The Landscape of Pío Baroja's Madrid: The Search for Meaning in *La busca* (1904)

Stacey E. Mitchell
The Pennsylvania State University

Abstract: This article examines the role of landscape in Pío Baroja's 1904 novel *La busca,* which portrays the harsh realities of modern life in Madrid through protagonist Manuel Alcázar. For Baroja and his contemporaries, the study and artistic rendition of the Spanish landscape aided in reconstructing a sense of national identity in the midst of socio-economic and moral decline. In *La busca,* Baroja's natural and urban landscape descriptions offer insight into Manuel's struggle for survival and reflect a broader effort to comprehend modern Spanishness.

Keywords: Pío Baroja – *La busca* – landscape – the city – Spanishness

De Regoyos a Baroja, de unos a otros paisajes,
del pictórico al literario, no hay más que un paso.
- Azorín[1]

As with many arts in nineteenth-century Spain, landscape painting was not immune to scientific advancement or new approaches to understanding nature. Belgian-born artist Carlos de Haes initiated an innovative leap in landscape painting in 1857 when he introduced the French *En plein air* method (painting outdoors directly from nature) to Spanish art for the first time.[2] The subsequent break with tradition among Spain's emerging artists was driven by their particular interest in capturing the effects of natural light on canvas which was one of the fundamental characteristics of Impressionism, a movement then considered radical

[1] Pío Baroja quotes Azorín as having said this in *Desde la última vuelta del camino* (20).

[2] At this time, Haes was serving as landscape chair at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Aureliano Bereute and Darío de Regoyos were two of his most successful and celebrated pupils. Regarding Haes's artistic innovation, Gayana Jurkevich relates how "Beruete […] recalled that during the competitive examinations for the Chair of Landscape Painting, the technique and color Haes employed were so unusual that his work caused a furor among his rivals, leading the jury to demand an examination of Haes's paint box to uncover possible irregularities. What they found there, Beruete wryly observed, was nothing but 'the fruit of wise teaching, based on the study of nature,' radically different from the mannered conventionalisms prevalent in Spanish landscape painting at the time" (30).

by academic standards. Like the practice of such revolutionary modern technique among artists, the founding of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza (ILE) in 1876 was a rebellious act on behalf of its originators, a group of liberal professors who had been dismissed from their posts for refusing to conform to conservative, state-mandated teaching standards. Under the leadership of Francisco Giner de los Ríos, the ILE promoted non-doctrinal education grounded in K. C. F. Krause's harmonic rationalism as well as positivist ideology, and was especially receptive to examining the touchpoints between aesthetics and nature. Giner famously advocated, much in the romantic spirit, for *excursionismo* (the direct experience and exploration of nature during invigorating hikes) as one of the institution's most valuable pedagogical tools and also worked to legitimize landscape painting as a serious academic discipline. His desire to integrate varied methods of studying the land and nature into the ILE's educational model lay in his belief that the Spanish landscape held the keys to understanding the people that inhabited it. Indeed, the ILE strove to restore Spain's national identity and define a collective sense of modern Spanishness, so to speak, through educational reform and study of Spain's landscape.

The various authors and artists who portrayed Spanish landscape and society in their work furthered the ILE's nation-building endeavor well into the twentieth century. For these authors and artists, landscape possessed a heuristic function whereby only in rendering its many properties and nuances on page or canvas were its deepest meanings unlocked for the reader or viewer. Evocation of the land, whether visual (like Darío de Regoyos' impressionist landscape paintings), philosophical (like Miguel de Unamuno's *En torno al casticismo*) or literary (like Antonio Machado's *Campos de Castilla*), provided insight into Spain's past glory days as well as, and often in contrast to, its current state of decline. One member of Spain's literary landscape pantheon was Pío Baroja, a self-proclaimed impressionist who considered "el ambiente" the most interesting aspect of painting (*Memorias* 25).[3] We see evidence of this preference in *La busca* of 1904, in which detailed and picturesque landscape descriptions abound. *La busca* is the first novel in Baroja's popular trilogy *La lucha por la vida* and follows protagonist Manuel Alcázar as he struggles to survive in a rapidly urbanizing Madrid. Straddling the divide that separates hapless *golfo* from respectable citizen, Manuel constantly shuttles between the modern city center and its marginalized shantytown neighborhoods, encountering the most desperate forms of poverty, hunger, misery, and instability at every turn. In what follows, I argue that Baroja's evocative renditions of landscape in *La busca*, which have remained largely understudied, demonstrate another facet of Spanish national self-consciousness during the *fin-de-siglo*. To that end, I will first address landscape in its

[3] Ebanks quotes Baroja's response to an article by critic Augustí Calvet (Gaziel) in which he condemns the author as "excesivamente impresionista" (45). "Gaziel no comprende, sin duda, que yo soy un impresionista," says Baroja, "y que para un impresionista lo transcendental es el ambiente y el paisaje […] [los impresionistas] no buscamos el delinear la figura, grande y destacada, con una línea fuerte que la separe del medio en que vive, sino que queremos hacerla vivir en su ambiente" (qtd., Ebanks 45; 46).

various interpretations within and beyond the Spanish context, and then I will analyze key scenes from *La busca* that inform our reading of Manuel's character while providing insight into Madrid's moral and socio-economic configurations on a more collective scale.

It goes without saying that landscape is a broad and complicated term. It can refer to fields, mountains, bodies of water, as well as spaces generated or touched by human activity like a cottage by the lake, a ship harbor, or a city skyline. It comprises geography, populations, and traditions. It also encompasses a set of natural and/or man-made forms that, when invoked and restructured in(to) art, communicate historical, societal, and cultural narratives. In this sense, landscape as an aesthetic is a means to convey insight about a particular society or group of people, a "medium of cultural expression," as W. J. T. Mitchell puts it (14). Landscape factors into rich artistic and literary traditions, which have developed since the Middle Ages and captured the attention of academicians over time. In Kenneth Clark's classic study *Landscape into Art* (1949), he traces the evolution of landscape painting from the Medieval to Modern eras and identifies its climactic period as the onset of Impressionism when the representation of nature as individual 'things' shifted to the rendering of the land as unified 'impressions.' The relationship between humankind and landscape for Clark is largely abstract; human beings, he claims, have gone through stages of understanding, conceiving of, fearing, or enjoying nature, which are reflected in the creation and perception of art. John Barrell presents a contrasting interpretation of landscape that highlights its human or social significance. His work examines the painting of England's rural poor during the eighteenth century and the difficulties of actualizing Arcadian pastoral landscapes to include the working ploughman of the countryside. Societally imposed constraints determined how these subjects could and should be depicted which epitomized social tensions between the rich and the poor, as well as the role landscape played in preserving or dismantling this dynamic.

W. J. T. Mitchell challenges Clark's analysis as a naïve conceptualization of landscape aesthetics, and offers a more critical reading of the topic. He acknowledges the shifting trends in landscape painting over generations but unlike Clark, centers on changes in its function within aesthetic tradition. Landscape painting initially occupied a subordinate position as mere decoration or illustration, but over time took on an emancipated one as independently perceived (and conceived) image of nature. He suggests that this image, unified and pure, may represent a parallel between European landscape painting and imperialism. "Is landscape painting," he asks, "the medium in which [Western imperialism] 'emancipates,' 'naturalizes,' and 'unifies' the world for its own purposes?" (13). This hypothesis attests to Mitchell's broader claim that landscape is less an aesthetic genre than a "cultural practice," serving not only "as an object to be seen or a text to be read but as a process by which social and subjective identities are formed" (1). For Mitchell, then, actively asserting an identity is one function of landscape rendition. Of note is that scholars like Salter and Lloyd describe geographical

landscape as the "humanized spatial environment" encompassing not only natural forms, but also the human activity that shapes a given space (2). In literature, Salter and Lloyd argue, authors work predominantly in either objective or subjective ways: they may describe landscape as keen observers, or provide insight into its human qualities through their creative sensibility. While literary landscape presupposes some degree of realism, it is undoubtedly a creative exercise, and a fictional character's experience of the surroundings provides crucial insight into his or her attitudes, inclinations, and emotions.

Francisco Giner de los Ríos and the ILE initiated their own landscape tradition in Spain that stimulated attempts to understand and (re)build their country's national identity. With Krausist philosophy and positivist ideology in mind, Giner and the ILE strove to "formar hombres," to teach students how to think, how to live, and how to be morally good in addition to exposing them to the latest in scientific or mathematical research (Pérez-Villanueva Tovar 23). As part of this model, Giner and his disciples insisted on the need to directly encounter and investigate the land in order to comprehend the Spanish *pueblo*'s history and virtues. The ILE's emphasis on the relationship between landscape and identity demonstrates its indebtedness to romantic perceptions of nature as a remedy for the depersonalization of a modernizing world. In his often cited 1886 essay "Paisaje," Giner recounts observing a sunset while on an excursion with his ILE colleagues and students. He recalls a feeling of rapturous seclusion as he stood before the scene, which ironically inspired collective reflection among the group on the current state of education, the "detestable educación nacional" (799). Spain's state-run education system, he feared, would ultimately curtail students' access to experiencing the Spanish landscape wherein lay the sources of creative stimulus, intellectual motivation, and moral awakening. Educational reform and improvement, therefore, were essential in moving forward as a united people, and landscape, both natural and aesthetic, played a crucial role in these identity-forming efforts.

In much the same regenerative spirit, nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors and artists took up the ILE's considerations of landscape in their efforts to comprehend what had caused Spain's decline, as well as how they could heal and progress as a nation. Miguel de Unamuno, Azorín, Antonio Machado, Ignacio Zuloaga, José Gutiérrez Solana, Pío and Ricardo Baroja, and others captured the pessimism and anxiety that inundated the country, especially after the tragic *Desastre de 98*. Moreover, their introspective and often critical works enlightened contemporary attempts at understanding this chaotic yet productive time in Spain's history. In many cases, landscape rendition was a means to offer this type of meditation. In *La busca*, Pío Baroja represents what Mitchell calls the *found* as well as the *put* landscape, the former being the land in its natural, untouched state and the latter referring to any space marked by human intervention, urbanization, or industrialization (14). Baroja's descriptions of the sky, the mountains, and the plains (always of great interest to Giner), as well as his

cityscapes function as mediums through which the reader can interpret individual and collective identities. Baroja's expertise in capturing the grittiness of turn-of-the-century Madrid and the details of its surrounding terrain allows the author to use both *found* and *put* landscapes to convey as much about his characters as about the city they inhabit.

Baroja's literary landscape in *La busca* and in other novels has garnered a range of critical attention, though much remains left to uncover. In an examination of *Camino de perfección*, *El árbol de la ciencia*, *La lucha por la vida*, and other works, Bermúdez-Cañete offers a broad survey of landscape descriptions and their function(s) in Baroja's novelistic writing. He focuses on the representations of natural (*found*) landscapes in these novels, and concludes that they demonstrate the author's perception of nature and society while providing insight into characters' complex interiority. Lily Litvak, in contrast, foregrounds the industrialized landscape in *La busca* specifically. She claims that Baroja presents Madrid as contaminated by a type of urbanization that expresses a "crítica implícita de la ciudad moderna como obvia y monstruosa" (*Transformación* 93).[4] Alan Hoyle traces the function of landscape in *La lucha por la vida* (and *La busca* in particular) in a way that correlates Baroja's landscape descriptions to the fundamental Darwinism that frames the trilogy (182). For Hoyle, landscape has predominantly three functions: first, a documentary function that objectively describes the surrounding environment; second, a psychological function, which deals with the reflection of characters' moods in a landscape; and third, a multi-pronged function (thematic, philosophical, conceptual, and rhetorical), which he deems the most interesting and the least studied (183). These analyses are illuminating and suggestive, yet I aim to further the conversation. I argue that the artistic and symbolic elements of Baroja's landscape descriptions in *La busca* attest to the types of nation-building goals the ILE had developed and help to discern the author's perception of a collective Spanish identity.

La busca is plotless in the traditional sense of the word and the narrative, both descriptive and meditative, represents a running commentary on modern society. The squalid, unsanitary conditions of the *corralas* (Madrid's multi-leveled rectangular buildings that housed small, cheap apartments with shared bathrooms, balconies, and central patio), the obsessive focus on physiognomic and moral deformity, and the pervasive mention of prostitution, poverty, filth, misery, and cruelty compose the detritus of modernization that dogs Manuel and his community throughout the novel. In documenting this waste and suffering, Baroja offers a rather scathing political critique of the status quo (the corruption driving some restoration efforts, for example). As in other novels of Baroja's, Nietzschean, Darwinian, and eugenic connotations resound throughout *La busca*, which infuse the narrative with anxiety and skepticism.[5] While a

---

[4] Litvak revisits the role of industrialization in *La busca* in *A Dream of Arcadia: Anti-Industrialism in Spanish Literature, 1895-1905* (2014). She argues that this emphasis on the industrialized landscape communicates Baroja's longing for a pre-industrial arcadia based on repudiation of modernized society.

[5] For example: Nietzsche's critique of religious doctrine as responsible for modern moral degeneration in *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887); Darwin's evolutionary system of natural selection and

deterministic tone is palpable, Baroja makes it clear by the end of the trilogy that it is possible to chart one's destiny. This overcoming, however, is not simple and demands, among other things, supremely good health, which explains Baroja's preoccupation with the deteriorating and deformed body, criminality, and hygiene. José Ortega y Gasset and Gregorio Marañón recognized a high degree of "sensibilidad" (emotional sensibility and empathy) in Baroja's observations of the fleeting moments of everyday life, which in the case of *La busca* constitute its overriding plot (Ebanks 34). This "sensibilidad" is especially evident in his rendition of landscapes, which provide a more aesthetic vision of the natural and urban sphere wherein Manuel lives. As we will see in what follows, Baroja's crafted landscapes are equally as reflective, critical, and rich in descriptive power as his scientifically or economically informed observations.

The landscape scenes in *La busca* correspond to specific moments of rest for Manuel that contrast with his urban wanderings and offer a more aesthetic perspective of his surroundings. Temporal markers like morning or evening are common in *La busca's* literary landscape, but more common still are those that emphasize the passing of time and its fleeting essence. For example, "un crepúsculo rojo," "con la proximidad de la noche," "al caer de la tarde," "al anochecer," "al paso de las nubes," and "a la luz roja del sol poniente," are fragments that demonstrate the passing of time through naturally occurring changes in the environment (30, 85, 111, 186, 212). Baroja utilizes color, indicators of movement or location (proximity, the fall, upon, the passing, the setting, etc.), and contrasts of light and shadow in the sky, sun, and clouds in order to communicate this type of natural temporality.[6] As mentioned earlier, these landscape descriptions correspond with moments of rest for Manuel as demonstrated in the following excerpts: "[Se] sentó a descansar un rato," "se tendió de espaldas en el suelo," "quedó en el Viaducto," (85, 104, 185). In stark contrast to his otherwise multidirectional, sporadic moving into, out of, and around the city, these snippets anticipate landscape descriptions and emphasize momentary interruptions in Manuel's plight brought about by the physical and moral chaos of modern Madrid. That these moments of aesthetic reflection occur mainly when Manuel is at rest and almost always during a transition period calls attention to the juxtaposition of inexorable time and static protagonist. The world, in its symbolic significance and concrete reality, exists outside and independent of, though contingent upon, the individual. Time and life march on whether or not the individual is equipped to survive the struggle for life.

---

the struggle for life in *On the Origin of Species* (1859); and Francis Galton's idea of nature versus nurture in *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (1883), where he also coined the term "eugenics."

[6] These are key features that any landscape painter or writer should master. Azorín is the "most 'painterly' of the Generation's authors" and "it seems Azorín made it a point to master cloud nomenclature, for specialized terminology appears in most of his writing on the subject" (Jurkevich 38; 101). He also relates his "collecting" of clouds: "what I do is collect clouds…I have a magnificent collection of cumulus, cirrus, stratus, and nimbus…the clouds I am alluding to are depicted in the canvases of famous painters" (qtd., Jurkevich 101).

The moments of repose generate a feeling of heightened awareness in Manuel that offer the reader a glimpse into his emotional and psychological states. Toward the end of Part II, Manuel finds himself on the Viaducto de Segovia and looks out toward Campo de Moro where the trees appear "rojizos, esqueléticos" (186). He feels how "aquel severo, aquel triste paisaje de los alrededores madrileños con su hosquedad torva y fría le llegaba a Manuel al alma" (186). Clearly, this is not the welcoming landscape surrounding an ancient Greek Arcadia, nor is it a regenerative *locus amoenus,* but rather a severe, desolate, sullen, and cold setting that penetrates the core of his soul. The translation of landscape into harsh and deeply moving emotion is not arbitrary. On the contrary, the connection between landscape and emotion has concrete significance in that it primes the reader for tragedy. Shortly after imbibing the scene, Manuel learns that Leandro, his cousin, has committed suicide after brutally murdering his ex-girlfriend Milagros when she spurned him for a more desirable suitor. The observation of and identification with the landscape from the Viaducto, along with the concretization of melancholy and death in the image of reddish, skeletal trees, anticipates the ghastly crime of passion that Manuel subsequently discovers. For Baroja, then, landscape can be an introspective and anticipatory tool that links human essence with the land and its elements.

In the pages of *La busca* Baroja manages color masterfully. He conveys darkness and shadow using a gamut of adjectives – "gris," "ennegrecido," "negro," "negrura," "negruzco" – that create a baleful tone throughout. He paints a disquieting vision of modern life using all the shades of the greyscale from the whitest of whites to the blackest of blacks, often crafting harsh and unsettling *chiaroscuro* effects in the process. His landscape descriptions, however, present a distinct phenomenon. As impressionist painters had before him, Baroja broadens his literary pallet significantly when rendering landscape to include a rainbow-like variety of colors such as greens, reds, blues, yellows, ochres, and purples. Nevertheless, the overarching macabre tone persists. A scene in which Manuel looks out at the evening sky over the San Isidro Cemetery from Campillo de Gil Imón exemplifies such chromatic diversification: "El cielo azul y verde se inyectaba de rojo a ras de tierra, se oscurecía y tomaba colores siniestros, rojos cobrizos, rojos de púpura" (85). As night falls, the darkening blue-green sky acquires warmer hues as a red horizon line severs it from the earth in the distance. Baroja's peculiar qualification of coppery and purpleish reds as "siniestros" is key to interpreting other instances in which the author employs or evokes this color. For Baroja red possesses both descriptive and communicative functions, but the question is: why red? Speaking generally, Tracy Adler suggests that in the Western imagination: "[the] connotations of blood, life, religion, and cultural histories are all present. But beyond that exists the purity of red – a primary color – […] from its use as one of the earliest pigments in ancient cave paintings to its applications today, red remains a color of optical and emotional power" (13). On the one hand, Baroja's reds help shape the tone of *La busca* and prime the reader for events (generally tragic ones) to come, as was the case with the

reddish, skeletal trees in the Campo del Moro mentioned above. On the other hand, the author places red or redness directly into the reader's imagination rather than deferring to the color's descriptive faculty. He uses blood imagery, for example, to color the landscape on more than one occasion: "un crepúsculo rojo esclarecía el cielo, inyectado de sangre como la pupila de un monstruo," and "[…] el fondo incendiado y sangriento de la tarde," (30, 85). These metonymic evocations imbue the landscape with a menacing character and bring to mind notions of death, dying, and even violence.

Baroja's reds can also transmit significant details to the reader about Manuel and, by extension, the Spanish people on a more symbolic or metaphorical plane. The author achieves this effect in a pair of scenes that indicate undesirable yet characteristic aspects of Spanishness through varied references to or evocations of the color red. In the first scene, Manuel and two of his closest ruffian friends, Vidal and Bizco, walk by the animated *plaza de toros* heading southeast on their way to investigate an abandoned home that they plan to sack the next day. Baroja describes a portion of the surrounding landscape as follows: "el camino del camposanto se tendía, polvoriento, por entre hondonadas y taludes verdes, por entre tejares abandonados y lomas con las entrañas de ocre rojo al descubierto" (257). As a whole, this landscape alludes to unfulfilled or failed development (the dusty road and abandoned building material), and the disemboweled hillock is a rather anomalous image to consider. "Ocre," or ochre, refers to a yellow-brown color as well as a type of rich clay, and given its relation to "lomas," or hills (hillocks, mounds), either definition is suitable. However, Baroja's blending of "ocre" and "rojo," along with his mention of "entrañas" (entrails), evokes the rust-tinted brown color of excavated dirt, placing chief emphasis on the redness of this "ocre rojo." The hills' insides, reddish and visible as if innards torn from a splayed corpse, does not perturb the boys. Then again, why should it? They merely pass by an excavated mound of earth. It is the reader's experience that is less mundane. The word "entrañas" necessarily suggests biological life, and the fact that they are "al descubierto" conjures up ideas of violence, trauma, and ultimately agonizing death. Baroja constructs a scene semantically distinct for the boys versus the reader: an aborted building project is textually construed as a mutilated body. Whether looking at it literally or figuratively, the opportunity to thrive and flourish is stunted, and the nation-building effort it tangentially suggests is crudely interrupted and in need of rejuvenation.

The power of the previous example lies in semantics, which distinguishes it from a second scene in which Manuel attends his first bullfight. Amidst the raucous and cheering audience filling the *plaza de toros,* Manuel realizes that the *corrida* is far from the artistic show he had expected to see. The slaying of one bull unsettles Manuel, but he resists his desire to flee until witnessing another disembowel a *picador*'s horse. The *picador* is unsaddled but quickly whisked away to safety. The horse, on the other hand, is not as fortunate: "[E]l caballo trató de levantarse, con todos los intestinos sangrientos fuera, pisó sus entrañas con los cascos y agitando las piernas cayó convulsivamente al suelo" (308). Manuel jumps up from his seat in horror before this gruesome scene while the

rabid crowd mocks his indignation with cruel laughter. Feeling ashamed and angered, he remains in the stands until the second bull meets its end, thinking to himself all along that the spectacle was "una asquerosidad repugnante y cobarde" (309). For the second time, Baroja employs the disconcerting language of splayed entrails, unavoidably linked to the color red and feelings of anguish, in order to demonstrate how cultural and socioeconomic stagnation hinders yet shapes modern Spanish society. He appeals to the inherently expressive character of landscape to begin this exposition and to link these two scenes to one another, revealing that the Spanish cultural panorama encompasses both current realities and long-held traditions. In order to combat uneven development and to progress intellectually as well as morally, the author seems to suggest, the Spanish nation needed to evaluate its substantially antiquated attitudes and resigned demeanors.

It is possible, then, to glean historical and cultural meaning from Baroja's use of red when it is associated with sinister skies, skeletal trees (and a subsequent murder), and bloody entrails. Baroja's unique application of the color red and its symbolic interpretation in the Spanish imagination, particularly within the context of the age-old bullfighting tradition, combine to elicit notions of destruction and inhumanity that have historical grounding. If landscape is a collection of symbolic forms that have meaning for a given nation and its people, then Baroja's literary landscapes suggest that continuous bloodshed, chronic indifference, and tolerated stagnation were some of the most problematic characteristics of Spain and Spanishness. Not surprisingly, Baroja found combatting widespread ignorance and backwardness the greatest challenge for Spanish society, as did a number of his contemporaries. If we also consider his aversion to antiquated traditions or schools of thought, his general disillusion with religious doctrine, and his frustration with failed national reforms, it becomes clear why he attempted to "asumir el papel de reformador" in his work (Ebanks 239).[7] While he does not offer a concrete solution to the *problema de España* in *La busca,* he offers a potent critique of modern Spanish society, and makes evident that Spanishness requires change.

As previously mentioned, Baroja renders two types of landscapes in *La busca,* the *found* and the *put.* The latter, which we can call the urban landscape, conveys the reality of urbanization and industrialization in Madrid and foregrounds man-made structures that interact with or usurp the *found* landscape (the sky or the land). In *Madrid*

[7] Literary critic César Barja's testimony about Baroja and his attitude toward modern Spanish society is enlightening: "Como ya sabemos, su actitud frente al problema de España no es solo la del espectador desinteresado, sino también la del crítico y el reformador. Su visión, y su sentimiento, son los comunes a los escritores de su generación, e igual es, poco más o menos, el cuadro que nos ofrece: una España y unos españoles viejos y envejecidos; una España tétrica, pobre e ignorante, víctima de la opresión religiosa y del rutinarismo tradicional; algo fijo, algo anquilosado, algo brutalmente duro, tenido con carmines de sangre. Unos españoles indolentes, sin sentido de sociabilidad ni de compasión, cruel y petulante. Herir la vanidad nacional y así espolear la paralítica voluntad de la raza y su reforma mental y moral es el fin a que apuntan todas estas novelas; y un capítulo de política y pedagogía regeneradoras es lo más esencial de su obra novelística" (qtd., Ebanks 239).

1900, Michael Ugarte reminds us that the modern city takes root with the rise of the factory as a guiding economic and social force (12). Fittingly, one of the most emblematic features of Baroja's urban landscape are factory smokestacks that jut up along the city skyline. He employs a particular vocabulary to craft these types of scenes, which is the case when Manuel observes Madrid from the Viaducto de Segovia and where in the distance "de una chimenea de ladrillo de la ronda de Segovia salía a borbotones un humazo oscuro que manchaba el cielo, limpio y transparente" (205). Baroja's register is consistent when he describes a view south-west of the city center:

> [D]estacábanse muy cerca, debajo de San Francisco el Grande, los rojos depósitos de la fábrica del gas, con sus altos soportes, entre escombreras negruzcas; del centro de la ciudad brotaban torrecillas de poca altura y chimeneas que vomitaban, en borbotones negros, columnas de humo inmovilizadas en el aire tranquilo. A un lado se erguía el Observatorio, sobre un cerrillo, centelleando el sol en sus ventanas; al otro, el Guadarrama, azul con sus crestas blancas, se recortaba en el cielo limpio y transparente, surcado por nubes rojas. (212)

Here, *put* and *found* landscapes merge. The urban scene occupies the fore- and middle-grounds (the gas factory, the dumpsites, and the city center) while nature occupies the background (the sky, and the far-off Guadarrama mountains). The sky, though scored by red clouds, is clean and transparent in the distance, which contrasts with the plumes of black smoke that hang stagnant in the otherwise tranquil air around the factory. In a way, Baroja's urban landscape mimics a *found* one, where the chimneys resemble trees and the smog they launch into the air simulate clouds. Clearly, the black smoke represents a visible marker of industrialization, but the urban smog along with the reality of dismal working conditions for factory workers neutralizes or at the very least dilutes the implied socioeconomic progress. It is well-documented that Madrid faced many setbacks and complications as it grew into a metropolis. Urban modernization promised advancement, but the economy could not sustain the demographic increase that accompanied it, and when city planning became a political question in the mid-nineteenth century, it led to social segregation and heightened tensions between classes. In 1860, for example, city engineer Carlos María de Castro proposed the *Ensanche de Madrid* to address the city's inability to accommodate its rapid growth. This project intended to triple the size of the urban center and establish a more organized and sanitary Madrid. However, instead of producing an orderly and clean modern society, the wildly expensive *Ensanche* segregated the population within the newly created extensions. The middle to upper class populations concentrated in the north, while lower class and poorer residents gravitated to the south and outlying areas where poverty, hunger, and filth ravaged its residents (Parsons 35).

The modernization of the Spanish city in its initial phases, therefore, was paradoxical in essence. Manuel, one of the poor who occupies the undesirable margins of the capital, lives and feels this paradox: "Al paso de las nubes la llanura cambiaba de color; era sucesivamente morada, plomiza, amarilla, de cobre; la carretera de Extremadura trazaba una línea quebrada, con sus dos filas de casas grises y sucias. Aquel severo, aquel triste paisaje de los alrededores madrileños con su hosquedad torva y fría le llegaba a Manuel al alma" (186). Manuel looks out over Madrid's countryside to a plain that changes color as the clouds pass by. In this countryside, a highway appears sketched through the land, and it is flanked by dark, dirty, and crumbling houses. The scene suggests that modern development has literally paved its way through the natural setting, fixed in ironic contrast between two lines of dilapidated shacks. The rows of houses Manuel observes externalize his repeated battles with poverty and decadence amidst the modernizing environment. Just as miserable structure after miserable structure is perceived on the horizon, we get the sense that there is no end in sight for Manuel's own suffering. The taint of urbanization infiltrates all aspects of the scene, even the color. The unnatural hues suggest pollution in a practical sense, yet they also speak to the symbolic melancholy that touches Manuel's soul. Baroja communicates in this landscape the danger and hypocrisy that urbanization and industrialization have stitched into the fabric of modern life in Madrid.

Lily Litvak suggests that in *La busca*, "Manuel siempre contempla la ciudad desde la distancia como si fuese remota e inaccesible fortaleza" (*Transformación* 91). Alan Hoyle echoes this view when he suggests that in the novel, "the impression of the city [appears] as an impregnable fortress for those it excludes" (189). It is true that Manuel's attempts to integrate meaningfully into city life are systematically frustrated. For instance, his mischief bars him from living under his once guardian Doña Casiana's roof, and he is unable to hold down any one job for an extended period of time. Ultimately, he prefers life on the margin among the *golfos* or with Señor Custodio, the rag picker he befriends toward the end of the book. What Litvak and Hoyle overlook is that this impenetrability applies not only to the city center, but also to certain peripheral spaces, such as the San Isidro Cemetery, which Baroja mentions more than once by name in the novel. Two factors make this an impenetrable area: the distance that separates Manuel from the cemetery as observed object, and the physical wall that surrounds it and prevents passage. Including this sacred and historically significant locale as part of the urban landscape, allows Baroja not only to provide insight into Manuel's experience of modern Madrid, but also shows how religion and its cultural matrix contribute to the definition of a national Spanish identity.

One of Baroja's most picturesque landscapes in the novel includes a vision of San Isidro Cemetery. The quote is lengthy, but worth considering in its entirety:

> Cuando llegó Manuel frente a la escalera de la calle del Aguila, anochecía. Se sentó a descansar un rato en el Campillo de Gil Imón.

> Veíase desde allá arriba el campo amarillento, cada vez más sombrío con la proximidad de la noche, y las chimeneas y las casas, perfiladas con dureza en el horizonte. El cielo azul y verde se inyectaba de rojo a ras de tierra, se oscurecía y tomaba colores siniestros, rojos cobrizos, rojos de púpura.
>
> Asomaban por encima de las tapias las torrecitas y cipreses del cementerio de San Isidro; una cúpula redonda se destacaba recortada en el aire; en su remate se erguía un angelote, con las alas desplegadas, como presto para levantar el vuelo sobre el fondo incendiado y sangriento de la tarde.
>
> Por encima de las nubes estratificadas del crepúsculo brillaba una pálida estrella en una gran franja verde, y en el vago horizonte, animado por la última palpitación del día, se divisaban, inciertos, montes lejanos. (85-86)

Whenever Manuel is looking out over Madrid and its outlying areas, Baroja uses linguistic markers to imply a sense of great distance between observer and object; this is the first factor of the San Isidro Cemetery's impenetrability. In the previous quote, Manuel gazes out across the surrounding plains toward the cemetery "desde allá arriba" which positions him at an elevated distance away from the cemetery. Other such designations include, "desde allá," "a lo lejos," "muy a lo lejos," "se veía Madrid en alto," which emphasize Manuel's separation and alienation from these spaces (185/222, 131/226/311, 111, 211). It is difficult to say whether or not Manuel's isolation is ever truly remedied. Even in the company of friends, *golfos,* rag pickers, family, co-workers, rich or poor people, he never fully integrates into any one particular group. His nomadic lifestyle also complicates his situation for he is constantly on the move: at times working a steady job, at others hustling the streets; at times sleeping in a bed, at others in a cave; at times striving to be a good person, at others resigning to be a ruffian. Manuel's indeterminate status recalls Benjamin's modern *flâneur,* who "stands on the threshold – of the metropolis as of the middle class. Neither has him in its power yet. In neither is he at home. He seeks refuge in the crowd" (40). Although less financially stable and artistic than Benjamin's *flâneur,* Manuel likewise finds himself at home nowhere and everywhere: he represents a threshold figure on the verge of everything and of nothing. In his *flânerie*, Manuel's already tentative sense of identity dissolves in the homogeneous crowd. When he observes the landscape, however, when alone and at rest, the reader gains insight into his emotional turmoil. In contemplating the land, the character's interiority and individuality are revealed.

Due to the irredeemable distance that separates Manuel and the San Isidro Cemetery, his vision of it is compromised. He sees the towers of mausoleums, cypress trees, a cupula, and a large angel sculpture, but they are partially obstructed by its enclosing stone walls, which constitute a physical and impassable barrier. This marks the

second factor of the cemetery's impenetrability. Should Manuel traverse the distance between him and it, his chances of gaining passage into the cemetery are still unlikely since the "tapias" he can make out are not just any modest garden walls. From Manuel's position at the Campillo de Gil Imón to the cemetery there is a distance of almost two kilometers, meaning that the walls would have had to have been quite tall for him to see them, and they were. An aerial photograph from 1928 captures a bird's eye view of the cemetery, a semicircle shaped area enclosed by clearly discernable, fortress-like walls.[8] The cemetery appears enormous, dwarfing other smaller gravesites and patios that lie adjacent to it, and within its walls one can discern the forest of "cipreses negros" that Manuel sees rising up amidst the tombs and mausoleums in the novel (65). Baroja's brief description of the cemetery reinforces the sense of divide between inside and outside. Manuel looks on but is unable to see past its imposing walls, a barrier that protects as much as it rejects. Like the marble angel that rises up behind the cemetery walls, poised for flight but incapable of breaking free from the stone that binds it to the sacred ground, Manuel cannot escape his own reality, tied to his city and relegated to its periphery.

History confirms the physical and conceptual impenetrability that the cemetery walls represent for Manuel in *La busca*. In 1900, Spanish cartographer Facundo Cañada López completed his famous *Plano de Madrid y pueblos colindantes al empezar el siglo XX,* a comprehensive map of Madrid's urban landscape and its environs.[9] He charted the city's streets, buildings, monuments, plazas, gardens, land formations and all other defining features including the San Isidro Cemetery, which appears delineated by thick, red borders. Cañada's map establishes and enforces real life boundaries by transferring them to the symbolic realm of the plan where they will live on in perpetuity regardless of the actual condition of the land at any given moment. The legal, state-recognized status of the map gives power to the meaningless, yet meaning-full, red lines that represent the San Isidro Cemetery's stone walls; imposing structure becomes imposing concept when placed on the map. In *Mapping the Social Body*, Collin McKinney claims that the art and practice of map-making divides spaces in such a way that reflects the social anxieties of the cartographer and his or her respective class: "Maps are never value-free but always value-laden images, participating actively in the construction of our social reality rather than passively reflecting landscapes […] Maps name, delineate boundaries, locate people and places, in some cases they indicate a course of action. In short, maps function in/on society as a form of power-knowledge" (16). Cañada's map reflects the desire to maintain separation between the cemetery's sacred interior and the city's profane exterior.

---

[8] Find this photograph by Walter Mittelholzer in digital format in ETHzürich's online library entitled "E-Pics" via the following link: http://doi.org/10.3932/ethz-a-000249012

[9] Find this map in digital format in DIGITAL.CSIC's collection of documents entitled "Plano de Madrid de 'Facundo Cañada López' de 1900" via the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10261/28971

María Isabel Gae reveals that the San Isidro Cemetery, the oldest in the city, was of "un innegable valor artístico y arquitectónico dado que fue el camposanto escogido por la aristocracia madrileña" (141). The cemetery's aristocratic tradition diverges from the inclusive nature of the religious beliefs upon and around which it was built. Even in death, the great equalizer of all human existence, Madrid's class divisions remained intact.[10] This type of hypocrisy fueled Baroja's utter disdain for religion. The author condemned what he perceived as religion's sociopolitical inconsistencies throughout history as well as the discord between its perceived good intentions and its actual corrupt or ineffective practices. For him, falsity governed the Church. He saw it as an institution that ruled by enlisting the fear of God in the people, and imposed religious doctrine that was ultimately responsible for the decline of modern morality. In short, Baroja's "negación [de la religión] es absoluta y rotunda" (Ebanks 197). Typical of the decadence Baroja identified in the Church was the Romería de San Isidro which, in his time, had strayed far from its initial spiritual objectives. Long before the turn of the century, secular behavior had infiltrated the pilgrimage's once purely sacred mission to celebrate the miraculous compassion and generosity of San Isidro, the patron saint of Madrid. On May fifteenth of each year, throngs of people migrated from the city center to the Pradera de San Isidro, a park next to the cemetery where celebrants partook in lively festivities, played carnival games, ate, drank, danced, and enjoyed a view of the city that they were otherwise unable to experience. In exchange for pious worship, the pilgrimage gained a reputation for raucous celebration.[11]

In *La busca,* Baroja does not offer an account of the pilgrimage itself, but does include a scene that unfolds just outside the San Isidro Park. On the Camino alto de San Isidro is "la Doctrina," a small building with fenced in patio that Baroja describes as a "conclave de mendigos," where the needy gather regularly in the hopes of receiving handouts for reciting religious doctrine. Manuel accompanies his acquaintance Roberto to "la Doctrina," and from a clearing across the street the two observe a group of *marquesas* begin to lead a ragged assembly of beggars in prayer. Other onlookers explain how the *marquesas* distribute *sábanas* (alter cloths) or shirts on occasion to these beggars who, instead of taking them home, often sell them immediately upon leaving "la Doctrina" to buyers strategically stationed outside. There are also individuals who

[10] Carlos Saguar Quer explains the evolution of the European cemetery in the nineteenth century including the appearance and subsequent popularity of the mausoleum among aristocratic families in Madrid: "A lo largo de los años 50 y 60 fueron levantándose no pocos panteones en los cementerios de Madrid, concentrándose especialmente en el de la Sacramental de San Isidro que venía perfilándose como el preferido por la aristocracia de la capital" (262). The aristocracy essentially privatized the San Isidro Cemetery to ensure a physical and social boundary between them and poorer residents.

[11] Antonio Ribot y Fonseré describes the exuberance that overcomes Madrid's residents on the day of the pilgrimage and suggests that the celebration is an integral part to the city's history: "[S]in la romería de San Isidro, Madrid no se concibe, no tiene siquiera razon [sic] de ser; Madrid se ha poblado exclusivamente para asistir á la romería de San Isidro. Los padres procuran tener hijos para tener, cuando ellos mueran, quien los represente el día 15 de mayo en la célebre fiesta (158).

register for more than one prayer section so as to maximize their alms intake. Clearly, this ritual operates under a paradigm of charity, but ultimately it is farcical in nature. As soon as the service ends, the mendicants chaotically rush out of the patio and back toward the city center in packs, including a group of "viejas" who "vociferaban y sentían la necesidad de insultar a las señoras de la Doctrina, como si instintivamente adivinasen lo inútil de un simulacro de caridad que no remediaba nada" (106). The most indigent and unfortunate willfully feign faith in order to receive, exploit, and curse what they recognize is a mere simulation of charity. The conclusion of this scene emulates Baroja's disillusionment with religion, an institution unable to serve the unique needs and attitudes of Madrid's citizens.

During the "Doctrina" scene Manuel, watching from a point removed from the action, lays back on the grass to observe his surroundings: "Manuel se tendió de espaldas en el suelo. Desde allá surgía Madrid, muy llano, bajo el horizonte gris, por entre la gasa del aire polvoriento. El cauce ancho del Manzanares, de color de ocre, aparecía surcado por alguno que otro hilillo de agua negra. El Guadarrama destacaba de un modo confuso la línea de sus crestas en el aire empañado" (104). Here, all the landscape elements previously discussed are in concert: color, the urban landscape with its contaminated air, two natural features of national significance for Spain (the Sierra de Guadarrama and the Manzanares River), and the distance that is perpetually posited between Manuel and the observed world into which he cannot fully integrate.[12] This is a composite representation of Madrid's early twentieth-century landscape, the *found* together with the *put,* which represent its history, traditions, and socio-cultural realities. Baroja's literary rendition communicates the interior realities of Manuel as a visual one could not. His position in the socio-cultural matrix of the city is as confused as the peaks of the Sierra de Guadarrama appear in the distance, and Spain's future is likewise as uncertain. Literary landscape again bores into the psychological dimension of Manuel's character and acts as a means to express cultural meaning.

Baroja unabashedly offers his opinions on social morality in the pages of *La busca.* "La moral de la sociedad," says the author, "me ha turbado y desequilibrado. Por eso la odio cordialmente y le devuelvo todo el veneno de que dispongo" (qtd., Ebanks 188). The moral and urban panoramas he portrays in the novel are replete with poverty, misery, religious hypocrisy, and institutional ineptitude. He suggests a national identity built on antiquated traditions and anchored in the distant past that perpetuated out-of-

[12] Giner describes the Sierra de Guadarrama and the surrounding plains as follows: "En ambos se revela una fuerza interior tan robusta, una grandeza tan severa, aun en sus sitios más pintorescos y risueños, una nobleza, una dignidad, un señorío, como los que se advierten en el Greco o Velázquez, los dos pintores que mejor representan este carácter y modo de ser poético de la que pudiera llamarse espina dorsal de España." (35) He interprets moral qualities in the landscape (interior strength, grandeur, nobility, dignity, grace) that the ILE would adopt as distinctive traits of the Spanish nation (Ortega Cantero 35).

date morals and values incompatible with the rapidly changing world. To recover from its decline, Spain had no choice but to combat its economic and intellectual stagnation and build its own vibrant and prosperous modern nation. Baroja's complex landscapes allow the reader to reflect on these issues by drawing a connection between observer (self) and object (land). Much like the landscape, Spanishness can be shaped and improved as well. *La busca* concludes as Manuel contemplates day break over the city center: "Aquella transición del bullicio febril de la noche a la actividad serena y tranquila de la mañana le hizo pensar a Manuel largamente […] Y pensaba también que él debía ser de éstos, de los que trabajan al sol, no de los que buscan el placer en la sombra" (321). In this final moment of rest and transition, which coincides with the last picturesque description of the city, Manuel begins to *think*. For Baroja, the ability to think independently and critically was a crucial step toward progressive and regenerative change for the Spanish nation. While the author provides the reader with no concrete solution to the current state of affairs, he does not extinguish hope.

WORKS CITED

Adler, Tracy L. "Seeing Red: The Project." *Seeing Red: On Nonobjective Painting and Color Theory*. Eds. Michael Fehr and Sanford Wurmfeld. Cologne: Salon Verlag. 2004. 13. Print.

Baroja, Pío. *Desde la última vuelta del camino: Memorias.* Barcelona: Editorial Planeta. 1970. Print.

---. La busca. Madrid: R. Caro Raggio. 1917. Print.

Barrell, John. *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730-1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 1980. Print.

Benjamin, Walter. "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century." *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire.* Ed. Michael W. Jennings. Trans. Howard Eiland, Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livingston, and Harry Zohn. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of the Harvard UP. 2006. 30-45. Print.

Bermúdez-Cañete, Federico. "Notas sobre el paisaje en Baroja." *Estudios sobre literatura y arte dedicados al profesor Emilio Orozco Díaz* Vol. I. Eds. Nicolás Marín and Agustín de la Granja. Granada: Universidad de Granada. 1979. Print.

Cañada López, Facundo. *Plano de Madrid de 'Facundo Cañada López' de 1900*. 1900. DIGITAL.CSIC, Madrid. *DIGITAL.CSIC*, http://hdl.handle.net/10261/28971. Accessed October 2017.

Clark, Kenneth. *Landscape into Art*. New York: Harper and Row, 1949. Print.

Darwin, Charles. *On the Origin of Species*. New York: Bantam Classics. 1999. Print.

Ebanks, Gerardo. *La España de Baroja*. Madrid: Ediciones cultura hispánica. 1974. Print.

Galton, Francis. *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*. Burlington: Ostara Publications. 2012. Print.

Gea, María Isabel. *Diccionario enciclopédico de Madrid*. Madrid: Ediciones La Librería. 2002. Print.

Giner de los Ríos, Francisco. "Paisaje." *Francisco Giner de los Ríos: Obras selectas*. Ed. Isabel Pérez-Villanueva Tovar. Madrid: Espasa. 2004. Print.

Hoyle, Alan. "The Function of Landscape in Baroja's La lucha por la vida." *Spain's 1898 Crisis: Regeneration, Modernism, Post-colonialism*. Eds. Joseph Harrison and Alan Hoyle. Manchester: Manchester UP. 2000. 181-194. Print.

Jurkevich, Gayana. *In Pursuit of the Natural Sign: Azorín and the Poetics of Ekphrasis*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1999. Print.

Litvak, Lily. *A Dream of Arcadia: Anti-Industrialism in Spanish Literature, 1895-1905*. Austin: University of Texas Press. 2014. Print.

---. *Transformación industrial y literatura en España (1895-1905)*. Madrid: Taurus. 1980. Print.

McKinney, Collin. *Mapping the Social Body: Urbanization, the Gaze, and the Novels of Galdós*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. Print.

Mitchell, W.J.T. (ed.) *Landscape and Power*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 2002. Print.

Mittelholzer, Walter. *Madrid (Friedhof) aus 300 m Höhe*. 1928. ETHzürich, Zürich. *E-Pics,* http://doi.org/10.3932/ethz-a-000249012. Accessed October 2017.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. Nietzsche: *'On the Genealogy of Morality' and other Writings*. Ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson. Trans. Carol Diethe. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 2017. Print.

Ortega Cantero, Nicolás. "Paisaje e identidad. La visión de Castilla como paisaje nacional (1876-1936)." *Boletín de la A.G.E.* 51 (2009): 25-49. Print.

Parsons, Deborah L. *A Cultural History of Madrid: Modernism and the Urban Spectacle*. Oxford: New York. 2003. Print.

Pérez-Villanueva Tovar, Isabel ed. *Francisco Giner de los Ríos: Obras selectas*. Madrid: Espasa. 2004. Print.

Ribot y Fonseré, Antonio. "La Romería de San Isidro." *El museo universal* 8 (1864): 158-159. Print.

Saguar Quer, Carlos. "Arquitectura del siglo XX en la Sacramental de San Isidro." *Anales de la Historia del Arte* 4 (1994): 261-273. Web.

Salter, Christopher L. and William J. Lloyd. "Landscape in Literature." *Resource Papers for College Geography* 76.3 (1977): 1-30. Print.

Ugarte, Michael. Madrid 1900: *The Capital as Cradle of Literature and Culture*. University Part: The Pennsylvania State UP. 1996. Print.