juana, also known as ‘the mad Queen’, and Jesusa’s fatal schizophrenic fit at the end of the novel.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, New York is seen by Jesusa as the embodiment of crude materialism, and she regards American capitalism as an attack on the ‘laws of God’. As the narrator states, ‘a doña Jesusa el dinero le importaba poco’ (149); she is concerned with moral values that emanate from her religious beliefs, values that in New York are disregarded due to the materialist nature of the metropolis. The city is therefore seen as the epitome of moral decadence, and Jesusa fears that her children will be infected by the influx of such debauchery in a city that is ‘maldita de Dios’ (109). New York is for her ‘la ciudad protestante, hereje’, in opposition to ‘España, la nación católica’ (231). As one can see, the American ‘heresy’ is directly related to money and materialism by Jesusa, who ‘era torturada por la materialidad de aquel vivir’ (152), since ‘le dolían los lujos, siempre innecesarios’ and ‘la mayor parte de ello era obtenido contra las leyes de los hombres y de Dios’ (158). Jesusa, ‘archiespañola’ (85), refuses to accept the benefits brought about by capitalism – ‘las comodidades sin las que se hubiera podido pasar’ (158) – since they go against her Catholic values and hence to the principles of her national identity.

In stark contrast with their mother’s traditionalism, Jesusa’s children embrace the social changes brought about by class mobility, women’s emancipation, and cultural contact. Their case shows the reader how, in Jiménez words ‘las costumbres cambian’ (183), foreseeing the changes that will affect the entire world, including Spain. As Jiménez also declares, Jesusa’s children are ‘como eran todos los habitantes de Nueva York, como todos los pobladores del mundo serían’ (191). In addition, they have all lost their Catholic faith. The most prominent case is that of Pepín – the youngest son –, who enrolls on a course to study theology, and eventually becomes a Protestant priest. According to doña Jesusa, Pepín has lost his soul, for he has betrayed his origins:

ser pecadores, ser impenitentes, ser antirreligiosos, estaba mal. Pero, al menos, en esas condiciones teníanse abiertos los caminos de la virtud y del arrepentimiento que vuelven a la religión. Mientras que

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<sup>23</sup> For a comprehensive study of literary representations of Juana de Castilla, see *Juana of Castile: History and Myth of the Mad Queen* (2008), ed. by María A. Gómez, Santiago Juan-Navarro, and Phyllis Zatlin.

habiéndose pasado a una religión contraria, enemiga, traidora... El que adquiere una creencia falsa para siempre pierde la verdadera. (232)

By abjuring his religion, Pepín has lost his final bond with the national community, turning into a stranger and an enemy. And he is not the only one. As Carlos states: ‘los demás hemos abandonado la fe y damos el alma por perdida. Aseguraría que Juan y hasta que Rosa y Mary no se conservan muy católicos. Y lo que es yo... Yo no creo ni en la camisa que llevo puesta’ (232). Jesusa’s children have voluntarily renounced their national language – they only speak Spanish to their mother because she barely understands English –, their culture, their geographical origins, and their religion, consciously embracing the values and customs of a foreign community. Jesusa, however, remains so attached to the fixed concept of culture she represents that she ends up paralysed, and she dies – as we know – at the end of the story.

Again, the ambiguity of the novel is manifest. On the one hand, the American nation, based on political citizenship rather than ethnic ties, and the successful adaptation of Jesusa’s children to New York, challenge the identification between ‘race’ and nation established by Spanish ethnic nationalism. The view of New York as the city of the future also renders the identification of Spain with a ‘racially’ and culturally homogeneous community as an obsolete concept of nationhood. In this context, the novel promotes a more inclusive conception of national identity that goes beyond shared geographical, cultural, and ‘racial’ origins, in which, moreover, the ‘racial’ hierarchy that locates the colonised subaltern in a position of intellectual and social inferiority is unveiled as a cultural construction. However, on the other hand, the loss of national characteristics such as religion and language as consequence of the standardising effects of New York’s melting pot, also suggest a threat to the Catholic and linguistic essence of Spanish identity – not only in the Peninsula, but also in the whole Hispanic community – at the hands of ‘the Big Other’. In this view, modernisation is presented as a danger to the persistence of a ‘natural’ identification between nation, culture, religion, language, and ‘race’.

#### 4.4 ‘La España Grande’ versus ‘La España Negra’ in *La ciudad automática*

In *La ciudad automática*, Julio Camba devotes three chapters to the situation of black people in New York: ‘Negros’ (1960: 22-23), ‘Más negros’ (24-25), and ‘Negros y blancos’ (25-28). Similarly to images of ‘racial contamination’ developed by Moreno Villa, Camba’s text especially focuses on the contact between African and white Americans. Once more, jazz music is depicted as the catalyst for the subversion of ‘racial’ hierarchy. Camba locates the chapter entitled ‘Negros’ in Harlem jazz clubs, where he argues that ‘racial’ hierarchy is blurred by the combined effect of black music and alcohol:

Nueva York aborrece a los negros, no cabe duda, pero los aborrece únicamente desde las ocho o nueve de la mañana hasta las doce de la noche [...] abandonando los cabarets del Broadway con su alegría mejor o peor imitada, se va al Harlem en busca del *real thing* [...] Para los americanos de estirpe puritana la alegría es una invención negra. [...] Es la hora de Harlem. La hora en que los negros más monstruosos estrechan entre sus brazos a las más áureas anglosajonas. La hora en que el alto profesorado, tipo Wilson, se pone a bailar la rumba con la servidumbre femenina de color. [...] Allí se ve bien claro que no todo son fuerzas contrapuestas entre los negros y los blancos norteamericanos, y que si los blancos odian a los negros es, en cierto modo, como el vicioso odia a su vicio. Se ve, en fin que los blancos pueden odiar a los negros durante el día y a las horas laborables, pero que, a pesar de todo, hay algo en el fondo de la raza maldita que los atrae de un modo irresistible. (22-23)

Camba does not condemn the hatred suffered by African Americans in New York, but rather focuses his criticism on the ‘depraved’ behaviour of Anglo-Saxons, who look for the pleasures forbidden by their puritan values in the dark and debauched clubs of Harlem. Moreover, black people are depicted as a ‘vice’ that white Americans cannot resist, and which leads to ‘unnatural’ sexual matches that destabilise ‘racial’ and class hierarchies. Camba strives to highlight such subversion by establishing binary oppositions between the blacks and the whites. First of all, in the couple formed by ‘negros monstruosos’ and ‘áureas anglosajonas’, the sexual and ‘racial’ purity suggested by the golden hair of Anglo-Saxon women – one must note, as in Moreno Villa’s travelogue, the use of ‘blonde’ to characterise the Anglo-Saxon ‘race’ – is opposed to the impurity and exacerbated lust (‘monstruoso’) of black men. Regarding the binary white/black, Winthrop Jordan points out that:

embedded in the concept of blackness was its direct opposite – whiteness. No other colors so clearly implied opposition [...] White and black connoted purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, virtue and baseness, beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, God and the devil. (1994: 42)

Jordan's words refer to the first encounters between the English and the Africans in the sixteenth century. As one can see, the same racist stereotypes are still in force in Camba's text. Indeed, the portrait of African Americans given by Camba is a re-elaboration of previous discourses of 'Otherness' carried out in the West since its encounter with non-European cultures, based on binary oppositions such as sensuality/rationality, nature/civilisation, and childishness/maturity. In the chapter entitled 'Más negros' (24), Camba defines blacks by their sensuality and musical skills, to the extent of arguing that 'bailan todos los negros [...] Dotados de una gracia de movimientos puramente animal y con un sentido extraordinario del ritmo, los negros nunca aciertan a explicar por completo un sentimiento o un deseo mientras no lo bailan' (25). Their alleged inability to articulate their feelings through words strengthens their opposition to the 'civilised' and educated white man. Furthermore, black people's supposed sense of rhythm is seen by Camba as an expression of their 'primitivism' and 'racial' inferiority: in contrast with the cultural refinement of the Western man, their musical talent is 'puramente animal'. This view is confirmed later on in Camba's animalisation of African Americans, who are compared to apes and dogs:

hay negros chiquitines y muy peripuestos que se pasean por las calles de Harlem con una petulancia tan deliciosa como la de un *fox-terrier* [...] otros son enormes, como gorilas [...] bailan los negros *fox-terrier* y los negros *bulldog* [...] baila el negro gorila y el negroide chimpancé. (24-25)

Surprisingly, Camba declares himself to have 'gran simpatía' (24) for black people. Soon we discover that such affection is also explained by Camba's attachment to discourses of 'Otherness', in this case the infantilisation of the 'racial Other':

los niños, en especial, me encantan y, junto a un negro de seis o siete años, un blanco de tres me parece que ya está en plena senectud. En cuanto a los grandes, no hay ninguno que haya dejado enteramente de ser niño. Los negros son niños siempre por su candor y por su marrullería, por su capacidad admirativa, por sus terrores



injustificados, a la par que su desconocimiento del verdadero peligro y, ante todo, por la enorme fuerza creadora de su imaginación. (24)

The distinction between whites and blacks is shown by Camba as a constant that manifests itself even in the earlier periods of human life. In his view, a white child is already older than a black one of the same age, as though the former were intellectually superior to the latter since his birth. Moreover, both 'categories' remain unalterable, since blacks never overcome this state of childishness and therefore stay in a permanent condition of inferiority in relation to the white man's maturity. Camba's view of 'races' as fixed categories does certainly echo racialist theories such as those argued by Arthur de Gobineau in *The Inequality of Human Races* (1855). According to Gobineau, all 'racial differences' were permanent, since 'races' 'constitute separate branches of one of many primitive stocks' (Gobineau 1915: 133). Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida (2002: 226) points out that racialist theory also arrived to Spain in the nineteenth century, although 'scientific' studies of 'race' were not numerous. Chillida argues that rather than racialism, racist views were still rife in Spain where 'el influjo de los caracteres físicos raciales sobre los intelectuales y morales, o la superioridad de la raza blanca, fueron admitidas por la gran mayoría como verdades axiomáticas, tanto entre conservadores como progresistas' (Chillida 2002: 226). Camba's agreement with theories supporting 'racial' inequality is highlighted by his depiction of Harlem as a primitive and magical inner city, isolated from modernisation:

en Nueva York se habla del barrio de Harlem, donde están concentrados, como de una ciudad mágica en la que se cultivan ritos extraños y misteriosos, y hay algo de ello, no cabe duda. Harlem vive, ante todo, de artes de hechicería. Su industria principal consiste en la venta de amuletos contra el mal de ojo, filtros amorosos. (25)

The writer insinuates that even in modern cities such as New York, blacks preserve their allegedly 'inherent' sensuality, 'animality', and superstitious character, since they are unable to become 'civilised'. Due to ignorance or conscious denial, the writer obviates the booming visibility of black literature, music, and art in the 1920s and 1930s thanks to the 'Harlem Renaissance', a black cultural movement that represented 'not only a golden age of African American arts but a valiant effort to remove the masks of racial stereotypes in order to put a new face on African Americans' (Buck 2010: 795). Moreover, Camba describes

the Great Migration as an ‘invasion’, therefore highlighting the position of African Americans as outsiders: ‘desde la guerra europea, los negros han comenzado a invadir las grandes ciudades del Norte, como Chicago y Nueva York’ (26). It is precisely in the North of the United States, Camba reminds the reader, where:

se ha libertado al negro y se ha emancipado a la mujer, a la que, a falta de equivalencia idiomática, nadie podría ahora llamar aquí, como se la llama a veces en España, “negra de mis carnes”. Aquí, socialmente consideradas, todas las mujeres son rubias. (26)

In the previous quotation the three lines of enquiry of this thesis converge: the reaction towards mass society, women’s emancipation, and multiculturalism. First of all, there is a blatant identification between women’s emancipation and black people’s liberation from slavery. Second, I also argue that the sentence ‘socialmente, todas las mujeres son rubias’ connects racism to social discrimination. Obviously, Camba is referring to the entrance of women in the public sphere. By saying that ‘todas son rubias’ he opposes blonde – and hence white – to black, therefore implying that in the United States all women are in high social positions and thus at the same social level than men. Such a statement implies that non-blondes (blacks) belong to a lower class position. Furthermore, the reference to the expression ‘negra de mis carnes’, used in early twentieth century Madrid as a sexually charged flattering comment (Díaz-Cañabate 1978: 99), also refers to the change undergone by women in the United States in comparison to their situation in Spain: from sexual objects to civil subjects. Once again, ‘negra’ is identified with a position of inferiority, the weak element in patriarchal, classist, and racialist oppositions, showing the shared origin of discourses of ‘Otherness’ that shaped Western identity; discourses that were challenged by the development of modernisation in the United States.

The second dancing couple to which Camba refers in his description of Harlem night life, does in fact blur the ‘natural’ division between social classes. ‘El alto profesorado, tipo Wilson, se pone a bailar la rumba con la servidumbre femenina de color’ (22): the white educated man dances with the black feminine servant. Following the social elitism expressed by the writer in other sections of his travelogue (analysed in Chapter 2 of this thesis), Camba reacts against the contaminating influence that black popular music has on the American high

intellectual élite. Steve Fenton (1999: 83), points out that the construction of ‘racial’ difference in the West was parallel to the development of class ideologies. As Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 2) also remind us that ‘race’ is a social construction ‘used as a legitimizing ideological tool to oppress and exploit specific social groups and to deny them access to material, cultural and political resources, to work, welfare services, housing and political rights’. Camba is perfectly aware of the racist discrimination suffered by African Americans, as he openly refers to the so-called ‘Negro problem’: ‘el llamado problema negro ha dejado de ser un problema exclusivamente rural para convertirse también en un problema urbano’ (26-27). The writer provides a list of possible ‘solutions’ given to such a ‘problem’ in the United States: ‘hay quien habla de matar a todos los negros; hay quien habla de echarlos y hasta quien habla de esterilizarlos’, and declares that ‘cualquiera de estas medidas tiene cierta lógica; pero lo absurdo es eso de separar a los negros de los blancos en el tranvía, en el teatro, en la escuela y hasta en la iglesia’ (27). Given the humiliating and dehumanising depiction of black people given by Camba, it is unsurprising that genocide, banishment, and sterilisation are seen by him as ‘logical’. However, he also seems to be condemning segregation policies. The following lines clarify this first impression:

¿Para qué separar dos cosas de apariencia tan distinta como un líquido azul y un líquido incoloro? ¿Y para qué separar a los negros de los blancos si salta a la vista del más miope quiénes son los blancos y quiénes son los negros? [...] Por mi parte opino que el problema negro no existe, y no existe precisamente porque los negros son precisamente una raza de color [...] dentro de su piel cada negro está tan lejos de los otros ciudadanos americanos como un *paragoe* en su campo de concentración. (27-28)<sup>24</sup>

Black skin is compared to a concentration camp that separates African Americans from Anglo-Saxons. As one can see, Camba does not even consider the possibility of egalitarianism: for him, their skin colour will always confine blacks to a position of subalternity and make visible the inferiority of their ‘race’. As in *Pruebas de Nueva York*, the emphasis is not placed on ‘racial’ discrimination, but on the subverting power of black culture. The writer condemns the fact that the ‘natural’ social boundaries established by discrimination become weaker during the night, when whites become increasingly affected by the intoxicating effect of

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<sup>24</sup> I have not been able to find the meaning of the word ‘paragoe’. I can only deduce that Camba is misspelling ‘arapahoe’ and he is referring to Indian reservations.

jazz: ‘el irse animando es como si dijéramos ir sintiéndose negro, y hacia la una o las dos de la madrugada todo el mundo se siente, por lo menos, cuarterón’ (22). The whole scene is given a carnivalesque character in which the ‘right order of things’ has been inverted, and the semiotic parallel between ‘the night’ and ‘the black’ strengthens the idea of temporal madness, of the dangerous and corrupting power of the African American influence. Significantly, the explanation given by Camba for the ‘irresistible’ attraction that Anglo-Saxons feel towards blacks is reminiscent of Moreno Villa’s words in *Pruebas de Nueva York*:

Todo lo cual tiene una explicación bien sencilla: la falta de lujuria propia en el pueblo americano. Naturalmente, yo no voy a salir en defensa de ningún pecado capital, pero opino que todos los hombres, aun los de un abolengo puritano más directo, están hechos del mismo barro, y que si se prescinde de su naturaleza o si se quiere ir brutalmente contra ella, el error sera funesto. La dictadura puritana arremetió contra toda pasión carnal de un modo verdaderamente feroz, y hoy pueden ustedes ver a este pueblo que, totalmente desprovisto de sus instintos lujuriosos, no tiene más remedio que arreglárselas con la lujuria de otros pueblos. [...] Como la raza anglosajona es una de las razas menos sensuales del mundo, se consideró tarea facilísima el hacer de ella una raza enteramente virtuosa, pero al privarla de su parca sensualidad se la dejó sin defensa contra el estímulo de sensualidades extrañas, y cuando la raza elegida estaba ya a dos dedos de la pura virtud, hela aquí que se suelta el pelo y que dice: – Ahora me toca a mí... (23)

Using similar arguments to those put forward by Moreno Villa, Camba ridicules the zeal for purity of the Anglo-Saxon ‘race’, and its lack of sensuality is rendered as an imperfection rather than a virtue. The writer strives to dismantle racist theories of Anglo-Saxon superiority by showing the counterproductive effects of its excessive search for purity: the alleged suppression of sexual drives by the Protestant faith cannot contain the strength of the lowest instincts, which are attracted by the exacerbated lust of an inferior ‘race’ and lead Americans to fall into the ‘vices’ they try to avoid.

Both Camba’s racist stand regarding African Americans and his dialectical efforts to dismantle theories of Anglo-Saxon ‘racial’ superiority, must be connected, as in Moreno Villa’s case, with nostalgic formulations of Spanish national identity. As a matter of fact, Harlem reappears in a subsequent chapter significantly entitled ‘La España negra’ (48-51), where the writer describes the East side of this neighbourhood in the following terms:

desde la calle 110 hasta la 116, entre las avenidas quinta y octava, puede decirse que estamos en España. Una España algo negra, desde luego, pero una verdadera España por el idioma, por el carácter y por la actitud general del hombre ante la vida [...] No hay duda de que esto es España, y sólo con espíritu mezquinamente provinciano dejaríamos de reconocerlo así. Es España en toda su enorme variedad histórica. Es la España grande, la España donde nunca se pone el sol todavía, la España hispánica, en una palabra. (48-49)

Camba's account is a wistful memory of the lost Spanish Empire, of the unity between the mainland and the colonies, as he confirms some lines later:

y si usted, lector, considerase algo bárbara esta nomenclatura, yo no podría por menos de lamentarlo, porque ello demostraría, no que es usted muy español, sino que lo es usted muy poco, que tiene usted de España un concepto peninsular exclusivamente y que carece usted de conciencia histórica nacional. Esta conciencia histórica, si en efecto le falta a usted y quiere usted adquirirla, en ninguna parte podrá lograrlo mejor que en el barrio de Nueva York a que me refiero, donde se encontrará usted, en pequeño, con una España muy grande. (49-50)

I suggest that the title 'España negra' is a play on words that not only refers to the presence of African Americans in Harlem, but also to the stereotype of Spain as a backward country condensed in the trope of 'La leyenda negra':

The Black Legend [...] is the name of an anti-Spanish discourse said to have arisen in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, an era of constant warfare and competition between Catholicism and Protestantism. [...] Institutions such as the Inquisition and the Catholic Church, the intermixing of Spanish, indigenous, and African peoples in the Spanish Empire, and a history of racial, religious, and cultural syncretism in Spain, were regarded elsewhere in Europe as signs of an inherent and intractable cultural and racial deficiency. The heterogeneous peoples and cultures of both Spain and its Empire were found wanting when compared with the purportedly purer, more benign, and humanistic northern European imperial enterprises. [...] The term Black Legend was introduced in 1914 by the Spanish historian Julián Jover y Loyot, who wanted to disarm what he regarded as the antipathy towards Spain, and Spanish Catholicism, among European historians. (Allatson 2007: 35-36)

'España Negra' is also the title of two books that reflected the persistence of the aforementioned stereotype at the turn of the century, written by Emile Verhaeren and Darío de Regoyos (1899), and José Gutiérrez Solana (1920) respectively. According to Lozano (2000: 47), Verhaeren and Regoyos's text represents 'la invención de una imagen de España que identificaba en lo fúnebre, lo decrepito y lo sangriento aquello que caracteriza, por contraste con la Europa civilizada, el

carácter español y su ambiente singular'. In turn, the view of Spain given in Gutiérrez Solana's book has been described by José Saramago as 'sórdida y grotesca en el más alto grado imaginable, porque eso fue lo que encontró en las llamadas fiestas populares y en los usos y costumbres de su país' (2010: 88). I would argue that Camba aims partially to subvert such negative stereotypes. In opposition to the view of Spain as a degenerate country given by Northern European historians, the writer praises the grandeur of the former Spanish Empire, still alive in the linguistic and cultural heritage of the colonies, and presented as a colourful and joyful national community:

en el teatro de San José no son únicamente el gallego, el catalán o el baturro quienes hacen las delicias del público con sus acentos respectivos. A la par de ellos salen a escena el jíbaro de las Antillas, el pelado mejicano, y el atorrante argentino, etcétera. Se bailan jotas y sones, sardanas y rumbas, pericones y muiñeiras, peteneras y jarabes. [...] Los restaurantes, por su parte, no serían considerados como restaurantes españoles si, junto al arroz valenciano o la escudella catalana, no incluyesen en la carta los tamales, el churrasco, el mole de guajalote, el chile con carne, la barbacoa, el sibiche, el chupe de camarones y demás *platicillos* o *antojitos* hispanoamericanos. (49)

In Camba's account, the success of the Spanish Empire in bonding with the colonies and creating an enduring sense of community contrasts with the Anglo-Saxon failure in the United States. His view of 'racial' contact in New York suggests that Americans have failed to include their subalterns in the national unity without jeopardising the integrity of their 'racial' purity. On the contrary, the legacy of the Spanish Empire, in the form of *Hispanidad*, shows the extent to which Spanish national identity has spread through the world also absorbing the influence of colonised cultures. A Castilian-centred Spanish identity has prevailed not only in the colonies, where the Castilian Spaniard has maintained his position of authority over the 'primitive Others', but also in the Iberian Peninsula. The presence of representatives of different peninsular regions, as expression of the Empire's grandeur, is indeed not accidental, but mirrors the threat posed by regionalist movements to the national unity. In addition, the allusion to members of the different colonies is highly misleading, as the choice of adjectives accompanying the West Indian, the Mexican, and the Argentinean unveils. The first of them is denominated 'jíbaro', thereby evoking a sense of 'primitivism',

and connecting him to a particular social group, the agricultural working class.<sup>25</sup> Second, ‘pelado’ is a derogatory term used to name Mexican poor urban people.<sup>26</sup> Finally, in Argentinian Spanish, ‘atorrante’ is a term used to refer to tramps.<sup>27</sup> As one can see, all the representatives of the colonies are qualified according to a binary opposition that establishes their inferiority in relation to the white Spanish man of the Iberian Peninsula. Even Latin American food is located in a subaltern position through the use of diminutives (‘antojitos’, ‘platicillos’). In Chapter 1, I have shown how contradictory archetypes of ‘the black’ as lustful, naïve, and troublemaker, were used as a dialectical device essential in the creation of the illusion of a ‘pure’ Spanish ‘race’. I propose that here the writer is resorting to a similar construction. By alluding to the colonies as a subaltern ‘Other’, poor, ignorant, and lazy, Camba maintains the artifice of ‘racial’ purity in the Iberian Peninsula, which makes itself visible through the persistent authority exerted by the white Castilian man. Although Spain’s political authority over the colonies ceased after the Spanish American wars of independence, Camba’s view of a Hispanic unity preserves a sense of cultural superiority. I therefore argue that the comparison between such superiority and the view of American society as ‘corrupted’ by the influence of black culture is aimed at disarming the racist theories that characterised Spain as a degenerated and dying nation. On the contrary, Camba’s text strives to construct a strong Spanish national identity based on ‘racial’ purity and cultural superiority over its regional and colonial ‘Others’.

Following the racist nature of his portrait of African Americans, Julio Camba focuses his description of Jewish people on a series of physical characteristics that have been recurrently used in ‘the West’ to define its archetypical ‘internal Other’. In different chapters of *La ciudad automática*, the writer refers to the so-called

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<sup>25</sup> Paul Allatson (2007: 133) points out that ‘traditionally, the term jíbaro conveyed a sense of rural-based island character as poor, humble, fatalistic, unknowledgeable about the wider world, and yet stoic and endearing’.

<sup>26</sup> According to Heather Levi (2001: 342), ‘the term pelado, which literally means “baldie” or “stripped”, identifies a poor (man) with (his) lack: of possessions, of culture, of everything’.

<sup>27</sup> Jason Wilson (1999: 33) argues that ‘the *atorrante* was an immigrant who hadn’t made it, who lived homeless in the gutter’. The RAE Dictionary defines this adjective as ‘vago’ and ‘persona desfachatada, desvergonzada’, both meanings used in Argentina and Uruguay (<http://www.rae.es/rae.html> <Accessed 5th August 2011>).

‘Jewish nose’ – ‘nariz judaica’ (19), ‘nariz aquilina’ (19), ‘el judío chato’ (59), ‘ángulos faciales’ (119) –, and to the ‘Jewish beard’:

barbas vegetales de esparto, de rafia, de cáñamo, de maíz, de algodón, de buho [*sic*], de puercoespín. Barbas en forma de escoba y barbas en forma de zorros. Barbas de invierno y barbas de verano. Barbas onduladas, barbas trenzadas, barbas avirutadas [*sic*]. Barbas horizontales y barbas verticales. Barbas hirsutas, barbas lacias, barbas crespas. Barbas policromadas. Barbas lustrosas, con reflejos casi metálicos, y barbas desleídas, sin brillo ni color. Barbas de astracán, barbas de seda, barbas de pluma. (28)

In Camba’s view, both the nose and the beard function as symbolical markers of the Jewish ‘race’. The alleged physical distinctiveness of ‘the Jew’ is blatantly ridiculed by the writer in order to render this stereotypical image as expression of ‘racial’ and cultural inferiority. Few lines after, Camba also states that:

el judío no se considera realmente dueño, sino simplemente depositario de ellas. Por eso jamás se las lava, ni se las aliaña jamás. Las siembra, eso sí; las abona, las engrasa y las cultiva; pero no las altera. No verán ustedes una sola Gillette en todo Rivington Street. Las barbas están aquí en perfecto estado de Naturaleza y, al internarse entre ellas, uno tiene la sensación de internarse en una selva virgen. (29)

‘The beard’, seen by Camba as an indissoluble part of Jewish identity, characterises ‘the Jew’ as ‘un-civilised’. The references to ‘una selva virgen’, ‘en perfecto estado de Naturaleza’, take the reader immediately to the opposition between ‘primitiveness’ and ‘civilisation’, which is also elaborated around the contrast between the ‘Jewish beard’ and the ‘Gillette’. Whereas the razor blade is a symbol of modern times, the beard is constructed as a sign of archaism. According to the writer, even in the most modern city of the world, Jews still live in the Middle Ages: ‘estamos en plena judería. En diez minutos de Metro nos hemos trasladado, como si dijéramos, a la Edad Media’ (28).

Camba’s account of American Jews does not only rely on physical stereotypes, but also on psychological ones, especially the archetype of ‘the avaricious Jew’ so deeply ingrained in the Western imaginary. The writer describes Rivington Street as:

un mercado donde cada uno pone sobre la mesa todo lo que tiene: su ropa, su calzado, sus retratos de familia, un paraguas roto que se encontró quizás un día en el *subway*, un despertador destartalado, un rosario... Con frecuencia, sobre la misma mesa, el judío tiene una



hornilla donde cuece su comida de la noche; pero si alguien se siente con apetito, que ofrezca precio. En Rivington Street todo se vende.  
(28)<sup>28</sup>

Following Camba's 'parodistic' style, the stereotype is – if possible – exaggerated. According to the writer, everything is for sale in the 'Jewish market'. For 'the Jew', money is more important than family ('sus retratos de familia') and religion ('un rosario'). Furthermore, since the rosary is a religious object used for the homonymous prayer that commemorates the fifteen Mysteries of the life of Jesus, the allusion to this item can be also related to the 'Christ killer' stereotype: in Camba's text, 'the Jew' sells the rosary – which metaphorically symbolises Christ – therefore recalling Judas' treason. I also suggest that the reference to broken objects is used not only to highlight the alleged greed of 'the Jew' but also to ridicule and humiliate this figure. In Camba's depiction, 'the Jew's' irrational greed has not limits, and he tries to sell objects that nobody would buy. A similar image is used in the chapter entitled 'La España negra', in which the writer argues that during a walk in the Bowery (East Harlem), 'habiéndome detenido, por pura curiosidad a la puerta de una ropavejería, cuatro o cinco judíos se abalanzaron simultáneamente sobre mí. – ¿Le gusta a usted este gabán? – me dijeron enseñándome un gabán muy grande' (50). As the story develops, Camba is harassed by the Jewish peddlers, who insist on trying to sell him an old and excessively big coat in a malicious manner:

toda mi resistencia fue inútil. Quieras o no, no tuve más remedio que probarme aquel gabán que, en opinión de los judíos, me sentaba muy bien. Yo me daba perfecta cuenta de que varias manos recogían a mis espaldas la tela sobrante y de que, en cuanto yo me quedase a solas con el gabán, desaparecería por completo dentro de él; pero esta convicción no me servía de nada. Los judíos, simulando una súbita afección por mí, dijeron que aquel gabán valía lo menos cincuenta dólares, pero que, en vista del interés que yo tenía en llevármelo, harían un sacrificio y me lo dejarían en veinte.

– Vengan quince dólares – me replicaban. – Vengan diez solamente. Vengan ocho. Vengan siete y medio. Vengan cinco...

Total, que me llevé el gabán de los judíos y casi todos mis dólares, y que ésta es la hora en que no comprendo todavía aquel negocio [...]  
(50)

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<sup>28</sup> Rivington Street is part of the Lower East Side neighbourhood, a multicultural area of New York with a prominent Jewish population. For a detailed History of this neighbourhood see Hasia R. Diner's *Lower East Side Memories: a Jewish Place in America* (2002).

I argue that Camba's story follows a modern stereotype that described Jewish inhabitants of early twentieth-century European metropolis such as London as old clothes dealers, often 'portrayed carrying under one arm a bag or sack to put his stack of second hand clothes' (Felsenstein 1995: 78). As Felsenstein (1995: 78) states, 'the lowly social status of such an occupation and the importunity of some of these traders were sometimes put forward as further evidence of the debased condition of the Jews since biblical times'. I propose that the episode narrated by Camba follows the same objective, namely to render Jewish people as 'corrupted' and 'primitive', and therefore inferior to white Europeans. The coincidence with the stereotype suggests that Camba is consciously re-creating and therefore perpetuating Western stereotypes of 'the Jew'. At the beginning of the travelogue, he declares that 'desde mi punto de vista, la verosimilitud es siempre más importante que la verdad' (13), 'Verosimilitud' – resemblance to the truth – is based on the reader's horizon of understanding, in what the reader expects from the text. As I have argued throughout this thesis, the perception of social constructs such as 'class', 'race', 'gender', and 'nation' relies on the re-elaboration of a series of discursive formations based on the binary opposition between 'Us' and 'Them'. Literary works help to promote and keep such discursive formations alive in the social imaginary. I propose that Camba's description of Jewish people in New York, rather than referring to facts, is elaborated by using old stereotypes available in the discursive archive of the West. Furthermore, I suggest that the location of this anti-Semitic fable in a chapter devoted to praising the cultural grandeur of the Spanish Empire responds to the intention of reinforcing a nostalgic view of Spanish national identity, which was under review in the early decades of the twentieth century. By maintaining medieval stereotypes of 'the Jew' and resorting to modern reinventions of this archetype, Camba creates an oppositional image of Spain's 'internal Other' that preserves the illusion of a Spanish national identity rooted in Catholicism and 'racial' purity. The closing paragraphs of 'La España negra' cast a new light on the writer's choice of title for this chapter, which intertwines nostalgic views of Spain with racist and anti-Semitic stereotypes:

Pero ya no quedan judíos en Harlem. Los negros de Puerto Rico, al invadir Nueva York, iniciaron una ofensiva realmente sangrienta contra ellos. Hubo tiros y puñaladas, y como a pesar de todo, los

judíos se resistían, a veces, para desalojarlos fue necesario comprarles todos los gabanes que tenían en venta, hecho histórico que explica en gran parte la pintoresca elegancia de los llamados aquí negros latinos. Hoy ya no se habla *yiddish* más que en la calle 110. Desde la 111 en adelante hasta la 120 [...] se habla el español con todas sus modalidades. Se habla, se reza, se canta y hasta se baila. (51)

Here, Camba's colourful arguments countering Spain's Black Legend are complemented with a new expulsion of the Jews from a Hispanic territory, in this case carried out by the black colonised subaltern from Puerto Rico, who has interiorised the culture of the coloniser. 'The Jewish enemy' has once more been defeated by the strength of the Empire, still alive in the Spanish language and, significantly, in the Catholic religion. One must also note the insistence on 'the avaricious Jew' trope, since the text implies that the way to fight against the stubbornness of the Jews is to resort to their greed and materialism.

Probably echoing the interest in Sephardic Jews in early twentieth-century Spain, Camba also refers to an alleged encounter with a Jew of Spanish origin in Rivington Street:

a veces, en una esquina de Rivington Street se congregan seis o siete barbas tan diferentes entre sí como si sus portadores no hubieran tenido otro objeto al reunirse que el de cotejar las unas con las otras. Estas barbas vienen directamente de Amsterdam, aquéllas llegan del fondo de Polonia, las de más allá son, sin duda alguna, unas barbas españolas del siglo XV, y, por el olor que despiden, parecen haber estado hasta ahora conservadas en naftalina. Los judíos sefarditas no escasean por aquí, y yo recuerdo una tarde en la que observando la gracia, puramente oriental, con que hacía sus compras una chica, me dijo uno de ellos:

– Fermosa doncella, ¿no piensa lo mismo vuesa merced?

A lo que no pude menos de replicar:

– Lo mismo pienso, amigo, y cristiana o infiel, una doncella tan fermosa merece los mayores acatamientos. (29)

First of all, I propose that at the beginning of the previous extract, Camba alludes to the stereotype of 'the wandering Jew'. By referring to the different origins of the metonymic Jewish beard, the writer highlights the nomadic existence of the Jewish people, who never become a legitimate part of the national community. Moreover, I suggest that this alleged encounter brings forward a nostalgic recollection of medieval Spain, the golden age of Spanish nationalism. The

persistence of the Judaeo-Spanish language centuries after the expulsion is here used in order to show the greatness of Spanish culture, of its endurance even in the antagonistic ‘race’ par excellence. However, the use of the adjective ‘infiel’ reminds the reader that despite linguistic similarities, ‘the Jew’ cannot be really considered as an ‘amigo’ and a ‘true’ Spaniard. The reference to religion therefore reinforces a *casticista* stand that identifies the essence of Spanish identity not only with past imperial glories, but also with Catholicism. The blatantly sexist remark made by the writer also suggests the dominant position of the ‘male Spaniard’. Whether Christian or Jew, the oriental woman must comply with male authority (‘acatamientos’). Furthermore, I suggest that Camba might be playing with the etymology of this verb, since he is imitating medieval Spanish. ‘Acatar’ comes from ‘catar’, meaning ‘to see’. The ‘observed woman’ is hence constructed through the male gaze as a sexual object.

Finally, Camba also differentiates between the Jews of Rivington Street and those living in Park Avenue:

¡Qué diferencia entre los judíos de Rivington Street y los de Park Avenue! Los judíos de Park Avenue son hijos de los de Rivington Street, pero carecen totalmente de carácter. Tienen Picassos y Rolls Royces, cebellinas y sillones metálicos, *solariums* y piscinas de natación, pero no tiene barbas. Rivington Street es el Oriente, el mundo antiguo, la Biblia. Park Avenue, en su parte judaica, es tan sólo Nueva York, ya posguerra y, a lo sumo, el *Times*. (30)

I argue that the writer opposes two antithetical, yet equally recurrent stereotypes: that of ‘Jewish primitivism’ and that of ‘the Jew as symbol of modernisation’. The result of such an opposition renders the Jews from Rivington Street as almost harmful, a vestige of an archaic culture that has bent to the authority of the white European. However, the Jews from Park Avenue represent the arrival of a new era dominated by technology (embodied by the car as a symbol of modern times), by avant-garde art (Picasso), and ruled by American power (a country that has shown its military potential in the First World War) and its new capitalist system and society of mass production (‘no tienen carácter’). This new American Jew poses a real threat to white-European supremacy, since it represents the strength of ‘the Big Other’. When confronted with these two images, Spanish national identity is therefore aligned by Camba with the idea of Western civilisation, finding in the two contrary archetypes of ‘the Jew’ a double paradigm of ‘Otherness’: internal –

in relation to the history of Jewry in Spain and Europe –, and external, in the form of the American ‘Big Other’.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

The concept of ‘race’ around which New York’s multiculturalism is set in *Pruebas de Nueva York*, *El crisol de las razas*, and *La ciudad automática* reveals a particular conception of Spanish national identity as the result of a common ancestry, language, culture, and religion, as an eternal category that provides the illusion of a stable and immutable identity. This cultural construction is the result of hierarchical binary oppositions in which the white Spanish man occupies a position of superiority over both (black) external and (Jewish) internal ‘Others’. The image of African Americans as ‘racially’ inferior – therefore confined to the lowest rungs of the social ladder – and corrupting, stems indeed from colonialist discourses that are in turn a re-elaboration of ancient prejudices against the ‘Other’. The archetype of ‘the Jew’, still present in modern Spanish narrative despite centuries of Jewish absence from the country, can be analysed in similar terms. The view of Jews as the embodiment of capitalism and of the dangers of modernisation is in fact a re-elaboration of a stock of anti-Jewish images.

The racist attitudes shown in the New York narratives of José Moreno Villa, Teresa de Escoriaza, and Julio Camba are a response to the challenge posed by American multiculturalism to the stability of the concept of national identity promoted by ethnic nationalism. In the particular case of Spain, a country undergoing a necessary re-definition of its national identity after the fall of its colonial Empire, the reactions to multiculturalism expressed in these texts show a special interest in preserving the fantasy of national unity. The views of African Americans and Jewish people provided in these works confirm the oppositional nature of identity formation in the nationalist sense, by establishing an asymmetrical relationship between the national representation of Peninsular Spain and both its subordinates (the black colonised) and its religious and cultural antagonists (‘the Jew’ and the protestant or atheist American). The efforts to preserve the stability of national identity fall, however, into continuous contradictions, showing the constructedness of such a concept as well as the inadequacy of racialist arguments and pseudo-scientific theories of ‘race’ to which

the view of multiculturalism given in these case studies often resort. Furthermore, efforts to dismantle the theories of Anglo-Saxon 'racial' superiority in vogue at the time also reflect contemporary concerns about the degeneration of the Spanish 'race'.

A different perspective is suggested in *Anticipolis*, in which identity is rendered a fluid, mutable category, not dependent on limiting conceptions of ethnic membership. On the contrary, Oteyza's novel presents a challenge to essentialist views of national identity, considering culture not as an immovable entity, but rather as a permeable concept in constant change. The novel also 'anticipates' the need for Spain to embrace new identitarian principles and overcome the cultural stagnation caused by a monolithic view of the Spanish nation. New York's multiculturalism, presented in *Anticipolis* as an unavoidable consequence of progress and modernisation, represents therefore the need to leave behind the almost religious faith in 'ethnic' homogeneity promoted by nationalism. Nevertheless, the polyphonic structure of the novel also leaves the reader in a state of uncertainty as to whether such a challenge represents a threat to the religious, linguistic, cultural, and 'racial' unity of the Hispanic community. The traditionalist essence of Spanishness represented by Jesusa would be considered 'endangered' in this case, and therefore – following *casticista* notions of Spanish national identity –, in need of protection from pernicious foreign influences.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to study New York as a symbol of modernisation in the early twentieth-century Spanish narrative, and to explore how literary representations of this city reflected the crisis of Spanish national identity triggered by the end of the Empire in 1898. In particular, I have focused on the view of New York developed in two little-studied Spanish novels (*El crisol de las razas* by Teresa de Escoriaza and *Anticópolis* by Luis de Oteyza) and in two travelogues (*Pruebas de Nueva York* by José Moreno Villa and *La ciudad automática* by Julio Camba), all written between 1927 and 1932. Although the interest of Spanish writers in this American city has not gone unnoticed in Hispanic literary and cultural studies, analyses of this phenomenon have mostly focused on two works of poetry, namely Juan Ramón Jiménez's *Diario de un poeta recién casado* and in particular Federico García Lorca's *Poeta en Nueva York*. Non-canonical works have been conventionally dismissed due to an alleged lack of literary value. Moreover, due to the difficulty in classifying these texts according to strict categories based either on literary generations, as traditionally followed by Spanish literary studies (Generations of 1898, 1914, 1927), or on the equally traditional distinction between high and low literature, these texts have been generally 'forgotten' or labelled as 'weird'. Moreover, with the exception of Barrantes Martín's work on Oteyza's novel and Eloy Navarro Domínguez's preliminary study of Eduardo Criado Requena's *La ciudad de los rascacielos* (2004), those few studies devoted to the presence of New York in Spanish literature – Dionisio Cañas (1994), Isabel García-Montón (2000, 2002), Carmen González López-Briones (2000), and Emilio José Álvarez Castaño (2003) – follow descriptive, stylistic or mainly structuralist methodologies for literary analysis. Departing from these previous approaches, I have argued that the analysis of popular narratives and travelogues provides a more complete and inclusive understanding of Spain's struggle for modernity in the early twentieth century. In this sense, this thesis aims to contribute to the study of Spanish Modernism within the discipline of Hispanic cultural studies, and consequently, it has benefited from the advances carried out in the last decades by scholars such as Stephanie Sieburth (1994), Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi (1995), David T. Gies (1999), Anthony L. Geist and José B. Monleón (1999), Jo Labanyi (2000), Mary

Lee Bretz (2001), John A. McCulloch (2007), and Christopher Soufas (2007), amongst others.

The canon of Spanish narrative works of the 1920s and 1930s has mainly included texts belonging to the so-called avant-garde novel. Studies of Spanish narrative based on this premise have therefore reduced the corpus of narrative texts to one literary genre, the novel, and to a specific set of stylistic characteristics such as formal experimentation. On a thematic level, a unifying feature of the corpus of canonical works is the essential presence of the increasingly visible effects of modernisation in Spain: the urban space and the city, technology, ‘the masses’, and the modern woman. As I have shown, all these themes are also an essential part of the narrative works studied in this thesis, therefore revealing key concomitances between so-called ‘high’ and ‘low’ literatures. In addition, and drawing on Beatriz Barrantes’ analysis of the Spanish narrative written in the 1920s and 1930s, the limiting term ‘avant-garde novel’ not only hides the similarities between experimental and ‘popular’ genres, but also overlooks the variety of narrative genres coexisting in this period. Building on the term ‘novela de la modernidad’ proposed by Barrantes, I have suggested a more overarching concept, that of ‘narrativa de la modernidad’ or ‘Spanish narratives of modernity’, which would include all Spanish narrative forms produced in this period, such as the novel, the novella, and the travelogue.

As I have shown, these narrative genres are also embedded in the tensions and contradictions brought about by modernising process in Spain. This is precisely a characteristic of the Spanish New York narratives of the 1920s and 1930s that has been traditionally overlooked. Sometimes in an open manner (*Pruebas de Nueva York, Anticópolis, La ciudad automática*) or in a more subtle way (*El crisol de las razas*), the chosen texts engage with the debates around traditional and modernising views of Spanish national identity. Recurrent images of ‘Otherness’ highlight the challenge posed by modernisation to monolithic views of Spanish national identity based on fixed notions of class, gender, and ‘race’. In that sense, and following similar attitudes in other European literary systems, New York – functioning as an often reductive epitome of the United States – represents an ambivalent symbol in Moreno Villa’s, Camba’s, Escorriaza’s, and Oteyza’s narratives: on the one hand, an image of ‘Otherness’ which serves the purpose of reinforcing the Spanish ‘Self’ by opposing images of ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’; on the



other, a threatening ‘Big Other’, whose growing power and influence seems to foretell the inexorable worsening of similar modernising processes already budding in Europe. As I have shown, Spanish responses to modernisation must be contextualised within a broader context, that of the crisis of Western modernity. In this vein, my thesis aims to dismantle the theoretical pigeonholing of the Spanish crisis as an isolated phenomenon, epitomised within Spanish literary studies by the opposition between Generation of 1898 and Spanish *Modernismo*. On the contrary, my work is indebted to studies such as those by Gullón (1992), Bretz (2001), Larson and Woods (2005), Soufas (2010), and Delgado, Mendelson, and Vázquez (2007), which have attempted to locate the literary production of the period within the broader scope of international Modernism. However, these studies have mostly focused on the texts of the so-called Generation of 1898 and the Hispanic avant-garde. Once again, my thesis has aimed to show that other non-canonical narrative forms can also be ascribed to this category. Themes such as the ‘masses’, technology, dehumanisation, the rise of the ‘modern woman’, and the destabilisation of ethnocentric views of the nation, do indeed connect the Spanish New York narratives studied in this thesis to similar reactions in other European literary works. Furthermore, I have intended to show how the discourses of ‘Otherness’ developed in the case studies are connected to similar and pervasive discourses used in the West in order to create a European identity that opposes civilisation, rationality, culture, and ‘racial’ superiority to primitivism, irrationality, nature, and ‘racial’ inferiority. The similarities between European and Spanish discourses of ‘the masses’, women, and non-white ethnicities do indeed unveil the role played by Spain in the construction of archetypes of the ‘Other’ since the early years of colonial expansion in America, as well as the perpetuation of patriarchy through a biosocial conception of gender, and the social and cultural elitism promoted by both the establishment and the intellectual *élite* in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The starting point of analysis was the confrontation between two apparently conflicting projects of national regeneration, namely traditionalist and liberal, and their opposing reactions to Spain’s increasing modernisation. However, and despite the contrast between nostalgic claims for the Catholic and monarchic essence of the Spanish nation and liberal attempts to move forward towards a secular, modern, and republican state, both projects share similar views of ‘the

masses', women, and non-white ethnicities as 'Others'. This is highlighted by the use of similar discourses in the different case studies, in which authors associated with liberal and republican positions such as Moreno Villa, Escoriaza, and Oteyza have points in common with the view of 'Otherness' given by Camba, a writer who has been connected to traditionalism and even Francoism. In my view, this fact strengthens the idea that discourses of 'Otherness' work as a grid or system of representation which shapes the author's perception of the 'Self' and the 'Other'. Consequently, the interest of the case studies analysed in this thesis lies not only in the way such discourses are perpetuated through cultural products, but also in the difficulty presented to the author by these discourses, which resist being broken. It is precisely when the challenge to this prevalent world view creates a crack in the discourse that contradictions and tensions arise, showing the constructedness of concepts such as class, gender, 'race', and nation. All four texts studied in this thesis are party to these tensions to varying degrees.

The view of 'the masses', mass society, and technology given in the New York narratives written by Moreno Villa, Oteyza, and Camba, is indeed reminiscent of similar attitudes in both European literary works and the Spanish narrative of the period. In these texts, the modernisation and constant movement towards the future represented by the American city clashes with a view of Spanish identity based on nostalgic memories of a past in ruins. The skyscraper and the increasing presence of the machine contrast with the veneration of ancient monuments, representatives of the attachment to a mythicised view of Spanish identity. In addition, these texts show concerns about how modernisation has created a new type of civilisation in which the individual has been enslaved by the vociferous and primitive power of 'the masses'. Consequently, the United States are depicted as a dehumanised society and primitive country. These attitudes show the threat posed by capitalism and mass society to social and cultural elitism. The messianic role assumed by intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century is challenged by a society where class mobility and capitalist consumerism blurs social difference and where democratic and egalitarian ideals empower 'the masses' and diminish the impact of the intelligentsia. When this society is compared to Spain, the initial response in both Moreno Villa's and Camba's travelogues is that of resisting modernisation. However, both texts evolve in different ways, and whereas in *Pruebas de Nueva York* there is a change of

perspective and an eventual critique of the project of *Regeneracionismo*, Camba's travelogue strengthens an elitist view of society which is increasingly threatened by the rise of 'the masses', also in Spain. Oteyza's novel, for its part, overlaps with both a positive and a negative view of modernisation. On the one hand, it focuses on the negative effects that the accelerated pace of urban life have for a traditionalist standpoint and can be interpreted as a critique to Spain's stagnation. On the other, New York's unstoppable movement towards the future can also be read as a warning of the dangers posed by the unavoidable influence of modernisation to the traditionalist essence of Spanish national identity.

The views of women's emancipation displayed in the case studies can be grouped into three different positions. First of all, both Moreno Villa's and Camba's travelogues show a strong resistance to the entrance of women in the public sphere and to the challenges posed by female economic and emotional independence from male authority. This view is in tune with patriarchal and biosocial gender constructions not only promoted by traditionalist positions and the Catholic Church in Spain, but also by liberal intellectuals such as José Ortega y Gasset. Female rebelliousness is portrayed in these two texts as violence and chaos. However, women still remain in a position of patriarchal subjugation, depicted as 'niñas' and 'chicas', irrational beings in need of male protection. As I have suggested, the persistent identification between woman and the home/family as well as the role ascribed to womanhood as reproducer of the nation, confirms the patriarchal gaze behind the construction of Spanish national identity. Reactions to the increasing visibility of the modern woman, embodiment of dynamism, and a challenge to biosocial constructions of gender, shows the discomfort caused in both conservative and liberal Spanish male intellectuals by the dismantling of gender categories prompted by modernisation. Secondly, *El crisol de las razas* represents a change of perspective from a male to a feminine gaze. Following the ideas of Spanish female intellectuals of the time such as Carmen de Burgos and Rosa Chacel, in Escoriaza's novella women are depicted as essential actors in modernisation processes. Consequently, whereas Helen's reluctance to embrace her life as an independent woman is punished at the end of the narrative in the form of an accidental death, Sonia's final escape from patriarchy is rewarded with Joe's love. Regarding the role played by male characters in the narrative, Boris embodies the archetype of patriarchal

domination. On the contrary, Joe represents a new type of masculinity that respects women's independence. Finally, *Anticípulis* confronts two oppositional voices: traditional motherhood (Jesusa) and the rebelliousness of the young modern woman (Rosa). Jesusa's attachment to religious and social conventions unveils the role played by women as cultural reproducers as well as the power exerted by symbolic violence – borrowing Bourdieu's term – on women. Rosa, on the other hand, fully embraces the freedom and independence given by modernisation to women in New York. The symbolism of Jesusa's death at the end of the novel remains, however, ambiguous. The ultimate paralysis and fatal fit suffered by this traditionalist woman can be read either as the need to embrace modernisation in order to overcome the weight of the past and move forward, or as a cautionary against the devastating effects of modernisation to the essence of Spanish national identity.

The last aspect analysed in this thesis is the reaction to New York's multiculturalism and the challenge posed by multicultural societies to the ethnocentric concept of national identity promoted in Spain at the time. In particular, I have analysed the depiction of both black and Jewish people – the traditional external and internal 'Others' of the West, including Spain – and the connection of such depictions to the reinvention of Spanish national identity in the first decades of the twentieth century. The racist bias shown in *Pruebas de Nueva York*, *El crisol de las razas*, and *La ciudad automática* unveils the similarities between the pervasive racist stand of Western constructions of 'Otherness' and the Spanish case. Indeed, views of 'race' developed in these three texts resort to racist discourses deeply ingrained in the Western imaginary. Furthermore, I have tried to show how the analysis of issues of 'race' in these texts reveals the role played by racist discourses in the re-formulation of Spanish national identity. On the one hand, both anti-Semitic discourses and the construction of 'the black' as subaltern in Moreno Villa's and Camba's travelogue echo nostalgic views of Spain's imperial past, which relies on the alleged existence of a pure Spanish 'race' and the construction of the 'Other' as 'racially' inferior. Ultimately, and despite the different political stands represented by these authors, both resort to similar archetypes and stereotypes, highlighting the strength of Western discourses of 'Otherness' in both liberal and conservative positions. Moreover, I have argued that efforts to construct the Spanish 'race' as pure respond to

contemporary concerns about the degeneration of the Spanish ‘race’ as opposed to the alleged superiority of Anglo-Saxon ‘races’ argued in Lord Salisbury’s speech and Edmond Demolins’ essay. In *Pruebas de Nueva York* and *La ciudad automática*, the threat posed by New York’s multiculturalism to the ‘racially’ and culturally homogeneous community defended by Spanish ethnocentric nationalism is turned into an oppositional device used in order to highlight the supposed pernicious effects of miscegenation and ‘racial’ diversity for the Anglo-Saxon ‘race’ in the United States. As I have argued, the aim of this strategy is that of constructing an image of the Spanish ‘race’ as essentially pure and therefore protected against ‘racial’ degeneration, creating the illusion of an ethnically homogeneous national community. *El crisol de las razas*, a text that challenges the patriarchal nationalism defended in *Pruebas de Nueva York* and *La ciudad automática*, paradoxically shares with these two texts a strong anti-Semitic bias. Escoriaza’s novella associates patriarchy with a racist view of Eastern Jews as a primitive and degenerate ‘race’, which in this case not only poses a threat to ‘racial’ purity, but also to the social advances of American society in relation to gender equality. Therefore, and in spite of the attempt to destabilise biosocial conceptions of gender, this text remains strongly attached to racist stereotypes of the ‘Jew’. Whereas the novella strives to challenge the construction of woman as an inferior ‘Other’, the influence of Jewish culture and ‘race’ in New York is demonised, to the extent of considering miscegenation as a threat to American modernisation. The confusing terminology used in the novella – where ‘racial’ mixture is seen as an attempt to create a superior ‘race’ in the United States – highlights, similarly to Moreno Villa’s and Camba’s texts, the increasing fear of ‘racial’ degeneration in both Europe and Spain, and the pervasiveness of racist stereotypes of ‘the Jew’ as an internal and corrupting ‘Other’. Finally, and in tune with the ambiguity deriving from its polyphonic nature, *Anticópolis* offers two opposing views of ‘race’ and national identity simultaneously. On the one hand, the embracing of American culture and modernising social values such as capitalism, class mobility, and women emancipation by Jesusa’s children, as well as the unstoppable influence of modernising processes represented by New York in Spain, suggest a flexible view of national identity, not dependent on essentialist values, but rather open to negotiation. Moreover, the archetype of the ‘subaltern black’ is subverted by presenting Jiménez – a black Puerto Rican – as the voice of

modernisation. The advanced ideas articulated by this educated doctor are in stark contrast with Jesusa's ignorance and irrational attachment to traditionalism, therefore undermining the authority of the Spanish coloniser over the 'primitive' colonised. On the other hand, the potential disintegration and disappearance of Spanish national identity at the hands of modernisation is represented not only by the conscious rejection of the Spanish language, religion, and classist values by Jesusa's children, but also by her own final paralysis and demise. The novel therefore presents two hegemonic responses to modernisation in Spain, unveiling the direct connection between modernisation and the reassessment of Spanish national identity.

New York as a symbol of modern times, embodiment of modernisation and 'Otherness', functions in all these four texts as a contrasting image that is continuously challenged and questioned, sometimes feared, sometimes admired, but always projecting the concerns, tensions, contradictions, and anxieties brought about by modernisation in Spain. The challenge to class, gender, and 'race' constructions catalysed by this discovery of a 'new world' in New York reveals the contradictions and fissures of the elitist, patriarchal, and ethnocentric foundations of the projects of national regeneration promoted in early twentieth-century Spain.

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## Appendix: List of Spanish Literary Works about New York (1912-1935)

YEAR OF PUBLICATION	AUTHOR	TITLE	GENRE
1912	Eduardo Zamacois	<i>Dos años en América: impresiones de un viaje por Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Chile, Brasil, New-York y Cuba</i>	Narrative (Travelogue)
1916	Juan Ramón Jiménez	<i>Diario de un poeta recién casado</i>	Poetry
1918	Mariano Alarcón	<i>Impresiones de un viaje a New-York</i>	Narrative (Travelogue)
1919	Eduardo Criado Requena	<i>La ciudad de los rascacielos</i>	Narrative (Travelogue)
1921	Luis Araquistáin	<i>El peligro yanqui</i>	Narrative (Travelogue)
1922	Rómulo de Mora	<i>Los cauces. Novela de la vida norteamericana</i>	Narrative (Novel)
1924	Vicente Blasco Ibáñez	<i>La vuelta al mundo de un novelista</i> (Chapter 2: 'La ciudad que venció a la noche')	Narrative (Travelogue)
1926	Joaquín Belda	<i>En el país del bluff. Veinte días en Nueva York</i>	Narrative (Travelogue)
1927	José Moreno Villa	<i>Pruebas de Nueva York</i>	Narrative (Travelogue)
1929	José Moreno Villa	<i>Jacinta la pelirroja</i>	Poetry

1929	Teresa de Escoriaza	<i>El crisol de las razas</i>	Narrative (Novella)
1929-30 (1940)	Federico García Lorca	<i>Poeta en Nueva York</i>	Poetry
1930	Jacinto Miquelarena	<i>...Pero ellos no tienen bananas (El viaje a Nueva York)</i>	Narrative (Travelogue)
1931	Luis de Oteyza	<i>Anticipolis</i>	Narrative (Novel)
1931	Luis de Oteyza	<i>Picaresca Puritana</i>	Narrative (Short Stories)
1932	Julio Camba	<i>La ciudad automática</i>	Narrative (Travelogue)
1935	Pedro Segura	<i>Nueva York 1935: impresiones de un viaje a los Estados Unidos</i>	Narrative (Travelogue)