THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE NOVEL IN PIO BAROJA

DISSERTATION

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The purpose of this study is to present a systematic exposition of the aspects of Pío Baroja's thought which relate to his novelistic art, and to show the results of these theories in his novelistic practice. In order to make the investigation reasonably concise, certain limitations have been observed. No attempt is made here to add anything to the polemic over the existence or the non-existence of the generation of 1898. The literature on this topic is already extensive, opinions are divided, and to enter into the discussion would not serve the ends of the present investigation. Neither has it been thought advisable to include a stylistic analysis of Baroja's work in this study, even though such an analysis would be highly desirable. To have done so would have meant expanding the dissertation to unmanageable proportions, and every work of this kind must recognize the need for reasonable restrictions of scope.

Pío Baroja has been the object of a large number of books and articles over the last half-century, but technical studies based on more than one or two works are few.
Several biographies are in existence, the most recent of which are Pío Baroja en su rincón, by Miguel Pérez Ferrero, and Retrato de Pío Baroja, by Luis Granje. Both of these books are valuable for the information they contain on Baroja the man, his ideas and his personality, but they touch only incidentally on his novels. Recently another book has appeared, Baroja y su máscara, by Marino Gómez-Santos, which is a book of conversations between Baroja and the author. Closer to a literary estimate of Baroja is Ramón Sender's essay in Unamuno, Valle Inclán, Baroja y Santayana, although the study is mainly devoted to the contradictions in Baroja's thought and personality.

Several important studies on Baroja have appeared over the years in the periodical literature, apart from the numerous reviews and articles in newspapers and magazines. One of the earliest detailed studies was made by H. Peseux-Richard in 1910. This article is highly critical of Baroja's method, and of course is based only on the relatively small number of novels that Baroja had

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1Santiago de Chile, 1940.
2Barcelona, 1953.
3Barcelona, 1956.
4Mexico, 1955.
published up to that year. Of the early criticisms of Baroja's work in Spain, that of Azorín is the most consistently favorable, almost adulatory in fact, particularly in the matter of style. All of Azorín's essays dealing with Baroja have now been collected in one place under the title of "Ante Baroja." Ortega y Gasset is more critical than Azorín, but praises Baroja for his sincerity and lack of rhetoric. In later years, César Barja has devoted many pages to Baroja in his book Libros y autores contemporáneos, but the greater number of them deal with Baroja's ideology rather than with his technique. Ideology is also the concern of the studies on Baroja by Helmut Demuth and John T. Reid. Arthur L. Owen has also published a brief study on Baroja's ideas.

More closely related to the present investigation

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6 They may be consulted in his Obras completas, Madrid, 1947, VIII, 139-324.

7 "Ideas sobre Pío Baroja" and "Una primera vista sobre Baroja," in Obras completas, Madrid, 1946, II, 67-100 and 101-123.

8 New York, 1935.


The studies of Federico Sánchez, Rosa Seeleman, and D. L. Shaw present Baroja's theory of the novel as extracted from the Prologue to *La nave de los locos* and applies it to the *Memorias de un hombre de acción*, somewhat the reverse of the procedure followed in the present analysis, which excludes the *Memorias*, for reasons stated later. Seeleman deals with the treatment of landscape in all members of the generation of 1898, while Shaw makes a comparison of Baroja's and Ortega's theories of art. To the best of my knowledge, no detailed study is in existence which exactly parallels the present investigation. It has seemed, therefore, justifiable and even desirable to carry out such a study, which will shed some new light on Baroja's novelistic technique.

The bibliography lists only those books and articles which have been consulted in the course of the preparation of this dissertation. It has not been deemed necessary to include all the reviews and minor articles on Baroja which have appeared in newspapers and magazines. Those desiring a more complete bibliography may consult C. E.


14 "A Reply to Deshumanización—Baroja on the Art of the Novel." *Hispanic Review*, XXV (1957), 105-111.
Anibal's edition of Paradox, rev (New York, 1937); José A. Balseiro, Blasco Ibáñez, Unamuno, Valle-Inclán, Baroja (Chapel Hill, 1949); César Barja, Libros y autores contemporáneos; or Luis Granjel, Retrato de Pío Baroja, all of which contain fairly extensive bibliographies.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Professor José Manuel Blecua of Zaragoza for first suggesting that I undertake a study of Pío Baroja's novelistic art. I wish to express my gratitude also to Professor Carlos Blanco of the Ohio State University for valuable aid and advice in the early stages of my investigations. Particular thanks are due to Professor Bruce W. Wardropper, also of the Ohio State University, without whose assistance and encouragement the work could not have been brought to a successful conclusion. It will of course be understood that I alone am responsible for the shortcomings and weaknesses of the dissertation, as well as for any errors found in the text.
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CHAPTER I

IDEOLOGY

In a study dealing with a writer's theoretical views concerning his craft, some reference must be made to his general ideology, so that his concepts may be seen in context. Therefore, the initial chapter of the present investigation will be devoted to an exposition of Pío Baroja's views on the primary problems of human existence.

Those interested in a more detailed study of Baroja's ideology may consult Helmut Demuth's book, Pío Baroja: das Weltbild in seinen Werken,1 of which Baroja has included a summary in his Memorias,2 or John T. Reid, Modern Spain and Liberalism.3

Baroja's ideas will be considered in the following order: the philosophical, the political, and the social. His views on arts and letters will be given more extended treatment in subsequent chapters.

1Bonn, 1937.

2El escritor según él y según los críticos, in his Obras completas, 8 vols., Madrid, 1946, VII, 484-492. In the present study all references to Baroja's writings except the Páginas escogidas are to this definitive edition of his works, which will be cited simply as Obras, with the volume and page number following.

3Stanford, 1937.
I. PHILOSOPHY

In religion, Baroja is a thoroughgoing agnostic. He tells us so in so many words, and a study of his theoretical writings reveals that his beliefs on this score are constant from youth to old age. (This is true of most of Baroja's ideas. The interested reader may compare El tablado de Arlequín, published in 1904, with the Memorias, published forty years later, for confirmation of the constancy of his views.) Although he tells us that metaphysics attracts him, and that art is a child's game compared to philosophy, he finds that the riddle of human life is essentially insoluble. Of course Baroja, in his youth, debated these questions along with everyone else, but he abandoned them later because he concluded that they were not capable of solution through human reason.

The essence of Baroja's beliefs regarding the existence of a Supreme Being may be summed up in a phrase of Heraclitus which Baroja quotes as representing his own

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4Artículos, Obras, V, 1121, and El escritor según él y según los críticos, Obras, VII, 483.
5Juventud, egolatría, Obras, V, 185.
6Las horas solitarias, Obras, V, 293.
7La caverna del humorismo, Obras, V, 477.
8El escritor según él y según los críticos, Obras, VII, 443.
view exactly: "Los dioses pueden existir; los dioses pueden no existir; lo que es evidentemente que, si existen, no se ocupan de nosotros."9

It does not follow from the above that Baroja's view of life is entirely negative. It is true that, from the human standpoint, there is apparently no purpose in Nature. Beauty exists in Nature, but so do floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, poisonous snakes, and microbes. The so-called wisdom of Nature is therefore an illusion.10 Nevertheless, Baroja feels that nothing is to be gained by falling into a purposeless despair. He rejects the extreme pessimism of philosophers like Kierkegaard, because he sees no point in cultivating anguish and despair systematically, almost as ends in themselves.11 Life in itself is neither good nor bad, but necessary, like Nature.12 Baroja's philosophic position is thus between optimism and pessimism, although not precisely midway between those two extremes. He denies being a "systematic pessimist," but readily admits that he inclines more toward pessimism than toward optimism. It is impossible to measure life

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9Artículos, Obras, V, 1121.
10Ibid., p. 1291.
11Las horas solitarias, Obras, V, 237-238.
12Juventud, egolatria, Obras, V, 165.
in an absolute sense; the value of the different things which make up human life must be sought within life's relativity and limitations. It does not seem to Baroja that life has any purpose outside of itself; for when we consider the immensity of the cosmos, we have no more right to feel optimistic about our situation than ants would have if they considered themselves with regard to the whole earth. Even so, he does not consider himself an unhappy pessimist, but rather "un pesimista estoico y, a veces, jovial."

This is Baroja's picture of the universe. One may well ask whether there is anything in life in which a man may place his faith. To this Baroja's answer is: in science. To Baroja, science represents the one great hope of mankind. He has phrased his thought so well on this subject that it bears direct quotation:

La ciencia es la construcción sólida de la Humanidad, la única bienhechora; ella, poco a poco, a medida que avanza, nos va dando el pan del cuerpo y del espíritu, y va alejando de nuestro lado las enfermedades y la muerte.

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13 La caverna del humorismo, Obras, V, 463.
14 El escritor según él y según los críticos, Obras, VII, 483.
15 Ibid.
The scientist, although he knows that ultimate reality must forever remain a mystery, nevertheless continues his onward march. He is, in Baroja's words, the hero of the modern tragedy.  

It is not to be assumed from the foregoing that Baroja is blind to the limitations of science. He does see civilization as, in essence, science, and sees in science the only possibility for the betterment of man. The hope for an improvement in the human condition lies in science; but whether or not science will be utilized to bring about this improvement, we do not know.

The reasons for this qualification concerning the efficacy of science are to be found in the nature of man. Baroja finds no justification for the belief that man is essentially good, nor does he have faith in his perfectibility. Taken collectively, mankind behaves like a wolf toward his own species. It would be hard to improve on Baroja's own words in summing up his estimate of human nature:

El hombre sigue siendo el mismo animal egoísta, salvaje y cobardé, que en épocas primitivas disfraza la crueldad con el nombre de valor y la cobardía con el de prudencia. Así ha sido siempre

17 *La caverna del humorismo*, Obras, V, 477.
18 *Artículos*, Obras, V, 1118.
Looking at human beings individually, however, Baroja sees them as a mixture of good and bad. One or the other may predominate in a given person, but there is some good in even the worst men, and some fault in the best.20

Upon concluding this section on Baroja's personal philosophy of Man and Nature, it is just to mention some of the positive suggestions he makes for the individual conduct of life. He stresses the importance of being able to accept one's own limitations,21 the necessity of heeding instinct and the emotions in making sense out of life,22 and the pursuit of truth as a guiding principle, since without truth there can be neither science nor art, nor personal satisfaction.23

This personal philosophy will not satisfy everyone, but it satisfies Baroja. In one of his later articles he tells us that he will be content to be remembered as

19 Pequeños ensayos, Obras, V, 1007.
20 La caverna del humorismo, Obras, V, 475.
21 La formación psicológica de un escritor, Obras, V, 865.
22 Ibid., p. 869.
23 Ibid., p. 868.
a man who loved truth, hated hypocrisy and falsehood, and who was a Basque who dearly loved his country. 24

II. POLITICS

In the area of political theory, Baroja's ideas have undergone a certain evolution. Most of his thinking has crystallized by the time of the appearance of Juventud, egolatria (1917), and is fairly constant thereafter. Yet there are certain inconsistencies, a certain indecision, which seem to indicate that Baroja was never able to solve the problem of government to his entire satisfaction.

An outline of Baroja's political philosophy will be better understood, perhaps, if the constant elements are taken up first. Baroja is above all and always an individualist. As such, he is opposed to the State in all its forms. In a struggle between the Church and the State, however, he will be on the side of the State, at least until it is victorious over the Church, at which time he will again become an enemy of the State. 25 But he will always be on the side of liberty and tolerance, because it seems to him that without these, life would not be worth while. 26 He is therefore an enemy of totalitarianism

24 Artículos, Obras, V, 1313.
26 Artículos, Obras, V, 1124.
under any guise, whether that of Fascism or Communism. He speaks out against both of these systems in no uncertain terms, condemning them equally as enemies of liberalism.27

All this does not mean that Baroja is a friend of democracy. It is true that in his youth he was a republican, but in his maturity he shows himself as distrustful of democracy as of Communism. He has no confidence in the masses. Good judgment and elevated thought, necessary for good government, are rare characteristics, not given to all men. Politicians, seeking applause and votes, will do whatever procures their favor with the multitudes, who, in turn, desire only the gratification of their appetites.28

The foregoing elements of Baroja's political thought are clear and constant. Now, however, we must consider an aspect of his thought that is not so clear: his attitude toward anarchism. It naturally follows from his individualism that he would favor the form of government which

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28These thoughts are expressed in works as far apart in time as Juventud, egolatria, Obras, V, 215 (first published in 1917), and El escritor según él y según los críticos, Obras, VII, 484 (published in 1944).
involved the least regimentation; yet his pessimistic view of human nature would not permit him to believe that men would govern themselves wisely if simply left to their own devices. He thus finds himself on the well-known horns of a dilemma, and he is never able to solve this difficulty in a satisfactory manner. For this reason his espousal of anarchism is partial and contradictory.

In the beginning, he tells us, his anarchism was simply a negative doctrine, which could be summed up in the phrases "no creer, no afirmar." He accepted no program of anarchism, and in 1934 he defines his anarchism as "una crítica de la vida social y política, un liberalismo extremo." Ten years later, he denies having been a "theoretical anarchist." This could not be, he explains, since a theoretical anarchist is an incurable optimist, one who believes that man is naturally good, and that all restrictions by laws are prejudicial; whereas he, Baroja, does not believe in any of this, but on the contrary, believes that man is a cruel, treacherous, and envious animal, full of egotism and vanity. He continues in this vein, heap.
and concludes with the remarkable statement that he is in favor of a form of government quite opposed to anarchism. This ideal would consist of no political dogma, or at least a minimum of it, and in its place criticism, free inquiry, experience, and dictatorship.\(^\text{32}\) This is one of the few passages in Baroja in which his thought is simply not clear. He does not explain what he means by the word *experiencia*, nor does he offer any clarification of the term *dictadura*. It is certainly not easy to see how criticism, free inquiry, and dictatorship can exist together. Here it is necessary to keep in mind that Baroja's brand of individualism would require some sort of safeguard from the pressure of the masses toward conformity. To put it another way, the non-conformist must be protected in his rights against the majority, and Baroja evidently fears that this would not be possible in a democracy. This is the contradiction in the political philosophy of Baroja which was mentioned above. Perhaps the best solution would be simply not to ascribe much importance to the statement on dictatorship, since it was written during the Franco regime in Spain.

The only positive political creed to which Baroja seems willing to give his allegiance is that of Liberalism.\(^\text{33}\)

\(^{32}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{33}\text{But with qualifications. See John T. Reid, Modern Spain and Liberalism, Stanford, 1937.}\)
The difficulty here, nowadays, is one of definition, since this word has come to mean all things to all men. Baroja himself is rather vague about what he means by it. In 1917 he says that he is attracted by those elements of liberalism which destroy the past, but that its constructive program (universal suffrage, democracy, parliamentarianism) is of no value.\textsuperscript{34} Much later, in 1944, he writes that after his youth, he has felt "más monárquico que republicano," and that "el liberalismo ha producido una forma social aristocrática e inteligente."\textsuperscript{35} This formulation leaves much to be desired, but Baroja does not go beyond it. The facts of human nature make Utopia impossible, and we must be content with the second-best, some form of liberal monarchy with an aristocracy based on merit.

III. SOCIETY

Under this section we shall examine Baroja's views on women, the relationship between the sexes, marriage and the family, and the ideal society. It should be mentioned beforehand that Baroja is not the hermit that he has been thought to be by some. He tells us so explicitly. He is not fond of the solitary life, although he does like to have some time to himself during the

\textsuperscript{34}Juventud, egolatria, Obras, V, 215.
\textsuperscript{35}El escritor según él y según los críticos, Obras, VII, 484.
day, like almost everyone else. At the same time, he finds social life agreeable, and feels that it is necessary.36

Women, Baroja feels, constitute the most conservative element of society. Their behavior is largely instinctive, and those things which appear to them to have nothing to do with their biological function they look upon as useless and even dangerous. Their ideal is a cozy nest on a firm branch, for which is needed a stable society moving predictably in well-worn grooves. Speculative thought disturbs them, while routine comforts them. They have little literary or philosophic sense. For a man to be well thought-of by women, he must be young, strong, handsome, and of attractive appearance generally; everything else is merely secondary.37

The question of sex is taken up by Baroja in Juventud, egolatria, and goes far toward explaining his indictment of the society in which he lived. He calls the relationship between the sexes "la tragicomedia sexual," and speaks of it as containing the key to many problems of psychology. There is no doubt in his mind that sexuality is one of the mainsprings of temperament, and that its repercussions are felt in all the manifestations of the conscious being.

36Las horas solitarias, Obras, V, 229.
37Ibid., pp. 246-247.
Society, however, presents this dilemma: either submit to its formulas, or live outside them; and in either case instinct is violated. Speaking of his own case, Baroja tells us that if he had been able to live in accordance with his instincts between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, he would have been a tranquil man, perhaps a bit sensual, perhaps a bit cynical; but never angry and bitter. For this reason he hates the society he lives in, and he pours out this ill-will in his works.\(^{38}\)

Marriage does not provide a satisfactory answer to this problem. Baroja has both personal and theoretical objections to it. Personally, he feels that he has never earned enough money to be able to support a family in a manner that would allow all its members to live a full life; and that he has not been able to find a woman whose conversation he would enjoy.\(^{39}\)

In an article on the family written in 1935, Baroja advances theoretical arguments to show why the family as an institution is in a state of decay. The reasons are biological and social. Biologically speaking, there is no harmony between two people, even between a man and a woman, unless one of them sacrifices either himself

\(^{38}\)Juventud, egolatria, Obras, V, 170-171.

\(^{39}\)Las horas solitarias, Obras, V, 247.
or the other person. The family becomes a conflict of forces, and the most powerful personality dominates it, whether this personality is possessed by the father, the mother, or one of the children. Socially, the family is in decline because of the passing of primogeniture, the increase in the culture of women, the mobility of the family, the difficulty of procuring servants, the institution of divorce, the migration to the cities, and the increasing number of women who work outside the home.\textsuperscript{40}

The social ideal of Baroja is admirably summed up in one brief paragraph well worth quoting:

\begin{quote}
No sé si yo tengo un ideal meridional o nórtico; pero el mío es la aspiración al trabajo, a la pulcritud en las relaciones humanas, a la vida sencilla y a conseguir que el hombre pueda desarrollarse con serenidad y con el máximo de libertad, de justicia, de cultura y de benevolencia.\textsuperscript{41}
\end{quote}

Baroja’s personal philosophy, briefly outlined in this chapter, necessarily conditions his approach to the novel. As a pessimist, he will not fill his books with sweetness and light. We may expect that his devotion to truth will lead him to present life as he sees it, without falsification. The dime novel hero, the paragon of virtue, will be absent. His characters will more likely be a

\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Artículos}, \textit{Obras}, V, 1292.

\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Rapsodias}, \textit{Obras}, V, 912.
mixture of good and bad, with the bad perhaps predominant. Since he does not see life as pre-ordained, with a definite purpose, Fate will not usurp the part played by Chance. The genuine tragic note will be absent; the gods are not angry, only indifferent. The reader need not seek doctrinaire solutions to political and social problems; but Baroja's social conscience will not allow him to ignore such problems. On the contrary; his strong feelings regarding them are sure to be expressed, but he will be more concerned with exposing evils than with suggesting sure-fire remedies.

His attitude toward women makes it seem unlikely that he will create great female characters; and he is not likely to slant his novels in favor of marriage, home, and the family.

In matters of technique, it is not difficult to see that an author who believes so strongly in a maximum of individual freedom will not feel excessively bound by conventional forms. A man who almost believes in anarchy is unlikely to imprison himself in the strict requirements of form demanded by literary genres other than the novel; his medium of expression must be the novel, and a novel of maximum freedom for the expression of the individuality of the author.
CHAPTER II

THEORY OF ART

In treating Baroja's theories concerning art in general, no attempt will be made to deal with the larger questions of esthetics considered as a branch of philosophy. Baroja is a professional writer, not a philosopher or esthetician, and we are interested here in his artistic criteria as a practicing man of letters.

I. THE FUNCTION OF ART

Should art serve social ends, or exist for its own sake? Baroja does not give an unequivocal answer to this question, but an examination of the development of his thought on the subject leads to a conclusion that does not exclude either purpose.

In one of his earlier works, Baroja speaks of art as an aspiration toward the ideal, an ideal which will always lie beyond the reality of man's attainments. It is a striving for perfection which will exist always, since human beings will never be perfect, although they may possibly improve.1 This is somewhat vague, but necessarily

1El tablado de Arlequín, Obras, V, 52.
so, when we recall that for Baroja there is no exactitude in esthetic values, as there is in mathematics. Around the year 1918, he seems to vacillate between two theories. First he leans toward the idea of art as mostly sensation, then toward the idea of art as having some purpose beyond itself. In this same year, 1918, he tells us that his view of art is "unilateral," that is, that one cannot be equally enthusiastic about Racine and Shakespeare, for example, because every work of art is a series of affirmations or negations which either do or do not fit in with one's own. He then makes the unequivocal assertion that "no hay arte sin intenciones sociales." This opinion appears again, slightly modified, in 1919, voiced by Guzzurtegui. He can conceive of literature and art as entertainment, he tells us, but not as pure esthetic ideals. It makes no sense to worship art as one would a flag or a religious symbol.

This idea of art at the service of man, and not the other way around, appears again in a later article. Here

2 Las horas solitarias, Obras, V, 232.
3 Ibid., p. 261.
4 Ibid., p. 360.
5 Ibid., p. 361.
6 La caverna del humorismo, Obras, V, 423.
Baroja states emphatically that those who think that art comes first and men second are holding to an absurd concept. Art, he says, lives only in and for man, while man lives not only for art but for many other things as well.  

By 1941, however, Baroja seems to feel some doubt about the whole matter again, for he tells us that he does not know whether works of art have an end superior to the artistic one. He believes not; they exist for a moment, they perpetuate this moment and give an amplification to life.  

If we seek a constant in this flux of Baroja's ideas on the function of art, we find it in the human element. Thus, art exists for man, whether it is social or individual. Although inclining at one time toward the belief that art should serve a social purpose, Baroja's central concern is that it should serve a human purpose, one which will serve to elevate human life, and perpetuate the aspiration toward the ideal.

II. THE ARTIST

To the question of objectivity versus subjectivity in the artist, Baroja gives an unqualified answer.

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7Artículos, Obras, V, 1105.
8El escritor según él y según los críticos, Obras, VII, 436.
Absolute objectivity is possible only in certain sciences; in philosophy and art, no objectivity is possible. Its creators and interpreters are all equally subjective. Man is the measure of all things. Each one sees what interests him, and only that. In the final analysis, all art, all philosophy, even those kinds which seem to be most objective and detached, are egotisms, narcissisms. This subjectivity is not a matter of choice but simply a condition of humanity. Our position is subjective whether we wish it or not, and this is so in criticism as well as in artistic production. Baroja reiterates these same sentiments fifteen years later, in 1934. This view of the artist forms the basis of Baroja’s theories concerning the presence of the author in the novel, which will be examined in the next chapter.

III. ARTISTIC PREFERENCES

In painting, Baroja prefers the old masters. Modern painting says nothing to him. His favorites are Velázquez, El Greco, Goya, Botticelli, and Mantegna, not

9 La caverna del humorismo, Obras, V, 401-402.

10 Ibid., p. 440.

11 La formación psicológica de un escritor, Obras, V, 864.
necessarily in that order. In the year 1931, he adds to these names those of Bosch, Breughel, and Patinir, and gives the last-named preference.

What is of interest to the present study are the reasons Baroja gives for his preferences. In speaking of Velázquez, he rates him higher than Michelangelo because the moralizing tendency is absent in Velázquez. His paintings are outside religion and politics, like mirrors of Nature which do not submit their images to any pre-conceived idea. On the contrary, they represent life with the same indifference with which the river reflects the trees on the bank. Baroja uses the same word, mirror, to describe the function of a novel. It is, he says, a mirror which travels along a road. This idea is fundamental to his conception of the novel, and will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

In speaking of the paintings of El Greco and Goya, Baroja praises them because they strike a responsive chord in him, and become like experiences that he has had in his inner self. He considers Botticelli and Mantegna

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12Juventud, egolatria, Obras, V, 176; and Nuevo tablado de Arlequín, Obras, V, 113.
13Intermedios, Obras, V, 705.
14Nuevo tablado de Arlequín, Obras, V, 114.
15Las horas solitarias, Obras, V, 361.
superior to Raphael and Michelangelo because of their greater simplicity. These reasons are of course subjective, but then Baroja never claims to be objective, as we have seen above.

IV. THE LITERARY ART

Under this heading fall various writings of Baroja which have to do with his theory of literature, but which do not deal specifically with the novel. Writings concerned either exclusively or primarily with the novel will be given extended treatment in the following chapter.

Classicism and Romanticism. According to Baroja, there are two principal ways of writing: the classical, or academic, manner, which consists of composing books based upon a reading of the Ancients, following certain established rules; and the anarchical, or romantic, manner, consisting of the imitation of Nature without consideration for rules. It is good that both kinds should exist, although he, Baroja, probably will not read the academic writers.

Classicism, writes Baroja in 1924, wishes to demonstrate that man does not change, that he is the same in

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16*Nuevo tablado de Arlequín*, Obras, V, 113.
17*Las horas solitarias*, Obras, V, 232.
all ages and in all countries. Romanticism, on the other hand, is based on the differences among men, and affirms the lack of understanding of a man of one era or country for a man of another. Baroja believes the Romantic view to be the truer one, for, as he tells us, he can conceive of a possible psychology for a man of the recent past, but the make-up of a man of the distant past escapes him.  

Writing in 1941, Baroja pens a definition of Classicism and Romanticism which is in essential agreement with what he wrote in 1918: Romanticism is the tendency to go beyond the known and the usual; Classicism, to live within the known and the experienced. The danger of Romanticism is extravagance or wildness; the danger of Classicism, the commonplace.  

Realism and Idealism. Baroja does not believe that a literary work must necessarily be either realistic or idealistic to be good. Something worth while can be produced with either tendency. He defends realism as something more than a slavish copy of reality. It has to be, because no artist can simply copy without putting something

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18 Diagaciones apasionadas, Obras, V, 499.
19 El escritor según sí y según los críticos, Obras, VII, 459.
20 Páginas escogidas, Madrid, 1918, p. 23.
of himself into his work. If Holbein, Durer, Titian, and El Greco were all to paint the same figure from the same model, attempting to make an exact copy, each would inevitably produce a work characterized by his own individuality.21

Humorismo. This word, which seems to lack an exact equivalent in English, is used by Baroja to designate a separate category, like Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism. To him it is one of the distinguishable attitudes toward life, comparable to optimism, pessimism, idealism, or cynicism. For example, he contrasts it with rhetoric (a favorite target for his darts), and likens the latter to a narrow set of pigeon-holes, with its traditional classifications, while humorismo is characterized as fluid, open to change. Rhetoric is rigid, humorismo is flexible, always evolving.22

Baroja does not interpret this definition to mean that in literature humorismo will permanently displace rhetoric. Rather, one or the other will be dominant, according to the ideas of the times.23

Humorismo in literature stems primarily from the

22Ibid., p. 418.
23Ibid.
temperament of the writer. In part, it is a product of disharmony and inadaptability; a person who fits perfectly into a particular groove in a particular society is not likely to have a humoristic viewpoint. Imagination and melancholy also play a part in the formation of humorismo, as does "un comienzo de desdoblamiento psicológico" which exists in all men. That is, the fact that a person's state of mind can undergo sudden changes, with a consequent shifting of values, is a constant source of humor. Closely related to this last cause if that of illness. There is no doubt, declares Baroja, that sickness has a profound effect on the spirit. After a prolonged (and presumably serious) illness, one looks at life differently, and its values seem to change.

External factors are sometimes present among the causes of humorismo. The humorist tends to appear in moments of crisis when the energies of action diminish, and reflection begins. Thus, Don Quijote appeared in Spain when the country no longer produced conquistadors, when the feverish activity of the sixteenth century was

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24 Ibid., p. 450.
25 Ibid., pp. 451-452.
26 Ibid., p. 461.
in decline, and disillusion was beginning to take its
place.  

Baroja mentions satire and pessimism as partaking of
some of the same qualities as humorismo, but he makes a
distinction. Satire makes more of an attempt to pass a
judgment than does humorismo; its point of view is moral,
while the point of view of humorismo is philosophical.  
Pessimism, on the other hand, may be classed among the
causes of humor. Pessimism, that is, which is not absolute
and systematic. A relative pessimism regarding the dif­
f erent activities of life is in general a sign of vitality,
a desire to criticize, and a manifestation of youth.  

**Criticism.** It has been noted above that Baroja feels
that complete objectivity in the artist is impossible.
The same applies to the critic. Reading is an interpre­
tation and in part a creation. The reader who is spir­
itually in tune with the author identifies himself with
him. Thus one who reads Cervantes and grasps his values
will be a Cervantes supporter; one who reads Rabelais and
understands and likes his allusions will be an enthusiast
of Rabelais, and so on. It is in vain that we speak of

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ourselves as being broad-minded, understanding, objective.\textsuperscript{30}

At bottom, every opinion, every thesis, is a defense of self, of one's good and bad qualities.\textsuperscript{31}

\textbf{Poetics.} Although Baroja never cared much for poetry, it has been thought advisable to include here some of his remarks on the poetic art as part of his general theory of literature. It is worth noting, also, that he did write some poetry late in life.

The two principal elements of poetry are sensation and rhythm; after these come words and ideas. For Baroja, poetry lies near the limits of the intellectual, almost within the domain of music. He can therefore understand poetry without concepts; but not poetry without rhythm. The concept, furthermore, is usually superfluous.\textsuperscript{32}

\textbf{Method.} Rules of method are extraneous to the production of a worth while literary work. Originality in literature is the result of intuition, not of method. This is true because literary or artistic creation is too intimate, too subjective, too bound up with the personality of the artist, to admit of a reduction to rules.\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 441.
\textsuperscript{31}La nave de los locos, Obras, IV, 309.
\textsuperscript{32}Las horas solitarias, Obras, V, 241.
\textsuperscript{33}La caverna del humorismo, Obras, V, 466.
\end{flushright}
Form. Baroja's literary ideal is a form of writing which is simple and sincere, without affectation and without crudeness; in a minor key, so as to bring out tenuous nuances; and which employs a rhythm in tune with present-day life, light and varied, without pretensions of solemnity.  

The Individual. Mention was made in Chapter I of Baroja's intense individualism in political philosophy. This same concern for the individual human being is apparent in his theory of literature. In tragedy, in the novel, it has always been the man, the woman, the child, who has related his joys or sorrows; the single unit of humanity, with its own identity, name, surname, temperament, and other circumstances. Collective literature, that is, literature with a whole people or an abstraction as its protagonist, almost always ends up in rhetoric.

Journalism. Baroja is of the opinion that the literary art will continue to be realized in books, not in the newspaper. The journalistic art and the novelistic art are not the same. A newspaper is to a book what a photograph is to a painting. Newspapers do not reflect

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34Juventud, egolatria, Obras, V, 175.  
35Vitrina pintoresca, Obras, V, 715-716.
life as it is, but only the external aspect of things, and not always even that. Most newspapers are alike; a newspaper of a Spanish provincial capital, for example, will not differ greatly from that of a Russian or American town. The coverage may be better or worse, but essentially the same information appears in all. On the other hand, one who reads Galdós, then Mark Twain, and then Gorky, will find the typical characteristics of each race clearly defined.36

V. LITERARY PREFERENCES

In 1906, Baroja writes that his preferences in literature have been, and continue to be, Dickens, Poe, Balzac, Dostoyevsky, and Stendhal.37 In general, he prefers modern authors. Only a few writers of the past can he read with the same interest felt on reading a modern author. Among English writers, Shakespeare;38 among the French, Molière;39 among the Spanish, Cervantes.40 He admires Shakespeare because he does not

36El tablado de Arlequín, Obras, V, 52-53.
37La dama errante, Obras, II, 230.
38Juventud, egolatria, Obras, V, 176.
39Ibid., p. 182.
40Ibid.
moralize but reflects life as it is, a phrase he applies to Velázquez in painting. Cervantes ranks ahead of all his contemporaries because of his invention of Don Quijote and Sancho, although Baroja accuses him of perfidy in having come to terms with the enemy (represented by the Church, the Aristocracy, and the Crown). As for Molière, he lacks the exuberance of Shakespeare and the invention of Cervantes, but he has better taste than the former and is more social and modern than the latter.

Earlier Baroja has said that except for Cervantes, he does not see the merit of the Spanish writers of the seventeenth century, nor, apart from Molière, the worth of the French classicists of the same century. A few years later, in 1917, he adds that of all the French encyclopedists of the eighteenth century, the only one readable today is Voltaire.

With regard to the moderns, Baroja devotes a small section of Juventud, egolatria to a few thumb-nail characterizations of nineteenth- and twentieth-century

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11 Nuevo tablado de Arlequín, Obras, V, 114.
12 Juventud, egolatria, Obras, V, 182.
13 Ibid.
14 La dama errante, Obras, II, 231.
15 Juventud, egolatria, Obras, V, 182.
writers, some of which are of interest here as indicating the direction of Baroja's inclinations. The sketches include Stendhal—"el inventor del automata psicológico movido por máquina de relojería"; Balsac—"el Dantón de la tinta de imprenta"; Poe—"la esfinge misteriosa que hace temblar con sus ojos de lince; el orfebre de maravillas mágicas"; Dickens—"el payaso místico y triste, San Vicente de Paul de la cuerda floja, San Francisco de Asis de los rincones londinenses"; Flaubert—"animal de pata pesada"; Dostoyevsky—"dentro de cien años se hablará de la aparición de Dostoyevsky en la literatura como de uno de los acontecimientos más extraordinarios del siglo XIX"; Tolstoy—"un griego, sereno, claro, sus personajes parecen dioses; no se ocupan más que de sus amores, de sus pasiones; no tienen ese problema agudo del vivir, para nosotros primordial."

In other places, Baroja speaks at greater length of these and other writers; but it is felt that the indications included in this section are sufficient, since the primary concern of this study is Baroja's theory and practice of the novel, not his opinions of the practice of others. Nevertheless, enough has been included so that some basis exists for an attempt to delineate the artistic temperament of Baroja.

46 Ibid., pp. 183-184.
VI. THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT OF BAROJA

Upon considering the qualities that Baroja admires in the art of other men, one forms a picture of a man who esteems human qualities in art more than artistic qualities in humans. His insistence upon truth, simplicity, and sincerity, coupled with his distaste for sham, ornament, and falsification, seem to be more akin to the criteria of a scientist than to those of an artist. As has been often noted, there is little doubt that his early training in medicine was of great importance in the formation of his literary personality, and this will be seen even more clearly in later chapters.

An examination in chronological order of Baroja's statements regarding his own estimate of himself reveals a notable consistency. Thus, of two of his outstanding characteristics, curiosity and egotism, he writes in 1904 that he considers himself among those who write for their own satisfaction, with hardly any hope of reaching a large public, and that he feels a great curiosity concerning everything near him, and nothing is closer than his own person. Many years later, in 1935, he speaks of himself as one of the last individualists, too curious

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From: El tablado de Arlequín, Obras, V, 11.
about all that is typical and picturesque.\textsuperscript{48} He again mentions these same qualities as characteristic of him in 1931.\textsuperscript{49} It is not that consistency is an ideal with Baroja; quite the contrary. He thinks it of no importance, and prefers change to constancy.\textsuperscript{50} But he arrives at the conclusion, in his old age, that it is very difficult to evolve and to renovate one's ideas.\textsuperscript{51} This of course is the result of his personal experience; others seem to have found it easier to change.

In one of his prologues, Baroja speaks in some detail of his literary temperament. He classifies himself as a Dionysiac type, vehement and disorderly, impelled toward action, dynamism, turbulence. At the same time, he feels a strong ethical aspiration. These two together, turbulence and ethical aspiration, have caused him to be an enemy of the past; he is anti-traditionalist. He sums up the qualities that form the basis of his literary temperament

\textsuperscript{48}Vitrina pintoresca, Obras, V, 715.

\textsuperscript{49}El escritor según él y según los críticos, Obras, VII, 432.

\textsuperscript{50}Juventud, egolatría, Obras, V, 176.

\textsuperscript{51}Vitrina pintoresca, Obras, V, 716.
in these words:

Este conjunto de particularidades instintivas: la turbulencia, la aspiración ética, el dinamismo, el ansia de posesión de las ideas, el fervor por la acción, el odio por lo inerte y el entusiasmo por el porvenir, forman la base de mi temperamento literario, si es que se puede llamar literario a un temperamento así que, sobre un fondo de energía, sería más de hombre de acción que de otra cosa.

If we take all the tendencies in literature favored by Baroja, we get a combination of Romanticism, Realism, and humorismo. The last-named element is the most important so far as Baroja's originality is concerned. In defining it as a product of disharmony, inadaptability, and pessimism, and in characterizing it as non-rigid and anti-rhetorical, he is evidently fashioning what might be called an intellectual justification of his own approach to literature. Just what this approach is with respect to the novel will be seen in the following chapter.

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52La dama errante, Obras, II, 231.
The logical place to begin a study of an author's theory of the novel is with his definition of the novel as a literary form. Baroja, however, does not offer a clear-cut definition, on the grounds that any definition of the novel would be arbitrary and incomplete. Its limits may be conveniently stretched and altered to meet almost any requirements. "Es un saco donde cabe todo."\textsuperscript{1} It is a form still in ferment, multiform, taking in everything: philosophy, psychology, adventure, utopia, epic; all find a place in the novel of the present day. It is not a well-defined literary genre.\textsuperscript{2}

Yet, although he does not give us a formal definition of the novel in a technical sense, Baroja does define it in terms of its function, in one of his later works. He says that the closest one can come to defining the genre is the idea that "una novela es como un espejo que se pasea por un camino."\textsuperscript{3} This is to say, of course, that the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{1}{Páginas escogidas, p. 10.}
\footnotetext{2}{La nave de los locos, Obras, IV, 313.}
\footnotetext{3}{La intuición y el estilo, Obras, VII, 1082.}
\end{footnotes}
novel should be realistic and objective, that it should reflect life as it is. More will be said about this presently.

Although difficult to define, the novel has taken its place in literature as a permanent form, and Baroja feels that it will never disappear.¹

I. COMPOSITION

Under this heading, the following elements will be considered: the genesis and writing of the novel, invention, structure, unity, and description. The reason for using these particular terms is that they are Baroja's own.

The genesis of a Baroja novel is usually the impression a particular sight or place makes on his mind during his travels through Spain. Later, recalling this impression, he puts it down on paper, and if these notes leave him with the desire to continue, he goes on writing, adding something here, deleting there, always thinking of the types of people that the place brings to mind. Then, during his process of thinking of the place and the people, characters and ideas suggest themselves to him. The names

¹Páginas escogidas, p. 10. Baroja's view is at variance with that of Ortega y Gasset, who feels that most of the possibilities of the novel have already been exhausted. See The Dehumanization of Art and Notes on the Novel, trans. Helene Weyl, Princeton, 1948, p. 58.
of his characters he often takes from the signs in front of stores. At this point, when he is in possession of an aggregate of impressions and characters, he attempts to decide whether or not this totality has a meaning for him, and if so, he begins to form a plan. The right framework is not always immediately forthcoming, and then he is obliged to make a false start or two, until he encounters the true path. When he has found his direction, he begins writing without further ado. During the writing, his main concern is to keep the novel from being boring, so he keeps his chapters and paragraphs short. At the same time, he declines to cater to the public's taste for melodrama, and he does not hesitate to be unorthodox.

Beyond this, Baroja does not care to go. He feels that the actual writing of a good novel is not so much a matter of technique as of intuition. There may be a novelistic technique, but if so it is not one, but several: one for the erotic novel, one for the humorous novel, and so forth. There may even be a technique acceptable to Baroja, and some day, he feels, he may encounter it. Of this possibility he is skeptical. Since the raw material of literature is life in all its manifestations, it follows

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5 For all of the above paragraph, see Las horas solitarias, Obras, V, pp. 252-253.

6 La nave de los locos, Obras, IV, 323.
that its technique is no great mystery. That which is of
most value in producing a good novel is something which can­
ot be learned. "La cuestión es tener vida, fibra, ener­
gía o romanticismo o sentimiento o algo que hay que tener,
porque no se adquiere." 7

There is, however, a theoretical possibility of writing
a novel of pure art, without digressions, psychological
analyses, or philosophical discussions, according to a cer­
tain formula, but this possibility is theoretical only,
because we know of no such novel in existence. 8

Baroja has said that the composition of a literary
work has few secrets. This is so because skill in weaving
a plot is a function of the imagination, not of learned
technique. And imagination, or the faculty of invention,
as Baroja calls it, is one of the most scarce of all com­
modities. It is for this reason that he speaks of "la
dificultad de inventar." People imagine that it is easy
to invent, but it is not; it is extremely difficult, so
much so that most of us are incapable of inventing a half­
way original story to entertain a child, and if we think
we have invented one, it turns out that it was invented
hundreds of years ago. 9 Thus, for Baroja, invention is the

7Las horas solitarias, Obras, V, 253.
8La nave de los locos, Obras, IV, 313.
9Páginas escogidas, p. 15.
most difficult part of writing a novel. Especially so, when it is a matter of trying to create characters which will be alive and sentimentally necessary. In this respect, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Defoe, and others who have created immortal figures, have been successful, because their characters fill a need in our emotional life. Yet the difficulty of inventing such a character is so great that even the great writers of the nineteenth century, Balzac, Dickens, Tolstoy, and Dostoyevsky, have been unable to create similar personages.\(^{10}\)

This does not mean that the possibilities of creation are exhausted, but simply that there are no men living in the present era with similar powers of inventiveness. Baroja thinks that if a man of the imagination of Poe were alive today, he would find ample material for new literary plots.\(^{11}\)

At the same time, there are limiting factors in the matter of invention. One of them is the imperfection of the human personality. Some characters are just one-sided, incomplete personalities, and the novelist has no way of filling them out. Another limiting factor is the reader. That is, the writer must keep within the bounds of reality

\(^{10}\)La nave de los locos, Obras, IV, 314.

\(^{11}\)Ibid.
in his invention, or his adult readers will become bored.12

There are, according to Baroja, two methods of creation in literature. One is to read the classics and then repeat the same plots and personalities, modernizing or changing them if possible, while the other method is to take the position of an observer of life and surroundings, simplifying and stylizing it. The latter method is the one which permits the most originality.13 Of course neither method exists in absolute isolation from the other.

If there are no rules for invention, neither are they of much use in structure, or what Baroja calls "arte de construir." This art scarcely exists in the novel. In literature, all other genres have a more definite architecture than the novel. It is not possible to write a sonnet, a play, or a short story without conforming to a certain pattern imposed by the definition of the genre. A novel, on the other hand, is possible without plot, structure, or composition. It can have all of these, of course, but some novels are characterized precisely by their lack of these architectural features. They are "invertebrate animals," in Baroja's phrase. They may be likened to the

12Ibid., p. 319.
13La intuición y el estilo, Obras, VII, 1031.
current of history; they have neither beginning nor end. Thus, the authors of *Don Quijote* or *The Pickwick Papers* could either add or take away chapters without appreciably affecting the work as a whole.\(^{14}\)

Returning to this idea in a later work, Baroja talks about the difficulty of creating live characters within a rigid framework. In a novel with what he calls an "argumento cerrado," the characters are not real. An author must sacrifice either perfection of structure or genuineness of characters. As examples of great novels without an "argumento cerrado" he cites *Don Quijote*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gil Blas*, *Rob Roy*, *The Red and the Black*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Dead Souls*, *David Copperfield*, *Father Goriot*, and *War and Peace.*\(^{15}\)

Concerning the unity of a novel, Baroja feels that there are two kinds: one, a unity of impression or effect, the other a unity of subject matter (*asunto*). The first is neither desirable nor possible; the second is both feasible and necessary. Unity of effect is not possible except in a short work, one which can be read at one sitting. If the work is so long that in the reading it will be interrupted by external events, then it must be a series

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\(^{14}\) *La nave de los locos*, Obras, IV, 326.

\(^{15}\) *El escritor según él y según los críticos*, Obras, VII, 436.
of short novels. Thus Baroja, in his own novels, has written them either to be read all at once, seeking unity of impression, or to be read in installments, in which case he has made the chapters short and concentrated the attention in the action.\textsuperscript{16}

There is, however, another unity which the novel should have: it should be self-contained. Baroja feels that novels which are continued in sequels always have a fragmentary, indefinite air about them. The end or purpose of a novel should be found within the work itself. It should contain all the elements necessary to produce its effect; it should be, in Baroja's words, "immanent and hermetic."\textsuperscript{17}

Description forms an integral part of the novel, according to Baroja. It results from the necessity of the writer to supply man's setting in Nature, although, with use, it has become a commonplace. Baroja tells us that his own descriptions are a product of direct impression, and that he would not be able to write about a character if he did not know where he lived and what his environment was like.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16}Páginas escogidas, pp. 13-14.
\textsuperscript{17}La nave de los locos, Obras, IV, 313.
\textsuperscript{18}Páginas escogidas, p. 21.
II. SUBJECT MATTER

A novelist's choice of subject matter is governed first of all by his own temperament, and secondly by his reading public. It is therefore quite natural for Baroja, anti-traditionalist and anti-rhetorical, to shun the Bible, the romanceros, and the legends, and to take his subject matter from the events of the day, from what he sees, hears, and reads in the newspapers. He tells us in one of his early prologues (1908) that anyone who reads his novels and is informed about Spanish life of the times will notice that almost all of the important events of the preceding fifteen or twenty years have appeared in his books.\(^\text{19}\) He feels that his choice of subject matter gives his work a temporal character, different from serious works of literature. At bottom, he says, he is an impressionist.\(^\text{20}\)

Yet Baroja does not feel that, from the point of view of the reader, the value of a novel is reduced by his selection of subject matter. As far as interest is concerned, it makes no difference whether the protagonist is Caesar, Hannibal, Napoleon, or a beggar on the street.\(^\text{21}\)

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\(^{19}\) *La dama errante*, Obras, II, 231.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.

\(^{21}\) *La intuición y el estilo*, Obras, VII, 1030.
As a matter of fact, for Baroja, there are no rules for arousing the interest of the reader. It is like saying that there can be rules to make a person likeable. This is possible in a negative sense; that is, there may be rules for avoiding offence; but in a positive sense, no. Precepts for attracting and captivating an audience are useless. Of course there are those who say that reader interest depends upon the unity of the plan, the perfection of the story, and the arrangement of the parts. To Baroja, these are just empty words. On the one hand, there are many books with a well-composed plot which are not interesting, while on the other, there are novels with very little action which are of great interest. As examples of the latter class he cites Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*, and Dostoyevsky's *House of the Dead*.22

One way in which Baroja attempts to attract and hold the interest of his readers is through his realistic treatment of his subject matter. This responds both to his own temperament and to the requirements of the modern reader. Truth, genuineness, must be found in the details of the novel, and it must be specific, individualized truth. In a word, exactitude.23 And yet, not quite the whole truth.

22*Páginas escogidas*, p. 11.
23*La nave de los locos*, Obras, IV, 320.
Realism in the novel is not absolute reality. Readers of his books will find an attenuated reality, a reflection which is somewhat less violent than the actuality.

The novelist must also consider the extension or amplitude of his treatment of his subject in terms of his public. A writer must keep in mind that we live in an age of rapidly-paced, busy life, which allows only brief periods for meditation and dreaming. Baroja adds, with regret, that books are for people who have time and opportunity for reflection and calm, and that today there are very few persons in those circumstances.

Should the author treat his subject matter in such a way as to point a moral? No, says Baroja, this is the moral of the melodrama, in which the good fellows always win and the bad men are punished. The novel which attempts to reflect life should have the solutions of life. This might make it appear to be immoral with relation to the morality of the times, but it would be difficult for it to be immoral with relation to universal morality.

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24 La intuición y el estilo, Obras, VII, 1021.
25 El escritor según él y según los críticos, Obras, VII, 430.
26 La nave de los locos, Obras, IV, 321.
27 Ibid., p. 322.
28 Páginas escogidas, p. 22.
III. CHARACTERS

Baroja differentiates two types of characters. The first is an incarnation of a virtue or a vice, for example a hero, a miser, a misanthrope. The second class consists of invented characters who are a mixture of good and bad. In literature, only those of the latter class are great. Their invention, however, does not depend solely on the writer, since he must take his materials from the environment of his time. Baroja himself almost always invents his protagonist, and copies his secondary characters from reality.\textsuperscript{29}

The touchstone of an author's success is in the psychology of his characters. Baroja says as much himself,\textsuperscript{30} and he recognizes that some critics have declared that the psychology of his characters is not clear or sufficient. Writing about this in 1925, he professes not to know whether or not his creations have lasting value, or whether they remain in the reader's memory afterwards. Perhaps not, because he is not going to presume that he has been able to accomplish what the most famous novelists of the nineteenth century have failed to achieve. On the other hand, who has been able to discover the final or ultimate reasons

\textsuperscript{29}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 17-18.

\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Ibid.}
which move men to action? Who has been able to say with assurance why one man hates while another loves? Baroja does not see any example in literature of a perfect model of clear and sufficient psychology.  

It is even more difficult to create psychologically complete entities when portraying female characters. In this, Baroja has made no attempt to deal with feminine psychology from woman's own point of view. He feels that it is not possible for a man to see a woman as she really is, because the element of sex intervenes. He has, therefore, been content to delineate female character from without, or from a distance.  

In number of characters, Baroja prefers many rather than few. He feels that a small number of characters is a consequence of the "novela cerrada," with its emphasis on a narrow structural unity. A large number of figures opens the horizon and detracts from the unity of a work. For Baroja, the open horizon, plenty of liberty, and the correspondingly large number of characters are necessities.  

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31 La nave de los locos, Obras, IV, 316.  
32 Páginas escogidas, p. 20.  
33 La nave de los locos, Obras, IV, 318.  
34 Ibid., p. 323.
IV. PRESENCE OF THE AUTHOR

According to one theory of the novel, the author should remain outside his work as much as possible, presenting his characters in an objective fashion, without showing where his sympathies lie. Baroja does not believe that this "impassiveness" is real. He argues that it is very difficult to be indifferent to that which has been created with enthusiasm and even passion. The author can perhaps feign indifference, but not feel genuinely indifferent.35

It is also said by some theorists that the author should not address his readers directly in the first person, but should speak through his characters. This view finds no favor with Baroja, and he cites Cervantes, Fielding, Dickens, and Dostoyevsky as examples of great authors who interrupted their novels to address the reader directly.36 Thus he justifies in his theory his own practice of being very much in evidence in all his novels, and of occasionally speaking to his public as the author.

But regardless of whether or not the author speaks directly to the reader, he is always present at least indirectly. He is, after all, writing the book, and his

36Ibid.
personality influences everything from his choice of subject matter to his choice of vocabulary. In Baroja's view, the personality of an author is more important than his novelistic technique.

The basis of a writer's personality is found in what Baroja calls the "fondo sentimental," which might be defined in English as the sum total of a man's past experience, especially as it affects his emotional life, together with his inherited predispositions. Or, perhaps even better, the attitude of the writer toward this sum of experience, the elements which he considers most vital to him as a person. Baroja's own "fondo sentimental" was formed between the ages of twelve and twenty-three, approximately. During this time, he tells us, everything appeared to him to be of transcendental importance; people, ideas, and things. His experiences engraved themselves indelibly in his memory. Later on in life, his sensitivity became less keen, and his emotions assumed an air of temporary sensations, like those of a tourist who is just passing through. In a significant passage, he declares that for a long time (this was written in 1925) the present has had for him the air of a file of photographs, of a picturesque or slightly comical aspect. It is Baroja's belief that this "fondo sentimental," which in one person

37Ibid., p. 325.
is linked with his childhood or youth, in another with his native land, in still another with his loves, in a fourth with his studies, etc., is what gives a novelist his character and personality, in a word, makes him what he is.38

When novelistic technique is placed in the scales against the force of a writer's personality and background, it weighs very little. Technique is too vague, too inefficient, even unknown in the sense of creative process. Accent is everything in a writer, and the accent comes from the "fondo sentimental." In Baroja's words, a sulphur spring will never smell like a swamp.39

V. STYLE

Baroja lays the groundwork for his theory of style as early as 1903. In that year he writes that an author should write the way he feels. If defects are present as a result of the writer's temperament, they should be allowed to remain; if they are a result of a habit or procedure, they should be deleted. Adornments should come from within, and not be added consciously. A beautiful effect is achieved by spontaneity. Artifice should be shunned, and the writer ought to present himself as he really is. The difficult part is to discover what one is really like, to

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38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
uncover the real personality. Then, after this has been achieved, style should be the faithful expression of the individual's manner of feeling and thinking. Concretely, this involves writing freely, without scruples of grammar, making use, if necessary, of neologisms, barbarisms, slang, and foreign words. If a writer employs these resources well, he will have style. For, contrary to what most people think, style is not that academic perfection which can be attained through study, which considers the language as fixed and immutable. This is precisely lack of style, and is within the reach of any ordinary intelligence. It indicates the lack of a powerful individuality, which is the only kind that can produce something artistic.\footnote{\textit{Ensayos, Obras,} VIII, 846-847.}

Returning to this subject in 1917, Baroja shows that he has not changed his mind, again flaying false rhetoric. It is not that all rhetoric is necessarily bad; what draws his wrath is triteness, the use of commonplace rhetorical devices which everyone knows and falls back on. It is this type that Baroja scrupulously tries to avoid.\footnote{\textit{Juventud, egolatria, Obras,} V, 173-174.}

By 1917 the critics had had time to read many of Baroja's novels, and there were those who felt that his style was so peculiar as to be incorrect. Baroja is amused by the notion held by some that he does not know the
ordinary rules of grammar or syntax. Bonilla y San Martín, looking for concrete errors in his works, discovered the following: "los niños no deben de hacer esto"; "le dijo a Fulano"; and the word "misticidad." Baroja’s reply is that, regarding the first two, he could easily find such constructions in the authors of the Golden Age, and that the word "misticidad" is spoken in his book by a foreigner. He does offer an explanation, however, for the peculiar quality of his style, which really exists. What is lacking, he says, is not strict grammatical correctness, nor syntax, but rhythm, or measure. It is a way of breathing which is not the traditional one.

At this same time (1917), he reiterates his preference for the short sentence, his distaste for rotundity and eloquence. He stresses his belief in the possibility of writing in a style both simple and sincere, without affectation; a style employing a rhythm in accord with modern life, light and varied, without aspirations of solemnity.

One year later, he defines this ideal more specifically: it is a form so closely adjusted to thought and feeling that it does not exceed them in any way. That is, that language should present the thought or emotion in its

\[4^2\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 174.\]
\[4^3\text{Ibid.}\]
\[4^4\text{Ibid.}, \ pp. \ 174-175.\]
essence, without obscuring or disguising it. He reaffirms his belief that correctness of grammar is not style, and, in itself, is of little value. In any case, repetition, the use of relative pronouns and auxiliary verbs, etc., cannot be avoided. Any attempt to evade these logical devices of the language leads at once to an artificiality which is much worse, and more boring. It is not for nothing that a language is a product of many trials and errors in search of clarity over a space of countless generations.\footnote{Páginas escogidas, pp. 24-25.}

To this ideal is added another in 1919. In \textit{La caverna del humorismo}, Guezurtegui declares that his ideal style would be always unexpected; a style that would be so personal that it could not be imitated. Such an ideal is, however, impossible of realization.\footnote{\textit{La caverna del humorismo}, Obras, V, 440.} False rhetoric is again condemned in this work; Guezurtegui avows that the so-called "noble style" does not impress his as being noble at all. It is theatrical, full of affectation, rigidity, and emphasis.\footnote{Ibid., p. 441.}

In 1922, the Ideal expressed in 1918 is reaffirmed. Baroja is confident that with time, when writers have a psychological concept of style instead of a grammatical one, they will understand that the writer who can give
an exact sensation with the least number of words is the best. 48

Many years later, in 1943, Baroja ridicules the idea that an author endures because of his form, rather than his psychological insights. Those who adhere to this view seem to feel that Shakespeare, Cervantes, Rabelais, Montaigne, Balzac, Dickens, Stendhal, Dostoyevsky, and many others are great writers who wrote badly. Baroja finds this idea very amusing.49

In this same year, 1943, appeared an essay on style which may be considered definitive, and is worth examining in some detail. First, we find here that Baroja still insists that style can be looked at from two points of view: one, his own, that style is a manifestation of the human personality, like one's speech, smile, or walk; two, that style is a group of grammatical and rhetorical rules which attempt to give literary form to writing.50 Baroja feels that the stylistic ideals of his time, in Spain, have been purism, adornment, and eloquence. These ideals are false, because if writing well consisted only of this, it would be easy to do, since the rules are well-known. Then anyone who employed this style and wrote exclusively

48 La nave de los locos, Obras, IV, 321.
49 Pequeños ensayos, Obras, V, 1018.
50 Ibid., p. 1061.
of palaces, gardens, catacombs, heroes, and such, would be a great writer. On the other hand, the author of Lazarillo de Tormes, or of El buscón, or of The Pickwick Papers, would be nothing at all. Baroja's own ideal is clarity, precision, and simplicity.\(^{51}\)

At this point Baroja goes into the specific details of syntax, vocabulary, paragraph, and transpositions, which make up the principal elements of prose. Looking at the question from a psychological point of view, he concludes that the syntax employed by a writer is determined by his race and culture. Something like the same thing happens in the case of vocabulary. When richness of lexicon is forced, learned, it gives the impression of artifice; when it is natural and spontaneous, the effect is very different. A writer who employs words that he has heard used since infancy gives them a flavor of authenticity which words he takes from the dictionary do not have. For example, Baroja will never write \textit{por endes}, \textit{a mayor abundamiento}, \textit{enterizo}, \textit{señero}, \textit{reciedumbre}, \textit{mañanero}, \textit{madruguero}, \textit{besana}, or \textit{albarán}, because while he has seen these words in print, he has not heard them spoken. Neither does he favor currently fashionable words like \textit{propugnar}, \textit{posibilitar}, \textit{opositar}, \textit{estructurar}, and \textit{controlar}, which seem to him to have a pedantic law-school

\(^{51}\textit{Ibid.}, \textit{pp. 1062-1063.}\)
air about them, and which do not appear to add anything new to old ideas. One of the unsolved problems in vocabulary is whether an author should use special words when they might not be known to the general public. For example, in descriptive passages, a writer may be in doubt as to whether he ought to give the names of plants. Baroja does not feel that a definite rule can be given to cover all such cases. He himself likes to give the names of the plants that he knows.

In sentence and paragraph length, Baroja prefers brevity. Long paragraphs, made up of many sentences joined together, tend toward eloquence. This type of "period" is of Latin origin. It is still the dominant style in Spanish, and has been employed by Castelar, Valera, and Galdós. At the beginning of the present century, Baroja and Azorín essayed the short paragraph. For him, adds Baroja, it was the most natural form of expression, because he prefers the direct, analytic, and impressionistic approach.

Of transpositions, Baroja says merely that they must be used with care. At times, they may lend energy to the language, but on other occasions they may cause confusion.

This essay on style is concluded with the observation that of all literary genres, the novel is the least apt
for exercises in style.52

Almost all of the ideas expressed in this section on style reappear, unchanged, in the volume of Memoirs entitled *La intuición y el estilo*. In addition to these, comments are included on purism and etymology, which will be summarized briefly.

What is called the purity of the language, which usually means freedom from foreign expressions, is of no particular concern to Baroja. What is pure in one era will not be pure in another. A language is like a river which picks up new currents along the way. For example, the purists have said that the word *marbete* should be used instead of *etiqueta* to designate the label on a bottle or jar, because *etiqueta* is a Gallicism; but it turns out that *marbete* itself is of Flemish origin, and besides, no one uses it anyway. In such matters, a writer should choose the word which has lived on in the language, and leave aside the other, irrespective of questions of origin.53

Related to the question of purity is that of etymology. At the time Baroja began writing, a theory was current to the effect that the original meaning of a word had significance for a writer of the present, and that it

52 For all the above comments on syntax, vocabulary, paragraph, and transpositions, see Pequeños ensayos, Obras, V, 1063-1065.

53 *La intuición y el estilo*, Obras, VII, 1092.
was therefore necessary to know the etymology of a word in order to be able to use it well. Baroja always sustained the contrary, that it was necessary only to know the meaning of a word at the time the author is writing. He bases his argument on the fact that the meanings of words change, whether the scholars like it or not. A few of the many examples he gives are: melodrama, originally "drama with music"; pañuelo, "a piece of cloth"; soldado, "a man on a salary, a mercenary"; caballero, "one who rides a horse"; pontifice, "builder of bridges"; calamidad, "hailstorm"; hecatombe, "sacrifice of one hundred oxen"; cataclismo, "flood"; tragedia, "hymn to sacrificed goats"; and many others. Baroja's purpose here is to demonstrate the futility of trying to use words in their exact etymological sense.54

The whole question of adornment and rhetoric in style is summed up in another volume of his memoirs. He, like all writers who wish to improve upon their past work, has attempted several times to polish his own style. He has deleted relative pronouns, eliminated gerunds, written "naciera" instead of "había nacido," and in the final analysis he has only succeeded in proving again to his own satisfaction the worthlessness of such "perfection."55

54 Ibid., p. 1100.

55 El escritor según él y según los críticos, Obras, VII, 475.
VI. EVALUATION

A knowledge of Baroja's own estimate of his work will place the reader in a better position to understand what Baroja is trying to do in his novels, and how well he feels he has succeeded. In addition, it will enable us to evaluate his work with greater precision and justice in the analysis undertaken in the second part of this study.

It would be false modesty on his part, Baroja tells us, if he were to affirm that his work is without value. If he felt that way, he would not take the trouble to write. He does not feel, however, that this value is necessarily literary or philosophical, but rather documentary and psychological. He recognizes that this tends to make the value of his novels ephemeral, but this does not greatly disturb him, since it is the nature of human beings to love most those things which are transitory.

Baroja is willing to concede that he probably is not a writer of the very first rank. He is incomplete, perhaps not too important, but still, he feels that he has a certain originality. He denies the accusations of plagiarism which have been made in his case. There are, of course,

\[56\] *La dama errante*, Obras, II, 229.
\[57\] Ibid., p. 232.
\[58\] *Páginas escogidas*, p. 9.
traces of other authors' influence in his work, as in everyone's, but he roundly denies the charge of deliberate plagiarism.59

Baroja feels that he has been unfairly handled by the critics. In this he is at one with almost every author under the sun, and he recognizes that the difficulty lies in the impossibility of finding an impartial critic. The author's desire to be judged fairly is a natural one, but it is simply asking too much of human nature. Critics are, after all, only human.60

It is not Baroja's feeling that he has been guilty of great extravagance (in the sense of wildness, folly, or nonsense), either in his ideas or in their execution. Writing in 1941, he says that there are many contemporary authors whose works are similar to his both in subject matter and in treatment. As examples he mentions Aldous Huxley, W. Somerset Maugham, Ernest Hemingway, and John Dos Passos. This does not mean, he adds, that these men have imitated him, or even read him, but simply that they have followed a direction similar to his own. That seems to show that his tendency is not absurd or nonsensical, but something which is in tune with the temper of the times,

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59 _La dama errante, Obras, II, 230._
60 _El escritor según él y según los críticos, Obras, VII, 422._
and in part brought about by it.\footnote{61}

In a defense against the critic Gaziel, Baroja makes a statement of particular significance for the present study. It is reproduced here in full, so that the reader may refer to it later:

Gaziel no comprende, sin duda, que yo soy un impresionista, y que para un impresionista lo trascendental es el ambiente y el paisaje. Eso, un mediterráneo de gustos clásicos y académicos, no lo puede entender.

Nosotros 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.\footnote{62}
CHAPTER IV

PLOT

Before entering upon the analysis of the plots of individual novels, it will be helpful to give some attention to the question of Baroja's arrangement of novels in trilogies. In the examination which follows, we shall consider the trilogies in chronological order, insofar as that is possible. A strict chronological order is not possible, due to overlapping, so I have taken as a guide the date of publication of the first novel in each trilogy.

The three novels of Tierra vasca, La casa de Aizgorri, El mayorazgo de Labraz, and Zalacain el aventurero, were published in 1900, 1903, and 1909 respectively. There is no connection between the three, or even between any two of them, as far as plot or characters are concerned. The only thing they have in common is the setting in the Basque country, which gives the trilogy its name.

The second trilogy, La vida fantástica, is composed of Aventuras, inventos y mixtificaciones de Silvestre Paradox (1901), Camino de perfección (1902), and Paradox, rey (1906). Again, there is no connection of plot between any of the novels, but a close relationship does exist between the first and the third in that the two main characters in each
are the same. **Camino de perfección** forms a distinct work, and the only element common to all three seems to be their theme, the search for individual and social perfection.

In the case of the trilogy which bears the title **La lucha por la vida**, the situation is very different. All three novels, **La busca**, **Mala hierba**, and **Aurora roja** were written the same year, 1904, and they constitute a single work in all particulars, plot, characters, setting, and theme. In reality, they are simply one long novel divided into three parts.

The fourth trilogy, **El pasado**, comprises the novels **La feria de los discretos** (1905), **Los últimos románticos** (1906), and **Las tragedias grotescas** (1907). The last two are so closely linked as to be a single novel divided into two parts, while the first novel is unrelated to them in plot or characters. Here, as in the first trilogy, the only unifying feature is found in the setting, in this case setting in time. The action of all of them takes place in the middle years of the nineteenth century, whence the title of the trilogy.

Next in order comes the trilogy of **La raza**, composed of **La dama errante** (1908), **La ciudad de la niebla** (1909), and **El árbol de la ciencia** (1911). The first two have the same two principal characters in common, and even the plot of the second novel is an outgrowth of the situation at the end of the first. The setting shifts with the travels of
the protagonist, that of the first being in Spain, while the scene of the second is London. The third novel has no plot connection with the other two, although it is linked very tenuously through one of the characters. A relative of the protagonist of the first two novels appears as a fairly important character in *El árbol de la ciencia*.

*César o nada* (1910), *El mundo es así* (1912), and *La sensualidad pervertida* (1920) are grouped as a trilogy under the title of *Las ciudades*, but there seems to be no organic connection between them. The plot, characters, and setting are different in each of the three novels. However, they do have one feature in common: in all of them, the customs of various Spanish towns and cities are held up to ridicule.

Then follows Baroja's one tetralogy, *El mar*. Its four novels are *Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía* (1910), *El laberinto de las sirenas* (1923), *Los pilotos de altura* (1929), and *La estrella del capitán Chimista* (1930). The unifying element, the sea, is present in all four of these novels, but there is no plot connection between the first and the second, or between either one of these and the last two. On the other hand, the latter form a single work, with no interruption of narrative.

In the trilogy *Agonías de nuestro tiempo*, we again have three novels which are in fact one work. *El gran tornabellino del mundo*, *Las veleidades de la fortuna*, and *Los amores tardíos* (all written in 1926) possess a common plot
and characters.

In the case of the next trilogy, *La selva oscura*, a relationship is found first of all in the theme, which is that of the unsettled political conditions in Spain during the years immediately preceding the establishment of the Republic in 1931. The "selva" in this instance appears to be the political jungle. In addition, although the three novels, *La familia de Errotacho* (1931), *El cabo de las tormentas* (1932), and *Los visionarios* (1932), are not constructed around a single protagonist, some of the characters are carried over from one novel to the next, thus providing for a certain cohesion in regard to the characters.

The last trilogy bears the title *La juventud perdida*, and is made up of *Las noches del Buen Retiro* (1933), *El cura de Monleón* (1936), and *Locuras de carnaval* (1937). There is no relationship among them in either plot or characters, but a rather vague thematic coherence can be seen in the evocation of memories of an epoch which coincided with the author’s youth.

As a result of this brief survey, we see that only two of the ten series contain three organically interrelated novels, *La lucha por la vida* and *Agonías de nuestro tiempo*. Two other trilogies, *El pasado* and *La raza*, contain two novels which are so closely integrated as to form two parts of a single narrative, and of these, *El pasado* has a setting common to all three of its constituent parts, as indicated
by its title. The one tetralogy, El mar, presents similar characteristics; two of its novels form one uninterrupted narrative, while all four exhibit the common motif of the sea, again as indicated in the general title. Of the five remaining trilogies, three, Tierra vasca, La vida fantástica, and La selva oscura, reveal a loose coherence derived either from the setting, the theme, or the characters, or a combination of two or more of these. Of the other two, Las ciudades and La juventud perdida, the latter may be said to exhibit some sort of cohesion based on the author's evocation of scenes or experiences of his youth, a hint of which is given in the general title. That leaves only one trilogy, Las ciudades, with very little apparent relationship between the parts, but even here it seems possible to sense an underlying unity of effect in the unrelieved pessimism which suffuses all three novels, and perhaps also in the harsh criticism of the customs of Spanish towns.

If the question is pursued a bit farther, it will be noted that the trilogies exhibiting the greatest degree of cohesion are, in general, those written within the shortest time of one another. Thus, all three novels of La lucha por la vida came out in 1904, while all those of Agonías de nuestro tiempo were written in 1926. The three books of El pasado, another trilogy showing a high degree of cohesiveness, were published at one-year intervals, in 1905, 1906, and 1907. Similarly, La selva oscura, with a considerable
degree of interrelation, shows dates of 1931, 1932, and
1932. On the other hand, the least integrated trilogies
usually show greater lapses of time between novels: for
example, the dates of Tierra vasca are 1900, 1903, and 1909;
those of Las ciudades, 1910, 1912, and 1920.

Further clarification of the trilogy question may be
sought by considering briefly the generic titles. After a
reading of all thirty-one novels contained in the nine tril-
ogies and one tetralogy, the meaning of the titles seems
at least fairly clear, except perhaps for La raza. Thus,
Tierra vasca indicates the single setting of that trilogy;
La vida fantástica refers to adventures in imagination and
ideology, characteristic of the three books belonging to it;
La lucha por la vida is the theme of the three novels dealing
with the poorer classes of Madrid; El pasado indicates the
nineteenth-century setting of its novels; El mar is self-
 explanatory; Agonías de nuestro tiempo is not as clear, but
certainly appears to refer to the protagonist's lack of suc-
cess in love; La selva oscura may be taken to mean the unset-
tled political situation in Spain during the years preceding
the Republic, since the political theme is predominant
throughout the trilogy; and La juventud perdida furnishes a
cue to the nostalgia of the three novels under its heading.

What emerges from all this is that Baroja's method of
grouping his novels into trilogies was somewhat loose, but
not merely capricious. If we recall his theory of the
novel, we can readily understand that he would not be likely to be particularly concerned about any "looseness" discovered in his arrangements. On the other hand, the degree of consistency found is high enough to warrant the conclusion that Baroja did want his novels to form a cohesive panorama of certain aspects of the life of his time. The fact that some of the novels do not fit very well in the trilogies of which they form a part (particularly those novels written several years after their companions in a given series) is evidence that Baroja is sometimes careless in the construction of trilogies, just as he is in the construction of his individual novels. It will be remembered from the chapters on theory that he admits that he does not pay much attention to design.

Nevertheless, it can be plausibly argued that the grouping in trilogies is not without logic. It enabled Baroja to paint his pictures of life and society on a larger canvas, under several aspects, without the restrictions of plot and considerations of length, which would have tended to be more confining in the case of single novels. Under the system of trilogies, he was free either to continue a novel in a sequel, if the subject warranted such expansion, or to write another novel on the same general theme or with a similar setting.

Our inquiry leads us now into the analysis of plot in the individual novels. In the interest of clarity, however,
these analyses will be preceded by a definition and discussion of plot as it has been understood by some leading critics of the novel.

Edwin Muir feels that there should be no difficulty over the definition of plot. In his view it is a definite literary term of universal applicability. For critic and layman alike it designates "the chain of events in a story and the principle which knits it together."¹ E. M. Forster's definition is not essentially different from this, although he feels that a distinction should be made between story and plot. Story is "a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence"; plot "is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality."² But W. Somerset Maugham sees no necessity for such a distinction; to him, "a plot is merely the pattern on which the story is arranged."³ The very wording of his definition, however, seems to imply some differentiation. Yet no essential disagreement seems to exist; the difference appears to be one of terminology. It might be legitimate to make an equation: Muir's knitting-together principle=Forster's causality=Maugham's pattern.

In any case, we may accept the term "plot" in its wide

¹The Structure of the Novel (New York, 1929), p. 16.
sense, as the manner in which a narrative is arranged or organized.

When it comes to the importance to be ascribed to plot, the critics (and novelists) immediately go their separate ways. Edwin Muir does not appear to feel too strongly about plot one way or another, and recognizes that it is more important in some types of novels than in others. For example, in novels of character it is wise not to expect too much plot. Speaking of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, he says: "All the plot that remains is the series of incidents which widen and diversify the picture, and set the characters in different relations."\(^4\) We shall see in a moment that this sentence fits many of Baroja's novels.

E. M. Forster feels that the requirements of plot have frequently handicapped the novelist. A novel need not be planned, necessarily; it may simply grow. Plot, he feels, may be exciting and beautiful, but still it is a fetish, borrowed from the drama, where it was imposed by the spatial limitations of the stage. Why, he argues, should not a novelist simply stop when he becomes muddled or bored, instead of being required to round off the plot?\(^5\) In another place he says: "Expansion. That is the idea the novelist

must cling to. Not completion. Not rounding off but opening out." This view is plainly very close to that of Baroja.

The attitude expressed by Ortega y Gasset on this point is somewhat similar to Forster's. Ortega feels that there is a necessity for at least a minimum of plot, since pure contemplation is not possible for human beings. Not much action is needed, but this minimum is indispensable. He goes on to state that today interest in "the outer mechanism of the plot" is less than it has been: "Not in the invention of plots but in the invention of interesting characters lies the best hope of the novel."

Carl Grabo ascribes more importance to the plot. He thinks that an equal balance between content and form is essential, and speaks of the defect of the picaresque novel as lying in its lack of clearly defined objective, complication, and suspense.

Other critics and writers have defended plot (sometimes

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6Ibid., p. 169.

7The Dehumanization of Art and Notes on the Novel (Princeton, 1948), p. 87. The original Spanish edition of this work was published in Madrid in 1925.

8Ibid., p. 103.

9The Technique of the Novel (New York, 1928), pp. 3-4.
expressed as "form" or "pattern")\(^{10}\) as an essential requirement of the novel. W. Somerset Maugham complains of critics who attach little importance to plot, and contends that the novelist claims to be an artist, and that he therefore does not merely copy life, but makes an arrangement of it to suit his purposes. A good story, says Maugham:

should have coherence and sufficient probability for the needs of the theme; it should be of a nature to display the development of character, which is the chief concern of fiction at the present day, and it should have completeness, so that when it is finally unfolded no more questions can be asked about the persons who took part in it.\(^{11}\)

Here we have almost the exact opposite of the view expressed by Forster.

The judgment of Percy Lubbock is in essential agreement with that of Maugham. This brief quotation may serve as evidence:

A novel is a picture, a portrait, and we do not forget that there is more in a portrait than the

\(^{10}\) For example, Edith Wharton defines form as "the order, in time and importance, in which the incidents of the narrative are grouped." The Writing of Fiction (New York, 1925), p. 23. This definition corresponds closely to those of plot cited above.

"likeness." Form, design, composition, are to be sought in a novel, as in any other work of art; a novel is the better for possessing them. That we must own, if fiction is an art at all; and an art it must be, since a literal transcript of life is plainly impossible.12

Robert Liddell follows a similar line of thought, and defines a perfect novel as one in which "interesting characters are displayed in a coherent and well-shaped action."13 As examples of perfect novels he mentions Emma, Madame Bovary, and The Spoils of Poynton.

Edith Wharton also belongs to this school of thought. She deplores the distrust of technique, as "leading to pure anarchy in fiction,"14 and feels, like Maugham, that all the threads should be gathered up at the end.15

Among so many differing viewpoints, it is difficult to choose a position which would be unassailable. The orientation of the present study will be toward the center, in the vicinity of the position occupied by Ortega y Gasset. It is hard to conceive of a novel without that

12The Craft of Fiction (New York, 1957), pp. 9-10. The edition used here is a reprint of the original, which was first published in 1921.


15Ibid., p. 108.
minimum of plot he speaks of; on the other hand, the re-
quirements of Lubbock, Maugham, Liddell, and Wharton seem
somehow rigid. Their theories do not seem to explain
adequately great novels like War and Peace, Don Quijote,
and David Copperfield.

The examination of plot in Baroja must necessarily
involve at least a brief glance at a considerable number
of the novels he wrote between the years 1900 and 1937, in
order that any conclusions formed may be on a sufficiently
broad base. It has been deemed advisable, therefore, to
exclude the twenty-two novels of the Memorias de un hombre
de acción, in part because an analysis of them would make the
present chapter needlessly long and repetitious, without
contributing significant new insights on Baroja's novelistic
technique, and also because they constitute a work apart
in which the biographical and historical elements are pre-
dominant over the purely novelistic ones.

La casa de Aizgorri (1900) is Baroja's first novel.
It is short, and written in dialogue form. Its plot may be
summarized as follows: Agueda, a young woman of marriage-
able age, lives with her father, Don Lucio, in the village
of Arbea. Her mother has died some years earlier. Don
Lucio is the owner of a brandy factory, the most important
industrial enterprise in the town. Mariano, an eligible
young man, and the owner of a foundry, is in love with Agueda
and wishes to marry her. Agueda, however, is worried about the bad effects the products of her father's distillery have upon the populace of Arbea, and feels that she must somehow shut it down and convert it into an asylum or hospital before she can entertain thoughts of marriage. The conflict is resolved when Mariano completes an important contract, in spite of difficulties caused by a strike at the foundry, and purchases the distillery with the proceeds. An epilogue shows us Mariano bringing Agueda home to his mother's house, where they begin a new and better life.

This of course is a conventional plot, very simple, and developed without complications, and even comes to a conventionally happy conclusion with the marriage of the protagonists. This is unusual in Baroja, and makes this novel notable for its lack of pessimism. In addition, the virtual absence of digressions makes *La casa de Aizgorri* one of Baroja's shortest works.

*El mayorazgo de Labraz* (1903) offers considerably more complexity of plot. Robert B. Knox has rightly pointed out that this novel is one in which Baroja has taken unusual care with structure.¹⁶ Like many of his other novels, it is divided into "books," five in this case, but the divisions

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in the work under discussion are much more organically related to structure than is usually the case. A somewhat detailed analysis will show how this is so.

It may be noted at the outset that in this novel Baroja employs a common device of fiction, a prologue in which he relates how the novel came into his hands from another writer, and that he has merely transcribed it without adding or taking away so much as a single word. This device becomes almost standard practice with Baroja in later works.

The novel proper opens as two travelers are attempting to make their way to the town of Labraz after nightfall. It becomes apparent on the first page or two that they are presumably man and wife, that they have been away from Labraz for a long time, and that they are not sure how well they will be received by the person they are going to see. In another page or so, they have arrived at the gates of the town. Here the scene shifts to the interior of the town, to the inn, and various characters are introduced, among them the innkeeper, La Goya, and her two daughters, Blanca and Marina. The conversations of some of the characters who hang around the inn function as flashbacks, in which important details of the history of the pair making their way to Labraz are filled in. By the time they make their entrance, the reader knows that the man, Don Ramiro, was given a home many years earlier by Cesarea, the mother of
Don Juan, the mayorazgo. Juan was left blind by smallpox, and Cesárea transferred her affection to the waif, Ramiro. When Ramiro grew into manhood, he and Cesárea went away together. It is they who are the travelers making their way back to Labraz at the beginning of the novel, apprehensive about the kind of reception they will get from Don Juan. The first book ends with the latter's acceptance of the situation, and Ramiro and Cesárea accompany Don Juan to his house.

By the time this point is reached in the story, it has already become apparent that El mayorazgo de Labraz contains two elements that are not too common in the novels of Baroja: suspense and close interaction between plot and character. The narration has been carried forward with such care that the reader feels that events are moving toward a definite climax and dénouement, while the character of Don Juan as an unfortunate blind man with the patience and resignation of Job is clearly stressed, yet with the suggestion of latent power. This suggestion is conveyed through the conversation of the people present at the inn at the time of the travelers' arrival, but always with the rejoinder of "¡Ca! Es demasiado bueno" which stresses the almost limitless resignation of the mayorazgo.\textsuperscript{17} Here plot and character are brought very

\textsuperscript{17}Obras, I, pp. 77 and 81.
close together, since the outcome of the plot depends largely upon the plausible transformation of the character of Don Juan, thus far a genuine "hombre sin voluntad."

However, as we have seen, Baroja is far from haphazard in this particular novel, and the transformation of Don Juan is carefully prepared and well-motivated. The second book is mainly devoted to developing the major secondary thread of the plot, the affair between Ramiro and Micaela, a relative of Don Juan who lives in the same house. The novel begins to move swiftly toward a climax in the third book, as misfortune continues to grind Don Juan under its heel. Ramiro and Micaela are on the point of poisoning the ailing Cesárea to get her out of the way, in order to be free to indulge their own passion for each other, but she dies of her illness before they can carry out their nefarious scheme. They soon decide to run away together, and in order to obtain the necessary money, Ramiro steals and sells the crown and jeweled robe which adorn the Virgin in the family chapel. With the departure of Ramiro and Micaela, this thread of the narrative is disposed of, and the fourth and fifth books are devoted to the climax and dénouement of the main story, which revolves around the developing affection between Juan and Marina, and the resolution of the former's problem of abulia.

It has already been mentioned that Don Juan possesses
a dormant force of character. The motivation of his trans-
formation is attended to carefully by the author. Through-
out the fourth book, the trials to which Juan's patience
is subjected increase in number and weight. First he is
convinced by the town officials that he should assume
responsibility for the theft of the Virgin's jewels, and
replace them with money from his own pocket, even though he
is already practically destitute because of the expense of
the funeral of Cesárea. Then Rosario, Ramiro's little
daughter, whom Juan has come to love as his own, falls sick
with typhus, and dies after a prolonged and agonizing ill-
ness. During this time Marina comes to visit the child, and
remains in the house to care for her throughout her illness.
Here is laid the basis for the affection which develops be-
tween Juan and Marina; that of Marina for Juan is born out
of sympathy for his grief; that of Juan for Marina out of
appreciation of her sacrifice and love for Rosario. Thus it
comes about that when the town officials visit Juan the day
after the burial of the child and hint that perhaps her
death was divine punishment for Marina's living under the
same roof with Juan, the latter is finally pushed too far,
and throws the hypocrites out of his house. The insult to
Marina restores his lost will-power, and he sets fire to
the fields he has mortgaged to pay for the stolen jewels,
in complete rebellion against the town of Labraz. The
mayorazgo leaves the flaming fields behind and slips out of town.

The dénouement occupies all of the fifth book. After a lapse of some months, Juan returns to Labraz disguised as a beggar to ask Marina if she will go with him to a town on the Mediterranean coast, where they can begin a new life. She does, and the novel ends with two travelers on the road again, at the point when they realize that their long-standing affection has ripened into adult love. Thus the novel is brought full circle, but this time the travelers can obviously look toward the future with at least a normal chance for happiness.

In the maintenance of suspense throughout at least four-fifths of its length, and in the absolute minimum of its digressions, this novel is almost unique among the works of our author, and shows that at least once he was capable of producing a book which would come very close to satisfying the requirements of Percy Lubbock in matters of form. Yet it does possess some of the features typical of Baroja: digressions are present, even though few and relatively brief; the presence of a town as protagonist (usually cast as the villain, as in the novel under discussion and in César o nada); and the introduction of a larger number of characters than would be absolutely necessary.

With Zalacain el aventurero (1909), the third novel of
the *Tierra vasca* trilogy, we find something much closer to what might be called the standard plot pattern of the Baroja novel. An indication of its nature may be found in the sub-titles of the novel's three books: "La infancia de Zalacain"; "Andanzas y correrías"; and "Las últimas aventuras." Books One and Three are short; the bulk of the narrative is contained in the second book. This biographical arrangement, by which the novelist follows the fortunes of his protagonist from childhood into adult life, becomes the characteristic pattern of Baroja's novels. Plot is reduced to a mere loose framework for the narration of the hero's adventures in chronological sequence, along the lines of the picaresque novel of the Golden Age.

Yet *Zalacain* is not entirely typical. Plot, though of much less importance than in *El mayorazgo de Labraz*, is nevertheless more carefully worked out than in many other novels of Baroja. In the first place, instead of beginning and ending anywhere, it begins with the birth of the protagonist and ends with his death, thus giving it the kind of completeness advocated by Somerset Maugham. A sense of structure is imparted through the foreshadowing of Zalacain's untimely end by means of an old letter introduced early in the story relating how one of Zalacain's ancestors met his death by treachery in the fifteenth century. The killer was an ancestor of Carlos Ohando, childhood
acquaintance (and enemy) of Zalacain, who is responsible for the latter's death, by a shot in the back, at the end of the novel. Suspense, an element which usually requires careful plot construction, is present in some degree, in the development of the love between Zalacain and Catalina, the sister of Carlos Ohando, a love which results in their marriage. The suspense arises from the obstacles to their love, first in the form of the enmity of Carlos, and later from his own restlessness and the difficulties caused by the Carlist war. Lastly, it may be added that the famous digressions are few in number and short in length, as in El mayorazgo de Labrás, thus allowing the narrative to be conducted at a relatively brisk pace.

Aventuras, inventos y mixtificaciones de Silvestre Paradox (1901), the first novel of the Vida fantástica trilogy, is just what its title implies--a chronicle of a portion of the life of its protagonist. As such, it has less of a plot structure than any of the novels that have been considered thus far. At the beginning of the story Paradox is moving into a boarding house in Madrid, and at its end he is leaving Madrid for Valencia to try to make a new beginning. The protagonist is forty-three years old at the start of the novel and perhaps two or three years older than that at its conclusion. From beginning to end, no really significant change takes place in his fortunes or
in his character. He and his friend, Avelino Díaz de la Iglesia, move from one adventure to another, making a living now by inventing, now by writing, occasionally changing boarding houses and thus falling in with different sets of picturesque characters. The interest lies in the latter, and in the situations, rather than in the plot, which scarcely exists.

A word or two might be said about the arrangement, however. After the opening scenes, in which Silvestre Paradox is introduced, the action is interrupted to bring us a summary of the early life of the protagonist—a biographical feature which Baroja uses in almost all of his novels. In this case, the summary occupies almost one-third of the total length of the book, but it holds even more interest than the rest of the novel, partly because of the light it sheds on the character of the adult Paradox, and partly because the amount of ground to be covered forced Baroja to utilize the principle of selection to a greater extent than he ordinarily does. In this section, digressions are hardly to be found. Yet it should be added that throughout this novel, there are far fewer digressions than in many of Baroja's other works. Interest is concentrated in the gallery of boarding house types and in fantastic money-making schemes, rather than in political or philosophical discussions.
Paradox, rey (1906), though written some five years later, is a continuation of the adventures of Paradox and Diz de la Iglesia, and may be considered here before Camino de perfección, the intervening second novel of the trilogy, which is unrelated structurally to the other two. Paradox, rey manifest an uncomplicated plot and considerable cohesion in its structure. The plot, well-known to most readers of Baroja, consists simply of the participation of Paradox and Diz in an expedition to the Guinea coast of Africa, the running aground of their ship in a storm, and their subsequent attempt to establish an ideal society. After achieving limited success, they are frustrated by the capture of the town by a French military force carrying out the colonization of the area. The advent of "civilization" brings to the natives the diseases and vices of the white man, and the demoralized populace sinks into despair and drunkenness, as the French congratulate themselves for having brought European civilization to the benighted savages.

It will be seen that in this work, the plot, although far from complex, is of some importance to the effect, in that it provides the very necessary framework for the satirical intention of the author. This is an ideological novel, the aim of which is to attack and discredit accepted institutions of European civilization, while at the same time exploring some possible alternatives. The contrast can
be more sharply brought out by transporting Paradox and Diz to a distant country of totally different customs, rather than having them discuss local mores at a cafe in Madrid. The procedure is familiar, and the reader is reminded of the "Oreillons" and Eldorado in Voltaire's Candide.

The situation is somewhat different as regards Camino de perfección (1902). This novel is also ideological, but what is portrayed here is the spiritual struggle of one man. It is, in fact, more a "confession" than a novel. Although there is some external action, the greater part of the book is taken up by the descriptions of the psychological states of the protagonist, Fernando Ossorio, as he passes through one inner crisis after another in his struggle for peace of mind. Plot, therefore, is important only when this or that event precipitates some sort of spiritual turmoil. Or, looking at it another way, one could say that the plot of this novel consists of the search of a young man in Madrid for a rational yet satisfying philosophy of life, a search that ends in partial failure, and the two directions to his search that provide at least an outline of plot are his attempts to find this philosophy through Nature and through love. The quest of Nature involves Ossorio in wanderings through Castile, during which the reader encounters the typical Baroja types and places, and the pursuit of love brings the plot to its ironical conclusion:
Fernando's marriage to Dolores, a Catholic girl, whose mother sews a page of the Bible into the umbilical bandage of Fernando's new-born son, at the very moment Fernando is resolving to bring up his son entirely free from the religious tradition which still casts its shadow over his own spirit, despite his long struggle to liberate himself from it completely.

The final twist thus given to the plot points up its secondary function: to indicate that the type of spiritual struggle portrayed in this novel is nearly always doomed to failure because of the power of entrenched and institutionalized tradition. An individual may be at least partially successful in freeing his own conscience, but the individual, in the long run, will be defeated by the conforming majority.

When the trilogy of La lucha por la vida is reached, plot loses its function to such a degree that it practically disappears altogether. As noted earlier in this chapter, La busca, Mala hierba, and Aurora roja (all 1904) form an organic unit, so they may be considered together. The plot of the entire trilogy may be summarized in a single sentence: the fortunes of Manuel Alcázar, an orphan, during the years of his adolescence and early youth. The theme, as indicated in the title, is his struggle for existence in the streets of Madrid. Some flesh is added to this skeleton in the slow development of a conscience in the boy, and a
search for values in life. There is one major sub-plot, the long drawn-out attempt of Manuel's friend, Roberto Hasting, to recover his rightful share of an inheritance.

It is of course immediately apparent that this type of plot is closely akin to that of the picaresque novel of the Golden Age. The wanderings and adventures of the protagonist form the plot, and, like Lazarillo, Guzmán, and Pablos, Manuel Alcázar's first concern is how to keep body and soul together. The pressure of poverty is ever-present, and furnishes the motivation for a large part of his activities. At the same time, there are sharp divergences between this trilogy and Lazarillo or El buscón, but since they concern principally characters and setting, they will be treated in later chapters.

In this trilogy, then, plot is reduced to a minimum because it fulfills no useful function. The author's aim is not to tell a good story or analyze a personality, but to write a documentary with social commentary. The slight thread of narrative which is provided does little more than furnish numerous occasions for the presentation of characters and environment.²⁸

²⁸ Baroja's own comments on the genesis of this trilogy are enlightening: "El convivir durante algunos años con obreros panaderos, repartidores y gente pobre, el tener que acudir, a veces, a las tabernas para llamar a un trabajador, con frecuencia intoxicado, me impulsó a curiosear en los
La feria de los discretos (1905), the first novel of the trilogy El pasado, offers certain similarities with the trilogy just discussed. It is the story of a young man, Quintín, who returns to Cordova after eight years of schooling in England, and plunges into the political activity of the 1860's. These revolutionary activities bring him into contact with people living either just within the law or outside of it, and Baroja thus provides himself with the opportunity to draw pictures of Cordovan types and places. At the same time, plot is of a good deal more account in this novel than in La lucha por la vida. First of all, although many characters are introduced, as usual in Baroja, the protagonist occupies the center of the stage almost constantly, and the narrative is built rather closely around his actions. Furthermore, the author is at some pains, as in Silvestre Paradox, to fill in the early life of Quintín in considerable detail. And in its structure, the first half of the novel is similar to El mayorazgo de Labraz, although more diffuse. It is worth while to pause here in

barrios bajos de Madrid, a pasear por las afueras y a escribir sobre la gente que está al margen de la sociedad.

Los cuadros que forman La busca y Mala hierba, que la sigue, son como fotografía retocada, procedimiento que no es, sin duda, el mejor para producir una obra de arte. " Páginas escogidas, p. 136. The reader will have noticed Baroja's use of the word cuadros applied to these novels.
order to see more in detail just how La feria de los discretos is constructed.

As in El mayorazgo de Labrás, the story opens as a traveler is returning home. In this case, he is traveling by train, and his destination is Cordova, his home town. He is Quintín García Roelas, twenty-two years of age, and he is returning from England, where he has been studying for the last eight years. When he arrives home he gets a warm reception from his mother, but an indifferent one from his father. During the next few days, as he walks about through the streets, his thoughts naturally turn to memories of his childhood, and he attempts to reconstruct that period of his life. The reader thus learns of many details of his earlier existence. One of these memories leads him to the realization that there was something obscure about his birth, and now, grown up, Quintín sets out to solve the mystery. An appropriate series of events puts him in contact with Don Gil Sabadía, an amateur archeologist who knows everything that ever happened in Cordova, from whom he gets the whole story, without revealing his own identity until the end. Briefly, the facts are that Quintín is the illegitimate son of a marquis and an innkeeper's daughter; the marquis was killed before Quintín was born; the innkeeper's daughter, Fuensanta, later married a peddler who in time grew prosperous; and these two brought up Quintín as their
own son. (Typically, Don Gil's narrative requires three long chapters.) It is only at this point (approximately the end of the first third of the novel) that the reader is in possession of all the facts preceding the homecoming described in the first chapter. Even after this, the novel continues to develop slowly for a time, as love interest comes to the fore, and the foundation is laid for the desenlace of the final chapter. Thus, it is not until the halfway mark that the protagonist makes his decision to become a "man of action," a phrase which becomes the theme of the remainder of the book. Quintín plunges into revolutionary activities, and after numerous adventures, escapes from his enemies and leaves Cordova. The final chapter provides the reader with an opportunity to observe the protagonist six years later. He is now a member of the Chamber of Deputies, but his success has cost him his integrity and his chance for happiness. The point is that it would be fine to be a man of action, as an ideal, but in practice one cannot achieve success without the sacrifice of principle.

It turns out, then, that here again plot functions as the handmaiden of ideology, but it is more carefully planned and executed than in La lucha por la vida, and it is worth noting that in this novel, instead of just ending it anywhere, Baroja makes a distinct effort to "round things off," tie up loose ends, and point his moral. Since, as
we have already seen, he does the same thing in *El mayorazgo de Labraza, Paradox, rey,* and *Zalacain el aventurero,* it seems plain that he was not always anarchistic in his approach to the practice of the novel.

*Los últimos románticos* (1906) and *Las tragedias grotescas* (1907), the other two novels of this trilogy, constitute a unit and may be considered as one work. Here it is difficult to trace an organized plot. One has to say simply that the story revolves around the life of Fausto Bengoa in Paris in the late 1860's, but it is actually a novel of manners, and depicts the degeneration of Parisian society in the years immediately preceding the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.

There is, certainly, a rather vague outline of a plot. The decline in the family life of Don Fausto parallels the general disintegration of society, and the introduction of Carlos Yarza as a principal character in the second book ties the plot thread to the revolutionary movement against Napoleon III. Yet, although the novel ends with the cataclysm of the suppression of the Commune of 1871, the effect which lingers is that in spite of everything Fausto Bengoa's life will continue much as before. The protagonist himself sums up the feeling in the final words of the book: "La vida, créelo, Nanette, no acaba nunca... Siempre se está
al principio...y al fin." Thus, there is no conclusion because there is little plot; the story simply stops. Here again, as in *La lucha por la vida*, the plot has no organic function, but serves merely as a framework on which to hang a sort of historical cuadros de costumbres. It is worth noting, also, that in this trilogy Baroja utilizes historical events to an extreme degree, particularly in *Las tragedias grotescas*, so that he is writing about as much history as fiction.

Much of what has just been said of the last two novels of *El pasado* applies also to the first two of *La raza*. *La dama errante* (1908) is based on a historical incident, the attempted assassination of Alfonso XIII and his wife in Madrid on May 31, 1906. The main events of the story, as well as the principal characters, are taken from reality, and the description of the flight of Doctor Aracil and his daughter to Portugal is based upon a trip through the same region made by Baroja himself, along with his brother and a friend. Thus the plot of this novel was not invented by

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19 *Obra*, I, 1047.

20 This trilogy illustrates Baroja's comparison of the novel with history: "La novela, en general, es como la corriente de la Historia: no tiene ni principio ni fin; empieza y acaba donde se quiera." *Obra*, IV, 326. Baroja's thinking of the novel as similar to history may explain why he wrote so many historical novels.

the author, but provided by a historical incident, which he has followed closely. This means that the plot is essential in that it provides the book's reason for being, but it is not greatly elaborated by Baroja, who uses it as a basis for the depiction of ambiente. In this way he is able to expand an incident into a full-length novel.

The second part, La ciudad de la niebla (1909), follows Doctor Aracil and María to London. María's attempt to find herself, to live independently without hypocrisy, and her eventual surrender to the forces of conformity, furnish a thin line of plot. Ideological considerations dictate the conclusion, which is the impossibility of a woman's overcoming the dead weight of tradition by herself. However, the amount of space devoted by the author to observation of the London scene leads us to the conclusion that here again plot is subordinate, and the main intention to write a novel of manners.22

El árbol de la ciencia (1911), unrelated to the other two novels of the trilogy, is philosophical in tone, and punctuated by long ideological discussions between Andrés Hurtado, the protagonist, and his uncle, Iturrioz. In this case the discussions are not digressions, since the theme, the need to give some direction to life, requires a great

22Baroja says of this novel that "no tiene una acción muy bien limitada." Páginas escogidas, p. 274.
deal of exposition in order to present the various alternatives. At the same time, there is a fairly cohesive plot. Andrés, a medical student at the time the story opens, decides that he must seek a worthwhile goal in life through the gradual acquisition of experiences, and the plot is worked out through these stages of growth. As might be expected, the experiences of the protagonist afford the author numerous opportunities to work at his specialty, cuadros de costumbres. There is for example the description of the daily life of the students in medical school, or of the unspeakable misery of the San Juan de Dios hospital. Another fine example of this kind of thing is Andrés's experience as a physician in the little town of Alcolea del Campo, in southern Castile. This episode occupies all of Part Five, and contains sharply-drawn pictures of the life and customs of a typical Castilian village, presented very unfavorably, since they are typically Spanish, and therefore, in Baroja's opinion, "de un absurdo completo."23 There is even a little short story within the novel in this section, a murder mystery which turns out to be a suicide.24 This incident has no direct connection with the plot, but it

23Obras, II, 527.

24The reference is to Chapter IX, "La mujer del tío Garrota," Obras, II, 537-540.
is important thematically in somewhat the same way as is "El curioso impertinente" in Don Quijote. In this case, the story within a story serves as a clarification of one of the major themes, the hopelessness of trying to get the majority of Spaniards to change their way of thinking, no matter how evident a given error becomes.

These incidents along the way are not so numerous that they cause the reader to lose sight of the main thread of plot. This thread is the accumulation of experience by Andrés, and its assimilation into his intellectual life. Paralleling his intellectual development on the material side is his growing interest in Lulú, and the problem of love is apparently solved by marriage. Only apparently, because the dénouement follows swiftly: after two years of unprecedented happiness and well-being, Lulú becomes pregnant, the baby is stillborn, Lulú dies in childbirth, and Andrés Hurtado commits suicide by taking poison. Of course, killing off the main characters is sometimes a too convenient way of ending a novel, but here the conclusion, though at first reading a bit startling, on reflection seems justified and even inevitable. It was not unusual for women

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25 In this connection, see the study of Bruce W. Wardropper, "The Pertinence of El curioso impertinente," PMLA, LXXII (1957), 587-600.
to die in childbirth in the early years of this century, and adequate motivation for Andrés's suicide is found in the very intensity of his happiness with Lulú, after the barrenness of the preceding years.

The effect of this handling, in retrospect, is to clarify the whole plot structure: a young medical student, seeking a meaning and a goal for his life, passes through experiences which lead him into pessimism, and when he finally achieves happiness, only to be rudely deprived of it after a brief interval, rejects life and eliminates himself from the struggle. The other elements, environment, customs, philosophical discussions, are supplementary. Yet they add as much to the effect of the work as a whole as the plot does; on balance, we may say that this is a novel in which plot carries more of the burden than in any of those of the last three trilogies discussed, and the definitiveness of its ending gives it a family resemblance to El mayorazgo de Labraz, La casa de Aizgorri, Zalacain el aventurero, Paradox, rey, and La feria de los discretos.

César o nada (1910), the first novel of the trilogy Las ciudades, is similar to that part of El árbol de la ciencia which deals with Andrés's experience in Alcolea del Campo. Here also there are two protagonists: a man, César Moncada, and a town, Castro Duro. The plot is the conflict between them, and it follows a familiar pattern: in the
beginning, partial success; in the end, eventual defeat by the forces of conservatism. César Moncada represents liberalism, the town of Castro Duro reaction. The defeat of the liberals, brought about by the shooting of César, if followed by the triumphant restoration of the old traditions, and the return to the status quo is summed up in the final paragraph of the novel, which is such a fine expression of Baroja's pessimism on this point that it deserves quotation in full:

Hoy Castro Duro ha abandonado ya definitivamente sus pretensiones de vivir, ha vuelto al orden, como dice el periódico semanal conservador; las fuentes se han secado, la escuela se cerró, los arbolillos del Parque Moncada fueron arrancados. La gente emigra todos los años por centenares. Hoy para un molino, mañana se hunde una casa; pero Castro Duro sigue viviendo con sus venerandas tradiciones y sus sacrosantos principios, sin permitir que los advenedizos sin religión y sin patria turben su vida, sin mancillar los derechos sacrosantísimos de la Iglesia nuestra madre, envuelto en polvo, en suciedad y en mugre, dormido al sol, en medio de sus campos sin riego.26

This is an ideological novel, and the similarity of its theme to that of Galdós's Doña Perfecta is apparent. Baroja's work loses some of its force, however, through its lack of concentration and its division into two parts of only slight relation to each other. Part One, which takes

26%Obras, II, 751.
place in Rome, contributes practically nothing to the conflict which creates the plot in Part Two. In addition, it makes the novel too long for its subject, given the simplicity of the thesis, since a thesis novel ordinarily must be kept relatively short if it is not to degenerate into the laboring of an obvious point. Nevertheless, Part Two by itself is well constructed. From the time of César's arrival in Castro Duro, the action moves steadily (and even relatively swiftly, for Baroja) toward a climax as the protagonist gains in power and prestige, only to be shot down by hired assassins. The conflict is liquidated, and the town returns to its former somnolent state. The dominant note in this plot is irony: the irony of the fate of the reformer. He who devotes his energies to improving the conditions of life in the community is persecuted by the very elements that prate most constantly about the benefits they bring to struggling humanity. Ironic, too, is César's downfall; he is shot while carrying in his pocket a letter from a friend warning him of the plot to assassinate him, a letter which he has not had time to read. The ending is another of the "rounded off" kind, at least to a degree, and adds to the evidence that Baroja frequently gave attention to this aspect of structure.

*El mundo es así* (1912) is one of the few novels of Baroja which has a woman as its protagonist. In part an
epistolary novel, it is set in Geneva and Seville, and re­lates the matrimonial difficulties of a Russian girl, Sacha Savaroff. There is no plot aside from this, and most of the book is taken up with discussions revolving around the theme manifested by the title. The meaning of the phrase "el mundo es así" is spelled out in many places, and summed up near the end of the novel in these words: "La vida es esto: crueldad, ingratitud, inconsciencia, desde de la fuerza por la debilidad, y así son los hombres y las mujeres, y así somos todos."27 It is this theme that gives the book its singleness of effect, rather than a plot structure, which is seldom in evidence. Here again, "digressions" form most of the substance of the novel, which consists of an examination of feminine psychology and the male-female relationship in Spain.

By now, it has become apparent that when Baroja writes a novel without any plot to speak of, the purpose of the work lies precisely in the "digressions" themselves. This is perhaps Baroja's fundamental technical defect as a novelist. We have seen, in the consideration of several of the novels already discussed, that he is capable of constructing a plot; he is capable of bringing a work to an artistic conclusion; but in the number and length of his

27 Obras, II, 842.
philosophical commentaries, he is guilty of inserting too much extraneous matter in the novel. Too often we see the essayist instead of the novelist.

The third novel of this disconnected trilogy, *La sensualidad pervertida* (1920), is also made up largely of *divagaciones*. Told in the first person, it derives its unity from its autobiographical form, covering the life of Luis Murguía from infancy to about the age of fifty. It seems safe to assume that the protagonist is Baroja, very thinly disguised, and thus this is one of our author's most personal books, among many such. The emphasis throughout is on Murguía's experiences and relationships with the opposite sex, most of which were disappointing. While women are by no means vilified, the author makes no secret of his regret that they seemingly prefer good-looking show-offs to homelier men of greater substance. At the same time, the sexual mores of Spain come in for vigorous censure, as in other works of Baroja. Of plot, however, little can be said, since here again we have the merest outline of a story used only as a framework for autobiographical recollections and reflections.

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28 See Luis S. Granjel, *Retrato de Pío Baroja* (Barcelona, 1953), p. 22. The identification is based on the many points of contact between the story of Murguía and the known facts of Baroja's life.
With *Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía* (1910), the first novel of the tetralogy *El mar*, we come to something different from the works previously considered. Instead of a poverty of invention, there is almost an embarrassment of riches. The method is familiar: the story purports to be the memoirs of an old Basque sailor, recalling the adventures of his youth. For a time the narrative proceeds along this line, relating incidents of his childhood and early manhood in the port of Lázaro. But before long, a complication is introduced in the form of the mystery surrounding Shanti's uncle, Juan de Aguirre. This plot thread runs parallel with that concerning the life of Shanti Andía for a time, gradually occupying more and more of the narrative, until it finally crowds Shanti out altogether, and the last half of the book is concerned almost exclusively with the working out of the identity of Juan de Aguirre and the recounting of his numerous and remarkable adventures on the slave ship *El dragón*, commanded by the amazing and picturesque Captain Zaldumbide. The manner in which the threads of this mystery are tied together one after another, through successive revelations by different persons connected with the story in some way, concluding with Juan de Aguirre's own account which fills in the final gaps, makes the plot of this novel one of the most complicated in Baroja. It is not that it is, in retrospect, a really
complicated tale, but the piecemeal manner of its unfolding shows a care in construction hardly characteristic of the author we are studying. One or two examples will make this complexity evident.

One example is the matter of the identity of Juan de Aguirre. Early in the story, a man going under this name dies, and Shanti, supposing that it is his uncle, whom no one has seen for some years, attends a funeral service held for him. But the family's maid assures Shanti, at this time still a child, that his uncle has not died at all. Twenty years later, a conversation with an old Basque captain tends to confirm Shanti's suspicion that his uncle was not the one who died. Another captain, Iriberrí, who had sailed with Aguirre, contributes the information that he was captured by the English, and that he was probably still in prison, unless he had either escaped or died. Not long after this comes the summons that takes Shanti to the bedside of a dying man in a remote country house, and the man reveals himself to Shanti as his long-lost uncle, Juan de Aguirre. Then, gradually, comes the unfolding of the mystery in the manner alluded to above, with the exchange of names between Juan de Aguirre and Tristán de Ugarte, so that only near the end of the novel does the reader find out for certain that the funeral service for Juan de Aguirre was brought about by news of the death of Tristán de Ugarte,
who had exchanged names and papers with Juan, and was thought to be the latter.

Another good example of this kind of care in the construction of the plot is the importance of the envelope which Juan de Aguirre gives to his nephew in the scene in the country house. At that time, no hint is given of the contents of the envelope; Shanti's uncle simply makes Shanti swear to give it to one Juan Machín one year after his death. In due time this is done, and the manuscript reveals that Machín is the illegitimate son of Juan de Aguirre. When Machín leaves Lázaro, he gives the manuscript to an old doctor, friend of Shanti, and the doctor gives it to Shanti, who reproduces it in his memoirs (i.e., the novel) and thus clears up all the remaining mysteries concerning his person.

The fact is that in this book Baroja has outdone himself, and the interwoven threads make the tax on the reader's memory almost too great at times, particularly since the work contains a typically large assortment of characters. But this novel is more than an exercise in the complication of plot. It is a rousing tale of adventure on the high seas, of slave traffic, of piracy, of the strange and savage daily life aboard the sailing vessels of the nineteenth century, of disease and violent death. The main narrative centers around the slave ship El dragón, captained
by the aforementioned Zaldumbide, and among whose crew was Juan de Aguirre. The narration of its voyages, adventures and misadventures, many of them wild and woolly yet utterly believable, makes fascinating reading. This novel reveals to us a "new" Baroja, the Baroja of the straight adventure yarn, displaying a truly amazing wealth of invention in the variety of incident. We shall have an opportunity to examine this same type of novel uncomplicated by so much plot in the analysis of the last two novels of the tetralogy, *Los pilotos de altura* and *La estrella del capitán Chimiste*.

In *El laberinto de las sirenas* (1923), the fantastic element comes to the fore. In this work the structure is loose, although there is considerable complication. The form is biographical, a favorite form of Baroja, as we have seen. A long, rambling preface tells us that what follows is the story of the life of Juan Galardi, "un vasco decidido y valiente." In fact, however, the protagonist of the narrative is a place—"El laberinto de las sirenas," a strangely-shaped formation of rocks in a little cove on the coast of southern Italy. This locality, and the villa constructed on the site, is the center of the book, around which move several different important characters, each with his own story. These are presented in a rather meandering fashion, with frequent interruptions for lyrical
interludes by the author. The principal aim seems to be to create atmosphere, to give a sense of the aire fatídico which hovers over this beautiful but haunted place. This is borne out by the misfortune which eventually overtakes almost everyone closely connected with the spot. The inclusion of numerous "prose poems" to the mysterious attraction of the sea appear to justify the view that this work is an expression of Baroja's lyricism. In it, his Romanticism triumphs for the moment over his normal Realism. The plot, broken up into sections, is less important than the atmosphere in creating the novel's total effect.

*Los pilotos de altura* (1929) and *La estrella del capitán Chimista* (1930) form a unit, and may be considered as a single novel. In this work the tale of adventure is the outstanding element, but the procedure is somewhat different from that of *Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía*. The narrative is formed of the parallel lives of two seamen, Ignacio Embil and José Chimista. Perhaps parallel is not exactly the word to use; the story follows first one and then the other, then both, as their paths cross, run together for a time, diverge, then re-cross. A series of exotic adventures will be typically followed by a meeting between the two, during which they have a chance to talk and comment upon the things they have seen. Their travels range over the entire globe—Havana, Charleston, S. C.,
Mexico, San Francisco, South America, the Orient--almost every conceivable locality. Again and again the reader is surprised by the author's fertility of imagination, after it seems that he has exhausted the possibilities of variety and multiplication of incidents. This is, then, a novel of action and adventure, with a loose plot made up of minor incidents, with ample opportunity for conversations between the protagonists concerning the relativism of manners and morals.

The importance of the tetralogy El mar for the purposes of the present study lies in its demonstration of the possibilities of variety in Baroja. It adds a Romantic novel, two novels of almost pure adventure, and an adventure novel with considerable plot complication to a total which already includes the picaresque novel, the philosophical novel, the thesis novel, the novel of manners, the historical novel, the psychological novel, and the political novel.

The trilogy Agonías de nuestro tiempo is an organic unit. All three novels, El gran torbellino del mundo, Las veleidades de la fortuna, and Los amores tardíos, were written during the same year, 1926. In form, the trilogy is the biography of José Larrañaga, and it belongs to the same family as La sensualidad pervertida. In other words, it is personal, philosophical, and rambling. In fact, it
is probably the most rambling of all Baroja's novels. Apparently even our author felt this, for the third novel of the trilogy contains a brief prologue which is in effect an apology for such a long book which goes nowhere in particular: "¡Qué se va a hacer! A mí el libro que me gusta es el que no tiene ni principio ni fin." In this case, it is certainly true that the novel has neither beginning nor end, and perhaps not even a middle. It is useless to try to trace a plot; the scene shifts about aimlessly from one European city to another, and in all of them José Larraflaga does little besides talk. It is the novel of pure divagaciones in its most unadulterated state. Since plot is of so little account, there is no need to dwell upon this trilogy in the present chapter.

La selva oscura, the trilogy made up of La familia de Errotacho (1931), El cabo de las tormentas (1932), and Los visionarios (1932), offers little of interest to plot analysis. All three novels are based on the political crisis in Spain which brought about the establishment of the Republic in 1931, and the method used is primarily journalistic. It is the kind of journalistic writing that Baroja does very well, but the imaginative element is slight. This trilogy illustrates again Baroja's inclination

29Obras, I, 1325.
for making novels out of current events of historical significance.

The final trilogy, _La juventud perdida_, is a bit difficult to analyze. _Las noches del Buen Retiro_ (1933) is constructed mainly about the life of Jaime Thierry, a young newspaperman. It ends with his death from tuberculosis, and so has a definitive ending. Yet there is little that could properly be called plot. It is done in the manner of _La lucha por la vida_, in that the life of a particular individual provides the focal point and the unifying thread, but no single episode or aspect is selected for significant development. In other words, there is no complication, climax, or resolution, but simply the daily movements of Jaime, his work, his loves, his aspirations and disappointments, and finally his illness and death. Needless to say, the environment in which he moves is presented in detail, with its full complement of "tipos, paisajes y sucesos."^{30}

_El cura de Monleón_ (1936) is another philosophical novel. Its protagonist is Javier Olarán, a priest about 33 years old, who gradually comes to doubt his vocation in response to various environmental influences, and embarks upon a program of reading which causes him definitely to abandon his faith. The framework is simple, and the greater

^{30}Obras, VI, 588.
part of the book is devoted to the exposition of arguments for and, especially, against Christianity. Approximately the last third is made up of Biblical criticism. More than a novel, this work is an examination of the traditional content of the Christian religion, and its anti-dogmatism reminds the reader of earlier polemical writings like Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. Thus, although it is an absorbing book, little can be said of it from the standpoint of plot.

*Locuras de carnaval* (1937) is not a single novel, but four short ones. These little novels are in part *cuadros de costumbres*, in part psychological studies. Because of their length, they really belong to the short story rather than the novel, and may be excluded from the present survey.

It should now be possible to reach some general conclusions regarding the function of plot in Baroja's fiction. Of course generalizations must be handled carefully, and almost always qualified. It should be apparent that plot in a novel of Baroja may be of great importance, or of practically no importance at all, a mere excuse for an ideological treatise. At one end of the spectrum are novels like *El mayorazgo de Labraz* and *Las inquietudes de Shanti-Andía*, in which plot is carefully worked out, while at the other end one finds such amorphous works as *La sensualidad pervertida* or the three books of the *Agonías de nuestro tiempo* trilogy.
Nevertheless, it is possible to discern a favorite type of plot, one to which Baroja returns again and again. I refer to the biographical or autobiographical form, a novel revolving primarily around the life of a single individual, in which the construction is haphazard and the conclusion is either indefinite or natural, as when caused by the death of the protagonist. Reasons for this preference are of course not far to seek. Some of them have been set down in Chapter Three of the present study, and referred to from time to time in this chapter. One aspect of Baroja's theory which bears on this point is that the novel is like the current of history, which begins and ends anywhere. Then, too, the novel reflects life; not, to be sure, life as it is completely, but life as the novelist sees it; and this is the way Baroja sees life: aimless, haphazard, full of the unexpected, the illogical, and the ludicrous, without a well-defined goal and meaning, yet fascinating, and overflowing with curious people and places. It is Baroja's inexhaustible curiosity toward picturesque characters and localities that makes the meandering form mandatory in the majority of his novels. A tightly constructed plot, in which all extraneous matter was rigidly excluded, would give him no opportunity to pause along the way to bring in all manner of folk for a brief appearance. In his own words: "Yo necesito escribir entreteniéndome en el detalle,
como el que va por el camino distraído, mirando este árbol, aquel arroyo y sin pensar demasiado adónde va.\textsuperscript{31}

Aside from this, however, there are other reasons, which are to be found in the general preoccupations of the generation of 1898. Unamuno, Azorín, Antonio Machado, all voiced their concern with similar problems in their works. The "digressions" in Baroja's novels are the result of his willingness to sacrifice form for his contributions to the great debate on the issues of the day among the intellectuals of that generation. This, as noted before, is his greatest technical defect, in that he forgets that he is writing a novel instead of an essay. One feels that Baroja is a good novelist when he sticks to novel-writing, as evidenced by his variety, his fertility of imagination, and his ability to construct when he wants to. He is of course an excellent essayist, but his stature as a novelist would perhaps be greater today than it is if he had not insisted to such an extent on mixing the genres. This is particularly so since the issues which he discussed in his novels are not as alive to us as they were to the Spaniards of Baroja's day, and this fact is causing a great deal of his work to become dated already. It will be remembered, however, that Baroja recognized the ephemeral quality of his

\textsuperscript{31}Páginas escogidas, p. 12.
work and was not greatly perturbed by it.\textsuperscript{32}

Another factor in the situation is the extent to which Baroja uses historical materials in his novels, an aspect already referred to. In trilogies such as \textit{El pasado} and \textit{La selva oscura} the plot is interwoven with historical events, which in part makes the novels history, and limits the author's freedom to construct a plot according to his own plan.

The point which needs to be remembered is that Baroja is perfectly capable of constructing a conventional plot when it suits his purposes. \textit{La casa de Aizgorri}, \textit{El mayo-razgo de Labraz}, \textit{Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía}, and to a lesser degree, \textit{Zalacain el aventurero}, \textit{Paradox, rey}, \textit{El árbol de la ciencia}, and \textit{César o nada} are novels in which plot is of substantial importance.

\textsuperscript{32}Obras, II, 232.
Characterization in Baroja may best be approached by considering first some general observations on fictional personages. Our first task will be to inquire into the nature of characters in fiction, in order to appreciate the peculiarities that distinguish them from living human beings.

E. M. Forster points to the impossibility of complete communication between real people as central to the distinction. That is, we cannot read another person's thoughts, and neither can we bring ourselves to confess all of our own thoughts to others, not even to intimate friends or members of our family. A novelist, however, in creating a character, can allow his readers to understand him completely, by revealing his innermost thoughts and feelings. We therefore come to feel that we know fictional characters more fully than we know our own friends, since the latter always have secrets from us.\(^1\) Forster goes on to characterize *homo fictus* as needing little sleep or

\(^1\)Aspects of the Novel, p. 47.
food, but constantly occupied with human relationships.\textsuperscript{2}

Robert Liddell points out certain additional differences between existence in fiction and existence in life. For one thing, we exist continuously in life, whereas a character in fiction exists only at such times as he appears on the scene. And when he does appear, he ordinarily must do something special and interesting, while real people often exist for days and years without doing anything noteworthy. Another feature of \textit{homo fictus} is the simplification of his physical and mental life. He ordinarily omits such external acts as brushing his teeth, and in his thinking he usually proceeds more logically from thought to thought than ordinary human beings.\textsuperscript{3}

By these standards, the characters of Baroja do not differ essentially from other fictional beings in their mode of existence. The only respect in which they appear to differ somewhat from the generalized \textit{homo fictus} is in their tendency to be on the scene without necessarily doing anything special or interesting, unless these adjectives can be applied to the activities of refection and introspection.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 56.

\textsuperscript{3}A Treatise on the Novel, pp. 91-92. Liddell notes, however, that James Joyce and others have attempted to make \textit{homo sapiens} and \textit{homo fictus} coextensive.
The question of how fictional characters are made is more difficult. Most critics agree that they are nearly always taken from life, in one way or another. Liddell asserts that even when a character is said to be wholly fictitious, we can be sure that it is drawn largely from other characters in fiction, which are themselves taken from life. Maugham also tells us that drawing characters from life is the universal custom among novelists.

Maugham does not of course mean that the novelist simply copies his originals. In the first place he cannot know them intimately enough to do that; people are too elusive, too incoherent and contradictory. In the second place, the novelist's concern is not to reproduce a person, but to take what he wants and needs from him in order to form a plausible harmony adequate for his purpose. In short, the novelist is an artist, not a biographer.

Pío Baroja's practice in this regard is, as he tells us, the same as that of other novelists. He invents his principal characters and copies his secondary ones from

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4Ibid., p. 91.
5The Summing Up, p. 132.
6Ibid., p. 133.
reality. But there seems to be a difference between this statement and those of Liddell and Maugham. If Baroja invents his principal characters, does that mean that they are not taken from life? It would appear, rather, that they are taken from Baroja himself.

Somerset Maugham maintains that a novelist creates convincing characters to the extent that he himself is in the character. Most other writers agree that they put a great deal of themselves in their major creations, and Flaubert is even quoted as saying "I am Madame Bovary." If we turn to examine Baroja's principal characters, we shall see to what extent they are drawn from his own personality, rather than invented.

The heroes in Baroja's novels fall into two classes: men of action and their opposites. The former are strong, dominant, and energetic; the latter are men of paralyzed will and slight vital energy. The men of action are Martín Zalacain, Quintín García Roelas, César Moncada, Shanti Andía, José Chimista, and Juan Galardi. Katherine Reding rightly points out that these men of action are of two types, those who are unconsciously and instinctively active,

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7Baroja's words are: "Yo, como los demás escritores, en mis novelas casi siempre invento el tipo principal y copio de la realidad los secundarios." Páginas escogidas, p. 18.

8The Summing Up, p. 143.
and those who choose action as an ideal of life after reflection. The first group is comprised of Zalacain, Shanti Andfa, José Chimista, and Juan Galardi, while Quintín and César form the second, along with the Silvestre Paradox of Paradox, rey, who becomes a man of action through force of circumstances. It is the general view of critics that these hombres de acción represent, not the real Baroja, but a projection of his desires, a fictional ideal of the kind of man he would have liked to have been. This view is accepted in the present study, and it is further believed that the two different types of men of action represent two levels of projection. The instinctively and unconsciously active protagonists are the kind Baroja would have liked to be, since they do not have to find an answer to the problem of the meaning of life, whereas those who consciously choose


10 For example, Gonzalo Torrente Ballester speaks of Baroja's "amor de los tipos humanos más opuestos a su propio ser" in Panorama de la literatura española contemporánea, Madrid, 1956, p. 182; José A. Balseiro says of Baroja that "las hazañas que hubieran podido interesarle como hombre, pero sin condiciones personales para realizarlas, se las hizo vivir a los seres de su invención literaria" in Elasço Ibáñez, Unamuno, Valle-Inclán, Baroja, Chapel Hill, 1949, p. 201; and Luis Granjel speaks of Baroja's "deseo de aventuras que, nunca satisfecho por la realidad, buscó saciar en el mundo novelesco, pura creación suya, de las mejores páginas de su literatura" in Retrato de Pío Baroja, Barcelona, 1953, pp. 25-26.
action as an ideal do so as an answer to this problem. The latter, therefore, represent Baroja as he might possibly have been, not just as he would have liked to be ideally, and therefore contain more of their creator than the purely active characters. Evidence for this is found in their preoccupation with self, in their intellectual tendencies, and in their doubts and hesitations, all of which are noticeably lacking in men like José Chimista or Martín Zalacaín.

Yet Baroja could not believe whole-heartedly enough in his men of action to make them permanently successful in life. Of the six being considered, only José Chimista, who attains the proportions of a veritable superman, is able to overcome all odds. Martín Zalacaín is murdered, shot in the back by a treacherous enemy; Quintín is able to achieve success in politics, but only at the expense of his integrity; César Moncada is shot down by hired gunmen and his work undone by the forces of reaction; Shanti Andía gives up his active life after a few initial adventures and lives on his memories; and Juan Galardi, with advancing age, surrenders his independence for domestic tranquillity, and eventually enters a monastery. A similar fate befalls the Silvestre Paradox of Paradox, rey, whose ideal society is destroyed by "civilization" in the form of invading imperialist armies. In these failures can be seen Baroja's characteristic pessimism, and perhaps also a justification of his
own failure to become in practice an example of his fictional ideal.

For it is in the abulic protagonists that we see mirrored more closely the real Baroja, the hombre sin voluntad. These are Manuel Alcázar, Andrés Hurtado, Luis Murguía, José Larrañaga, Fausto Bengoa, Jaime Thierry, Fernando Ossorio, and the Silvestre Paradox of Aventuras, inventos y mixtificaciones de Silvestre Paradox. Each of these characters is not only close to Baroja psychologically, but reproduces some important phase of the author's own experience. For example, Manuel Alcázar as a small businessman in Madrid, Andrés Hurtado as a medical student and later a country doctor, Jaime Thierry as a newspaperman, Luis Murguía as a man disappointed in love, and Fernando Ossorio as a man with a deep spiritual problem.

Equally apparent are the psychological affinities. These protagonists are all victims of abulia. They are lacking in both energy and will-power, but they do not feel that this situation is their own fault—it is simply their modo de ser, and no one can do anything about it. The attitude is well illustrated in an exchange between Roberto Hasting and Manuel Alcázar in Mala hierba. Roberto urges a philosophy of action upon Manuel:

Muévete, activate. Ahora la actividad para ti es un esfuerzo; haz algo; repite lo que hagas, hasta que la actividad para ti sea una costumbre. Convierte
The urging is useless. Manuel says nothing to Roberto, but his mental reply is: "Me dice: 'Ten voluntad.' 'Pero, ¿si no la tengo?' 'Hazla.' Es como si me dijesen que tuviera un palmo más de estatura."  

Somewhat different in tone, but illustrating the same attitude of resignation to one's limitations of character, is Luis Murguía's gentle complaint about his lack of success with the opposite sex. This dialogue occurs at the end of La sensualidad pervertida. A woman friend is asking Luis questions about his attitude toward women:

---Usted se ha reído mucho de las mujeres.
---No; hubiera sido reírse de la Naturaleza, y yo soy poca cosa para eso.
---Entonces, ¿por qué habla usted mal de nosotras?
---¿Qué quiere usted? Esto no es más que amor y entusiasmo disimulado por ustedes y dolor por el fracaso.
---¡Bah!
---Sí. No me ha ido completamente bien con el gremio femenino... Como decía antes, me ha faltado el desdén... y la barba negra.

---11Obras, I, 391.
---12Ibid.
---13Obras, II, 994.
José Larrañaga exhibits the same kind of fatalism as Manuel Alcázar: "Hemos tomado una postura espiritual y material, queriendo o sin querer, y eso somos."\textsuperscript{14} Los amores tardíos, the same character voices a different expression of the same essential determinism: "Parecemos conscientes, libres, y las acciones más trascendentales de nuestra vida las ejecutamos en plena inconsciencia, casi como sonámbulos."\textsuperscript{15}

Andrés Hurtado, though more active and decisive than Larrañaga, arrives at a similar stage of fatalism: "¿Por qué incomodarse, si todo está determinado, si es fatal, si no puede ser de otra manera?"\textsuperscript{16} Even Fernando Ossorio, although he is moderately successful in solving his spiritual problem, is unable to make himself over completely, and has to resign himself to bringing up his son to be what he would have liked to be: "El ya no podía arrojar de su alma por completo aquella tendencia mística por lo desconocido y lo sobrenatural, ni aquel culto y atracción por la belleza de la forma; pero esperaba sentirse fuerte y abandonarlas en su hijo."\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14}Obras, I, 1061.
\textsuperscript{15}Obras, I, 1373.
\textsuperscript{16}Obras, II, 529.
\textsuperscript{17}Obras, VI, 128.
If we seek a common denominator in both types of protagonists which will identify them with Baroja, we may find it either in their continual cerebration or in their spiritual orientation toward life. Katherine Reding has shown that these heroes' conception of life as a blind force motivated only by egoistic desires, without transcendental meaning or purpose, leads them to one of two extreme positions: either they remain on the sidelines of life, disillusioned and doing nothing, or else they participate in its self-seeking, striving through action for concrete and selfish goals. Which posture is adopted depends simply on the individual's *manera de ser*, and a sense of the futility of life is present in either case. That this is Baroja's own view of life we know of course from his essays, which formed the basis of the ideological study in Chapter One of this investigation.

The identification of these major characters with facets of Baroja's personality, and particularly with his spiritual orientation, does not appear to admit of doubt. However, since we are dealing with fiction rather than autobiography, these same characters must function in the novel, and be as convincing and complete, psychologically, as possible. What, then, are the criteria for judging the

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adequacy of fictional characters?

E. M. Forster has conveniently divided them into round and flat characters, a system followed by many other critics. A flat character, he says, is one which can be summed up in a single sentence, while a round is one which is capable of surprising us in a convincing manner. To be round, a character must have "the incalculability of life about it." It is assumed by Forster that it is better for characters to be round than flat, although this causes him to encounter some difficulty in explaining the vitality of Dickens, most of whose characters are flat. His explanation is that Dickens' characters borrow a little life from their creator and somehow vibrate a bit. How this "vibration" takes place is not immediately apparent. The question here seems to be whether flat characters can also be convincing, without surprising us. In life there appear to be flat people, or at least our perception of them always from the same angle makes them look flat. Baroja himself complains that some people are nothing but "silhouettes," who cannot be filled out, and it is useless to try to write more than a few lines about them. It does seem that there are

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20 Ibid., p. 71.
21 Obras, IV, 320.
people with fixed ideas of conduct, which limit their activities and deprive them of extra dimensions, thus removing most of the element of unpredictability from their actions. A novel may contain characters of this type and still leave a vivid impression of life.

If we accept Forster's definition of the round character as one who is capable of surprising us convincingly, and apply it to Baroja's protagonists, we encounter several who qualify. For example, Andrés Hurtado's suicide comes as a surprise, but it is not out of character for a pessimist who was never convinced that his happiness could last. When his son was stillborn and his wife died in childbirth, he felt that he no longer had any reason to live, and declined to participate any longer in what he deemed a meaningless farce. César Moncada undergoes a rather surprising change after he gets married, but after all marriage changes many men. Similarly, Manuel Alcázar's refusal to join other underprivileged children in a life of crime is unexpected, but we know of many cases in which environment alone does not produce a criminal. Quintín García Roelas is another hero who undergoes a profound change by becoming a man of action through choice, but we are prepared to accept the change because of the latent force of his character and the compelling circumstances of his situation. On the other hand, there are times when
a change in a character does not seem convincing; the conversion of Juan Galardi at the end of El laberinto de las sirenas is not, because the author dispatches the whole thing in a one-page epilogue.

Still, there is more to the problem of roundness than the test of surprise. Forster says in another place that a fictional character is real when the novelist knows everything about it. But is this possible? There are limits to this kind of knowledge, even when the fictional character is a thinly disguised version of the author himself. Psychological completeness is hardly possible, either in our conception of others or of ourselves. No author can reveal the ultimate springs of human behavior, but can only approximate them. Thus, even a great psychological novelist like Dostoyevsky cannot tell us precisely why Raskolnikov, in Crime and Punishment, goes through with his premeditated murder, but can only describe the condition of his mind as he planned it and executed it. Raskolnikov could have stopped before matters were beyond repair; he was on the verge of doing so several times, right up to the time the act was irrevocably committed. Why did he go through with it, when his better judgment repeatedly warned him of the folly of the whole undertaking? No one can say. Neither

the novelist nor the psychologist can say why some people only contemplate crime (almost everyone does, at one time or another) while others not only contemplate it, but plan it and ultimately execute it. Heredity or environment, or both together, simply do not seem adequate to explain all cases of criminal behavior.

Another example of psychological incompleteness is found in Stendhal, also famous as a writer with deep insight into the human soul. The motivation of Julien Sorel's shooting of Madame Rénal is scarcely to be comprehended. Only if Julien had been presented as being completely insane would the psychology have seemed adequate; but he is not so presented.23

Within the limitations of the novelist's possibilities, however, we may still determine whether or not the main characters in Baroja are presented as round or flat. That many of them are seen as living and growing human beings who change, develop, and evolve, and are seen from more than one angle, will be shown from the following examples.

Manuel Alcázar lives through all three books of the trilogy *La lucha por la vida*. He grows in the first place

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23It is interesting to note that Pío Baroja and W. Somerset Maugham, poles apart in other matters, share the same reaction to Stendhal's novel. For Baroja's opinion, see Obras, IV, 317. For Maugham's, see The Summing Up, pp. 131-132.
physically, like all men, since he is about 14 years of age at the beginning of *La busca* and around 22 at the close of *Aurora roja*. But beyond this merely physical growth, the author follows his mental and spiritual development rather closely, showing in detail the various stages through which he passes in his struggle to overcome the handicaps of his environment and come to terms with life and with his own conscience. If Baroja cannot quite put his finger on precisely what it is that saves Manuel from going the way of some of his companions, it is for the reason mentioned above, that no one can say exactly why one person is preserved from depravity while another is not, under identical conditions. The change does take place, nonetheless, and in *Aurora roja* Manuel has progressed from a golfo to a respectable young businessman, married and with a future. In addition, Baroja devotes a great deal of space to studies of the protagonist's *estado de ánimo*, as he does in almost all of his novels. That, after all, is what interests him most in the characters drawn after his own likeness.

*María Aracil* furnishes another excellent example. For a long time, through most of *La ciudad de la niebla*, she is a woman who wishes to live independently, according to the dictates of her own conscience, and she struggles valiantly to make a place for herself in the world. Gradually, the pressures of the environment cause her spirits to flag, and
eventually she is forced to give up her aspirations. She bows to the inevitable and returns to Spain, marries and settles down to a conventional life. Yet no violence is done to her character; the change is perfectly logical and understandable in the human terms with which we are all familiar.

Quintín García Roelas, hero of *La feria de los discretos*, is a protagonist who is followed all the way from childhood to the age of thirty-two. In his early twenties, the part of his life with which most of the novel is concerned, he is a man of action, too busy with the process of becoming a success to devote much time to reflection about values. Later, when he has achieved success, he comes to realize that he has gained it at the expense of his integrity and his chance for happiness, and his victory seems empty.

Other valid cases of growth and development are found in Silvestre Paradox, Shanti Andía (who is traced all the way from childhood to old age), Martín Zalacain, Clementina (notable for the influence of environment on character; in *Los últimos románticos* and *Las tragedias grotescas*), and Luis Murguía (of particular interest for the observation of changes in attitude toward love and sex with advancing age). In fact, Baroja's biographical method permits him to work with growth and change in many of his novels, and
a listing of those works in which a considerable portion of a person's life is represented, with the attendant psychological consequences, includes, in addition to those already mentioned, *Camino de perfección*, *El árbol de la ciencia*, *César o nada*, *El mundo es así*, the three books of *Agonías de nuestro tiempo*, and *El cura de Monleón*. The last-named covers a relatively short period of time, but the change in mental attitude of the protagonist is profound.

Without being in any way exhaustive, the foregoing examples should make it clear that Baroja is very much concerned with the psychological development of his major characters, and that if he does not appear to have uncovered the ultimate sources of human motivation, it is because this is not within the grasp of any novelist.

It must be admitted, however, that there is a great deal of sameness in the psychological make-up of Baroja's major creations. Because he puts so much of himself into these principal characters, they all suffer from similar intellectual preoccupations, and are polarized at the two extremes pointed out by Katherine Reding. There is, therefore, seldom a clash between two equally strong but opposite wills. The only example of such a clash that comes readily to mind is that of Martín Zalacain and Carlos Chando.
But if variety is lacking among Baroja's protagonists, the opposite is true of his minor characters. He has packed into his books a veritable swarm of humanity. For example, one might estimate the total number of characters appearing in *La lucha por la vida* at two hundred, and be reasonably certain that it is a conservative estimate. Since it is obviously impossible to draw more than a few of these characters with any degree of psychological completeness, Baroja adopts the procedure of trying to bring out the subject's salient characteristics in one short paragraph, a sort of thumb-nail sketch. A few examples will serve to illustrate his technique:

Era este Mingote hombre de unos cincuenta años, bajo, grueso, de bigote pintado, con la cara carnosa, la nariz pequeña y roja, la boca cínica, las trazas de agente de la Policía o de zurupeto. Vestía de una manera presuntuosa, le encantaba llevar una cadena gruesa en el chaleco y diamantes falsos, como garbanzos de grandes, en la pechera y en los dedos.  

This is the description of Don Bonifacio Mingote, one of the more important minor characters of *Mala hierba*. The outstanding qualities of this sketch are its economy of expression and the presentation of the author's judgment on the character's moral qualities simultaneously with the

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24 *Obras*, I, 409.
physical description. This inclusion of simpatía or antipatía is standard procedure with Baroja. The following example from La feria de los discretos shows an extreme case of antipatía:

Tenía el dómine Piñuela un tipo extravagante y ridículo: la nariz, gruesa, larga e inflamada; el labio inferior, colgante; los ojos, grandes, turbios, abultados, como dos huevos, siempre llorosos; vestía una levita larga y entallada, en algún tiempo negra; después, de grasa sobre mugre y de caspa sobre sebo; los pantalones, estrechos, con rodilleras de bulto, y un solideo negro.25

Thus is depicted the teacher of Quintín García Roelas. Here the characterization is reduced almost to caricature.

At the other extreme is this description of the girl who marries Juan Galardi in El laberinto de las sirenas:

Santa era una muchacha muy bonita y muy simpática, con el óvalo de la cara perfecto, los ojos grandes y melancólicos, el pelo de color de caoba, dividido en dos bandas y un aire de madonna.26

It would be erroneous, however, to leave the impression that Baroja is through with the description of his minor characters after such brief sketches. If they are of any importance at all, that is if they are present for more than a page or so, he usually develops them much more,

25Obras, I, 671.
26Obras, II, 1276.
giving attention to their mental and emotional make-up, and in particular to any outstanding idiosyncrasy.

If Baroja's feeling of antipathy or liking for his minor characters needs an explanation, it may be found in the fact that he copies them from life, without much modification. Since he is a man of strong likes and dislikes, the opinion he has formed of a person from observation is communicated to his readers when that person is introduced in a novel. This may or may not be a defect, but it does not prevent his minor characters from being convincing and life-like. It is, in fact, as much the minor characters as the major ones which convey to the reader of Baroja's novels the intense feeling of the ebb and flow of human life, which is the principal value of his work.

There remains to be considered the relevance of all these characters to the work as a whole. One well-known writer, Edith Wharton, has said that in the number of characters introduced in a novel, relevance is the first, the arch, necessity.²⁷ If by this is understood relevance to plot, Baroja must stand condemned. The sheer number of his characters makes it impossible that they could all contribute in some fashion to the plot. But if relevance is understood to pertain to the total effect of the novel,

²⁷The Writing of Fiction, p. 84.
our author has a somewhat better case. Large numbers of characters are necessary to produce the effect of life that he seeks. This does not mean that there is no principle of selection at work. Not only does the author select the characters he wishes to present to his readers, and the aspects he wishes to bring particularly to their attention, but the total number, though large, is far smaller than the number of persons the average man meets or sees in the course of a few days of his daily life.

The whole question of the number of characters introduced must be referred back to Baroja's theory of the novel. He has told us that his talent requires an "open" novel, with many windows and a large number of characters, even though he is willing to concede that a novel with a limited cast may be more artistic. On this point it is difficult to censure the novelist; Baroja defends himself by recounting the story about Mozart, who, upon being told that his opera Don Giovanni contained too many notes, replied: "On the contrary, it has only as many as needed." If Baroja cannot say the same of his novels, neither can any other novelist, and it has seemed to him that all his characters are entitled to a place on his stage.

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28Obras, IV, 323.
29Ibid., 313.
30Ibid., 326.
Critical opinion concerning the proper proportion and function of background in the novel is more uniform than in the case of plot or characters. A good starting-point for the discussion of this subject is provided by Wellek and Warren. These scholars point out that detailed attention to setting is not universal, but is characteristic rather of nineteenth-century Romanticism and Realism.\textsuperscript{1} They note that background can be employed in several ways: to establish a mood, to express character, or to serve as a determinant environment. They do not, however, evaluate background specifically as a constituent of fiction. Edith Wharton makes relevance the prime condition of setting, maintaining that a descriptive passage should depict only what the character or characters concerned would have noticed, and then only in terms within his or their range of intelligence.\textsuperscript{2} Robert Liddell feels that it is high time

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\textsuperscript{1}\textit{Theory of Literature} (New York, 1956), pp. 210-211. However, Wellek and Warren fail to mention the detailed attention to setting in the pastoral novel of the Renaissance and in Cervantes.

\textsuperscript{2}\textit{The Writing of Fiction}, p. 85.
\end{flushright}
for an open attack to be made on the pictorial element in literature. It is his view that background occupies a subordinate place in the novel, since "fiction is the delineation of character in action, and landscape in the background is merely incidental." He goes on to say that if background is looked at objectively, it must be seen only in so far as it explains the action, and if looked at subjectively, it must be the view of one of the characters.

His thought here clearly runs closely parallel to Edith Wharton's. Carl Grabo also condemns decorative but non-essential description, and asserts that "the technical test for fitness in the employment of background lies ... in the relevancy of the scene to action and to the mental states of the characters." E. M. Forster does not deal with setting in his *Aspects of the Novel*, but Percy Lubbock discusses it at some length in *The Craft of Fiction*, at least as it pertains to the art of Balzac and Tolstoy. A consideration of some of his remarks will lead us directly into the question of background in Baroja.

In speaking of Balzac, Lubbock says that he finds and expresses the life behind the story in the streets,

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houses, and rooms of his characters:

He cannot think of his people without the homes they inhabit; with Balzac to imagine a human being is to imagine a province, a city, a corner of the city, a building at a turn of the street, certain furnished rooms, and finally the man or woman who lives in them. He cannot be satisfied that the tenor of this creature's existence is at all understood without a minute knowledge of the things and objects that surround it.®

If we compare this paragraph with the following one of Baroja, the similarity in the point of view is quite clear:

Yo siempre he tendido a hacer descripciones por impresión directa y, sea amaneramiento o costumbre, no podría hablar de un personaje cualquiera si no supiera dónde vive y en qué ambiente se mueve.7

The reader will remember also a statement of Baroja that his aim is not to make a figure stand out from a background but to make it live in its environment.8

Lubbock goes on to point out, however, that Balzac concentrates his description at the beginning of his novels,

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®See page 60 of this study. Baroja's conception of the functional necessity of description contrasts sharply with the procedure followed by Unamuno in Niebla, Abel Sánchez, and La tía Tula, in which he has attempted to construct novels outside of space and time, so as not to "distraer al lector del relato del desarrollo de acciones y pasiones humanas." See the prologue to the second edition of Paz en la guerra, Madrid, 1923. 

7Páginas escogidas, p. 21.

8The Craft of Fiction, p. 220.
as an essential preliminary to the story, which, after it has performed its function of providing for the effect which the story will have throughout, gives way to the action. In Lubbock's words, Balzac "amasses in his opening picture the reserve of effect that he needs." Lubbock gives his approval to this method, at least in the hands of a Balzac, but whether or not he would approve of it in the hands of Baroja (he does not mention Baroja at all in his book) is dubious, particularly since Baroja not only accumulates description at the beginning of a novel, but ordinarily throughout its entire length. The extent and use of setting in Baroja will be shown now in some detail.

One favorite method of furnishing initial background is illustrated in El mayorazgo de Labraz. Here the physical setting is given in the prologue, along with the outline of the history of the town. The pretext is the presentation to the reader of how this particular novel (usually referred to as cuartillas or manuscrito) found its way into the hands of the author of the prologue. Thus two purposes are accomplished: the heightening of the effect of the reality of the story by giving details of the physical aspect of its locale, and the furthering of the illusion of

truth by making the story seem to come from a source at one remove from the author. The manner of presenting the description is through the eyes of the author as he approaches the city, describes it from afar as a group of yellowish houses of humble aspect, and then in more and more detail as the traveler draws closer and finally enters the village. Then follows the description of the streets, the individual buildings, the churches, the plaza. Here the author sits down to rest, and shortly finds himself in conversation with two villagers who happen by. It is in the course of this conversation that the outline of the history of the town is given, as told to the author by the villagers. The author then comes into contact with other townspeople, among whom is an Englishman who has written a novel about the most important inhabitant of Labraz. Our author takes the novel with him to read it, and some time later transcribes it for us, "sin poner ni quitar nada de mi parte."

After this initial establishment of the general setting, description is linked more closely to the action. Thus, in the opening scene of the novel proper, the description of the cold and cloudy night serves to emphasize the discomfort of the travelers who are out in it. At the same time, some of the details are added simply because the author takes delight in them for themselves, not because they have a function in the action. An example of
this type of description follows:

Alguna estrella brillaba en el fondo terso y negro del río, durmiendo tranquila, sobre todo en los remansos, en donde el agua parecía inmóvil. En la inmediata presa resonaba con rumor de misterio la corriente.¹⁰

Frequently physical description serves as the introduction to the presentation of characters in their environment, as in Balzac. Thus, the second chapter of the work being discussed opens with a detailed description of the inn run by La Goya, which then merges with the depiction of the characters who frequent it. After this, there is practically no description unconnected with action throughout the rest of Book One. The procedure is similar in the remainder of the novel, with detailed descriptions mostly at the beginning of a book, although sometimes chapters within a book will contain quite a bit of detail. For example, whenever the scene shifts from one room to another in the Mayorazgo's house, that room is described minutely if it has not been previously presented. In general, however, these descriptions lead up to something which is about to happen in the place dealt with. In addition, they are not overly long; usually two or three paragraphs of ordinary length. All in all, it may be said that the action of El

¹⁰Obras, I, 59.
mayorazgo de Labraz is not unduly interrupted by descriptions inserted for their own sake, at least until Book Five, in which the Mayorazgo and Marina are on the road; here some landscape descriptions are included which are beautiful in themselves, but do not contribute to the action.

It has been noted earlier, however, that El mayorazgo de Labraz is not typical of Baroja with regard to plot, and the same must be said of it in its generally sparing and functional use of background. Other novels are characterized by a much greater profusion of landscape description, which is not always essential to the action. An example of this type is Camino de perfección. In this work the subject is the internal struggle of a soul trying to come to terms with itself, and the author has tried to present this struggle against a background of Nature. Part of the time he is successful, as in the following paragraph, where there is a clear relationship between the setting and the mind of the protagonist:

Comenzó a anochecer; el viento silbaba dulcemente por entre los árboles. Un perfume acre, adusto, se desprendía de los arrayanes y de los cipreses; no piaban los pájaros, ni cacareaban los gallos..., y seguía cantando la fuente, invariable y monótona, su eterna canción no comprendida...11

11 Obras, VI, 43.
On other occasions, although there is no relationship suggested between background and mood, Baroja follows the procedure, accepted as legitimate by the aforementioned critics, of seeing the landscape through the eyes of his hero:

Se marchó el alemán, y Ossorio quedó allá envuelto en la manta, contemplando el paisaje a la vaga luz de las estrellas. Era un paisaje extraño, un paisaje cósmico, algo como un lugar de planeta inhabitado, de la Tierra en las edades geológicas del icthiosauros y plesiosauros.\(^\text{12}\)

At other times, however, the author sees through his own eyes, and is so impressed by the scene that he pauses to paint a colorful picture, apparently motivated exclusively by his sensitivity to the beauties of Nature:

Con los cambios de luz, el paisaje se transformaba. Algunos montes parecían cortados en dos; rojos en las alturas, negros en las faldas, confundiendo su color en el color negruzco del suelo. A veces, al pasar los rayos por una nube plomiza, corría una pincelada de oro por la parte en sombra de la llanura y del bosque, y bañaba con luz anaranjada las copas redondas de los pinos. Otras veces, en medio del tupido follaje, se filtraba un rayo de sol, taladrándolo todo a su paso, coloreando las hojas en su camino, arrancándoles reflejos de cobre y de oro.\(^\text{13}\)

These passages of pure landscape description will

\(^{12}\text{Ibid.}, p. 45.\)

\(^{13}\text{Ibid.}, p. 47.\)
arouse different reactions in different readers. Baroja himself gives two reasons for their inclusion: intrinsic beauty ("La descripción sólo, llegando a cierto grado de perfección, es algo artístico que interesa y atrae") and the practical separation of different parts of the narrative.\textsuperscript{14} Other novels similar to Camino de perfección, in that description is included more for its intrinsic interest (or perhaps it would be better to say for its interest to the author) than for its contribution to a vital aspect of the narrative, are Silvestre Paradox, Zalacain el aventurero, El árbol de la ciencia, and La sensualidad pervertida. It should be understood, of course, that reference is made not just to descriptions of landscape, but to those of towns, houses, streets, and the like.

When we turn to a work like the La lucha por la vida trilogy, however, the situation is different. Here the setting has a fundamental importance to the effect of the novel, in that it serves as the determinant environment. A good example of Baroja's manner in this novel is provided by the description of Uncle Rilo's house, called el Corralón, at the time Manuel Alcázar goes to live there. The passage is too long to quote in its entirety, but an

\textsuperscript{14}Páginas escogidas, p. 21. Again, contrast with Unamuno's practice of keeping his landscape studies completely apart from his novels.
idea of its nature can be shown by a few of the phrases that occur in it: "telas puercas y tablas carcomidas, escombros, ladrillos, tejas y cestos"; "agua negra que inundaba el patio"; "hojas de col y papeles pringosos"; "ropas sucias, colgadas en las barandillas"; "harapos ne-gruzcos puestos sobre mangos de escobas"; "un pasillo lleno de inmundicias"; and other similar elements of the environment. Some of the rooms of the establishment are described as "chiscones oscuros, sin ventilación alguna, construidos en los huecos de las escaleras y debajo del tejado." The life of the inhabitants is summed up in the phrase "todos los grados y matices de la miseria" within "el comunismo del hambre."15 The reader need not have much imagination to be able to appreciate the way in which such an environment will affect the lives and character of the people who dwell in it, and in particular the sensitive personality of the boy Manuel.

More powerful in their depressing effect are some of the descriptions in Mala hierba. A typical example of the creation of a revolting, but moving, impression is the

15This passage extends from page 291 to 295 in Obras, I. It will be noted that Baroja's procedure here does not differ essentially from that of Galdós in Misericordia, except that the impression left by Baroja seems harsher.
presentation of the ironically named Asilo de las Delicias. Again, the passage is too long to be reproduced here. One paragraph, however, will perhaps be sufficient to illustrate the whole. Manuel is passing his glance over the hall, and these are some of the people he sees:

Todos los demás eran de facha brutal: mendigos con aspecto de bandoleros; cojos y tullidos que andaban por la calle mostrando sus deformidades; obreros sin trabajo, acostumbrados a la holganza, y entre éstos algún tipo de hombre caído, con la barba larga y las guedejas grasientas, al cual le quedaba en su aspecto y en su traje, con cuello, corbata y puños, aunque muy sucios, algo de distinción; un pálido reflejo del esplendor de la vida pasada.16

In other passages Baroja does not hesitate to create an even more unpleasant effect, by furnishing all the physical details, as in this description of a house in the appropriately named barrio de las Injurias:

Las paredes de aquellos cuartuchos destilaban humedad y mugre; el suelo, de tierra apisonada, estaba agujereado por las goteras y lleno de charcos. La cocina era un foco de infección: había en medio un montón de basura y de excrementos; en los rincones, cucarachas muertas y secas.17

The human beings who live in this neighborhood are as

16Obras, I, 463.
17Ibid., p. 461.
miserable as their surroundings:

Era gente astrosa: algunos, traperos; otros, mendigos; otros, muertos de hambre; casi todos de facha repulsiva. Peor aspecto que los hombres tenían aún las mujeres, sucias, desgarradas, haraposas. Era una basura humana, envuelta en gufiapos, entumecida por el frío y la humedad, la que vomitaba aquel barrio infecto. Era la herpe, la lacra, el color amarillo de la terciana, el párpado retraído, todos los estigmas de la enfermedad y de la miseria.18

Paragraphs like the above occur in profusion throughout Mala hierba. Many other examples could be given, but there is no point in lengthening the list indefinitely. The effect obtained can be sufficiently appreciated from the examples already presented.

It seems clear that in this trilogy at least, Baroja's procedure is as close to that of the Naturalists as he ever gets. This is a novel of social conditions, a novel of protest in which the author's sense of outraged humanity, though not stated directly, is unmistakable.

It would not be quite accurate, however, to say that background in this trilogy always contributes to the effect, although this is so generally. But there are instances of description inserted at various points which represent scenes perceived by the author that probably would not be reflected in the consciousness of the characters, who are

18 Ibid.
usually too busy looking for food to appreciate the beauty of the sunrise and the sunset. These passages are not excessively numerous, though, so that the powerful general effect of the environment is not noticeably marred.

The use of setting as the determining factor in the environment is found also in such novels as César o nada, Los últimos románticos, Las tragedias grotescas, and La ciudad de la niebla.

In the first of these, a thesis novel, the method used is the interweaving of the physical aspects of the town with the description of its mode of life, in such a way as to present the elements of its backwardness, which are essential to the plot. Since the town is one of the protagonists, it must be presented in its moral and spiritual aspects. Thus, César's arrival in Castro Duro is followed, typically, by the pictorial setting of the town (in which Baroja lingers over a passage describing the early morning hour), which in turn is followed by several paragraphs on the town's life and customs. One of these may serve as an example of the method:

Las calles de Castro, sobre todo las más céntricas, en donde la aglomeración es mayor, en el verano están sucias y malolientes. Nubes de moscas revolotean y se posan sobre alguna pareja de bueyes que duerme con beatitud; el sol derrama su claridad cegadora; no pasa un alma, y sólo
The relevance of setting to plot in this novel is brought out by the similar description of the town at the end, after the rise and fall of César, when everything has returned to its normal state. Castro Duro is once again "envuelto en polvo, en suciedad y en mugre, dormido al sol, en medio de sus campos sin riego."\(^{20}\)

The case of Los últimos románticos and Las tragedias grotescas (a single novel) is somewhat different. Here too the environment, the Paris of the late 1860's, is a conditioning element in the lives of the characters, particularly as it affects Don Fausto's wife, Clementina. But in this novel we see clearly Baroja the curious reporter and historian. He not only recounts the series of personal contacts that work to bring about the change in Clementina, but widens his picture to include the whole atmosphere of the era. His larger purpose is historical, to portray a society in decadence. Thus the action of the story is frequently suspended to provide for the inclusion of paragraphs tracing the evolution of the Paris of that epoch.

\(^{19}\)Obras, II, 684.

\(^{20}\)Ibid., p. 751.
It is difficult to select an example, but perhaps the following will serve to show the general tone:

La descomposición de la sociedad daba mayores atractivos a la vida de la gente, ansiosa de placeres. Había prisa por divertirse, por quemar la vida pronto y bien. Las grandes damas hacían la competencia a las bailarinas y las bailarinas a las grandes damas; las cocottes decían: "Nosotras somos las princesas actuales."  

The journalistic and historical aspect of the background of this novel is seen also in the accuracy with which are presented details of the Franco-Prussian War and of the Commune revolt of 1871.

Something similar occurs in La ciudad de la niebla. This book, with a loose plot structure, is principally a picture of London society, drawn in its physical setting. As a novel it doubtless does not rank very high, but as a book of impressions of an alert tourist, it is hard to surpass. Its descriptions, however, forming as they do a very large part of the book, cannot be exemplified here. Suffice it to say that in this case, background is practically the entire function of the novel.

The journalistic element in background is present also in novels like Zalacain el aventurero, La feria de los discretos, and La dama errante, to mention only a few. To

\[2\] Obras, I, 993.
some extent, of course, it is present throughout Baroja's work, and most notably in the Memorias de un hombre de acción. In Zalacain it is shown in the narration of events of the Carlist war of 1874-76, which figures prominently in the plot. La feria de los discretos offers in its setting a combination of elements, as seen by Baroja the traveler, the reporter, the historian, and the novelist. The traveler describes the city as it really is, destroying the picturesque, idealized image so dear to foreigners, the reporter keeps an eye out for human interest, and the historian is ever ready to resuscitate the past for us.

And in addition to these descriptive elements, there is also present, as usual, the purely pictorial, the descripción intercalada. An example of the latter is the word picture of Spring in Córdova, which occupies two or three pages, and halts the action completely. It is of course much too long to include here, but the introductory paragraph is brief, and may serve to give an idea of the whole, which is mainly the impression of brilliant sunlight:

El sol inundaba las calles silenciosas, desiertas, el cielo azul, de un azul puro, sin transparencia, parecía algo compacto, una gran turquesa o un gran zafiro, en donde se empotraran tejados y torres, azoteas y terrazas.22

22Obras, I, 726.
The succeeding paragraphs intensify the effect of the hot, bright sun reflected from the walls and roofs of the buildings. Its effectiveness as vivid description is apparent—one can almost feel the sun beating on his neck; but it has little relevance to the narrative, and doubtless could have been condensed without great loss. Landscape description is one place where Baroja is not economical with words.

Background in the tetralogy El mar possesses traits in common with several of the novels already discussed. First, the sea as a determinant, the element in the environment which shapes and conditions the lives of the men who live with it. Thus, the wildness and unpredictability of the sea, its indifferent cruelty, brought forth a corresponding savagery in the seaman, setting him apart from other men. Baroja expresses this correspondence in a passage brief enough to be reproduced here:

A la gran barbarie del mar correspondía la barbarie de su servidor el marino; a la brutalidad del elemento salobre, la brutalidad humana. En aquella época, un marino volvía a su rincón con un anillo en la oreja, una pulsera en la muñeca y una cacatúa o una mona en el hombro.

Un marino, entonces, era algo extrasocial, casi extrahumano; un marino era un ser para quien la moral ofrecía otros aspectos que para los demás mortales.23

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23 Obras, II, 1000.
Yet, for all its cruelty, the sea and the seafarer's life had an irresistible charm. Those who once went to sea were cast under its strange spell, and gave their lives to it. The author expresses this attraction in a lyrical tribute to old sailing ships. This kind of "lyrical description" occurs in several places in El laberinto de las sirenas.

Another function of description in this tetralogy is particularly well-exemplified in the last two novels of the series, Los pilotos de altura and La estrella del capitán Chimista. It might be called documentary. That is, although these novels (a unit) are novels of action, or adventure stories, the ships, places, people, and customs found in the four corners of the earth are described with the care and authenticity of an anthropologist, reporter, historian, and archeologist rolled into one. The kind of research required to produce this authentic framework exhibits another point of contact between Baroja and the Naturalists. It has not been deemed necessary to include examples of this type of documentation; a selection would be more than ordinarily difficult, and in any case the author's knowledgeability in these matters is not likely to be questioned.

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24 Ibid., p. 1001.
Before summing up the extent and function of setting as a constituent in the novels of Baroja, there is one other point that requires mention. C. E. Anibal, in the introduction to his edition of Paradoz, rey²⁵ states that "Baroja has reverted to the novelistic formula of Spain's Golden Age, the biographical-episodic-descriptive formula of the picaresque novel and of Cervantes." The present writer has in effect expressed agreement with this view in various places in this study. In the matter of description, however, a reservation must be made. Setting in the picaresque novel is radically different in kind and volume from the detailed backgrounds of Baroja. If we look for just a moment at two classics of the genre, Lazarillo and El buscón, this difference may be readily appreciated. For purposes of comparison, here is the first paragraph of La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes:

Pues sepa V. M. ante todas cosas que a mí llamamn Lázaro de Tormes, hijo de Thome Goncales y de Antona Perez, naturales de Tejares, aldea de Salamanca. Mi nacimiento fué dentro del rio Tormes, por la qual causa tomé el sobrenombre, y fué desta manera. Mi padre, que Dios perdone, tenía cargo de proueer vna molienda de vna hazaña, que está ribera de aquel rio, en la qual fué moli­nero mas de quinze años. Y estando mi madre vna noche en la hazaña, preñada de mi, tomole el parto

²⁵ New York, 1937, pp. xxiv-xxv.
Here, in one short paragraph, the hero gives his identity, parents, place and circumstances of his birth. As in Baroja, the geographical location is factual, but the similarity ends there. Tejares is an "aldea de Salamanca," and that's that. No description, either general or particular. Lázaro was born in the "rio Tormes." The author does not feel it is necessary to tell us anything about the river, the vegetation along its banks, or whether its waters were clear or muddy. His birthplace was "vna hazefía." Not another word is said about the flour-mill, it is not described at all, either from the outside or from the inside.

Turning now to the first paragraph of the Historia de la vida del Buscón, we find a very similar procedure:

Yo, señor, soy de Segovia; mi padre se llamó Clemente Pablo, natural del mismo pueblo—Dios le tenga en el cielo—. Fué tal, como todos dicen; de oficio barbero; aunque eran tan altos sus pensamientos, que se corría le llamasen así, diciendo que él era tundidor de mejillas y sastre de barbas. Dicen que era de muy buena cepa, y, según él bebía, es cosa para creer. Estuvo casado con Aldonza Saturno de Rebollo, hija de Octavio de Rebollo Codillo y nieta de Lépido Ziuraconte.27

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As in Lazarillo, the place names are real, but nothing is described. Quevedo sees no necessity for describing the buildings, the streets, or even the house in which Pablos lived. Furthermore, as we read on, we note that nothing is described for its own sake, and that even the places or things necessary to the action are not actually described, but only mentioned as existing. For example, the author, in relating the characteristics of his mother, tells us of the skulls she had in her room, and that her bed was fashioned with hangman's rope. But the fact is just stated, without describing the room at all: "Tenía su aposento . . . todo rodeado de calaveras"; "Su cama estaba armada sobre sogas de ahorcado."28

Without going into the matter in great detail, it should be apparent that these two picaresque novels do not provide a setting, except for the mention of the geographical location of the action, and this is felt to be enough. If we examine now the opening paragraph of La busca, which Anibal has called "the best picaresque novel of contemporary Spanish literature,"29 we see immediately the great gulf that separates it from the two works just discussed in the matter of setting. In the latter, the first thing mentioned

28 Ibid., p. 13.
is the hero: the story is about him and his adventures, the action is centered on him throughout; he is the protagonist, not the environment. In *La buscá*, the setting is what occupies the center of attention at the beginning—an indication of its importance throughout the book. In fact, Manuel, the principal character, is not introduced until near the end of the second chapter. In the meantime, the author has presented in minute detail Doña Casiana's boarding house (which incidentally is only a temporary scene of the action) and its inhabitants. The house is first located exactly ("en la calle de Mesonero Romanos, antes del Olivo"), then described in exhaustive detail as seen by one who approaches it from the street, pauses in the doorway, then passes through the entrance, into the hall, and thence on to the various rooms, stopping at each stage to render a full report of what is to be seen. The procedure is almost identical with that used by Balzac in describing the appearance and the inhabitants of the *maison Vauquer* in *Père Goriot*.

A similar comparison might be made with *Zalacain el aventurero*. In this work the general setting is given in a three-page prologue (six ordinary pages), and even then the first chapter begins with a long paragraph describing the individual house, before Baroja reaches the point where he feels he can say: "En este caserío nació y pasó los
But the point need not be labored further.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that no attempt is made here to minimize the similarity between La busca or Mala hierba and the picaresque novel of the Golden Age. The differences noted here with regard to setting apply only to that constituent of the novel; the elements in common, such as the biographical or autobiographical procedure, episodic narrative, and struggle with hunger, are certainly apparent enough to clearly establish the family relationship. The radical difference in the handling of setting is important, though, for showing how Baroja was still in the tradition of nineteenth-century Romanticism and Realism, and particularly resembled Balzac in his initial settings.

To sum up briefly, then, we may say that background in Baroja's novels usually has the function of creating the atmosphere or tone the author desires for a particular work, frequently assuming such importance that it in fact becomes one of the protagonists, sometimes the most essential one. It is more often than not a decisive determining factor in the lives and characters of his novels, as it is with the Naturalists, but heredity is not usually stressed.

30 Obras, I, 170.
to the same extent as in, say, Zola. Sometimes background
is closely connected with the plot, as in El mayorazgo de
Labraz or César o nada. At other times, the setting is the
reason for the novel, rather than the plot, as in the period
novels. To condense the whole thing, one might say that in
Baroja, the importance of setting is equal, or at least
very nearly equal, to that of characters. Since this is
the case, the extent of his background material will seem
excessive to many readers. His tendency to linger over
details will be put down as a serious defect by those
readers who want to get on with the story, while others,
those with ample time and different tastes, will find his
paisajes inherently beautiful, and consequently worth while.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This essay has attempted to present an organized exposition of Baroja's ideas, particularly those relating to his theory of the novel, together with an examination of his novelistic technique. Certain general conclusions emerge from this investigation.

Perhaps the first generalization that can be drawn from the foregoing analysis is that Baroja's ideas and attitudes concerning life, politics, and society are highly relevant to his art. While it is probably true that no novelist is completely objective, one may recognize that some authors seek to be present in their work as unobtrusively as possible, while others intervene more directly. Flaubert may be mentioned as an example of the former, while Baroja undoubtedly stands near the other extreme. The intrusion of his personal attitudes may be perceived in such matters as his choice of subjects and characters, the prominence of ideological debates, irony, tone of protest and compassion, and the recurrent note of pessimism.

For example, Baroja's rejection of orthodox religious creeds explains the presence of spiritual preoccupations in
so many of his novels. *El mundo es así*, *Camino de perfección*, *El gran torbellino del mundo*, *El árbol de la ciencia*, and *El cura de Monleón* reveal Baroja's fundamental disillusionment, his conviction that life is an absurdity with no transcendental significance. In this particular he foreshadows Sartre and the French existentialists, although Baroja is more inclined to stress the ironic rather than the tragic nature of man's predicament. This feeling of the irony of life is what underlies the ridicule of pompousness, vanity, pedantry, and pettiness throughout his work. These vices are simply ludicrous in creatures of such small importance as human beings.

At the same time, Baroja feels a strong aspiración ética which finds expression in his recognition of the worth of each individual human being to itself, and of the right of every man to a minimum of human dignity. This attitude is reflected in his relentless attacks on stupidity and cruelty (for example his bitter accusations against indifferent doctors in *El árbol de la ciencia*) and in his pitiless exposure of suffering and misery. It is this dedication to human values which produced novels like *Mala hierba* and *César o nada*.

Also stemming from Baroja's humanism is his political ideology, which seeks a solution to many of the persistent problems of mankind. These political attitudes find
abundant expression in his novels, giving rise to works such as *Aurora roja* and *Paradox*, *rey*. Political ideas are also present to a considerable degree in *César o nada, La feria de los discretos*, and the three novels of *La selva oscura*. An example of the manner in which certain political institutions are singled out for denunciation may be found in *La familia de Errotacho*. In this novel capital punishment for political crimes is bitterly attacked through a carefully detailed account of an execution by means of the *garrote*. No direct appeal to the reader is made, but the tone of compassion and moral indignation cannot possibly be missed.

Baroja's high degree of personal involvement in his work also shows itself in his frequent digressions, and in his unusually large number of autobiographical novels. Although there is a certain amount of truth in Bernard DeVoto's assertion that all novels are autobiographies,¹ the distinction between the greater or lesser obtrusiveness of an author in his work remains valid, and Baroja appears as the principal character (only thinly disguised) in no fewer than six of his novels.²

¹ *The World of Fiction* (Boston, 1950), p. 35.
² The six: *Silvestre Paradox, El árbol de la ciencia, La sensualidad pervertida, El gran torbellino del mundo, Las veleidades de la fortuna*, and *Los amores tardíos*. 
Baroja's hostility to the Catholic Church, based upon ideological considerations as well as upon what he sees as institutional evils, is another of his personal convictions which turns up frequently in his novels. This attitude is central in César o nada and El cura de Monleón, is prominent in Camino de perfección, El mayorazgo de Labraz, El árbol de la ciencia, and La sensualidad pervertida, and is present to a lesser degree in several other works.

Finally, the extreme intellectualism of almost all of Baroja's principal characters, whether they are autobiographical or not, reveals the extent to which he expressed his personality in his novels by lending his protagonists his own inclination to theorize, debate, and expound.

In the same way, Baroja's ideas on the novel are found to illuminate many aspects of his practice. His method of writing novels reveals that his loose plot structures are the result of a consciously pursued purpose rather than an unconscious technical defect. Supporting evidence of this is found in the fact that he is not incapable of constructing well-knit plots, as shown by El mayorazgo de Labraz, Paradox, rey, and Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía. His theoretical statements regarding characters manifest his desire to include a maximum of human beings, in numbers and variety, in his novels, rather than limit his possibilities by producing "closed novels." His emphasis on setting is
shown to be deliberate, based upon his inability to see human beings apart from their environment, and even his pure paisajes find their justification in his theory on the grounds of their intrinsic beauty and their practical function of separating different portions of narrative.

In addition, one may conclude from the findings of the present investigation that Baroja was inclined to experiment considerably with his technique. Early in his career, he produced a short, tightly constructed novel in dialogue form (La casa de Aitzgorri), and followed it three years later with another novel containing a carefully planned plot (El mayorazgo de Labraz). Yet during the same few years, he wrote Camino de perfección and Silvestre Paradox, his first two novels of the wandering hero type. Shortly thereafter the plotless La lucha por la vida appeared, only to be followed closely by La feria de los discretos, a novel with some evidence of plot construction. Without making a catalogue, one may note that Zalacain el aventurero, Paradox, rey, César o nada, and Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía, all published between 1906 and 1910, show a fair degree of plot development, while other novels written during the same period, such as Los últimos románticos and Las tragedias grotescas, reveal very little plot structure. This would seem to indicate that Baroja did not adopt a definitive method at any given time, but continued to
experiment almost constantly, just as he tells us in his theoretical writings.

Baroja's place in literary history should be clearer as a result of the present study. While he reverts to the formula of the picaresque novel of Spain's Golden Age in some ways, his novels do not represent a sharp break with the nineteenth-century tradition. His frequent autobiographical treatment, episodic narrative technique, wandering heroes, and emphasis on the struggle for life are elements which he shares in common with the picaresque novel; but his handling of setting has been shown to parallel closely the technique of Balzac and Galdós. In addition, the selection of characters from the lower rungs of the economic ladder, the conception of environment as a determining factor in character, the portrayal of social evils, and the tendency to thorough documentation are elements which link him to Zola and the French Naturalists of the late nineteenth century. In fact, Baroja himself once said that the only difference between the procedure of the Naturalists and his own was that they wrote down their observations on the spot, while he wrote his afterward, from memory.³

³His exact words are: "La única diferencia que yo tengo con los naturalistas es que éstos toman las notas inmediatamente y yo las tomo después, recordando las cosas." The passage occurs in Las horas solitarias, Obras, V, 253.
Since most of Baroja's novels tend toward a rambling plot structure, a critic's evaluation of his work is likely to depend in large measure upon how much importance the critic ascribes to plot, and how much of it he is willing to sacrifice in exchange for other merits. In attempting to strike a balance, it will be helpful to remember that Baroja wrote in accordance with his own premises, which were extremely modest. He was aware of his limitations and not greatly concerned about them. He felt that he was writing primarily for his own generation rather than for posterity; he recognized that the topical nature of many of his novels tended to make his work of an ephemeral nature, but he was resigned to this also.

Within this restricted framework Baroja's merits are considerable. He must be credited with great variety in his choice of subjects and in his presentation of characters and episodes. Although many of his novels fall into more than one classification, one may distinguish several varieties: the philosophical novel (*El árbol de la ciencia*); the political novel (*Aurora roja*); the novel of manners (*Los últimos románticos* and *Las tragedias grotescas*); the historical novel (*Zalacain el aventurero* and the three novels of *La selva oscura*); the autobiographical novel (*La sensualidad pervertida*); the picaresque novel (*La busca*); the novel of social protest or social conscience (*Mala*
hierba); the novel of adventure (Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía, Los pilotos de altura, and La estrella del capitán Chimista); the thesis novel (César o nada) and what might perhaps be called the polemical novel (El mundo es así).

This list does not exhaust the possibilities, since other novels do not fit easily into categories, or partake of the characteristics of several classes at once.

Baroja's variety in characters is too obvious to require further presentation. Literally hundreds of human beings swarm through his novels, representative of every kind of fauna in the Spanish and European landscape. Few types of men and women can have escaped his notice, and it is very largely the number and variety of Baroja's characters that creates in the reader of his novels the sensation of having been plunged into the current of life.

Fertility in the invention of episodes, if not of plot, is another of Baroja's merits. The tetralogy of El mar is perhaps the best example of his richness in this respect. In particular the three novels Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía, Los pilotos de altura, and La estrella del capitán Chimista offer a wealth of incident, a variety of strange and unusual adventures and misadventures, difficult to equal.

Skill in description is undoubtedly one of Baroja's excellences as a novelist, although in this he sometimes
extends himself unduly. A stylistic analysis would have carried us beyond the scope of this study, but one can still appreciate the fact that in many of his descriptive passages, Baroja has succeeded in capturing in words the fleeting beauty of a sunset, a storm, or a village street at dawn.

Allied to his skill in description, and in part stemming from it, is his ability to create an illusion of reality through documentation and authentic background. But this statement must be qualified, in view of the fact that in many novels Baroja’s intention was not so much to create fiction as to present slightly retouched pictures of reality. This is more the merit of a journalist than of a novelist.

Against these values must be set certain serious defects. The philosophical and political digressions, although central to Baroja’s purpose, must be regarded as belonging more to the essay than to the novel. The interruptions of the narrative occasioned by descriptive passages excessive in number and length become a defect when they might have been an asset in proper proportion. Certainly many of his paisajes possess intrinsic beauty; but it is still true that most readers do not go to the novel primarily for descriptions.

Perhaps Baroja’s most important defect was his too
prolific production. Like Lope de Vega, he wrote many works and sometimes composed them all too hastily. On occasion Baroja wrote three books in the space of a year, and very frequently produced two a year. Such a pace left him little or no time for revision, and there is no doubt that his work suffered thereby. It is idle to speculate, of course, but one cannot help wondering what Baroja's work would have been like had he written thirty novels instead of sixty, and devoted the extra time to revision.

These defects, along with the topical interest of many of his novels, make it difficult to predict the probability of his work's having lasting value. At the present time his position as one of Spain's most important novelists of the first half of the twentieth century seems secure, in spite of the artistic defects mentioned above. Although many of his works will doubtless be read in future years chiefly for their historical value, this is a fate that few novelists have escaped. On the other hand, his human values, his ethical aspirations, his compassion for human misery, his sincerity, his hatred of sham and hypocrisy, and his individualism, while not primarily literary values, are qualities which provide that judgment on life which Edith Wharton speaks of as essential to the novel. Because of these qualities, as well as his authentic literary gifts, which are not negated by his defects, Baroja's work will
continue to live for those who value literature as much for its illumination of life as for its esthetic pleasure.
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III. BOOKS DEALING WITH THE NOVEL


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