

South as a Method: From the “Southern Question” to the “Southern Thoughts”

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

“South as Method: From the ‘Southern Question’ to the ‘Southern Thoughts’” examines the emergence of narrative and rhetoric patterns within the context of the unclear and unstable meaning of race and nation-building discourses in Italy, Spain, Peru, and Argentina. My methodology combines a close reading of late nineteenth-century novels and short stories published in these countries with an analysis of the ways that the global editorial market and local sociological essays influenced the creation of local ‘social types’ in these texts. Bridging intersectional literary analysis with post- and decolonial theories, this study analyzes writers’ definitions of their novels rather than what critics or theorists have called ‘naturalist’ or ‘realist’ novels. It is an invitation to look inside the writers’ peculiar ways of producing novels in this style while prioritizing national concerns. The literary corpus analyzed spans from essays—Luigi Capuana’s *L’isola del sole*, Antonio Gramsci’s *Quaderni del carcere*, Cesare Lombroso’s *L’uomo delinquente*, José Carlos Mariátegui’s *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana*, Ezequiel Martínez Estrada’s *Radiografía de la pampa*, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento’s *Civilización y barbarie*—to novels and short stories—Emilia Pardo Bazán’s *La tribuna*, Mercedes Cabello’s *Blanca Sol*, Eugenio Cambaceres’s *En la sangre*, Clorinda Matto’s *Herencia*, Luigi Pirandello’s “L’altro figlio,” Benito Pérez Galdós’s *Lo prohibido* and *Tormento*, Giovanni Verga’s “Rosso Malpelo” and “L’amante di Gramigna.” In my analysis of these nineteenth-century texts, the concept of ‘social type’ is highlighted as a key framework and a descriptive tool that responds to the growing need for orientation within the unsteady

national borders. In this sense, I analyze the osmotic relationship between social science and literature, which culminates in the responses articulated by Marxist theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, and José Carlos Mariátegui, in the 1930s, through their original articulation of the south as a method rather than an object of study.

Dedication

Ai miei *nonni*, per quello che mi hanno insegnato.

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1. Introduction

On October 21st, 2022, Giorgia Meloni, the recently elected right-wing Italian prime minister, released the names of the ministers composing her government. Among the new ministries introduced by Meloni there was one named “Ministero del Mare e del Sud” (Ministry of the Sea and the South). While it was not clear what the functions of this new institution were, it seems undeniable, from an Italian perspective at least, that the destiny of the south has been tied to that of the Mediterranean Sea that touches its coasts. Invaders from almost every European country disembarked Italian southern and northern African shores before Italian unification, and even Giuseppe Garibaldi arrived by sea in Marsala (Sicily) on May 11th, 1860 to free the island from the Bourbons. The sea saw the Italian immigrants leaving for the Americas at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century, and it is the place where thousands of immigrants coming from Africa on precarious boats find their death daily. However, following a trend that has started with the unification of Italy, this Ministry disappeared even before starting its official activities. The precariousness of the policies regarding the south and its uneven development have been a constant trend since the end of the nineteenth century. This tendency was not limited to southern Italy and constitute an element of comparison with the socio-political experiences of other souths.

“South as a Method: From the ‘Southern Question’ to the ‘Southern Thoughts’” provides a literary and historical background to the Ministry of the Sea and the South. It

is a study of the fictionalization of the south and how the seas connecting Italy, Spain, Peru, and Argentina promoted cultural exchanges across these far apart countries at the end of the nineteenth century. When the modern novel ‘rose’ in France and Great Britain—northern European countries with advanced bourgeoisies—these southern European and Latin American peripheries became vessels for the new French and English realist and naturalist books circulating in translation. These texts along with democratic political ideologies circulated in Italy, Spain, Argentina, and Peru, affecting the emergence of new literary styles, and political projects, that were key in shaping nineteenth-century nation-building processes. While, in the wake of Benedict Anderson’s seminal text (2006), several analyses of literature’s role in nation-building discourses have been published (Sommer 1991, Caudet 2002, Re 2009, Banti 2014), none seems to dwell on the paradox of a globe-conquering literary form—the novel—imagining unique national destinies. Within the framework of recent discussions concerning global literature (Mignolo 2000; Spivak 2003; Spivak & Damrosch 2011), the research question to which this dissertation attempts to give a reply is: how can we analyze nineteenth-century national literary production without losing the tension between global forms and local or national contents (Moretti 2015)?

Through an interdisciplinary dialogue with Transatlantic, Mediterranean and Global South studies, “South as a Method” identifies in the novelistic tradition of these southern literary peripheries the emergence of narrative patterns different than the one showcased by the dominant northern European realist/naturalist novel by putting them into dialogue with the local essayist tradition. The massive circulation of these novels in

Italy, Peru, Argentina, and Spain, from France, promoted the emergence of local responses and the creation of autochthonous writing styles. In Italy, the reception of Naturalism gave rise to *Verismo*, a literary trend whose main exponents were Giovanni Verga, Luigi Capuana, Federico de Roberto, and Matilde Serao. The choice to create a category that distinguished itself from naturalism was inspired by the desire to reveal the distance between the local literary movement and the French one—a semantic differentiation between what was considered ‘true’ and ‘natural.’ While Spanish and Latin American writers also tried to distance themselves from French Naturalism, the local trends did not bring about a cohesive school with a distinctive name. However, authors such as Benito Pérez Galdós, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Clorinda Matto de Turner, Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, and Eugenio Cambaceres, elaborated their peculiar styles as a response to the circulation of naturalism in Spain, Peru and Argentina.

Current scholarship on the reception of naturalism in Italy and Spain follows a comparative approach that focuses on the differences between the autochthonous styles and the French one. This approach, however, reifies French naturalism and conditions the interpretation and analysis of Italian, Peruvian, Argentine and Spanish literary production as deviations from an original that are always lacking or not naturalist enough. “South as a Method” challenges this approach and analyzes these differences as unique manifestations instead of the idiosyncrasies of the naturalist movement. By paying attention both to the formal and narrative strategies these writers employ in their works, this dissertation questions the limits of ‘naturalism’ as a style for interpreting novels published in these southern peripheries of the global editorial market. More importantly,

it critiques the tendency to impose northern European literary categories outside of the context in which these novels were produced. This approach examines the creation of these texts in a constant tension between the global and the local. Accordingly, the role of sociological, and criminal anthropological texts published at the end of the century in these countries is stressed and seen as the springboard for the articulation of a local and alternative theoretical framework that writers fictionalize in their novels. Thus, the characters that appear in these southern fictions are the synthesis of local worries and are functional to the critique of contemporary political and social trends.

During the last part of the nineteenth century, most discussions on the instability of racial categories and hierarchies in these countries focused on the concept of inherited racial character(istic)s that manifested both on a physical and psychic level. This kind of discourse was elaborated at the intersection of science, politics, and literature, and promoted an osmotic relation between these different disciplines. The intersection of social, economic, and cultural factors influenced the definition of race too. To respond to the increasing need for social regeneration, the notions of ‘character’ and ‘social type,’ both in the social sciences and literature, overlapped and became a heuristic tool to analyze local society and address local needs. The permeability between social sciences and literature was underlined by the emergence of similar trends and shared semantic fields to draw coherent ‘social types’ and establish scientific criteria to determine one’s character based on their physical appearance. In this way, novelists and social scientists participated in the public debate on social, cultural, and political reformation and influenced the creation of new policies and cultural trends.

This dissertation is interested in how Italian, Spanish, Peruvian and Argentine novels and short stories represented their own peculiar intake on the ‘social type’ intersecting and echoing the language, categories, and developments, of local racial thoughts articulated in the local essayist tradition. To this end, the literary corpus analyzed spans from essays—Luigi Capuana’s *L’isola del sole*, Antonio Gramsci’s *Quaderni del carcere*, Cesare Lombroso’s *L’uomo delinquente*, José Carlos Mariátegui’s *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana*, Ezequiel Martínez Estrada’s *Radiografía de la pampa*, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento’s *Civilización y barbarie*—to novels and short stories—Emilia Pardo Bazán’s *La tribuna*, Mercedes Cabello’s *Blanca Sol*, Eugenio Cambaceres’s *En la sangre*, Clorinda Matto’s *Herencia*, Luigi Pirandello’s “L’altro figlio,” Benito Pérez Galdós’s *Lo prohibido* and *Tormento*, Giovanni Verga’s “Rosso Malpelo” and “L’amante di Gramigna.”.

These texts were packed with crude and graphic language that stressed the congenital difference of the local ‘social type’ through racial taxonomies and hierarchies elaborated in the convergence of local anthropological theories and popular thesis of social Darwinism. This tendency promoted the emergence of a kind of ‘ethnographic’ discourse in the literary world aimed at describing the poor living conditions and moral habits of the lower urban and rural classes. The objective reproduction of the conditions of these social outcasts was used to guide the emergent bourgeoisie class in these countries in the regeneration of these countries.

Each of the chapter of this dissertation analyses a different ‘social type’ by contextualizing the text *vis a vis* local sociological and anthropological theories and

creating a dialogue with other texts produced in other countries that shared similar concerns. For instance, Chapter 2, examines the fictionalization of the criminal man, and the ways in which southerners are described. As national identity was being discussed after major historical events —e.g., the loss of colonial territories to Spain, Latin America's independence, and Italy's unification —writers faced the dilemma of deciding which conationals readers were to empathize with. As a result of the theory of Cesare Lombroso's criminology school, immigrants, indigenous people, and southern Italian peasants were stigmatized and criminalized. These theories circulated widely across these areas and was at the core of national debates about race.

Chapter 3 focuses on the reception of the Italian immigrants in Argentina and Peru through the analysis of four texts written at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century. It delves into the characterization of the Italian immigrants by tracing back the origins of the migratory phenomenon to the Italian unification. It also considers the evolution of the reception of Lombrosian theories in Italy, Peru and Argentina. Through a close reading of the characters of Italian descent in *Herencia*, *En la sangre*, and *Blanca Sol*, it examines the stereotypes on Italians circulating at the end of the nineteenth century in Peru and Argentina.

Chapter 4 focuses on the representation of low-class women, a particular marginal category in nineteenth-century literature. Their sexuality as well as their need to improve their material conditions, made them prone to find alternative ways of surviving in the patriarchal capitalist system. This chapter analyses the different solutions that writers proposed when describing different 'types' of southern women performing urban and

rural works. The different needs of each of these categories is underlined, while at the same time the precariousness of their lives and their dangerous sexuality represent a common worry across the texts.

Chapter 5, looks at the way in which degeneration influences the descriptions of members of the upper classes as affected by physical, psychic, and moral illnesses that prevented the regeneration of the nation states. The preoccupation towards the transmission of genetic, mental, and behavioral was a threat to the new generations. By using the metaphor of the family as the dysfunctional social nucleus of the nation-state, the leading function of the upper classes in the regeneration of the nation is underscored. The theme of the *race* in the novels here analyzed emerges as a metaphor of the bonds between the family members/nation citizens, and it is influenced by the local anthropological, ethnographic, medical, and criminal discourses that treated this topic from different perspectives in that moment.

Finally, the epilogue, “Civilization and Barbarism at the turn of the century,” examines the responses of early twentieth century thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci, José Carlos Mariátegui, and Ezequiel Martínez Estrada to the criminalization and racialization of the south that emerged in positivist sociology. A large part of their argument starts with the critique of nineteenth century intellectuals and politicians who reduced the south to a semi-colonial market for the north through agrarian policies. Similarly, they analyzed realist novels at the turn of the twentieth century, viewing them as merely copies of French naturalism and not as local ones.

To sum up, this dissertation stresses the importance of reading nineteenth-century Spanish, Italian, Peruvian and Argentine novels not as bad copies of French naturalism but as peculiar manifestations of local trends in dialogue with the global market and the essayist tradition. The dialogue created through the analysis of these different national novels shows the limitations of area studies in current academia and reclaims southern centrality in epistemologies where the south is neither the object nor the subject. By focusing on the authors' *locus of enunciation* and contextualizing it inside of southern debates, "Souths as a Method" dispels the idea that the south is incapable of producing its own art and knowledge.

1.2 The South in the Nineteenth Century

Before delving into the analysis of the literary and essayist corpus, in this section I want to focus on the selection of Italy, Spain, Peru and Argentina, as peculiar manifestations of the south. As a woman and a scholar coming from Sicily and writing from the south of the United States, it is important to define where, and what the south stands for in this dissertation, and why I am alluding to the Global South when I am focusing on the nineteenth century. Indeed, here a question is legitimate: why focusing on these particular geopolitical spaces, when all the scholars engaged in Global South studies analyze South-to-South connections in Latin America, Asia, and Africa?

My selection of these three particular geopolitical spaces, aims at challenging current conceptions about development and the South from a nineteenth century perspective. Even if today, it seems unquestionable that Italy and Spain are ranked among

the richest countries in the world, historically their development started quite recently, after WWII for Italy, and during the 60's for Spain.¹ Indeed, both countries were considered “underdeveloped” at the turn of the nineteenth century: Italy was devastated by the expenses of the wars needed for the Unification of the national territory, while Spain experienced a long-lasting economic crisis due to the dissolution of its colonial empire. Moreover, the choice of putting into dialogue southern European countries together with Latin American one, reflects also existing colonial bin: from the 15th-to the 19th-century, Italy was considered as not altogether different than Latin American colonies oversea. Symptomatic of this, is the fact that its Southern regions were part of the Spanish Empire until 1861, and it was subjected to a similar fiscal regime and territorial administration system. These regions, in Europe and across the Atlantic, worked as colonial or semi-colonial producers of raw material and reservoirs for cheap labor. Moreover, and most importantly for this project, Latin America received the excess of labor force from Italy and Spain: through such migratory routes also cultural networks of exchange were being created. These cultural networks are central to this study: Did the intelligentsia of these

¹ Italy is part of the G8 along with the most developed and rich nations in the world and is ranked at the 12th place and Spain at the 15th in the list of countries ranked by the GDP compiled by the International Monetary Fund (released October 25, 2019.) About Italy see: Crainz, Guido. *Storia del miracolo italiano: culture, identità, trasformazioni fra anni cinquanta e sessanta*. Donzelli Editore, 2005. On Spain: Clar, Ernesto, and Vicente Pinilla. "Agriculture and economic development in Spain, 1870-1973: not such a long siesta." *Conference Paper. XIV International Economic. History Congress, Helsinki*. 2006; Molinas, César, and Leandro Prados de la Escosura. "Was Spain different? Spanish historical backwardness revisited." *Explorations in Economic History* 26.4 (1989): 385-402; Prados de la Escosura, Leandro. "Economic growth and backwardness, 1780-1930." *Spanish History Since 1808* Eds. José Alvarez Junco and Adrian Shubert. NY: Oxford University Press 2000.

three “Souths” share similar concerns and solutions to the problem of nation-building? What was the role of the novel in the process of formation of national consciousness as an “imagined community”?

On another note, the peculiar choice of Italy, Spain, Argentina, and Peru, hints toward a major reconceptualization of the concepts of development and North-South divide to better define our contemporary understanding of the economic and sociopolitical realities of the nations located in the Global North and the Global South. However, in my opinion, such a reconceptualization should involve cultural and aesthetic production too. Only engaging with these three levels at the same time, we can achieve an epistemological shift in which both of the parties involved are at the same level, and the criteria are not the ones imposed by the Global North on everywhere else. This will lead not only to fairer practices, but also to an exploration of the South that inhabits the North, and the North that lives in the South. Relationality becomes the key term to understand how these two conceptual entities are entangled and cannot be thought in a dichotomic opposition.

Indeed, the Global South is far from being a geographic location, and the term is currently used as a politically correct metaphor to talk about the regions of the world that are suffering the negative effects of globalization and capitalism. Moreover, while on a global level the structural difference between North and South, has been theorized recently, in the European context, this divide has a long tradition. Since the end of the 18th century the difference between North and South in Europe was conceived in moral (and racial) terms. The internal European *other* was—and still is— a southern: the

famous acronym PIGS, standing for Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain, describes graphically how European southern shores have been conceptualized historically.² Starting with Montesquieu's climatology theory in *De l'Esprit des Lois*, the South has been conceived in terms of peoples dedicated to passions that could create only abusive and cowardly societies, leading to despotic governments.³ While, from a literary point of view M.me de Staël's in *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* theorized two completely different European literatures: a Southern whose origin was Omer, opposed to a Northern coming from Ossian. While the Southerners were better historians, this was only because they were primitive and had not progressed as philosophers like the Northerners. Building on this tradition, the Global North has theorized in oppositional terms its counterpart that, lately, flourished and expanded to embrace the entire southern hemisphere of the globe creating what is defined today the Global South.

Thus, as Walter Mignolo claims in his seminal article on the Global South, this term stands today for two sets of meanings that vary according to where the enunciation is located (2011). If the *locus*, or place of enunciation is in the Global North, it stands for underdeveloped and emerging economies that stand in a receiving and inferior position to its counterpart in the North. Instead, if the enunciation comes from the South, there is the

² See: Dainotto, Roberto M. *Europe (in theory)*. Duke University Press, 2006; Moe, Nelson. *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002; Petraccone, Claudia. *Le due civiltà: Settentrionali e meridionali nella storia d'Italia dal 1860 al 1914*. Bari: Laterza, 2000.

³ Cohler, Anne M., Basia Carolyn Miller, and Harold Samuel Stone. *Montesquieu: The spirit of the laws*. Cambridge University Press, 1989.

potential for a true decolonization of these spaces, in which a major shift in the production of epistemologies diverging from the normative northern paradigm is happening. For this reason, to propose a new reading of the South as a global phenomenon, one must be aware of the movements and theories that emerged within the Global South, even if they never used this term in their intellectual production, i.e., postcolonialism and decoloniality.

Both theoretical frameworks are connected with diasporic movements that made the Anglophone academia the center of production and dissemination of their studies, like what is currently happening with the Global South. While postcolonialism deals mainly with Middle East and South Asia starting from the 19th and 20th centuries; decoloniality refers to Latin America and takes into consideration the effects of the colonialization from its onset in the 15th century to nowadays. Both approaches consider as their interlocutor and counterpart Europe and the West, addressing mainly those countries that perpetrated colonial ventures in Asia, and Latin America. Even if, historically, both movements built on the works of Frantz Fanon, considered as the pioneer and father of all colonial studies, the intellectuals who shaped and consolidated the two movements are different.⁴ On the one hand, postcolonial studies emerged around the ideas of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak, lately joined by Dipesh Chakrabarty, Derek

⁴ Fanon's most famous works are *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952); *A Dying Colonialism* (1959); *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961); and *Toward the African Revolution* (1964).

Gregory and Amar Acheraïou, to name only the most influential intellectuals.⁵ Their work engaged with issues of the material and the socio-economic, while still considering the realm of cultural production. However, one limit of this framework is that the subaltern, i.e., the colonial subject, never acquires the capacity to speak on its own for itself: it is always spoken over and never overcomes its subaltern status.

On the other hand, decoloniality emerged from the modernity/coloniality school whose most important representatives are Anibal Quijano, María Lugones, Enrique Dussel, Arturo Escobar and Walter Mignolo.⁶ This movement arose, and shares some of its most influential thinkers, from other theories that developed in Latin America since the 1960's, like dependency theories, liberation theology, and indigenous knowledge and movements. Decoloniality is strictly linked to world-systems theory, and it proposes an epistemological shift from European and Western knowledge systems to the ones that were erased and/or subordinated during colonialism: one major proposal of this

⁵ See Edward W Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, London: Penguin, 1995; Homi K Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 1994; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988; Acheraïou, Amar. *Rethinking Postcolonialism: Colonialist Discourse in Modern Literatures and the Legacy of Classical Writers*. Springer, 2008; Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000; Gregory, Derek. *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004.

⁶ Cfr. Dussel, Enrique. Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures). *boundary 2* 20(3), 1993, pp. 65–76; Escobar, Arturo, *Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise: The Latin American Coloniality/Modernity Research Programme*. *Cultural Studies* 21(2–3), 2007, 179–210; Lugones, María. 'Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System', *Hypatia* 22(1), 2007, pp 186–209. Mignolo, Walter. 'The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101(1), 2000, pp 57–96. Quijano, Anibal. "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality", *Cultural Studies* 21(2), 2007, pp 168–178.

movement is an integrative and non-violent epistemic transition, that Dussel has named a *trans-modern pluriverse* (2009). While the idea of opposing a universal system of knowledge with a plural one might sound appealing, it leads to instability and variability on how human beings make sense, shape, and experience the surrounding world.

In this sense, I believe that a possible solution to essentialist and intransigent epistemic practices coming from the North as well as to the extreme variability implied in the pluriverse of the decolonial approach, might be the exploration and fostering South-to-South connections, relationships, and cooperation at the center of the Global South study area. Nevertheless, this area of studies has overlooked the cultural and literary production up to this moment, with few exceptions like the researches on the reception of Magic Realism in different areas of the Global South, and the most recent ones on the contacts, literary and not, between India and Latin America.⁷ As Klenger and Ortiz Wallner point out, cultural South-South relationship are largely unacknowledged not only in research in the North, but also within the South. To get to an epistemological shift from the South we need to explore not only these cultural relations but also to comprehend how different Souths mutually understand each other. This praxis is needed

⁷ Siskind, Mariano (2011): "Magical Realism and Postcolonial Writing". In: Quayson, Ato (ed.): *The Cambridge History of Postcolonial Literature*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 374-446; Slemon, Stephen (1995): "Magical Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse". In: Parkinson Zamora, Lois/Faris, Wendy B. (eds.): *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 407-426; Caro Vargas, Soraya (2014): *India, Latin America: An Alliance for the Future*. New Delhi: Vitasta Publishing; Klengel, Susana, & Ortiz Wallner, Alexandra. "A New Poetics and Politics of Thinking Latin America/India: SUR/SOUTH and a Different Orientalism." *A New Poetics and Politics of Thinking Latin America/India: SUR/SOUTH and a Different Orientalism*(2016): 7-26.

to better contemplate, assess and harmonize the several possibilities for negotiation in a global dynamic, while at the same time integrating the different claims for accountability in the social discourse (9).

Therefore, “South as Method” engages with this epistemological shift from a divergent position in which the attention is given to narrative, specifically to what has been defined by Doris Sommer as “foundational fictions” (1991) of the modern nation-state in Latin America, but also in Spain and in Italy. This approach seeks also to create a dialogue between disciplines, like Transatlantic and Mediterranean studies, through the light of a southern approach that aims at finding the emergence of narrative patterns different than the one showcased by northern realist novels in the 19th century. I contend that novels written during the second half of the 19th century in the immediate aftermath of independence and unification processes, for Latin America and Italy, and the loss of the colonial empire, as far as Spain is concerned, provide an entry point to discuss the ways in which my three different geopolitical spaces adapted and reacted to global, metropolitan forces. In the localities under examination, specific narrative styles were developed, modeled after the commercially successful styles of Northern realism and naturalism, so as to compete in an already-globalized literary market.

While the dissemination of these forms in the South was then a response to the commercial ‘invasion’ of their internal editorial markets by French and English novels, it was also motivated by internal necessities—that is to say, the intention to produce autochthonous and “local” variants of the globally circulating “realist novel,” so as to articulate an independent, autonomous national literary discourse. The widespread use of

these techniques in the South, applied to different social, racial, and political entities, entailed a thorough rethinking of the narrative devices borrowed from metropolitan centers, as well as the postulation of a different autonomous Southern individual immersed in a specific socio-economic *milieu*.

Through a close reading of the novels here studied, the emergence of three major themes distinguishes them from French naturalist novel, and articulates the differences of the Southern subjectivity. Specifically:

1. The shaping of a national identity based on the systematic integration or rejection of certain social groups. This process is usually rendered from a fictional point of view through the creation of ‘social types’ in dialogue with contemporary sociological and criminology studies. Southern peasants, the indigenous population and peoples of afro descent are usually the most problematic category to assume inside of the new national enclave that they are trying to build. On another note, immigration in the form of the poor Italian peasant that goes to the Americas looking for a better life, depict on a textual level South-South connections and mobility. This human flow between Southern countries also shaped the emergence of multicultural centers, like Buenos Aires, and more in general fostered the industrialization and agricultural development of the late 19th century, creating cheap labor urban enclaves in the fast-growing industrial centers.
2. The flow of commodities. After gaining independence, in the Italian and Latin American cases, and losing the colonies, for Spain, a common feature of these fast-changing economies is the search for capitals and foreigner investors to foster the

much-needed development and reach the socio-economic level of Northern countries. This pattern emerges in the novels through the representation of Northern individuals, usually British or Germans, that shape the national market through their investments in the wine—like the Jerez, as in the case of Benito Pérez Galdós's *Lo prohibido*—or the mine industries—red sand in Giovanni Verga's "Rosso Malpelo." Another sector that is controlled by foreigners' capital, and shaped according to their needs of moving different merchandises from the peripheries to the centers in which they will be shipped, is that of the *pulperias*, local convenient stores, described in Peruvian novels such as Mercedes Cabello's *Blanca Sol* and Clorinda Matto's *Herencia*.

3. The binomial land/national territory. The independence led previous colonial societies to be, finally, in charge of their national territory, asserting their borders and deciding the end use of each area. While, in the case of Spain, the loss of the colonies, provoked a transformation of the peninsular national territory and economy, reshaping the relation between the center, i.e., Madrid, and rural communities, like Galicia and Andalusia. The image of the land and the figure of the land-owner is central in Southern realist novels. Usually, the exploitation and speculation of the land symbolizes the accumulation of capital and the social climbing of a new middle-class that substitutes the previous colonial aristocracy of Spanish descent. However, ultimately these individuals are never fully integrated in the fast-changing late 19th century societies, and are devoured by the international market logic and needs.

These patterns that emerge in Spanish, Latin American, and Italian novels are different from the struggle for existence in Northern naturalist and realist novels, and make it difficult for philologists to assert their belonging to these Northern literary movements. The analysis of the formation of the Southern subject in novels, thus entails a study of the international power dynamics and of the racialization of capitalism in a way that goes beyond but at the same time asserts the Southern nation-state. I claim that looking at these narratives allows me to reshape both contemporary South-South relations among these geopolitical spaces, as well as to trace a genealogy or a history of these relations and exchanges—among what has been defined as subaltern or colonial subjects across national, racial and linguistic lines.

Finally, “South as a Method” aims at offering a new genealogy of the Global South by breaking the discipline barrier between Transatlantic and Mediterranean studies, and creating a new paradigm to analyze novels produced in these geopolitical locations. These ambitions can only be realized by proposing a new methodology: one in which the South, rather than an object of study, is recognized as a subject producing – last but not least through novels — knowledge about itself.

2. Southern Criminals, Primitive Peasants

On May 12, 1894 Luigi Capuana was invited to give a lecture on the state of Sicily in front of the Dante Alighieri Society Committee based in Bologna. This lecture, published four years later in the volume *L'isola del Sole* (1898; *The Island of the Sun*) under the title “La Sicilia nei canti popolari e nella novellistica contemporanea” (“Sicily in Popular Songs and Contemporary Short Stories”), presented his reflections on Sicilian customs, which according to him had changed over the past six years and had lost their originality. In the introduction, he clarified that his approach was that of an “impressionista” and he was not writing from the perspective of an “erudito, da folklorista o da critico” (157-160).¹ Stylistically, he presented two points of view: his own—that of a Sicilian returning after a long stay on the *Continent*, i.e., the Italian peninsula—and that of a *Continental*—that’s an Italian, who decided to visit the island after overcoming his repulsion for the dangerous and long trip. Through a combination of irony and nostalgia, he synthesized prejudices and stereotypes associated with both Sicilians and *Continental*s. The exponent of this latter category is portrayed as a

Uomo intinto di letteratura, sentito parlare di novelle siciliane scritte da siciliani, cioè da persone che dovrebbero naturalmente conoscere meglio di qualunque altro i luoghi descritti e i personaggi messi in azione, ha comprato tutti quei volumi, anche i meno noti – quello del Linares per esempio – e i notissimi del Verga, del De Roberto, del Navarro della Miraglia, del Varvaro e di qualche altro, e li ha attentamente letti, prendendo appunti, segnando pagine, coordinando all’ultimo le

¹ “As an impressionist” and not “As a learned, as a folklorist or as a scholar.”

diverse impressioni ricercate non per semplice diletto ma per scopo quasi scientifico (Capuana 162).²

The *Continental* described in this passage is presented as being in good faith and interested in preparing for his trip by carefully selecting what to read on the island. By avoiding literature written by other *Continental*s, and focusing on short stories written by Sicilians, he gave prominence to locals over presumably stereotypical perspectives presented by foreigners. The reiteration of the regional adjective in the passage emphasizes this criterion. The usage of the word ‘impressions’ paired with the ‘almost scientific purpose’ used in analyzing the short stories implies that (realist and *verist*) literary accounts were highly regarded at that time, subtly critiquing the sociological texts published by northerners on the island. But were the short stories written by Sicilians more accurate than the anthropological and pseudo-scientific studies written by *Continental*s?

In the first two sections of this chapter, I analyze “L’amante di Gramigna” (1880) and “Rosso Malpelo” (1880), two short stories written by the Sicilian author Giovanni Verga and that, according to Capuana, should give a more authentic perspective on the state of the island. To begin with, I contextualize Capuana’s polemic in light of the sociological and criminological accounts published following the unification of Italy.

² “A man steeped in literature, having heard of Sicilian short stories written by Sicilians, that is, by people who should naturally know better than anyone else the places described and the characters put into action, he bought all those volumes, even the less well known—that of Linares for example—and the very well-known ones by Verga, De Roberto, Navarro della Miraglia, Varvaro and a few others, and he carefully read them, taking notes, marking pages, coordinating to the last the different impressions sought not for mere amusement but for almost scientific purpose.”

Next, I compare those texts with Verga's short stories in order to see how he approaches the subject of southern criminality—the protagonists are brigands and evil children—from an alternative perspective. Finally, the second section examines Verga's fictional fate for these marginal subjects, as well as his depiction of Sicily and its inhabitants in these short stories.

2.1 Criminal Men and Children in Sicily at the End of the 19th Century

From an ethnological point of view, Sicily had been the object of many studies after the unification of Italy. Many of them were promoted by the central government because of the riots and local protests against the extension of the legal system from the Reign of Sardinia to the rest of the national territory. The local resistance to the imposition of compulsory conscription and the promulgation of new taxes, which resulted in popular revolts—such as the uprising of Palermo in September 1866, known as the “rivolta del sette e mezzo” (“seven and a half revolt”)—alarmed the central government and gave rise to a great national debate.³ After years of military presence on the island, in 1876, the parliament sent two MPs, Leopoldo Franchetti and Sidney Sonnino, to conduct an inquiry on the state of the island and its inhabitants. This expedition gave rise to one of the first and most important studies, *La Sicilia nel 1876 (Sicily in 1876)* in which the two

³ On the topic, read: Riall, Lucy, *Sicily and the Unification of Italy: Liberal Policy and Local Power, 1859-1866*. Oxford, 1998; especially Chapter 8, “Revolt Against the Government, 1866.”

MPs described in detail Sicily and Sicilian practices and reinforced the idea of the island's backwardness and inferiority *vis à vis* the rest of the nation. According to Franchetti, Italy was inhabited by two different civilizations, which acquired a meaning when considered separately but were incompatible together:

La Sicilia fa parte d'Italia e non si ammette che ne possa esser divisa. La coesistenza della civiltà siciliana e di quella dell'Italia media e superiore in una medesima nazione, è incompatibile colla prosperità di questa nazione e, a lungo andare, anche colla sua esistenza, poiché produce debolezza tale da esporla a andare in fascio al minimo urto debole da fuori. Una di queste due civiltà deve dunque sparire in quelle sue parti che sono incomparabili con l'altra. Quale sia quella che deve cedere il posto, non crediamo sia oggetto di dubbio per alcun Siciliano di buona fede e di mezzana intelligenza (Franchetti 237-238).⁴

While Italian political and territorial unification was not at stake, the problem for Franchetti was that the inferior southern civilization was undermining the flourishing of the Italian nation, making it weak. Post-unification Italy's social divisions were projected on the different moral standards and intelligence quotients of the two civilizations, making it clear that only Sicilians of good faith and average intelligence could understand that their inferior civilization had to disappear and be replaced by the northern one.⁵

⁴ "Sicily is part of Italy, and it is not admitted that it can be divided. The coexistence of the Sicilian civilization and that of middle and upper Italy in the same nation, is incompatible with the prosperity of this nation and, in the long run, even with its existence, since it produces such weakness as to expose it to go to pieces at the slightest weak impact from outside. One of these two civilizations must therefore disappear in those parts of it which are incomparable to the other. Which is the one that must give way, we do not believe is the object of doubt for any Sicilian of good faith and average intelligence."

⁵ This was the beginning of what Antonio Gramsci defined the *southern question*, an issue that has been studied by different scholars, such as: Nelson Moe (51-76); and Claudia Petraccone (511-41).

In a controversial tone, Capuana in “La Sicilia nei canti popolari” contested Franchetti’s celebration of northern modernization dismantling Sicilian customs by presenting in his lecture an Italian of good faith and average intelligence who instead of reading *La Sicilia nel 1876* to prepare for his trip, read Sicilian short stories and ethnographic accounts written by Sicilians (162). According to Capuana, folkloristic studies and short stories produced by Sicilians themselves were the true source of knowledge about the state of the island (162-3). He reinforced this idea by saying that “era stato bene che il Vigo, il Pitre, il Salomone-Marino e i loro anonimi collaboratori si fossero affrettati a raccogliere il tesoro dei canti popolari siciliani, canti di passione, canti di soggetto religioso, di leggende di santi, di storie di briganti mutati in eroi” (Capuana 193).⁶ Here, Sicilian folklorists that had collected popular idioms, songs, and stories, most of the time in the Sicilian language, were celebrated for mainly two reasons. On the one hand, they presented a more authoritative point of view on Sicilian customs: since they were fluent in the language spoken by the common folk, they did not encounter any linguistic and social barrier in the collection of the material. On the other, since after the unification local customs were rapidly being homogenized through the nationalization process that the central government was imposing, it was important to collect this material before it disappeared.

⁶ “It had been well that the Vigo, the Pitre, the Salomone-Marino and their anonymous collaborators had hastened to collect the treasure of Sicilian folk songs, songs of passion, songs of religious subject, of legends of saints, of stories of brigands changed into heroes”.

Beyond implicitly opposing Franchetti's idea on the homogenization of Sicilian customs, Capuana tackled another hot topic in his lecture: that of the criminalization of southern Italians. This crucial issue had been part of the Italian public debate since Cesare Lombroso's publication of *L'uomo delinquente* (1876; *The Criminal Man*). This book condensed Lombroso's findings in his expeditions in southern prisons to measure, collect and catalog the physical characteristics of brigands and common criminals. He concluded that the repetition of abnormal physical traits allowed him to predict southern criminality.⁷ Indeed, widespread forms of brigandage made the picture of Sicily even murkier, and the idea that criminality could be contained and limited to specific regions of the newborn Italian national territory, reinforced the prejudices associated with southerners, while reassuring northerners of their congenital superiority. Capuana had also joined the debate on southern criminality and wrote about the phenomenon of brigandage in "La Sicilia e il brigantaggio" (*Sicily and brigandage*), the essay that opens the volume *L'isola del sole*. This latter essay presented statistical evidence of the biased view that criminality was restricted to Sicily and southern Italy, whereas "La Sicilia nei canti popolari," on the other hand, portrayed brigands as they were described in Sicilian folktales and short stories. Furthermore, he presented an evolution of the phenomenon which was changing as Sicilian customs became nationalized. He claimed that while after Italian unification most of the times brigands were young men who escaped the military

⁷ Note that Cesare Lombroso's *L'uomo delinquente* was published in 1876, the same year of Franchetti's and Sonnino's expedition in Sicily.

service by retiring in the inner land and living outside of the law system, in the six years of his absence, they had become “audaci” and “volgari malfattori” (194).⁸ Brigands were no longer the popular heroes that had been elevated by popular imagination to the status of legends, and were becoming increasingly similar to their national counterparts (194-5).⁹

The figure of the brigand had been part of the national literary imagination since 1875, when Luigi Archinti’s “Un distaccamento in Calabria”—a fictional tale about brigandage in the southern region of Calabria—appeared in the *Illustrazione Italiana*, a popular magazine which had the aim of culturally homogenizing national taste by presenting the different regional traditions in picturesque terms (Moe, *The View from Vesuvius* 212-13). Contemporary to Franchetti’s and Sonnino’s inquiry and Lombroso’s study on the criminal man, “Un distaccamento in Calabria” presented a stereotypical image of the southern brigand from the point of view of the soldiers fighting against brigandage. This account was published following the enthusiastic reception that Verga’s Sicilian “sketch” “Nedda” had among the Milanese public in 1874. “Nedda”’s success had been confirmed by Eugenio Torelli Viola’s positive review of the *bozzetto* in the magazine, and Emilio Treves—the editor of *Illustrazione Italiana*—asked Verga to write more Sicilian short stories and encouraged the publication of fiction on the south of Italy.

⁸ “Daring” and “vulgar wrongdoers.”

⁹ On this topic, Ernest Mandel, in “From Hero to Villain,” analyzes the shift that the perception of criminals undergoes at the end of the nineteenth century. Due to the different sensibility of writers and readers, this character evolves from a positive one (a ‘good bandit’ like Robin Hood, who opposed the unjust feudal system) to an evil villain, that threatens the stability of the bourgeois state by attacking its property (1-11)

This was the origin of “Le storie del castello di Trezza,” which appeared as a series of four installments in the magazine between January and February 1875. That was the moment in which Verga understood that he could exploit northern fascination with the south to become popular, while at the same time presenting Sicily as the *locus* of contradictions. Indeed, Moe claims that “[i]t is Verga, in the first place, who helps bring into focus the aesthetic interest of the south at a moment when the backward view was still dominant” (*The View from Vesuvius* 212). In this sense, both Capuana and Verga enjoyed added prestige in the literary community as authorities on the real state of Sicily in a moment in which the south was at the center of fictional and scientific accounts. However, they followed two opposite approaches. While Capuana presented Sicily to the northern public to correct the circulating representations of Sicily as a dangerous and romantic place, Verga exploited some of these common places to sell his works (Zuccala 73).

These different approaches are particularly interesting when considering how the two Sicilian authors treated criminality in their works: Capuana using a more objective approach through his essays, while Verga diluted the sociological and pseudo-scientific discourses circulating at his time in his fictional works. Two of the clearest examples of this tendency are “L’amante di Gramigna” (“Gramigna’s Lover”) and “Rosso Malpelo” (literally “Red Evil-head”).¹⁰ Both short stories were initially published as literary

¹⁰ The short stories’ plots are simple. On the one hand, in “L’amante di Gramigna,” Peppa, the only daughter of a well-off widow of peasant’s origins, falls in love with the brigand Gramigna by listening to the popular stories that circulate on him. She breaks her engagement with a rich

appendices to magazines—“RM” in the “Fanfulla” in four installments on August 2-3-4-5, 1878, while “L’AG,” originally entitled “L’amante di Raja” (“Raja’s Lover”), it was published in February 1880 in Salvatore Farina’s magazine *Minima*. Later, in 1880, Verga took up the texts and revised them for publication in the short stories collection *Vita dei campi* (*Life in the fields*) and modified them again for the illustrated edition of the volume in 1897.

The public attention that these short stories received is evident in Verga’s desire to edit his texts to update them according to the changes in his public’s sensibility and the evolution of the sociological discourses that influenced them. For instance, “RM” was so popular that in February 1880 it was published unbeknownst to the author under the title “Scene Popolari – Rosso Malpelo” (“Popular Scenes – Red Evil-head”) as a pamphlet of the “Biblioteca dell’Artigiano, edita dalla Lega italiana per il “Patto di fratellanza” per la diffusione di buone letture fra gli operai” (“Craftsman’s Library, published by the Italian League for “Brotherhood Covenant” for the dissemination of good reading among workers”). As demonstrated by Rosanna Melis (1989), this publication shows how the short story was part of a larger debate and that the way in which the subject of child labor

peasant and escape in the countryside to join Gramigna. She lives with him as an outlaw, even if he beats her up. When Gramigna is finally arrested by the Carabinieri, her mother pays for her release and takes her home with the son she had from Gramigna. When her mother dies, she works for the Carabinieri to support herself and her son. On the other hand, “Rosso Malpelo” is the first short story that Verga wrote for *Vita dei campi*, and takes its name from its homonym protagonist, a child that works in the red sand mines at the foot of Mount Etna. It tells his story from his father’s death to his own, narrating the difficult conditions of children working in the mines. From now on, I will refer to “L’amante di Gramigna” as “L’AG” and to “Rosso Malpelo” as “RM.”

is treated allows for a different ideological use than the author's original ideology. Moreover, as Romano Luperini (2019) has shown, the variants of the 1880 and 1897 editions show how initially the author was more inclined toward the living conditions of southern workers, so much so that he included the scene of the delay of the engineer who was supposed to rescue Malpelo's father (Verga 86 [1881]). This philanthropic-social interest became weaker over the years so that this scene was largely revised and downplayed by Verga in the 1897 edition (Luperini 83).

The revision of "L'AG" was even more evident because it also affected the title that became more appealing to the national audience through the reference to the standard Italian *gramigna* (commonly known in English as Bermudagrass) and the suppression of the Sicilian term *raja* (sarsaparilla). The ending changed drastically too. In the 1880 version Peppa, the protagonist of the story, is portrayed as a caring mother who accepts to work for the Carabinieri to support the son born from her relationship with Gramigna and gets angry when the rascals of the neighborhood call him "il figlio di Gramigna, il figlio di Gramigna!"¹¹ (Verga 171 [1881]). On the contrary, in the 1897 edition, Peppa denies her role as a mother and abandons her son in an orphanage (Verga 283 [1897]). This change symbolically demonstrates a pessimistic evolution in Verga's ideology. While in 1880, the author's priority was to underline Peppa's maternal qualities in her abnegation to bring up Gramigna's son, after a symbolic reconciliation with her mother represented in the loss of their economic status, sixteen years later that's not the case anymore. Peppa

¹¹ "Gramigna's son, Gramigna's son!"

loses her maternal qualities and is represented as a woman that pursues only her individual interests and sexual pleasure in an almost sadomasochist way.¹² She is depicted as a “bad” daughter, mother, and fiancée, being reduced to the function of an outlaw’s lover, that is what epitomizes her in the title of the short story. Moreover, Gramigna’s offspring must be expelled from the national enclave to regenerate the island, so that Peppa can be reintegrated inside of the law system, represented by the Carabinieri.

The revisions of both short stories show how the author’s ideology evolved, becoming more conservative and reactionary, smoothing potential progressive instances, such as the upbringing of a criminal’s child, and the critique to the delayed rescue of Rosso Malpelo’s father. In so doing, Verga fictionalizes Lombroso’s atavistic theories, based on the congenital transmission of lower intellectual qualities, and shows a pessimistic vision of the reintegration and possible salvation of these individuals. There has been some debate on the possible influence of Lombroso’s theories on Verga’s fiction. Sandra Puccini analyzes the influence of positivist science in late nineteenth century literature and compares the preface of “L’AG” with a lecture delivered by Paolo

¹² In the short story, Peppa is portrayed as an irrational woman who takes unreasonable decisions that go against her psychological and physical integrity. First, she breaks up with her fiancé, Candela di Segò, renouncing to improve her economic status, and falls in love with Gramigna even if she has never seen him, only because of the stories that she has listened about him. Second, when she lives with Gramigna, he treats her poorly and beats her up. When she goes back home with her mother, after she has paid for her release, she lives as a social outcast, who not only lived as an outlaw with a bandit, but also had a son—outside of the marriage—from him. Finally, she works as a factotum for the Carabinieri. Both when she lives as an outlaw with Gramigna and when she cleans the Carabinieri’s station, she is described as a victim of the Stockholm syndrome, as she depends on the same people that treat her poorly or drift her apart from her loved ones.

Mantegazza, a positivist scientist who was Lombroso's early scientific mentor and later rival. In her close reading, Puccini shows how, besides the fact that Mantegazza's work is preserved in Verga's library, the two texts present similar stylistic devices and terminology. However, she goes on by saying that even if there is no evidence that Verga read Lombroso's work, his approach is closer to Lombroso's theoretical framework, than to Mantegazza's postulates (61-71). On the contrary, Vito Moretti points out that the two met in Milan during Verga's permanence in the northern town.¹³ Building on these studies, Jonathan R. Hiller analyzes the reception of Lombroso's theories in nineteenth-century Italian literature, and more specifically in Verga's works. He proposes a close reading of "RM" as the fictional personification of Lombroso's criminal man showing how red hair and grey eyes figure among the traits that physically distinguish the criminal type from the normal man (237-8).

However, I claim that a careful look at Lombroso's charts shows that even if red-hair criminals in Sicily have a highest percentage in comparison with other Italian regions, they represent only the 3%—the highest percentage of criminals have black hair, 54%, and brown hair, 41% (33 [1876]). A similar pattern can be observed regarding the eyes' color: indeed, the highest percentage in Sicily is represented by brown and dark eyes, 83%, followed by grey eyes, 12% (34 [1876]). Similarly, when comparing Gramigna's physical description with Lombroso's findings, they do not align, and this

¹³ It should also be noted that in Verga's correspondence there is a note that he sent to Lombroso on 8 August 1898, where he denies his support to Lombroso's proposal of a military reform to protect individual freedom. See Gino Raya, *Vita di Giovanni Verga* (38).

trend becomes even more prominent considering that this short story is one of the few instances in which Verga explicitly writes about a criminal. Indeed, Gramigna's physical description is secondary in Verga's narration. It comes only towards the end and occupies less than a line: "La gente che si accalcava per vederlo, si metteva a ridere trovandolo così piccolo, pallido e brutto, che pareva un pulcinella" (Verga 167 [1881]).¹⁴ The cruel brigand that had threatened the whole province results into a paradoxical caricature: he is small, pale and ugly, the opposite of his grandiose fame. Moreover, the shining of his eyes in the scene of his capture makes him resembling a mad man and frightens Peppa: "e quello che le agghiacciò il sangue più di ogni cosa fu il luccicare che cia aveva negli occhi, da sembrare un pazzo" (Verga 167 [1881]).¹⁵

While the reference to madness and ugliness could evoke Lombrosian discourse, Verga's literary description reproduces fictional *clichés* on criminals. This novelesque tendency is fiercely criticized by Lombroso who claims that "Sulla fisonomia dei delinquenti corrono idee molto erronee fra i più. I romanzieri ne fanno degli uomini spaventevoli d'aspetto, barbuti infino agli occhi, con isguardo scintillante e feroce, con nasi aquilini" (30).¹⁶ Lombroso opposes the literary commonplaces about criminals' ugliness that went back to the classical association based on the correspondence between

¹⁴ "People, who flocked to see him, laughed, finding him so small, pale and ugly that he looked like a Pulcinella."

¹⁵ "And what chilled her blood more than anything else was the sparkle that cia had in her eyes, that she looked like a madman."

¹⁶ About the physiognomy of delinquents run very erroneous ideas among the most. Novelists make of them men frightening in appearance, bearded below the eyes, with a glittering and fierce gaze, with aquiline noses."

moral virtues and physical appearance. Based on his findings he claims that criminals were neither ugly nor beautiful and had a peculiar physiognomy that varied according to their criminal activity. Specifically, he notices that criminals are generally taller and have a darker complexion than the normal type (Lombroso 42-3 [1876]). Moreover, talking specifically about brigands, Lombroso stresses that a common trait that distinguished them from the other criminals was their tendency to braid their hair because of their frizzy and unruly nature (32 [1876]). These remarks contrast with Verga's portrait of the brigand, representing Gramigna more like the literary descriptions circulating at Verga's time than to Lombroso's pseudo-scientific findings. The same applies to "RM" who is described as "un brutto ceffo, torvo, ringhioso e selvatico" (Verga 91 [1881]).¹⁷ As in the case of Gramigna, Rosso Malpelo's ugliness and wildness reflects more a stereotypical fictional vision of the criminal than the "reality" fixed by Lombroso. If that's the case, why does it seem that Verga's "RM" and "L'AG" constantly refer to the anthropological and criminology discourses circulating at his time?

While on a more general level, in both cases it is the tone that Verga uses to set the basis for his narration, and the regression of the narrator in the anonymous popular voice that is telling the stories, there are some differences in the way the scientific discourse is filtered in Verga's short stories.¹⁸ First, as Puccini notices positivist science

¹⁷ "an ugly, grim, snarling, and wild mugger."

¹⁸ A quick glimpse to the preface of "L'AG" should suffice to exemplify this trend. It is one of the few examples in which Verga directly refers to his narrative approach, he claims that "Io te lo ripeterò così come l'ho raccolto pei viottoli dei campi, press'a poco colle medesime parole semplici e pittoresche della narrazione popolare, e tu veramente preferirai di trovarti faccia a faccia col fatto nudo e schietto senza stare a cercarlo fra le linee del libro, attraverso la lente dello

in late nineteenth-century coincides with commonly held ideologies, since “La scienza e le sue costruzioni dottrinarie, in quest’epoca, sembrano legate da un rapporto speculare alle ideologie ed al senso comune diffuso” (68).¹⁹ It is for this reason that as Hiller points out, one thinks that Rosso Malpelo’s description coincides with Lombroso’s identikit of the criminal man (236), even when the child’s physical traits are not the most prominent ones in the criminologist’s charts. The common belief expressed by the popular narrator at the beginning of the short story merge with the criminology discourse justifying the superstitious prejudice and giving to it the appearance of a scientific truth: “Malpelo si chiamava così perchè aveva i capelli rossi; ed aveva i capelli rossi perchè era un ragazzo malizioso e cattivo, che prometteva di riuscire un fior di birbone. Sicchè tutti alla cava della rena rossa lo chiamavano Malpelo; e persino sua madre col sentirgli dir sempre a quel modo aveva quasi dimenticato il suo nome di battesimo” (Verga 92 [1881]).²⁰ The frequency of cause and effect adverbs—*così*, *perchè*, *sicchè*—in the opening sentence of

scrittore” (*Vita dei campi*, 155-6; “I will repeat it to you just as I picked it up from the paths of the fields, roughly in the same simple and picturesque words of the popular narrative, and you will really prefer to meet face to face with the bare and frank fact without looking for it between the lines of the book, through the lens of the writer.”) In these few lines, Verga presents some of the most important pillars of the verist style as he will “repeat” the story as he has heard it in the countryside with the same simple words used in the popular narration. The idea that the narrator is disappearing to present objectively a popular story, could make one think that Verga is only a scribe and his not projecting his ideology on the plot and character description, but as it will be shown in this chapter, that would be naïve belief.

¹⁹ “Science and its doctrinal constructions, in this era, seem to be tied in a specular relationship to ideologies and widespread common sense”.

²⁰ “Malpelo was called like that because he had red hair; and he had red hair because he was a mischievous, naughty boy who promised to succeed the best of the rascals. So that everyone at the red sand pit called him Malpelo; and even his mother, hearing him called that way all the time, had almost forgotten his first name”.

the short story sets the tone for the rest of the narrative. Like in a mathematical equation Verga implies that Malpelo's name comes from the color of his hair, and because of that color he is naughty.

Only Sicilian readers were aware of the association between red hair and mischievous behavior in their local culture, as it is remarked in many regional popular idioms.²¹ For a national reader, on the contrary, red hair has a meaning only through the connotations implied in the short story's opening sequence that echo a criminological discourse similar to Lombroso's one. According to Puccini "[L]a frase di esordio potrebbe essere stata tolta da un'opera scientifica del tempo: per esempio da una biografia di qualche assassino 'nato,' di un brigante, o magari di un anarchico o di un profeta contadino che, fin dall'infanzia, potevano aver manifestato la loro 'difformità' attraverso il colore della pelle e dei capelli" (67).²² It is the reliance on a physical trait that makes the story similar to a scientific work of its time, and essentializes red hair as a manifestation of a poor moral conduct. Therefore, Clemente sees in this tendency a proof of Verga's reliance on biologic determinism and Spencerian theories (515-534).

While I believe that Verga was conscious about the scientific theories that were circulating at his time, I claim that he was more interested in exploiting their success and

²¹ For instance: "Uocchi bianchi e capiddi russi, un ti fidari ,si un li canusci" (literally "White eyes and red hair, don't trust in them, if you don't know them"); "Pilu russu malu culuri: o birbanti o tradituri" ("Red hair is a bad color: either a rascal or a traitor"); "Cc'u pilu russu si fa u velenu" ("With red hair one makes poison").

²² "[T]he opening sentence may have been lifted from a scholarly work of the time: for example, from a biography of some "born murderer," of a brigand, or perhaps of an anarchist or a peasant prophet who, from childhood, might have manifested their "dissimilarity" through the color of their skin and hair."

popularity among his readers than a firm supporter. Indeed, in 1878 Verga published “RM” in the “Fanfulla,” while the second edition of Lombroso’s *L’uomo criminale* was coming out. Moreover, the writer was very conscious about the popular debates happening at a national level at that time and took advantage of them to sell his work. For instance, “RM” was published when there was a huge national debate on child labor, which began in 1877 from Minister Salvatore Maiorana Calatabiano’s agrarian inquiry, and later became a bill in 1879 thanks to Luzzati, Minghetti and Sonnino. As Luperini has convincingly demonstrated, the short story is based on a careful study of the chapter on Sicilian *carusi* (children) who worked in the sulfur mines and their white murders in Franchetti and Sonnino’s *Inchiesta in Sicilia* (81-98).²³

On a similar note, “L’AG” can be read as a fictional account of the second section of chapter one of *Inchiesta in Sicilia*, entitled “Le provincie infestate dai malfattori” (“The provinces infested with evildoers”). Here Franchetti and Sonnino present a study of the causes of brigandage in Sicily, complemented by a profile of the wrongdoers and of the local system that protects them. A clear intertextual reference is the one on the effects of the brigand’s action on the local economy. In the short story one reads:

Per giunta si approssimava il tempo delle messe, il fieno era già steso pei campi, le spighe chinavano il capo e dicevano di sì ai mietitori che avevano già la falce in pugno, e nonostante nessun proprietario osava affacciare il naso al disopra della siepe del suo potere, per timore di incontrarvi Gramigna che se ne stesse sdraiato fra i solchi colla carabina fra le gambe, pronto a far saltare il capo al primo che

²³ For a detailed study of the influence of Franchetti and Sonnino in “RM,” see Romano Luperini’s essay “*Rosso Malpelo*: lettura storico-ideologica e confronto con *Ciaula scopre la luna*” in *Giovanni Verga. Saggi* (1976 – 2018) [81-98].

venisse a guardare nei fatti suoi. Sicchè le lagnanze erano generali (Verga 151 [1881]).²⁴

In this passage nature is described as benevolent and lavish, evoking the mythical image of Sicily as the granary of the Roman empire: corn is personified in a bending attitude that invites the harvesters to collect it. This peaceful image is contrasted with the state of fear that reigns in the Sicilian countryside because of Gramigna, who bearing the name of a parasite plant represents a threat not only for nature but also for the human being: “era solo ma valeva per dieci, e la mala pianta minacciava di abbarbicare” (Verga 151 [1881]).²⁵ The brigant poses a dual problem: an economic one, as he threatens the harvesting season success, as well as a social issue, as other people could emulate him in his successful life as an outlaw. Moreover, this passage is molded out of one taken from Franchetti’s and Sonnino’s study on brigandage:

Nella sterminata solitudine della campagna siciliana i veri padroni sono i malfattori. Stanno a loro discrezione i grandi armenti che vagano pascolando, l’estate su pei monti, l’inverno nelle colline basse e nei piani delle marine, le messi mature, le vigne, i mandorli, le case e le ville perse in mezzo al deserto. Basta uno di loro con un mazzo di fiammiferi per distruggere la ricchezza di un uliveto prodotta da secoli. Appartengono a loro la vita e le sostanze [...] (38).²⁶

²⁴ “What’s more, harvest time was approaching, the hay was already spread out on the fields, the ears of corn were bowing their heads and saying yes to the harvesters who already had their scythes in their hands, and yet no owner dared to stick his nose above the hedge of his farm, for fear of encountering Gramigna lying in the furrows with his rifle between his legs, ready to blow the head off the first person who came to look into his business. So that the complaints were general.”

²⁵ “[He] was alone but it was worth ten, and the bad plant threatened to cling.”

²⁶ “In the endless solitude of the Sicilian countryside, the real masters are the wrongdoers. The great herds that roam grazing, during the summer on the mountains, and during the winter in the low hills and on the marine plains, the ripe crops, the vineyards, the almond trees, the houses, and villas lost in the middle of the desert, belong all to them. It only takes one of them with a bunch of matches to destroy the wealth of an olive grove produced for centuries. Life and wealth are at their disposal [...]”

While both passages convey the same urgency of the threat that these wrongdoers pose for the local economy, they use different strategies to make brigands' action stand out. On the one hand, Verga describes Sicily countryside as lavish and Gramigna as a parasite plant that can ruin the harvest and corrupt people. On the other, Franchetti and Sonnino evoke the picture of a solitary desert in which neither the owners nor the workers appear, and everything is left at the brigand's disposal. The oxymoron of a desert populated by herds, crops, vineyards, almond and olive groves, is not innocent as Sicily at that time was constantly compared to Africa: it implies a series of sociological and racial comparisons between the island and the close southern continent that was popular at the time and had a long history going back to the previous centuries.²⁷

The image of the desert appears again in Franchetti's and Sonnino's study on brigandage in reference to the Carabinieri, which are described as a continental military body, foreign to the island's customs, language, people, and even mimicry, as it is evidenced in this passage:

Ma forestieri all'Isola, legati da un regolamento di servizio fatto per altre circostanze ed altri paesi, ignoranti, spesso della lingua, dei luoghi e delle persone, quasi sempre del significato di quella mimica rapida e vivace, di quel girar d'occhi, di quelle intonazioni che formano per i Siciliani un secondo linguaggio determinato, chiaro quanto quello della parola, da loro impiegato per esprimere quelle cose, che non vogliono dichiarare apertamente e che sono in generale le più importanti a conoscersi, non avendo idea dei costumi della popolazione, delle complicatissime relazioni, che legano i malfattori fra di loro e colle altre classi

²⁷ See Dainotto, Roberto M. *Europe (in Theory)*. Duke University Press, 2007; Moe, Nelson. *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question*. Vol. 46. Univ of California Press, 2002; Dickie, John. *Darkest Italy: The Nation and Stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*. Springer, 1999.

della società, vivono in mezzo alla popolazione isolati come in un deserto, vedono e sentono senza capire, fanno la stessa figura che farebbe una statua della giustizia in mezzo ad una banda di malfattori (69).

As this long sentence indicates, the Carabinieri are insufficient in their mission to stop criminals, due to their transplantation from a different sociocultural and legal system. By accumulating different secondary clauses, this inadequacy is emphasized at various levels. In addition to the language barrier, the authors remark that Sicilians tend to express themselves through gestures when they “cannot” verbally say something explicitly. While the tone at the beginning of the sentence is descriptive, towards the end it becomes evaluative through the usage of two similes. The carabinieri, in the first instance, are described as living in a desert-like isolation from the rest of the population. Secondly, they are compared to a statue of justice among a band of wrongdoers, thereby criminalizing Sicilian society as a whole.

While Verga does not share this extreme view about Sicilians, in “L’AG,” the inability of the institutional armed forces to find Gramigna is highlighted in temporal terms “lo inseguivano da due mesi, senza essere riesciti a mettergli le unghie addosso” (158-159 [1881]).²⁸ Also, it is contrasted with the relative ease with which Peppina finds the brigand wounded among the prickly pears. His exhausting escape from the armed forces is what converts him in the topic of discussion in the whole province:

Nelle campagne, nei villaggi, per le fattorie, sotto le frasche delle osterie, nei luoghi di ritrovo, non si parlava d’altro che di lui, di Gramigna, di quella caccia accanita, di quella fuga disperata; i cavalli dei carabinieri cascavano stanchi morti; i compagni d’armi si buttavano rifiniti per terra in tutte le stalle, le pattuglie

²⁸ “They had been chasing him for two months, without being able to get their nails on him.”

dormivano all'impiedi; egli solo, Gramigna, non era stanco mai, non dormiva mai, fuggiva sempre, s'arrampicava sui precipizi, strisciava fra le messi, correva a carponi nel fondo dei fichi d'india, sgattajolava come un lupo nel letto asciutto dei torrenti (Verga 160 [1881]).²⁹

In this passage Gramigna's chase is compared to a hunt, and he is even animalized and compared to a wolf. He is described as tireless and an expert of Sicilian geology: his physical skills allow him to escape in the Sicilian rough nature, epitomized in the cliffs, prickly pears, and dry streams. On the contrary, the armed forces that are looking for him get tired and do not have the physical characteristics required to survive on the island. He is also better than animals, as even Carabinieri's horses get tired in Gramigna's chase. This kind of discourse converts the brigand into a legend as he becomes the principle topic of discussion in the whole province: "Il principale argomento di ogni discorso, nei crocchi, davanti agli usci del villaggio, era la sete divorante che doveva soffrire il perseguitato nella pianura immensa, arsa, sotto il sole di giugno" (Verga 160 [1881]).³⁰ Similarly, as it happened in the previous quotation, the reiteration of the places in which people are speaking about Gramigna makes him a hero, as while his reputation is reinforced by the popular gossiping, the trust in armed forces is weakened.³¹ Moreover,

²⁹ In the countryside, in the villages, on the farms, under the branches of the taverns, in the meeting places, nothing was spoken of but him, of Gramigna, of that fierce hunt, that desperate escape; the horses of the carabinieri fell dead tired; the comrades-in-arms threw themselves finished on the ground in all the stables, the patrols slept on their feet; he alone, Gramigna, was never tired, never slept, always fled, climbed the precipices, crawled through the crops, ran on all fours in the bottom of the prickly pears, sneaked like a wolf in the dry bed of the streams.

³⁰ "The main topic of every talk, in the croquis, in front of the village exits, was the devouring thirst that the persecuted had to suffer in the immense, parched plain under the June sun."

³¹ As Franchetti and Sonnino make clear, brigands have a large array of proselytes among all social classes in Sicily. It is only when rich people see that their interests are being threatened that they pressur the government and law enforcement authorities to stop brigandage: "Però, questa

as in a magic realist Latin American fiction, it is Gramigna's thirst that triggers the main events of the plot.

This popular superstition that Verga fictionalizes is based on a real story, as Capuana recalls in "La Sicilia nei canti popolari". Peppa's character is inspired by Capuana's service maid, while Gramigna on a popular brigand of the time:

Così in tempi più recenti, e che pure paiono assai lontani, Gramigna—si chiamava altrimenti, ma il Verga l'ha ribattezzato con questo nome nell'arte e non è lecito più mutarlo—si dava alla campagna per aver ucciso, trattovi per i capelli, il suo tutore infedele e tiranno. Non la fantasia popolare, ma una potenza artistica che rivaleggia con essa, ha svolto e fissato quest'accenno della vita reale. Col Verga avevo discorso d'una persona di servizio in casa mia, quando Gramigna errava per la campagna inseguito dalla forza pubblica, dapprima latitante, poi di nuovo omicida, per difesa, in uno dei frequenti agguati e scontri da cui riusciva a sfuggire quasi per miracolo (195 -196).³²

In this excerpt Capuana briefly reports the true story of the brigand on which Verga molded his Gramigna. The reference to the true event underlying the artistic

ammirazione teorica pei briganti non impedisce che la poca sicurezza non provochi, specialmente nella classe ricca, generali lamenti, i quali, nella bocca di chi ebbe a soffrire dal brigantaggio personalmente in modo crudele, diventano aspri ed irosi e si manifestano per lo più sotto forma di duri rimproveri al Governo. Da esso si aspetta, o piuttosto si richiede tutto" ("However, this theoretical admiration for the brigands does not prevent the lack of security from provoking, especially in the wealthy class, general laments, which, in the mouths of those who had personally suffered from brigandage in a cruel way, become bitter and wrathful and manifest themselves mostly in the form of harsh reproaches to the government. From it everything is expected, or rather demanded.") [Franchetti and Sonnino 58]

³² "Thus, in more recent times, and which also seem very distant, Gramigna—he was called otherwise, but Verga has renamed him by this name in his art and it is no longer legitimate to change it—escape to the countryside for having killed, out of need, his unfaithful and tyrannical tutor. Not the popular imagination, but an artistic power that rivals it, unfolded, and fixed this hint of real life. With Verga I had been talking of a servant in my house, when Gramigna was wandering about the countryside pursued by the police, at first a fugitive, then a murderer again, in defense, in one of the frequent ambushes and clashes from which he managed to escape almost by a miracle."

creation is made through the expression “accenno alla vita reale” (Capuana 196). What surprises in Capuana’s account is that the brigand did not choose that lifestyle, but was almost compelled to become one. The reason that converts him into a fugitive is the murder of his unfaithful and tyrannical tutor, implying that he was most likely an orphan and a young wealthy man under the tutorship of a relative or a person close to his family, who was not acting in his interests and not giving him the freedom, he was aspiring to have. Expressions such as *trattovi per i capelli* (literally “pulled by the air”) and *per difesa* (“in defense”) make clear that the brigand acted out of need and not because he was intrinsically evil. These connotations are completely erased in Verga’s narrative as he focuses on the brigand’s escape, and do not give any explanation of his life’s choices. In so doing, Verga makes his brigand intrinsically evil, as his behavior is not explained by any reasonable argument.

To sum up, the perception of the brigand in Verga’s short story shifts towards a negative one. The author’s choice of changing the brigand’s name in Gramigna signals a shift towards a more symbolic one that conveys a set of negative connotations. This poetic intent is confirmed by the narrator at the beginning of the short story— “un nome maledetto come l’erba che lo porta” (Verga 158 [1881]).³³ Considering the fact that Verga declares to Farina in the short story’s preface that he is sending him an historical human document—“documento umano” (Verga 155 [1881])—it is important to understand that for the author, the short story had an historical relevance for mainly two reasons. On the

³³ “A name as cursed as the weed that bears it.”

one hand, the Sicilian sociocultural background that emerges from the short story is based on a careful study of *La Sicilia nel 1876*, therefore, it has a scientific value. On the other one, as it fictionalizes the story of Capuana's service maid and her superstitious beliefs, it fixes popular customs. As in Rosso Malpelo's physical description, it is the convergence of the popular discourse with the scientific one that gives Verga's short story the value of an anthropological document, a "semplice fatto umano [che] farà pensare sempre; avrà sempre l'efficacia dell'esser stato" (Verga 156 [1881]).³⁴

2.2 The Necropolitics of Extraction: How to Eliminate Subversive Subjects While Sustaining the National Development

Similarly to Gramigna in "L'AG," Rosso Malpelo in the homonym short story is told by a popular narrative voice that reports his story in the mine. The perspective used by this voice is a malevolent superstitious one that believes that Malpelo is evil because of his red-hair. He is the son of an idiot, whose name, Mastro Misciu Bestia, comes from his naive conduct: "solo un minchione come maestro Misciu aveva potuto lasciarsi gabbare a questo modo dal padrone; perciò appunto lo chiamavano Misciu Bestia, ed era l'asino da basto di tutta la cava" (Verga 93).³⁵ This kind of propositions in Verga's novels

³⁴ "Simple human fact [that] will always make think; it will always have the effectiveness of *having been*."

³⁵ "Only a prick like Mastro Misciu had been able to allow himself to be gulled in this way by the mine owner; that is precisely why they called him Misciu Bestia, and he was the cane donkey of the whole quarry." On this note, Lombroso published several books on the theme of cretinism and microcefalism, relating the phenomenon both to madness and criminality. This interest dates to his dissertation on endemic cretinism in Lombardia (1859). According to his studies the offspring of these individuals had high chances of being affected from the same syndrome.

and short stories fictionalize the rationale behind the creation of *'ngiuria*—the Sicilian term for nickname—for a national audience, that is a “nomignolo offensivo. Assai più spesso è un soprannome che trae origine da un tic, da un difetto fisico, da una particolarità del carattere, da un'abitudine” (Cammilleri 131).³⁶ The regional popular practice of essentializing a person through one of their physical or behavioral traits, becomes full of unexpected consequences in a national context. In the description of Mastro Misciu's *'ngiuria*, the usage of adverbs like *solo*, *perció*, and *appunto*, shows the logic process that guides the selection of the nickname in popular culture. In this way, a 'primitive' regional habit that does not have any sense for a national audience is legitimated for its rationality. In Verga's narrative, popular regional culture and scientific discourse merge and assume different connotations for the local and the national audience. Gramigna, Rosso Malpelo, Misciu Bestia, Ranocchio are the local names used to describe the brigand, the criminal child, the idiot, and the ill-formed, that were studied at a national scientific level in the studies of criminal anthropology.

The dehumanization of southern miners, in “RM,” is conveyed through the choice of *'ngiurias* that have an animal referent. In the case of Mastro Misciu and Ranocchio (literally froggy) are symbolically assigned the name of the animal that best represents their working skills.³⁷ For instance, Ranocchio is called like that because he is not able to

³⁶ “Derogatory nickname. Far more often it is a nickname that originates from a tic, a physical defect, a peculiarity of character, a habit.”

³⁷ Another well-known instance in which the *'ngiuria* coincides with an animal name is that of *La lupa*, the she-wolf, a short story on a woman connotated by her excessive sexual appetite. There again, the Sicilian woman peasant is described alike Lombroso's criminal woman.

bear heavy loads, and he shakes like a frog. Before becoming a miner, he worked in the construction sector, but he had fallen off a building site bridge and dislocated his femur “[i]l poveretto, quando portava il suo corbello di rena in spalla, arrancava in modo che sembrava ballasse la tarantella, e aveva fatto ridere tutti quelli della cava, così che gli avevano messo nome Ranocchio; ma lavorando sotterra, coì ranocchio com’era, il suo pane se lo buscava” (Verga 121 [1881]).³⁸ His physical deformity makes him unsuitable for working outside of the mining system, and even there he has several issues because he is weak and is not used to live in the tunnels like Malpelo, who has spent most of his life in the mines—“Un operaio disse che quel ragazzo *non ne avrebbe fatto osso duro* a quell mestiere, e che per lavorare in una miniera senza lasciarvi la pelle bisogna nascervi” (Verga 116).³⁹ Indeed, Ranocchio stands out for his weakness in comparison with Malpelo and Mastro Misciu, and dies of tuberculosis for the poor air quality of the tunnels.

In the case of Mastro Misciu Bestia the process of animalization is double as for his suitability in the mining work, he is called a beast and a donkey.⁴⁰ This animal

³⁸ “[T]he poor fellow, when he carried his sand load on his shoulder, trudged along so that he seemed to be dancing the tarantella, and he had made all those in the quarry laugh, so that they had put the name Ranocchio on him; but working underground, so froggy as he was, he deserved his bread.”

³⁹ “One worker said that that boy would not get used to mining, and that to work in a mine without dying there you have to be born in one.” Paradoxically, even Malpelo and his father who have worked all their lives in the mines will die there. However, according to the mining community they deserve to die there because of their foolishness and meanness.

⁴⁰ The donkey as an important narrative function in the short story, as it is an essential animal in the pit system, used to carry heavy loads until they died for their poor alimentation and exhausting work.

symbolizes stupidity as well as stubbornness and is used for hard repetitive works because of his docility. Indeed, Mastro Misciu is described as a naïve and diligent miner, who prefers to use his arms to work rather than engaging in pointless fights with his co-workers (Verga 93 [1881]). Therefore, according to the miners' community, Mastro Misciu deserves to die because he is a *minchione*, an idiot, that has accepted a suicidal mission for a low pay from the mine owner. The identification between Mastro Misciu and the donkey in the short story is carried out through the analogies with the *grigio*, a donkey that dies because of his hard work in the mine. Paradoxically, and because of his mischievous nature, Malpelo is one of those miners that most fiercely beats the *grigio*—“Ma l’asino grigio, povera bestia, sbilenca e macilenta sopportava tutto lo sfogo della cattiveria di Malpelo; ei lo picchiava senza pietà col manico della zappa, e borbottava: —Così creperai più presto!” (Verga 98 – 99 [1881]).⁴¹ Thus, Malpelo is described as sharing the same utilitarian and sadist way of thinking of the mining community.

While Mastro Misciu is not portrayed as a violent and vindictive individual, Malpelo returns the harm that he receives from the larger community and vents his anger on animals and weaker children. He exacerbates the Darwinist theory on the struggle for life in his resentment against the *grigio*: “L’asino va picchiato, perchè non può picchiar lui; e s’ei potesse picchiare, ci pesterebbe sotto i piedi e ci strapperebbe la carne a morsi”

⁴¹ “But the gray donkey, poor beast, lopsided and spindly bore all the outburst of Malpelo’s wickedness; and he beat him mercilessly with the hoe handle and muttered: —So you’ll croak sooner!”

(Verga 102 [1881]).⁴² The only kind of language that Malpelo knows is violence, as only his father treated him with kindness. In this sense, Malpelo can be considered both a perpetrator of the violent extractivist logic of the mining system and a victim. With the progression of the short story, Malpelo becomes more and more a victim as he is identified with his father—he wears his clothes after his corpse is found—and he is compared with a donkey, “Ei c’ingrassava fra i calci e si lasciava caricare meglio dell’asino grigio, senza osar di lagnarsi” (Verga 92 [1881]).⁴³ Malpelo passively accepts to be beaten because he knows that this is the treatment reserved to those like him—“A che giova? Sono *malpelo!*” (Verga 104 [1881]).⁴⁴ His love acts are also violent as he is not used to receive and give love to the others— “Il certo era che nemmeno sua madre aveva avuta mai una carezza da lui, e quindi non gliene faceva mai” (Verga 104 [1881]).⁴⁵ Therefore, in his friendship with Ranocchio, even when he is beating him up, this is his way of showing his love as he wants that he becomes tougher so that he can survive in the mining system. For the same reason, when Ranocchio’s health conditions

⁴² “The donkey must be beaten, because he cannot beat him; and if he could beat, he would step under our feet and bite our flesh off.” Once the *grigio* is dead, Malpelo spends his free time staring at his corpse down the valley and expressing his pessimist philosophy to Ranocchio, another child-miner that works with him. While looking at how dogs are eating *grigio*’s corpse, he says that with death one stops suffering, celebrating death as the only way to escape life’s sorrow.

⁴³ “He fattened because of the kicks he received and let the others charge him better than the gray donkey, not daring to complain.”

⁴⁴ “What is the benefit? I am a *malpelo*.”

⁴⁵ “What was certain was that his mother had never had a caress from him either, so she never caressed him.” Note the sarcastic tone of this sentence: it is Malpelo’s responsibility if he has never been loved, and not his mother’s fault. The paradox is that being mischievous he does not deserve to be loved, but it is his responsibility to love back the people who do not love him, so that they change their mind on his evilness.

worsen, Malpelo wishes him a quick death so that his suffering can end soon.

Deterministically, Malpelo thinks that one cannot escape from his own destiny, like his author. Ultimately, dying is the only way of breaking free from an unjust and violent system.

The short story is full of deaths: Mastro Misciu, Ranocchio, the *grigio*, and Malpelo, they all die because of their work in the mine. All these individuals are outcasts—an idiot, a phthisic, a pack animal, and an evil child—and their deaths are much expected and not regretted. The way that the miners' corpse is handled when they die in the mine indicates their disposable nature. When Mastro Misciu is finally found weeks after his death, the narrator says that “Il carrettiere sbarazzò il sotterraneo dal cadavere al modo istesso che lo sbarazzava dalla rena caduta e dagli asini morti, chè stavolta oltre al lezzo del carcame, c'era che il carcame era di carne battezzata [...] (Verga 109-110 [1881]).⁴⁶ In this passage, Mastro Misciu's corpse is objectified and compared respectively with the sand, dead donkeys, and decomposing flesh. The verb *sbarazzare* (to get rid of something) implies that his corpse is seen as an obstacle, a bulk, something that needs to be disposed so that the mining machine can work in extracting more valuable goods, like sand in this case. Considering that the carter taking the corpse out of the mine will lose time—that he could have spent in carrying loads of sand, avoiding tiring the donkey in the rescue—the only reason why it is worth extracting the

⁴⁶ “The carter rid the dungeon of the corpse in the same manner as he rid it of the fallen sand and dead donkeys, for this time in addition to the stench of the carcass, there was that the carcass was of baptized flesh.”

miner's body is his smell and the fact that he was a Christian, and, thus, merits to be buried. In this sense, the value of human life in the short story is seen as worthless compared to the red sand that needs to be extracted.

At the end of nineteenth century, red sand was an important material used in the construction industry. While the short story describes the nineteenth-century red sand mine system in Catania, this narrative aspect has not been considered by critics yet. These mines were exploited for almost 200 years by semi-forced labor. Franco Politano and Giuseppe Licitra describe the characteristics of the mines around Catania and on Mount Etna: *a gghiara*, the red sand extracted by Malpelo, is a material formed by the action of lava flows on the paleosol ("Le cavità artificiali"). In the short story there is no reference about what the usage of this material was, where it was carried and how long these pits had been used. According to Politano and Licitra claim:

nel periodo dal '700 alla prima metà del '900, si diffuse l'estrazione della ghiaia da cave sotterranee, appositamente scavate per tale scopo, in quanto la richiesta di "agghiara" aveva superato di molto quella della pietra lavica, perché, oltre ad essere utilizzata come legante, fu largamente utilizzata (dopo opportuno setacciamento in sabbia finissima) per la preparazione di intonaci esterni, che davano alle facciate degli edifici dei paesi etnei il loro caratteristico colore rosso ("Le cavità artificiali").

Historically, red sand was used to produce mortars and the red plaster that gave the façades of the buildings of the villages around the Mount Etna the characteristic red color for which they are renowned. To reduce time, costs, and the hardships associated with transportation, the mines were mainly located inside of the city limits ("Le cavità artificiali").

In the short story, it is said that Malpelo's mines are in Monserrato and Carvana (Verga 93 [1881]), two neighborhoods of Catania, that are now quite centric, but were peripheric in the nineteenth century. Elio Micciché describes the Carvana as an area of the city that retained agricultural connotations until the first half of the twentieth century. He says that it can be defined as the agricultural extension of the Borgo, with which it was in symbiosis until the eve of the subversive laws that uprooted the Benedictines from their estates with the unification of Italy (25). Therefore, the red sand extracted by Malpelo in the short story was used to sustain the modernization and urbanization of Catania at the end of the nineteenth century. However, as Luperini has shown, the main source for the description of the working conditions of children in these mines is based on Franchetti's chapter on the Carusi working in the sulfur extraction ("*Rosso Malpelo: lettura storico-ideologica*" 84). Considering that in Catania there were also important active sulfur mines in the nineteenth century—the only two of the island, that used modern technology in the refinement of sulfur—it is legitimate to ask: why did Verga decide to fictionalize red sand mines, then?

The text does not provide any reference about the usage of the material extracted, leaving the reader with the feeling that miners are doing a pointless activity that does not have an immediate material consequence. Considering the critique of modernity that the author carries on in other short stories and in *I Malavoglia*, I believe that in Malpelo, Verga is taking the rhetorical feature of the estrangement to its limits. By presenting the malicious point of view of the mining community as complicit with the capitalist system that exploits children in the mines, Verga shows the costs of the modernization process.

The lack of humanity of this extractivist system is remarked in the short story by the comparison between the mine and the prison:

Verso quell' epoca venne a lavorare nella cava uno che non s'era mai visto, e si teneva nascosto il più che poteva; gli altri operai dicevano fra di loro che era scappato dalla prigione, e se lo pigliavano ce lo tornavano a chiudere per degli anni e degli anni. [...] Dopo poche settimane però il fuggitivo dichiarò chiaro e tondo che era stanco di quella vitaccia da talpa e piuttosto si contentava di stare in galera tutta la vita, chè la prigione in confronto, era un paradiso e preferiva tornarci coi suoi piedi (Verga 120-1 [1881]).⁴⁷

By implying that the prison in comparison with the mine is a paradise, the narrator is expressing a double critique of the two systems. On the one side, he criticizes the first one for not reforming the prisoners and making them live at the expenses of taxpayers.⁴⁸ On the other, because of the tough life that miners carry out in the mining system, it is more appealing for the prisoner to live without freedom than choosing to work there.

The reference to the prisoner in the short story is also functional to the criminalization of Malpelo who, initially, does not even know what a prison is—“seppe che era un luogo dove si mettevano i ladri, e i malarnesi come lui, e si tenevano sempre chiusi la dentro e guardati a vista” (“RM” 120).⁴⁹ By knowing that the prisoner is like him, he is attracted by this mysterious figure and has “una malsana curiosità per

⁴⁷ “About that time there came to work in the pit a man whom they had never seen before, and he kept himself hidden as much as he could. The other workmen said among themselves that he'd escaped from prison, and that if he was caught, they'd shut him up again for years and years. [...] After a few weeks, however, the fugitive declared flatly and plainly that he was sick of that mole's life, and he'd rather be in prison all his life, because prison was paradise in comparison, and he'd rather walk back there on his own feet.”

⁴⁸ In “Fantasticheria” it is implied that prisoners eat the king's bread “mangiano il pane del re” (13), that means that do not have to work for their bread, and live at the expenses of the kingdom.

⁴⁹ “he was said that it was a place where thieves, and wrongdoers like him, were put, and they were always kept locked in there and watched on sight.”

quell'uomo che aveva provata la prigione e ne era scappato" (Verga 120-1 [1881]).⁵⁰ This unhealthy curiosity for someone who is similar to him, leads Malpelo to questioning the fact that he and the other miners are working in the mine. If even the prisoner preferred to lose his freedom than working in the mine, it meant that they were all fools in avoiding to be imprisoned:

Allora perchè tutti quelli che lavorano nella cava non si fanno mettere in prigione? domandò Malpelo.

Perché non sono malpelo come te! rispose lo Sciancato.

Ma non temere, che tu ci andrai e ci lascerai le ossa ("RM" 121).⁵¹

This passage reinforces Malpelo's criminality by implying that other miners are sure that he will die in prison. However, he will not be able to arrive at that point of his life, as he will die in the mines. Being born criminal, his life is worth less than that of the Sciancato, an ill-formed miner. He is conscious about it and does not rebel to his destiny: "Il padrone mi manda spesso lontano, dove gli altri hanno paura d'andare. Ma io sono Malpelo, e se io non torno più, nessuno mi cercherà" ("RM" 113-4).⁵²

In this sense, the mine owner is portrayed as the character that best exemplifies this capitalist mode of extraction as he assigns his workers different tasks according to his utilitarian return, thus attributing a value to the mere existence of his workers. This criterion exemplifies what I call the necropolitics of extractivism: the designation of

⁵⁰ "An unhealthy curiosity for the man who had tried prison and escaped from it."

⁵¹ "'Then why don't all the men who work in the pit get themselves put in prison?' asked Malpelo. 'Because they're not Malpelo like you,' replied the lame man. 'But don't you fret, you'll go there, and you'll leave your bones there.'"

⁵² "The master often sends me far away, where others are afraid to go. But I am Malpelo, and if I don't come back, no one will look for me."

sacrifice zones and people to sustain the modernization of underdeveloped regions of the country after the Italian unification.⁵³ According to Sando Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, extractivism identifies both historical and current modes of wealth accumulation based upon the withdrawal of raw materials and life forms from the planet's surface, depths, and biosphere in the production of financial value (1). For Macarena Gómez Barris, "the extractive zone names the violence that capitalism does to reduce, constrain, and convert life into commodities" (xix). In the short story, the violence that Malpelo, his father, and Ranocchio receive is multilayered: the mining system is dehumanized as a machine that fosters violent interactions between miners and, ultimately, provokes their death.

In "Necropolitics," Achille Mbembe claims that "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die. Hence, to kill or to allow to live constitute the limits of sovereignty, its fundamental attributes" (11-12). In the short story, the mine owner has the power to decide who will live and die, considering factors like their need to gain money, their level of protection, and how much he can gain out of them and their possible loss. For instance, he turns to Malpelo because he knows that after his father death, he is unprotected (Verga 113 [1881]). Also, he selects Mastro Misciu to work for extra money, because he knows that he is poor and has a daughter, who needs money for her dowery

⁵³ A similar expression is used by T.J. Demos in the article "Blackout. The Necropolitics of Extraction." Here, Demos focuses on visual studies and analyzes contemporary videos and installations recently produced in Southern Europe and other countries of the Global South. The convergence of the theoretical framework of extractivism and necropolitics becomes prominent in the reading of "RM."

(Verga 94-5 [1881]). When Mastro Misciu dies while working overtime, the mine owner knows that if something got wrong in the mine, it would have been difficult to coordinate Mastro Misciu's rescue as the engineer would not be on the site. However, from Mastro Misciu's loss, the owner gains even more than what he expected, as the narrative voice remarks in monetary terms the high quality and the quantity of the sand that fell in the landslide (Verga 96-97 [1881]).

For instance, when Malpelo is assigned the dangerous expedition mission at the end of the short story, the narrative voice comments: "Così si persero sin le ossa di Malpelo, e i ragazzi della cava abbassano la voce quando parlano di lui nel sotterraneo, chè hanno paura di vederselo comparire dinanzi, coi capelli rossi e gli occhiacci grigi" (Verga 123 [1881]).⁵⁴ In this passage, Malpelo is implicitly compared to the devil, and children are avoiding his invocation by lowering their voices.⁵⁵ He represents the quintessential embodiment of the red-hair outcast, and even after his death people think that he haunts the red sand mine, and convert him into a legendary ghost.

Referring to the dehumanization of the workforce in the plantation and slave system in the colonies, Mbembe describes the peculiar form of biopower used to differentiate them from the colonizers. He claims that

⁵⁴ "So Malpelo's bones were lost till now, and the quarry boys lower their voices when they speak of him in the dungeon, for they are afraid to see him appear before them, with red hair and gray eyes."

⁵⁵ Verga is making reference to the huge debate on spiritism that was happening at the end of the century. On this note both Capuana and Lombroso were interested in studying this practice. For instance, Capuana published *Spiritismo?* in 1884, and this was the beginning of his friendship with Lombroso as remarked by two letters in which the criminal anthropologist commended Capuana's book (Di Blasi 151).

[i]n the eyes of the conqueror, savage life is just another form of animal life, a horrifying experience, something alien beyond imagination or comprehension. In fact, according to Arendt, what makes the savages different from other human beings is less the color of their skin than the fear that they behave like a part of nature, that they treat nature as their undisputed master. Nature thus remains, in all its majesty, an overwhelming reality compared to which they appear to be phantoms, unreal and ghostlike (24).

While Mbembe is referring to the colonies, the way in which he describes ‘savage life’ can be applied to Malpelo, Ranocchio and Mastro Misciu, who are the inhabitants of the southern periphery of Europe—a semi-colonized region of the newborn Italian nation-state in Gramsci’s terms. Indeed, they are dehumanized and animalized and become part of nature. In the case of Malpelo, his essentialization in his red hair, a physical characteristic, converts him in a threat because of his nature. Out of fear, the mining community believes that Malpelo, the savage *par excellence*, will haunt the mine after his death. Even after his death, his ghostlike presence works as a warning for other children working in the mine: if they are like Malpelo, their lives will be expendable.

Finally, the extractivist logic that the short story uncovers is pervasive and shows the limits of an authoritarian capitalist system based on growing socio-economic inequalities and uneven access to education and social resources for southern miners and their children. By focusing on the split between the work for the extraction of the red sand, and not saying the usage of it, Giovanni Verga represents the activity as pointless. Malpelo, his father and his friend Ranocchio are part of nature, and that means that their lives are expendable in an anthropocentric society in which profit is what matters the most. They are working as modern Sisyphus extracting red sand to build a progress of which they will never be part of and see any benefit. In this sense, the modernization of

the south, based on capitalist modes of extraction that have at its centre profit and not human life, is described as precarious. Just like the mine system that has provided raw material to support this fictitious progress, the material improvements built out of it are like sandcastles that can fall at the first wrong pick stroke.

3. The Southern Gene: Italian Immigrants and Sicilian Peasants at the Turn of the XXth Century

The figure of the immigrant is a significant innovation of Peruvian and Argentine nineteenth century novels to the naturalist paradigm coming from Europe. Gabriela Nouzeilles, talking about the Argentine case, defines nineteenth-century Argentine novels as “*ficciones paranoicas*,” narratives that have the function of proposing a social change by exposing the threat that outcasts posed to the emerging creole bourgeoisie.¹ She claims that “el proyecto de mejoramiento de la nación como un todo se convirtió frecuentemente en el imperativo de actuar sobre ciertos grupos de la población que, como los mestizos, los negros, las mujeres y/o los inmigrantes podían supuestamente desestabilizar, por su comportamiento social o económico, el proyecto de modernización liberal de la burguesía criolla” (“*Ficciones paranoicas*” 236).² The main goal of late nineteenth-century novels was that of educating their readers through their fictions and criticize the contemporary social policies that exacerbated the exclusion of marginal subjects—mixed-race individuals, black people, women, immigrants, and indigenous people. Building on Nouzeilles, Ana Peluffo defines *Herencia*, as the perfect example of a *ficción paranoica*,

¹ “Paranoid fictions.”

² “The project of improving the nation as a whole often became the imperative to act on certain groups of the population that, such as mestizos, blacks, women and/or immigrants, could supposedly destabilize, by their social or economic behavior, the liberal modernization project of the Creole bourgeoisie.”

“because its main function is that of alerting the readers of the immigrant threat by dehumanizing him and associating him to the nation degeneration” (Peluffo 235 [2005]).

This chapter analyzes the *type* of the immigrant in four texts written at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century. The first section delves into the characterization of the immigrant of Italian southern descent as a criminal through the comparison between Eugenio Cambaceres’s *En la sangre* (1887) and Luigi Pirandello’s “L’altro figlio” (1905). It does so by tracing back the origins of the migratory phenomenon to the Italian unification. It also considers the evolution of the reception of Lombrosian theories both in Italy and in Argentina. In the second section, it analyzes the description of Italian immigrants in two Peruvian novels: Mercedes Cabello’s *Blanca Sol* (1888) and Clorinda Matto’s *Herencia* (1895). Through a close reading of the two characters of Italian descent, the second section examines the stereotypes on Italians circulating at the end of the nineteenth century in Peru. It also considers the different degrees of integration that these immigrants could achieve at that time. The object of this chapter is to contextualize these texts and put them in dialogue with one another and with the sociological theories that were circulating at that time, to give a better understanding of why the *type* of the immigrant can be considered a prominent one in southern realist/naturalist novels and short stories.

3.1 Italian Southern Criminals at Home and Abroad

In the preface to the fifth edition of *L’uomo delinquente* (*The Criminal Man*; 1896), Cesare Lombroso defends himself from the harsh criticism toward his positivist theories to determine whether a man was a criminal based on his physical appearance. He

does so by reporting the most frequent attacks he and his pupils received over the twenty years that had passed from the publication of the first edition in 1876 to the fifth one in 1896. One of these accusations was: “Come potete parlar di tipo nei criminali, quando dai vostri stessi reperti risulta che un 60 per 100 ne è privo del tutto, essendo più o meno somigliante all’uomo normale?”³ (6 [1896]). Indeed, the low frequency of peculiar physical traits that distinguishes the criminal ‘type’ from the common man was one of the most debated counterarguments that the Lombrosian school received. However, making a rhetorical move similar to that of a clever lawyer, Lombroso converts this question into a rhetorical one. He replies:

Ma, oltre che il 40 per 100 è una quota che merita di essere considerata, il passaggio insensibile da uno all’altro carattere si manifesta pure nelle specie animali e vegetali, anzi perfino tra le une e le altre, tanto più nel campo antropologico, dove la variabilità individuale crescendo in ragione diretta della maggior perfezione e del maggior incivilimento, pare che faccia smarrire il tipo completo (6 [1896]).⁴

Here Lombroso inverts the negative trend remarked by his opponents by emphasizing the importance that the 40% of recurrence of a specific type has in making prominent the difference between the normal man and the criminal one. This trend is also reinforced by the presence of a similar pattern in the botanical and animal kingdoms

³ “How can you speak of a type in criminals, when your own findings show that 60 percent lack it altogether, being more or less like normal man?” All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

⁴ “But, besides the fact that 40 per 100 is a quota that deserves to be considered, the insensible transition from one character to another is also manifested in animal and vegetable species, indeed even between one and the other, all the more so in the anthropological field, where individual variability growing by direct proportion to the greater perfection and greater civilization, seems to make the complete type go astray.”

where the ‘type’ distinction is easier to draw because of the lack of civilization. Indeed, the presence and recurrence of the criminal ‘type’ in the human species is inversely proportional to the degree of civilization that a specific population has reached: the more civilized is a country the fewer remarkable distinctions there are between the criminal and the normal type.

These observations regarding the prevalence of the normal man in more advanced civilizations are further explored as he connects it to the differences between national types. Indeed, he goes on claiming that “[...]ed è difficile, per es., che su 100 si trovino 5 italiani col noto tipo, gli altri presentandone sole delle frazioni che spiccano però subito se si confrontino cogli estranei, eppure a nessuno viene in mente di negare il tipo Italiano, e meno ancora il Mongolico, ecc” (6 [1896]).⁵ The difficulty of finding someone who gathers all the characteristics of the criminal type is significant in the Italian context, where it represents only the 5% of Italians. Nonetheless, this low statistic does not mean that one could not use the trends he observed to define the criminal type to determine if an individual has criminal tendencies. This is because many of the prisoners he studied present one or more characteristics of that type. Finally, he concludes that to understand the differences among types, one must turn to the international framework in which the traits of a specific population emerge better in comparison to those of the other countries.

⁵ “[...]and it is difficult, e.g., to find 5 Italians out of 100 with the known type, the others presenting only parts of it, which, however, immediately stand out when compared with strangers, that out of 100 one finds 5 Italians with the known type, the others presenting only fractions of it, which stand out, however, at once when compared with outsiders, yet it does not occur to anyone to deny the Italian type, still less the Mongolian, etc.”

The question of how to differentiate the criminal ‘type’ from the normal one when they (almost) looked like the same is a common preoccupation of nineteenth century writers, and manifests itself above all in the character of the immigrant. Written at the turn between the nineteenth and twentieth century, when the aforementioned debate was still lively, Eugenio Cambaceres’s novel *En la sangre* (*In the Blood*, 1887) and Luigi Pirandello’s short story “L’altro figlio” (“The Other Son” 1905) represent the criminal ‘type’ analyzed by Lombroso using similar stylistic strategies and referring to the same topics. Both fictions present problematic male characters that commit violent acts, rape women, and have southern Italian origins. On the one hand, Genaro Piazza, the protagonist of *En la sangre* is the son of Neapolitan immigrants, who was born in Buenos Aires. On the other hand, Marco Trupia is a brigand, freed from Giuseppe Garibaldi during the Thousand expedition in Sicily and is connivant with Cola Camizzi. The offspring he generates by raping Maragrazia symbolizes the birth of the *other* inside of the Italian national enclave. The theme of otherness is explored by Pirandello in the short stories in all its different manifestations. It has multiple levels of representation, as it is the criminal man, the raped woman, and the immigrants who left the motherland looking for better living conditions. Marco Trupia and Rocco, his son, represent the worst threat for the stability of the newborn Italian nation with their excessive masculinity, and physical appearance molded out of Verga’s Rosso Malpelo.

In both fictions the description of the physical appearance of the male characters is almost absent. The invisibility of the differences between the normal ‘type’ and the *others* in these two texts make Genaro, Marco Trupia and his son, Rocco, even more

dangerous than the individuals that could be differentiated according to their physical appearance as criminals. Thus, in both texts their criminality goes back to their regional origins. In this sense, the migration of people coming from the South of Italy becomes problematic as they are seen as potential threats for the stability of the receiving country.

Since the XIX century, together with the U.S., Argentina has been among the countries that have historically received the highest percentage of migrants (De la Torre and Mendoza 46). Although Argentine end of the century's policies foster European immigration as a civilizing agent of the barbarism that dominated the *pampa*,⁶ these migratory waves had to be limited only to individuals of specific social classes, and possibly from Northern Europe. For this reason, the protagonist of *En la sangre*, Genaro Piazza, son of immigrants from southern Italy, represents a potential threat for the Argentine social community. From the title of the novel, the usage of a medico-naturalistic language permeates the whole text, and characterizes Genaro as a parasite agent of Argentine society, who wants to live comfortably without studying or working. Ultimately, the usage of "medical" discourse and naturalist stylistic devices justifies xenophobia and exclusion of the southern Italian immigrants considering him as a pathogenic agent that can spread among good citizens and turn them into criminals.

⁶ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento discussed southern barbarism in *Facundo or Civilization and Barbarism in the Argentine Pampas* (1845) in the same vein as Lombroso. In Sarmiento's view, Argentina too was peopled by two distinct races, the civilized Europeans inhabiting Buenos Aires, and the indigenous savages and gauchos living in the Pampas (9). Sarmiento opposed European civilization to the American one, considering the latter as based on impulses and instincts rather than on rational thought. However, what changed by the end of the century was the scientific discourse justifying the racial inferiority of one of the two complexes of civilization sketched out by Sarmiento, that was used also to regulate European immigration to Argentina.

Literary critics, such as Evelyn Fishburn (1981), Gabriela Nouzeilles (1997, 2000), and James Andrew Brown (2000), have extensively analyzed the connection between the spread of naturalism in Argentine and medical discourse using *En la sangre* in their analysis. More precisely, Nouzeilles highlights the relevance of Franz Joseph Gall's, Cesare Lombroso's, and Francis Galton's theories in the late nineteenth-century Argentine narrative (239). She claims that these theories are used to develop a conception of Argentine society as a medical subject/patient that needed to be checked by the doctor/narrator, the only one that could diagnose and treat its illnesses. In this sense, naturalist premises such as determinism and objectivity, together with phrenology, and eugenics, are used to enhance the author's authority (Nouzeilles 242) and avoid subjectivism (Fishburn 50). Moreover, Brown claims that in Argentine naturalist novels "the authors evoke scientific theories and then dilute them with decidedly less-scientific language, imagery, and a subjective narrator in order to avoid unwanted ideological implications" (90). In this sense, he analyzes how the usage of terms such as "eternal laws" (Cambaceres 112) tight with the idea of falling bodies in the following passage combines scientific discourse with a religious connotation:

[...] mil veces había apelado... inspirarse, retemplarse, redimirse en el ejemplo de lo bueno, de lo puro, de lo noble, que en torno suyo veía, resistir, sobreponerse a esa ingénita tendencia que lo impulsaba al mal... ¡Vana tarea!... obraba en él con la inmutable fijeza de las eternas leyes, era fatal, inevitable, como la caída de un cuerpo, como el transcurso del tiempo, estaba en su sangre eso, constitucional, inveterado, le venía de casta como el color de la piel, le había sido transmitido por

herencia, de padre a hijo, como de padres a hijos se trasmite el virus venenoso de la sífilis... (Cambaceres 111-112).⁷

This passage comes after the description of a scene in which Genaro and other classmates skipped school, and he is recognized by an old neighbor that in revenge of Genaro's scornful attitude reveals that his parents were immigrants. This is a key moment in Genaro's development, since it is the moment in which he understands that no matter how he looks like, what he wears, says or does, he cannot escape his biological inheritance defined as a "ingénita tendencia que lo impulsaba al mal..." (Cambaceres 111). Brown reads this excerpt as the perfect example of the infiltration of the catholic religious imagery in Argentine naturalism, by referring to the fall of Adam and Eve from heaven to earth. Nevertheless, if one considers the falling body as a result of Newton's universal law of gravitation, the expression acquires a different determinist meaning. Thus, in this sense, one can claim that Cambaceres is leading the scientific discourse to the extreme, and not *spoiling* it with catholic ideology. Genaro's "natural" tendency for evil can be interpreted as a behavioral characteristic innate in his race, that is transmitted as the virus of syphilis from one generation to the other.

What the author is trying to conveying is that race is not only what one can see phenotypically, but has an unmaterial connotation: "Y víctima de las sugestiones

⁷ "[...] a thousand times he had appealed... to be inspired, to retemper himself, to redeem himself in the example of the good, the pure, the noble, that he saw around him, to resist, to overcome that inborn tendency that drove him to evil.... Vain task!... it worked in him with the immutable fixity of the eternal laws, it was fatal, inevitable, like the fall of a body, like the course of time, it was in his blood, constitutional, inveterate, it came to him from caste like the color of the skin, it had been transmitted to him by inheritance, from father to son, as the poisonous virus of syphilis is transmitted from parents to children..."

imperiosas de la sangre, de la irresistible influencia hereditaria, del patrimonio de la raza que fatalmente con la vida, al ver la luz, le fuera transmitido, las malas, las bajas pasiones de la humanidad hicieron de pronto explosión en su alma” (Cambaceres 61).⁸ In this excerpt, *alma*’s meaning exceeds the religious realm to represent what is intangible and invisible and yet becomes clear through human action. Cambaceres seems to play with these double meanings hinting to something that goes beyond the physical and religious realms. Indeed, in the following passage, he explains that again what is transmitted through racial and biological inheritance and he says “esa sagacidad hereditaria, innata en él y que era como el refugio supremo de su espíritu, como un agente extraño y misterioso que gobernara sus actos, como un segundo instinto de conservación que poseyese sólo en defensa de su ser moral” (Cambaceres 75).⁹ Here, inherited sagacity is paired with survival instinct that is what guides Genaro throughout the novel and that is determined in a genetic and racial sense, that is not shared by Argentines. Cambaceres plays with language by giving multiple meanings to common words and tries to describe genetic inheritance not only through its material, physical appearance, but also by means of what makes immigrants ‘different’ than Argentines.

The usage of the medical discourse to differentiate social outcasts from the rest of the community is used also in “L’altro figlio.” This tendency culminates in the character

⁸ “And victim of the imperious suggestions of the blood, of the irresistible hereditary influence, of the patrimony of the race that fatally with life, upon seeing the light, was transmitted to him, the evil, the low passions of humanity suddenly exploded in his soul.”

⁹ “[T]hat hereditary sagacity, innate in him and which was like the supreme refuge of his spirit, like a strange and mysterious agent that governed his acts, like a second instinct of self-preservation that he possessed only in defense of his moral being.”

of the doctor—a young man coming from far way, supposedly the north of Italy to treat the inhabitants of Farnia, an imaginary village in Sicily. The story takes the form of a detective novel in which the doctor, moved to pity by Maragrazia's destitute aspect, wants to find out why the only son that she has in Farnia does not take care of her. Through the replies that Maragrazia gives to the doctor her personal story intersects with the national one, and the unification of Italy becomes a violent act symbolized by her rape. The first criminal 'type' that she describes in her story is Cola Camizzi, a brigand freed by Garibaldi:

[...] vossignoria deve sapere che questo Canebardo diede ordine, quando venne, che fossero aperte tutte le carceri di tutti i paesi. Ora, si figuri vossignoria che ira di Dio si scatenò allora per le nostre campagne! I peggiori ladri, i peggiori assassini, bestie selvagge, sanguinarie, arrabbiate da tanti anni di catena... Tra gli altri, ce n'era uno, il più feroce, un certo Cola Camizzi, capo-brigante, che ammazzava le povere creature di Dio, così, per piacere, come fossero mosche, per provare la polvere, – diceva, – per vedere se la carabina era parata bene. Costui si buttò in campagna, dalle nostre parti. Passò per Farnia, con una banda che s'era formata, di contadini; ma non era contento, ne voleva altri, e uccideva tutti quelli che non volevano seguirlo (Pirandello 941).¹⁰

In this excerpt both Garibaldi and Cola Camizzi are animalized, but in different ways. The first one through the misspelling of his name, which becomes Canebardo, while the latter through the usage of expressions like "bestie selvaggie" and "sanguinarie"

¹⁰ "Your Lordship should know that when he came, this Canebardo gave orders that all the prisons in all the towns should be opened. Now, can you imagine what the wrath of God was then unleashed on our countryside! The worst thieves, the worst murderers, wild, bloodthirsty beasts, enraged by so many years of chain.... Among the others there was one, the most ferocious, a certain Cola Camizzi, a bandleader, who killed God's poor creatures, just for pleasure, as if they were flies, to test the powder - he said, - to see if the rifle was well aimed. He went into the country, in our area. He passed through Farnia, with a band of peasants that had been formed; but he was not satisfied, he wanted more, and killed all those who did not want to follow him."

(Pirandello 941). As Guido Nicastro states, for Maragrazia and therefore in the popular view, the coming of Garibaldi to Sicily, was only a source of misfortune and certainly not one of moral and economic well-being. He also suggests that Pirandello's judgement of the character strongly expresses a negative judgement on the consequences of Garibaldi's expedition (298-299).¹¹ Similarly to Canebardo, the character of Cola Camizzi was inspired by a real person too. Indeed, he was a mafia boss from Agrigento who, in 1867, having offered protection to Pirandello's father after his refusal, was wounded by a bullet (Vittorini 13). In the story he is described as a savage beast," a cruel man who kills peasants that do not want to join his gang and forces them to commit different kinds of crimes.

The animalization process of these two historical figures reaches its climax when they are referred both as dogs by Margrazia. When she sees that Cola is playing bowling with men's heads in the convent's court she is so disgusted that cannot help but screaming. Cola tries to shut her up, but his men jump over him and kill him. She describes the scene as it follows: "Erano sazii, rivoltati anche loro della tirannia feroce di quel mostro, signor dottore, e io ebbi la soddisfazione di vederlo scannato lì, sotto gli

¹¹ Pirandello, who was steeped in strongly patriotic values, begins to realize the failure of the revolutionary instances promoted by the unification process and the results of the Risorgimento in Sicily. However, he certainly realizes that the reference to Garibaldi offended the patriotic sensibilities of the audience, so much so that he removes it from the monologue of Maragrazia in the theatrical staging of the one-act play by the same name (1923), while he leaves all the rest of the story unchanged.

occhi miei, dai suoi stessi compagni, cane assassino!" (Pirandello 943).¹² Thus, the brigand is not described physically, but only through metaphors such as "monster" and "murderous dog." The association between Garibaldi/Canebardo and Cola Camizzi is, finally, accomplished through the sharing of the same epithet. Since Garibaldi is one of the fathers of the Italian nation it is even more significant that a brigand/mafioso and the national hero are referred to in the same way.

The degradation of Garibaldi's name in Canebardo has been analyzed by Erminia Ardissino, who divides the name in its two parts "cane" and "bardo" and analyzes the origin of each one. On the one hand, she affirms that "bardo" refers to the singers of epic deeds, that are present in Sicilian folklore, and to the rhapsodic poetry of which Garibaldi was the protagonist. On the other hand, she claims that "cane" is, unequivocally, a term that leaves no room for heroism (270). While Ardissino's etymological study is interesting, it is important to remember that historically in the same Sicilian folk songs that she is referring to when analyzing the term "bardo," Garibaldi's name is misspelled in various ways such as Canibardu, Caribardu, Caribardi etc. (Todesco "Garibaldi e il folklore").¹³

The implications of the epithet "cane" referring to Garibaldi highlight his connivance to criminal actions by remarking his responsibilities in the opening of the

¹² "They were satiated, revolted, too, by the fierce tyranny of that monster, Mr. Doctor, and I had the satisfaction of seeing him slaughtered there, before my eyes, by his own companions, you murderous dog!"

¹³ Moreover, in nineteenth-century Sicilian popular culture, he is even believed to be a descendant of Santa Rosalia, patroness of Palermo, by virtue of the assonance of his surname with Sinibaldi, the surname of the Saint.

prisons. While the increase of peasants' riots during Galibaldi's expedition to Sicily has been widely studied, (Riall 212 [2007]), the episode of the opening of the prisons during the expedition of the Thousand has not received the same critical attention. A similar episode to the one that Maragraza tells the doctor is reported in the memoirs produced by some Garibaldians who took part in the landing. An example is the one by Giuseppe Bandi who, in *I Mille da Genova a Capua* (The Thousand from Genoa to Capua) recounts the liberation of some prisoners locked up in the castle of Marsala (94-96). Lombroso refers to similar episodes too in his section entitled "Associazioni al Mal Affare" (174 [1876]). Moreover, in his analysis of the criminal type one of the hair colors that is remarked as prevalent is red (33-34 [1876]), and this detail becomes even more prominent when considering that Garibaldi was well-known for his red hair.

The significance of this hair color in Pirandello's short stories is highlighted in the description of Rocco, the *other* son of Maragrazia and Marco Trupia. The narrator describes him coming from the fields in which he was working as follows:

Rocco Trupia, che camminava curvo, con le gambe larghe, ad arco, e una mano alla schiena, come la maggior parte dei contadini. Il naso largo, schiacciato, e la troppa lunghezza del labbro superiore, raso, rilevato, gli davano un aspetto scimmiesco; era rosso di pelo, e aveva la pelle del viso pallida e sparsa di lentiggini; gli occhi verdastri, affossati, gli guizzavano a tratti di torvi sguardi, sfuggenti¹⁴ (Pirandello 938).

¹⁴ "Rocco Trupia, who walked stooped, with wide, arched legs and one hand at his back, like most peasants. His broad, flattened nose, and the too-long upper lip, shaven, raised, gave him an ape-like appearance; he was red-haired, and his facial skin was pale and scattered with freckles; his greenish, sunken eyes darted at him in grim glances, elusive."

This physical description resembles that of Verga's Malpelo and of Lombroso's criminal 'type'. Indeed, it is a recompilation of the salient characteristics that he presents through the different sections of his book. The paradoxical aspect that this description acquires in Pirandello's short story is that Rocco is described as a tireless worker, a caring father and son, with a good nature. The only reason why his mother does not stand to be with him is his physical resemblance to his father: "È tutto suo padre, signorino mio; nelle fattezze, nella corporatura, finanche nella voce... Mi metto a tremare, appena lo vedo, e sudo freddo! Non sono io, si ribella il sangue, ecco! Che ci posso fare?"¹⁵ (944). The reference to blood in this excerpt is double. On the one hand, it refers to the characteristics that Rocco has inherited from his father. On the other, it highlights how his mother rejects him because he looks like a raper. Rocco's and Marco's physical appearance is also inherited by his children, and especially by his eldest son who is described as "un ragazzotto di circa dieci anni, scalzo, con una selva di capelli rossastri, scoloriti dal sole, e un pajo di occhi verdognoli, da bestiola forastica" (Pirandello 938).¹⁶ The green eyes and red hair are the genetic tares that Marco Trupia has imprinted in his offspring, making them look like criminals even when they are good-hearted.

The importance of physical appearance as a distinctive social marker is emphasized also by Cambaceres, who describes Genaro's father as follows: "De cabeza

¹⁵ "He's alike his father, my lord; in features, in build, even in voice... I start shaking, as soon as I see him, and I break into a cold sweat! It's not me, the blood rebels, that's it! What can I do about it?"

¹⁶ "[A] little boy about ten years old, barefoot, with a thicket of reddish, sun-discolored hair and a paunch of greenish, forastic beastly eyes."

grande, de facciones chatas, ganchuda la nariz, saliente el labio inferior, en la expresión aviesa de sus ojos chicos y sumidos, una rapacidad de buitre se acusaba” (5).¹⁷ The elements that are remarked by both author on the basis of Lombroso’s theories are: the nose, the lips, and the expression of the eyes.¹⁸ While in “L’altro figlio” physical characteristics are transmitted from Marco to the next generations and the moral ones vary, in *En la sangre* it is the opposite. Indeed, the reader is constantly reminded of the physicality of Genaro’s father even by the theatrical description of his corpse. In contrast with “L’altro figlio,” Genaro’s description as a young adult and an adult are lacking. Indeed, throughout the novel Genaro becomes pure actions and loses his corporality. The only description of his physical appearance is given at the very beginning when he is a newborn: “llamáronle Genaro y haraposo y raquítico, con la marca de la anemia en el semblante, con esa palidez amarillenta de las criaturas mal comidas” (11).¹⁹ The emphasis on rickets, anemia, and pallor, is another reference to Lombroso’s seminal study. Indeed the positivist sociologist asked: “Chi può sapere fino a qual punto la scrofolia, l’arresto di sviluppo e la rachitide possano aver influito a provocare o modificare

¹⁷ “With a large head, flat features, hooked nose, protruding lower lip, and a vulture-like rapacity in his small, deep-set eyes, he had the expression of a vulture.”

¹⁸ It is interesting to compare these descriptions with Lombroso’s identikit of a raper: “Negli strupatori però quasi sempre l’occhio è scintillante, fisionomia delicata, le labbra e le palpebre tumide;” (“In stropers, however, almost always the eye is sparkling, physiognomy delicate, the lips and eyelids tumid”) [32, 1876,]. Here the emphasis on the lips and the eyes is similar to the descriptions provided by Cambaceres and Pirandello.

¹⁹ “They called him Genaro, and ragged and stunted, with the mark of anemia on his countenance, with that yellowish pallor of ill-fed creatures.”

le tendenze criminali?” (153 [1876]).²⁰ In this sense, Cambaceres provides an implicit reply to Lombroso’s question by following Genaro’s development from his birth to the birth of his first son.

In this sense, *En la sangre* has a cyclic form: it begins with the description of Esteban Piazza, Genaro’s father, and it ends with his own description as a father. In this way the author can present the weight of biological inheritance in Genaro’s development. From a genre point of view, the novel reminds us of a *Bildungsroman*, with elements of the *novela picaresca*. Genaro may not resemble his father physically, in what he wears, and how he speaks, but he looks like him in the way he acts and thinks, which is only visible through his actions. Some common elements that are revealed through the novel between Genaro and his father are: physical violence and the materialistic inclination toward capital accumulation. Considering the importance that is given to the environment in determinism, one cannot help but noticing that even if the context in which father and son grow is different—the cosmopolitan Buenos Aires is dissimilar to the *fin-de-siecle* Naples—the outcome of their development is the same. The invisibility of the genetic inheritance is what makes the immigrant’s progeny dangerous as a virus.

Indeed, it is as if by staying in contact with other classmates initially and upper class with his wife later, he is able to disguise himself in Buenos Aires, and one cannot understand from his physical appearance where he comes from. This is confirmed by his

²⁰ “Who can know to what extent scrofula, developmental arrest, and rachitid may have influenced to cause or modify criminal tendencies?”

father-in-law when he first meets him and says: “-No conozco, no sé quién pueda ser... pero parece muy bien el joven, muy fino y muy decente...” (Cambaceres 171).²¹ Genaro’s decency is extrinsically represented and confirmed by his physical appearance. This is even remarked later in the novel, when people start warning Genaro’s in-laws of his humble origins, and his future mother-in-law says:

Era una monada el joven, solía decir hablando de él la señora, tan atento, tan amable y—tan formal al mismo tiempo... no había cuidado de que se excediese, de que se propasase en lo más mínimo ése, no era como otros atrevidos, sabía darse su lugar.
Sí, cierto, convenía el padre, parecía bueno el muchacho, discreto, serio, decente, muy hombrecito... y no era tonto tampoco (179-180).²²

In this excerpt, Genaro’s physical appearance becomes the guarantee of his good nature. This appearance of good modals is exactly what converts him into a threat as it conceals his inner nature, that emerges when he seduces and rape Maxima to become her husband and come into possession of her father’s economic inheritance. *Ser* and *aparecer*, being and appearing is what is at stake when the reader is in front of immigrant’s children. Indeed, if it is true that many Italians that arrived in Argentina at the end of the nineteenth-century were not interested in citizenship, their children were Argentine because they were born there, they went to school and could integrate more easily than their parents in Argentine society.

²¹ “I don't know him, I don't know who he could be... but this young man looks very good, very fine and very decent...”

²² “He was a cute young man, the lady used to say about him, so attentive, so kind and so formal at the same time... he didn't care if he overdid it, he wasn't like other daring ones, he knew how to give himself his place. Yes, it was true, the father agreed, the boy seemed nice, discreet, serious, decent, very manly... and he was not a fool either.”

This integration is further remarked by the fact that he marries an Argentine girl coming from the upper class. In this sense, he is not only a parasite of Argentine society but also a social climber. The imitation of local's behaviors and the way of conducting in society is what makes him fitting in the Argentine enclave. He is able to do so because he is sly, and this characteristic is racially connotated:

Y, sólo porque dotado de la astucia felina de su raza, su único bagaje intelectual, poseía el don de sustraerse a las miradas ajenas, de disfrazar, envuelto en el oropel de una verbosidad insustancial y hueca, todo el árido vacío de su cabeza, no faltaba quien dijera de él que también tenía talento... talento él... ¡Oh! ¡si lo vieses, si los que tal creían lo sorprendiesen, frente a frente, cara a cara con sí mismo!... ¡imbéciles, el único talento que tenía él era el de engañar a los otros haciendo creer que lo tenía!... (Cambaceres 71-72).²³

Here, the reader is further reminded of *ser* and *aparecer*, and sees how *aparecer* is stressed by Cambaceres who claims that Genaro is not smart but sly, and he is like that because of his racial inheritance.

Genaro's skills in manipulating people and facts in order to achieve what he wants is fully presented in the flirting process with Maxima, and in the way he achieves to marry her through a violation during a Carnival party. This physical violence, which is one of the characteristics that he inherited from his father, is also remarked at the end of the novel when Genaro needs Maxima's signature to have access to her money:

-¿Me firmas el pagaré, me entregas el dinero, sí o no?
-No.

²³ “And, just because he was endowed with the feline cunning of his race, his only intellectual baggage, he possessed the gift of escaping the gaze of others, of disguising, wrapped in the tinsel of an insubstantial and hollow verbiage, all the arid emptiness of his head, there were those who said that he also had talent... talent he.... Oh, if only they could see him, if those who thought he had talent could surprise him, face to face, face to face with himself... fools, the only talent he had was that of deceiving others into thinking he had it!...”

-¿No?
-¡Una y mil veces no!... soy la dueña yo, me parece...
-¿La dueña dices? ¡de tu plata, pero no de tu culo... de ése soy dueño yo!...
Y arrojándose sobre ella y arrancándola del lecho y, por el suelo, a tirones,
haciéndola rodar, dejó estampados los cinco dedos de su mano en las carnes de su
mujer²⁴. (Cambaceres 289-290)

Genaro reproduces the violent acts he saw when he was a child at home. Just like his father beat his mother when she did not do what he wanted, he repeats the same power dynamics with his wife. Moreover, the offspring born out of his relationship with his wife is the result of violence. Their son is never described, leaving opened the question of how the progeny born out of this marriage will be. By ending with this scene of violence, the reader is alarmed by the potential violence of this new *mestizaje*—the result of the union of *criollos* with Southern Italians. The invisibility of the body of his son makes him a potential threat, and the integration process of this type of immigrant population is described by Cambaceres as violent and traumatic. Maxima represents on her body the marks that the reception of Southern Italians constitutes for the Argentine society, and her invisible son the uncertain outcome of the new progeny.

On a similar note, the physical and psychological violence suffered by Maragrazia metaphorically represents the trauma that of the annexation of Sicily to the

²⁴ “-Will you sign the promissory note, giving me the money, yes or no?

-No.

-No?

-Once and a thousand times no!... I'm the owner, I think...

-The owner, you say? Of your money, but not of your ass... I'm the owner of that!

And throwing himself on her and pulling her out of the bed and, by pulling her on the floor, making her roll, he left the five fingers of his hand stamped on the flesh of his wife.”

peninsula. The fruit of this sexual violence is disavowed by the mother as the *other* son, one that is not recognized as her own. As Giulio Ferroni remarks Maragrazia's story:

È un balenare d'orrore: confessione/ svelamento/ ripetizione di un trauma, che si pone come l'origine della lacerazione che costituisce l'essere di Maragrazia e dell' "altro figlio" Rocco, ma anche di quella dell'intero borgo di Farnia, degli uomini che partono e delle donne che restano sole, dei figli di Maragrazia che, partiti già da quattordici anni, non hanno mai dato notizia di sé, dei fogli su cui Ninfarosa verga non le parole che Maragrazia crede di dettarle, ma sgorbi casuali, dello stesso dottore che a Farnia è fuori posto e che presto la lascerà, invisio ai signorotti del paese (101).²⁵

As described by Ferroni, Maragrazia becomes the spokesperson for a series of traumatic experiences such as maternity, rape, emigration, and abandonment, that are all experienced by the inhabitants of Farnia in different degrees. Thus, unification and emigration become the two faces of the same coin. The unstable nature of both is due to the southern criminal 'type' who threatens both his motherland and the new country to which he is migrating because of his nature.

To conclude, in both texts the authors describe female characters as victims of the southern Italian criminal type who must be recognized and expelled from the society. They both base the description of some of their male characters on Lombroso's *L'uomo delinquente*. In so doing, they demonstrate how these theories were circulating at the end of the nineteenth century both in Italy and in Argentina and they echo the criticism that

²⁵ "It is a flashing of horror: confession/revelation/repetition of a trauma, which stands as the origin of the laceration that constitutes the being of Maragrazia and of the "other son" Rocco, but also of that of the entire village of Farnia, of the men who leave and the women who remain alone, of Maragrazia's children who, having already left fourteen years ago, have never given news of themselves, of the sheets on which Ninfarosa writes not the words Maragrazia thinks she is dictating to her, but random gouges, of the same doctor who is out of place in Farnia and who will soon leave her, disliked by the squires of the village."

Lombroso had received for the low percentage of differences between the criminal ‘type’ and the normal one. On the one hand, Cambaceres remarks that even if Genaro does not look alike his father, he shares similar moral characteristics that are genetically transmitted and constitutive of a race. On the other, Pirandello only apparently reverts this trend. Indeed, even if Marco, Rocco and his grandson may look like the same, the two latter are described as good-hearted, potentially breaking the pattern of the predictability of the criminal type based on his physical appearance. This does not mean that Rocco cannot be still a threat for the society as he says to the doctor: “Le giuro che se qualcuno di quei suoi figliacci ritorna a Farnia, io lo ammazzo per quest’onta e per tutte le amarezze che da quattordici anni soffro per loro: lo ammazzo, com’è vero che sto parlando con Lei, in presenza di mia moglie e di questi quattro innocenti!” (Pirandello 939).²⁶ By swearing that he will kill his brothers if they come back to Farnia, Rocco confirms that he might become a murderer just like his father. At the end of the day, one must be true to the blood that flows in his veins.

3.2 Between don Juan and Social Climbers: Italians in Peru

Italian immigrants are present also in two of the most important Peruvian novels written at the end of the nineteenth century: *Blanca Sol* (1888) by Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, and *Herencia* (1895) by Clorinda Matto de Turner.²⁷ Alcides Lescanti, in the

²⁶ “I swear to you that if any of those godchildren of yours return to Farnia, I will kill them for this disgrace and for all the bitterness I have suffered for them for fourteen years: I will kill them, as I am speaking to you, in the presence of my wife and these four innocents!”

²⁷ The plot of the two novels is similar, and Peluffo has also remarked a strong intertextuality between the two texts (126 – 127 [2010]). On the one hand, *Blanca Sol* tells the story of the

first one, and Aquilino Merlo, in the latter, share many similar characteristics with Cambaceres's Genaro, to the point that Ana Peluffo has defined Aquilino as Genaro's "Peruvian equivalent [...] a successful simulator who uses his shrewdness and good "look" to win over and later rape a girl from the upper class" (124). Indeed, from a narratological point of view, in terms of plot, the three novels repeat the same pattern as they present a man of Italian descent—Alcides and Genaro are born in the Americas, while Aquilino is of recent immigration—with an exuberant sexuality, who puts at risk the integrity of wealthy *criollas*. They are characterized as a threatening *other* that combines the worst aspects of Italian and American societies. On the one hand, they cannot escape their genetic and racial legacy. On the other, they emulate the upper class's empty and reprehensible behavior, criticized by the authors, to successfully integrate in the receiving society and improve their economic position.

The fictionalization of the migratory issue and the results of the different politics followed by Peru and Argentina was an urging concern for the authors. As in the case of Argentina with Domingo Faustino Sarmiento and Juan Bautista Alberdi, in Peru there

homonym protagonist from her climb to the social heights to her descent into prostitution. As a means of saving her family from their lost fortune and maintaining her social status, Blanca marries a wealthy simpleton, Serafin Rubio. Blanca's lifestyle leads to her husband's bankruptcy while she lives the life of a socialite. In order to survive and support her six children, Blanca Sol becomes a prostitute due to the combined effect of financial insolvency and marital failure (Serafin is confined to an insane asylum after declaring bankruptcy). On the other, *Herencia* narrates the stories of two young women, Camila and Margarita, who are characterized in opposite terms. As it is implied from the title, they cannot escape from the hereditary legacy passed down from their mothers. Therefore, their social behavior, management of their sexuality, and marriage, is strongly conditioned by the example they received by their mothers during their lives.

was a common belief in the idea that European immigration would have reinvigorated the weakened blood of the indigenous race. However, due to their geographical position, different socioeconomic factors, and migratory policies, the two countries received different types of immigrants. For instance, in the nineteenth century, the largest migratory wave in Peru came from China.²⁸ When considering European immigration to the country, Italians were the largest population that migrated during the apogee years of the exploitation of *salitre* (sodium nitrate) and guano.²⁹ Their main destination was Lima, even if their number was relatively inferior compared to the one received by Buenos Aires (Basadre 154). For this reason, it does not surprise that Cabello and Matto include an Italian immigrant in their novels set in the Peruvian capital, and present different degrees of integration according to the years of their permanence in Peru.

In *Blanca Sol*, Alcides Lescanti is the offspring of an Italian immigrant with an indigenous woman. He is described as follows:

llevaba en sus venas sangre italiana, sin dejar por esto de ser tipo esencialmente americano. El padre de Alcides, fue uno de los muchos italianos, que han arribado a nuestras playas, sin más elementos de fortuna, que sus hábitos de trabajo, su

²⁸ After the abolition of slavery in 1854, there was a massive immigration of semi-slaves to work in the Peruvian primary sector coming from China, the *coolies*. Their presence limited the European immigration in general, and more specifically the Italian one, as the majority of the people that left Italy in the 19th century worked in the agrarian sector. Therefore, the *few* Italians that migrated to Peru at that time, established in Lima and Callao, and dedicated to tertiary activities (Paris 33 – 34). Due to the selective nature of this immigration in Peru, the Europeans were integrated into the middle and even upper classes, which is why these new settlers also settled in the capital or in urban centers on the Peruvian coast and not in rural areas (Hampe 462).

²⁹ The age of guano in Peru can be roughly identified in the period between 1840 and 1872. It corresponds to a period of economic prosperity, as most of the revenues came from guano exports. This epoch ended in the 1870s and left Peru submerged in a catastrophic economic crisis, intensified by the loss of the war of the Pacific (1879 – 1883). See Heraclio Bonilla, *Guano y Burguesía en el Perú* (1974) and Paul Gootenberg, *Between Silver and Guano* (1988).

excesiva frugalidad, y su extraordinaria economía. Sus primeros trabajos, los hizo en uno de los asentamientos mineros del Cerro de Pasco. Allí contrajo matrimonio con una de esas jóvenes, que si confiesan llevar sangre indígena, es por que pueden probar, que fue la mismísima que circuló por las venas del gran Huaina-Capac. Cansado de la vida de peón minero, que le cupo llevar en el Cerro de Pasco, dirigiose a Lima, para explotar la más rica mina, que por antítesis han hallado en el Perú, los hijos de la artística Italia; las pulperías (39-40).³⁰

Alcides is the synthesis of the American type with the Italian one. His genetic legacy is stressed through the reference to the two bloods, the Italian and the Indigenous. Both parents' origins are ironically described: his mother's indigeneity cannot be concealed as her blood descends *directly* from the Incan emperor Huaina Capac, while the artistic qualities of Italians in Peru are reduced to the management of local convenient stores.³¹ This is the only passage in the novel in which the narrator mentions that Alcides is of Indigenous descent. The emphasis in the narration is shifted towards the paternal lineage. Alcides's father is positively connotated as a man who increased his fortune

³⁰“Alcides's father was one of the many Italians who had come to our shores, with no other good than their work habits, their excessive frugality, and their extraordinary economy. His first job was in one of the mining settlements of Cerro de Pasco. There he married one of those young women who, if they confess to having indigenous blood, it is because they can prove that it was the same blood that circulated in the veins of the great Huaina-Capac. Tired of the life of a mining worker that he had to lead in Cerro de Pasco, he went to Lima to exploit the richest mine that the sons of artistic Italy had found in Peru: the local convenient store.”

³¹ The ironic description of Italy and its inhabitants is expressed in their degradation from painters, sculptors, and musicians, into managers' of local convenient stores: “La Nación modelo, la maestra inimitable de las bellas artes, donde los pintores, los músicos, los escultores, son hoy todavía, como en la antigua Grecia, los modelos perfectos del arte; está no sabemos por qué, representada en el Perú por la inmensa mayoría de italianos pulperos, que viven entre la manteca, el petróleo y otros malolientes objetos, que forman el conjunto de su comercio.” (*Blanca Sol*, 40; “The model Nation, the inimitable master of the fine arts, where painters, musicians, sculptors, are still today, as in ancient Greece, the perfect models of art; is we do not know why, represented in Peru by the vast majority of Italian managers of local convenient stores, who live among the lard, oil and other smelly objects, which form the whole of their trade”). In this passage, Italy is reduced from the cradle of the arts, compared with old Greece, to a vulgar exporter of *pulperos*.

thanks to his hard work and money habits From a poor miner in the Cerro de Pasco, he is able to a “chain” of local convenient stores—the “casa Lescanti y C. ^a”—to send his son to study in Paris, and become a lawyer (Cabello de Carbonera 40). Because of his education and of the genetic legacy received by his Italian father and his American mother, Alcides is positively described as an “improvement” of the two types.³²

The description of Alcides’s father corresponds to the positive profile of the Italian immigrant given by Pedro Gálvez in *Proyecto de Inmigración al Perú* (*Inmigration Project to Peru 1871*).³³ In this text, Gálvez stresses Italians’ positive working qualities as he says “se puede reconocer en los italianos [...] una actividad, una perseverancia y economía digna de elogio” (56).³⁴ Italians are praised because of their money habits and of their diligence. The proximity of their language to Spanish and their similar customs facilitate their assimilation in Peru, according to Gálvez, who also considered positively their race, ideas, and character (55 – 56).³⁵ For all these reasons, and for the liberal transition that Italy started after its unification, Gálvez claims that “la

³² This positive remark is condensed in the following passage: “Este nacimiento y esta educación dieron al joven Alcides, el sello que sólo poseen esas organizaciones vigorosas, que han debido la vida en medio de una naturaleza pródiga de todos los elementos que la fortifican y vigorizan.” (Cabello de Carbonera 41) [“This birth and this education gave to the young Alcides, the stamp that only those vigorous organizations possess, which have drunk life in the midst of a nature prodigal of all the elements that fortify and invigorate it.”]

³³ Pedro Gálvez was one of the liberals’ leaders that promoted the abolition of the indigenous people’s tribute and participated in the Peruvian government after the Liberal revolution of 1854.

³⁴ “[O]ne can see in the Italians ... a praiseworthy activity, perseverance and economy.”

³⁵ It should be noted that Gálvez’s *Proyecto de inmigración al Perú* was published in 1871, while the first edition of Lombroso’s *L’uomo criminale* came out in 1876.

emigración italiana sea una de las que den 81osta resultados en el Perú” (56).³⁶ This enthusiastic approval of Italian immigration to Peru in the 1870s constitutes the sociological background that inspired the creation of Alcides’s father.

In the 1880s and the 1890s the debate on the pros and cons of immigration was still alive, as Cabello’s and Matto’s novels show in their novels. While Cabello shows a more attenuated point of view on the issue through a second-generation mixed-race character, Matto’s perspective is more critical. She questions Gálvez’s positive assessment on the Italian liberal transition in politics by portraying a revolutionary and anti-papal immigrant that was a “ciudadano nada menos que de la ciudad eterna, que había quemado pólvora por Víctor Manuel en las filas de Garibaldi, así odiaba al papa como adoraba a las mujeres de alta jerarquía” (Mato de Turner 45).³⁷ From the very beginning, Aquilino is described as an excessive man, capable of contrasting feelings like exacerbated papal hatred and fervent love for wealthy women. The desire to improve his economic position is expressed also in opposite terms. On the one hand, he is described as a man that since his arrival on the American shores has worked in different sectors “como cepillador del entrepuente, en Montevideo como agente de una casa de inscripción, en Buenos Aires de apuntador en la fábrica de aserrar madera, y hasta de agente de asuntos secretos; peor esa buena estrella que él anhelaba ver en el cielo, jamás

³⁶ “The liberal institutions into which all of Italy seems to have decidedly entered, make us hope that Italian emigration will be one of the most successful in Peru.”

³⁷ “A citizen of the eternal city no less, who had burned gunpowder for Victor Emmanuel in the ranks of Garibaldi, he hated the pope as he adored women of high rank.”

brilló” (Matto 49).³⁸ Despite his versatility and his hard work to change his economic situation, he is not able to improve it and he works in Lima at the local convenient store “La Copa de Cristal.” Having worked as a secret agent, and not mentioning for which country, Matto insinuates that one should not trust in him, and that he could potentially still work against Peruvian interests for a hostile nation.³⁹

On this note, the narrator implies that Aquilino’s bad luck in improving his situation is due to his fight against the pope, making him a threat not only in political terms but also in religious ones. This part of his personality emerges prominently through his language: his Spanish is not only corrupted by Italian—to the point that one can say that he speaks a sort of *itañol*—but is also blasphemous: “Será que en algo influya en mi mala suerte el haber peleado contra el Papa... *Per Dio* Santo... y Garibaldi y su *Magestá!*” (Matto de Turner 49).⁴⁰ Moreover, his political and religious hatred is directly correlated to his passion for women, as it is remarked in the following quote:

Y volvía a sus exaltaciones del odio político-religioso; y luego, con sonrisa que dejaba entrever los triunfos del macho, sin la cautela del hombre, repasaba en la memoria el archivo animal, donde estaban detalladas una a una las mujeres que había poseído, siempre por accidente, jamás por consentimiento deliberado; y el deseo de poseer una por voluntad, deseo que dormía en el fondo del alma,

³⁸ “as a brushman on the deck, in Montevideo as a broker agent, in Buenos Aires as a bookkeeper in the wood sawing factory, and even as an agent for secret affairs; but that good star he longed to see in the sky never shone.”

³⁹ In the 1890s, Peru was still recovering from the loss of the war of the Pacific (1879 – 1883), in which it had ceded part of its southern territory to Chile. In the novel, the narrator tells that, before coming to Peru, Aquilino worked in Montevideo and Buenos Aires, but they do not say where and for which country he worked as a secret agent. In this way they imply that he could be a potential threat for the difficult political and economic stability that Peru was achieving after its defeat in the war.

⁴⁰ “Maybe my bad luck has something to do with having fought against the Pope... For God’s sake... and Garibaldi and his Majesty!”

despertó sacudido por la voz de Espíritu: mejor dicho, así como la chispa que brinca del pedernal basta para encender la yesca, la pasión carnal y la codicia del dinero brotaron al roce de aquellas palabras animadoras (Matto de Turner 49).⁴¹

Aquilino is a male and not a man, and for this reason he is closer to an animal than to a rational human being. He acts moved by the desire to physically possess women, even without their consent. Violence is not mentioned here but is implied through Aquilino's animalization and the long list of women he has possessed against their will.⁴² The reiteration of the terms *deseo* (desire), *pasión* (passion), and *codicia*, which in Spanish means both lust and avarice, connotates Aquilino as irrational and moved by basic instincts. Inspired by Espíritu, a mixed-race prostitute, he understands that he can combine his desire for women and for money by possessing a wealthy one and making her fall in love with him. This task will not be difficult for Aquilino: he is handsome and many before him have achieved this goal in this way.

Espíritu makes clear that many Italians improved their economic situation in Lima by marrying upper class Peruvian women—"Y *cuidau*, pues, ño Aquilino, que aquí muchos han *venio* con su cara y sus ojos de *usté* se han *subio* al trono (Matto de Turner

⁴¹ "And he returned to his exaltations of political-religious hatred; and then, with a smile that showed the triumphs of the male, without the caution of the man, he reviewed in his memory the animal file, where were detailed one by one the women he had possessed, always by accident, never by deliberate consent; and the desire to possess one by will, a desire that slept in the depths of his soul, awoke shaken by the voice of the Espíritu: better said, just as the spark that leaps from the flint is enough to ignite the tinder, carnal passion and the lust for money sprang up at the touch of those animating words."

⁴² The process of Aquilino's animalization starts from his name which doubly connotates him as a bird (Aquilino means eagle-like, while Merlo is blackbird).

47).⁴³ In this way, Matto expresses her preoccupation for Italian immigrants: their integration comes at the expenses of Peruvian women and the integrity of their bodies.⁴⁴ Marriage is the access to Peruvian high spheres, and it is facilitated by Italians' attractiveness. Aquilino's eyes and face result uncommon to *Limeñas* and revert the Cinderella's traditional literary common place of the poor beautiful woman who marries a rich man. According to Pelluffo, "La belleza física del inmigrante se articula en la novela con el *topos* de la máscara y las falsas apariencias ya que por debajo del exterior maquillado del dandy se ocultan las fuerzas de una animalidad que se resiste a ser civilizada" (Lágrimas andinas 236).⁴⁵ Aquilino's blue eyes, blond hair and mustaches, and his fair complexion, conceal his inner animal nature, and make it difficult his complete assimilation in Peruvian society. As in Genaro's case in *En la sangre*, in *Herencia*, *ser* and *aparecer* do not align and discredit the positive consideration of Italian immigration as a potential carrier of social and genetic reinvigoration.

Similarly, Alcides in *Blanca Sol* is described as good looking too. However, being mixed-race, he is attractive in different terms. Cabello portrays him again as the perfect

⁴³ "And be careful, then, ño Aquilino, because many have come here with your face and your eyes and have gone up to the throne."

⁴⁴ In the nineteenth century, it was mainly young Italian men that emigrated to improve their economic situation, and that of their families that stayed in Italy through remittances. In Pirandello's "L'altro figlio," Maragrazia's elder sons migrated to Argentina as well as Ninfa Rossa's husband. Once these people arrived there, they forgot about their moms and wives and created a new life in the Americas. Pirandello's negative assessment of emigration is reiterated through multiple examples in the short story. The phenomenon is seen as a secondary effect of the Italian unification, and an impoverishment for Sicilian economy and society.

⁴⁵ "The physical beauty of the immigrant is articulated in the novel through the *topos* of the mask and false appearances since beneath the dandy's made-up exterior hide the forces of an animality that resists being civilized."

synthesis of the Italian type with the American one. For his physical appearance, he is more similar to other Peruvians—he has a dark complexion and black eyes. What distinguishes him from his co-nationals is his personality:

Su carácter bien acentuado, manifestaba la mezcla felicísima del italiano con el americano del Sur. La pasión arrebatada del romano y el sentimentalismo idealista del hombre nacido en estos templados climas, disputábanse en dulce consorcio, el dominio de su alma. Era franco, expansivo, afectuoso, pero llegada la ocasión, sabía también ser astuto, mañoso, llevando la sutileza de sus ardides, hasta un extremo que no era dable suponer (Cabello de Carbonera 41).⁴⁶

While at the beginning of this passage, Alcides is described as the result of a harmonic mix between his Italian and his American legacies, one side is negatively connotated in comparison to the other. The passionate and cunning nature received from his father threatens to irrationally explode at any time, making him untrustworthy. Italian passion is contrasted to American sentimentality and idealism, making him an “epicureo perfeccionado” which is the most dangerous kind of lovers, according to Cabello (Cabello de Carbonera 42).⁴⁷ In comparison with Aquilino, Alcides is positively seen as he has already a position in Lima (he is a lawyer), he has his own money, and does not need to seduce a wealthy woman to improve his economic situation. This does not mean that he is not a playboy, as Aquilino. Indeed, the narrator says that “con el triple atractivo de su hermosa figura, su gran fortuna y su bello carácter; había sido por largo tiempo el

⁴⁶ “His well accentuated character manifested the most fortunate mixture of the Italian with the South American. The passion of the Roman and the idealistic sentimentalism of the man born in these temperate climates, disputed in sweet consortium, the dominion of his soul. He was frank, expansive, affectionate, but when the occasion arose, he also knew how to be cunning, crafty, taking the subtlety of his schemes to an extreme that could not be imagined”.

⁴⁷ “Perfected Epicurean.”

León de la mejor sociedad limeña” (Cabello de Carbonera 42).⁴⁸ Similarly to Aquilino, here, Alcides is animalized as he is compared to a lion. However, considering that the Italian immigrant in *Herencia* was compared to a boa constrictor, a tiger, a wolf, and a human beast; being equated to a lion, it is implied that Alcides is ruling among Lima’s upper class.

The animal side of the two immigrants comes prominently out in the moment they seduce Peruvian women and use physical violence to get what they want. Even the perfected Epicurean Alcides is described as aggressive when Blanca does not want to get physically involved with him. It should also be noted that Alcides flirts with Blanca, because he has bet with his friends that he will be able to make her fall in love with him. When he notices that Blanca is prone to flirt with him, more out of her vanity than because of love, Alcides is disappointed by the fact that she does not want to have sex with him:

Alcides sentía los ímpetus más que amorosos, rabiosos, del hombre que ha tiempo incitado y siempre burlado, siente el coraje de la desesperación: su sangre italiana rebulló en sus venas: miró a Blanca que con la sonrisa provocativa de sus labios rojos, fuertemente incitantes, y sus ojos, en ese momento lánguidos, le miraban, y sus nervios se estremecieron de rabia y de amor.

Sin darse cuenta de sus acciones lanzose rápido como el león sobre su presa, y estrechando con acerados brazos a Blanca, la atrajo hacía sí, sin que ella pudiera evitarlo.

-¡Te tengo en mi poder! -díjole confundiendo su aliento con el de ella.

-¡Sería U. un infame! -exclamó ella intentando desasirse de Alcides enrojecida de cólera.

⁴⁸ “With the triple attraction of his beautiful figure, his great fortune and his beautiful character; he had been for a long time the Lion of Lima’s best society.”

Una lucha se trabó entre ambos. En ese momento comprendió Alcides el papel indigno y también ridículo que desempeñaba, y dominando su propia exaltación dejó libre a Blanca (Cabello de Carbonera 75 – 76).⁴⁹

Prior to this scene, Alcides was flirting with Blanca by kneeling and telling her romantic words, that the woman considers novelesque. That sentimental attitude, coming from the maternal legacy, is, thus, replaced by the paternal passionate influence. Alcides is compared again with a lion who holds on to his prey. Exasperated by Blanca's attitude and excited by her eyes and red lips, driven by his basic instincts, he kisses her while holding her firmly. He realizes that he has lost his temper only when he gets into a fight with Blanca and releases her. In portraying Alcides as irrational when acting driven by his Italian blood, Cabello is contesting the colonial racial hierarchy and imagery of the European men superiority and rationality. She inverts it by presenting Alcides tempered, and thus rational, when the maternal American side is predominating in him. This is even more surprising, thinking that his mother is of indigenous descent. In so doing, Cabello is implying that it is through the union with an American colonial subject that a European descendant becomes balanced.

⁴⁹ “Alcides felt the more than amorous, raging impetus of the man who, having been incited and always mocked, feels the courage of despair: his Italian blood boiled in his veins: he looked at Blanca with the provocative smile of her red lips, strongly inciting, and her eyes, at that moment languid, looked at him, and his nerves trembled with rage and love.

Without realizing his actions, he rushed swiftly like a lion upon his prey, and clasping Blanca in his steely arms, he drew her to him, without her being able to prevent it.

-You are in my power! -he said, confusing his breath with hers.

-You would be an infamous man! -she exclaimed, trying to get away from Alcides, reddened with anger.

A fight broke out between them. At that moment Alcides understood the unworthy and also ridiculous role he was playing, and dominating his own exaltation, he let Blanca go free.”

Lacking rational American influence, Aquilino is completely driven by his Italian irrational instincts. In a similar scene to the aforementioned one, he is described as a predator catching his prey:

Y sin meditar más que un segundo se lanzó sobre la hija de doña Nieves, [...] y ciñó su cintura con férreo brazo, la levantó en alto sobre si, y al mismo tiempo que sus labios de carmín de la niña, la actitud de su cuerpo profanó el alma de la virgen. [...] Ella no rechazó ni se dio cuenta; ¡todo pasó con la rapidez del rayo que ilumina, hiere y mata! Camila estaba transformada. Sin voluntad para repeler los brazos que la sujetaban, ni apartar los ojos de los ojos que la envolvían en una corriente lujuriosa, ni siquiera comprendida por ella, sintió su cuerpo virgen, al rozarse con el cuerpo de él, algo que conmovió de una manera extraña, oscureciéndole la vista, despertando en sus sentidos sensaciones y deseos que no podría nombrar, pero que sacudían su organismo con el poder de una pila de Volta (Matto de Turner 81).⁵⁰

Aquilino's irrationality is stressed in his lack of meditation. The words used to describe his way of acting with Camila are similar to Alcides's ones—Aquilino throws himself onto Camila, his arm is iron-made, while Alcides's were steely—what changes is the result that their attack is on their prey. While Blanca gets into a fight with Alcides, Camila is so surprised by the newness of what is happening to her that she is not even able to reject Aquilino. The sexual connotations of the scene are also amplified by Matto: Camila's virgin body is violated by the Italian's one. Aquilino is compared with a

⁵⁰ “And without meditating more than a second, he threw himself on the daughter of Doña Nieves, [...] and girded her waist with an iron arm, lifted her high above him, and at the same time as his lips of carmine of the girl, the attitude of his body profaned the soul of the virgin. [...] She did not refuse, nor did she notice; all passed with the swiftness of lightning that illuminates, wounds, and kills! Camilla was transformed. Without the will to repel the arms that held her, nor to turn her eyes away from the eyes that enveloped her in a lustful current, not even understood by her, she felt her virgin body, as it brushed against his body, something that moved in a strange way, darkening her sight, awakening in her senses sensations and desires that she could not name, but that shook her organism with the power of a Volta battery.”

lighting and a Volta battery. He is reduced to pure energy: his lustful electricity will light up Camila's sexual desire, making her as irrational as him. Unlike Alcides who is able to realize that he is not acting rationally and stops himself before getting even more physical with Blanca, Aquilino is proud of what he has achieved. He is not the son of an American woman, and therefore is not balanced. Peluffo wonders what would have happened if Aquilino had a virtuous mom like Cambaceres's Genaro, and claims that "la desaparición de la madre del inmigrante como personaje en *Herencia* remite [...] a la necesidad de feminizar el experimento sobre la herencia desviando la mirada hacia la relación entre madres e hijas" (Lágrimas andinas 238).⁵¹ It is exactly because of Camila's maternal legacy that Aquilino is able to awake her sexual desire.

According to Mary Berg "[t]he Italian immigrant, Aquilino Merlo, represents a danger to the stability of the nation because he has no sense of conventional rules or limits. His physical energy, at first utilized in day labor and the confection of alcoholic beverages and green noodles, is expressed in aggressive sexuality that menaces (and attracts) women" (157). The fact that at the beginning Aquilino is showed working at La Copa de Cristal while selling goods, preparing pasta, and distilling spirits, makes doña Nieves more favorable towards Camila's marriage with Aquilino. His hard work should be a sign of his future saving habits and economic temperament. However, even when working at the local convenience store, Aquilino is deceiving his clients by selling lower

⁵¹ "The disappearance of the immigrant's mother as a character in *Herencia* refers [...] to the need to feminize the experiment on genetic legacy by shifting the gaze to the relationship between mothers and daughters."

quality alcoholic beverages out of potatoes at the same price of more valuable ones. In this way, even when Aquilino was working and was still productive, he was tricking the community, thus, harming it. When he marries Camila, and he becomes the conde de la Coronilla, he frustrates doña Nieves's expectations as he is a lazy man that lives off Camila's dowry and loses his mother-in-law's money gambling and playing cards at the casino: —"Así dicen, mi don Eufracio pero encontrarse con todo un gandul. Se levanta a las quinientas después de tomar el té encamado; su vida es el Casino, ¡ay! quien lo creyera cuando era dependiente" (Matto de Turner 237).⁵² His excessive energy is shut down once he reaches economic stability: he becomes lazy and he spends his day in unnecessary occupations. His sexual desire has also decreased as once he improves his social position thanks to the marriage with an upper-class woman, he loses interest in her.

In this sense, the passionate Italian immigrant is a catalyzer of luxury, a sin that should be expelled from the reformed Peruvian republic envisioned by Matto. The end of Aquilino's story evokes again Genaro's one, as people insinuate in the casino that Camila has affairs with other men. Mad at her, he runs back home and finds her naked, lasciviously sleeping on their bed. Similarly to Genaro in *En la sangre*, he slaps his wife in the gluteus. Unlike Genaro, he reacts violently because of the social pressure and not for personal reasons. Indeed, after slapping Camila, he does not even wait for her reaction. He goes back to the casino and says "Ya está castigada" (Matto de Turner

⁵² "They say so, my Don Eufracio, but he is a real slacker. He gets up later in the morning after having his tea in the bed; his life is the Casino, oh, who would have believed it when he was an employee!"

243).⁵³ What's more, in this scene, the narrator calls him Aquilino Merlo, even if after his marriage he assumed the new name of Luis Conde de la Coronilla to conceal his humble origins. If the count was assimilated in his reprehensible lazy behavior to other exponents of the Peruvian upper class, when he acts violently, this behavior is associated again with his Italian legacy. His masculinity is opposed to the virtuous one represented by Ernesto and don Marín in the novel. According to Peluffo, "en la antinomia semántica que se establece entre formas virtuosas y anti-virtuosas de masculinidad republicana, se coloca al inmigrante italiano en el segundo polo, por su falta de racionalidad y control a la hora de dominar las pasiones" (Peluffo 235 [2005]).⁵⁴ In the Manichean fictional order of *Herencia*, the immigrant cannot be saved through his assimilation in Peruvian society as he represents a monster and frustrates the renovation national desires in a moment of customs regeneration.

On the contrary, Cabello's narrative complicates this simplistic reduction of the Italian immigrant, by describing him as assimilable in the target society. Alcides, who has also American blood is able to "escape" the negative connotations of the Italian legacy by marrying a virtuous seamstress, Josefina. Alcides's mixed-race and economic position distinguish him from a new immigrant who must prove his loyalty to the new nation. Indeed, one of the most appreciated qualities that Alcides has is his patriotism:

⁵³ "She has already been punished."

⁵⁴ "In the semantic antinomy established between virtuous and anti-virtuous forms of republican masculinity, the Italian immigrant is placed in the second pole, due to his lack of rationality and control when it comes to dominating his passions."

Entre las bellas cualidades que adornaban al joven Lescanti, y que todos, amigos y enemigos le reconocían, siendo éstas sin duda las que le daban faz simpática a los ojos del sexo débil, mencionaremos su patriotismo y su valor. Y estas cualidades que tanto apasionan a las mujeres, eran en él como la aureola de su personalidad, por otros títulos ya muy estimables (Cabello de Carbonera 42).⁵⁵

Alcides's courage and patriotism are celebrated both by his friends and his enemies, reinforcing the idea that he is a good Peruvian citizen. Therefore, unlike Aquilino, Alcides is rescued at the end of the novel by Cabello. By marrying the beautiful and virtuous Josefina, instead of following with his insane passion for Blanca, his moral integrity his reestablished.

Also, Alcides acts as the perpetrator of Blanca's complete fall into poverty and marital disintegration, as he is the one that exacerbates Serafin's bankruptcy by buying his debts: "Las escrituras hipotecarias de don Serafín, estaban todas con plazo vencidos; así pues, fácil fue para Alcides, comprar esos créditos, que, mal pagados los intereses, y peor asegurado el pago del capital, le endosaron los documentos, creyendo los acreedores, salir de un deudor casi insolvente" (Cabello de Carbonera 133).⁵⁶ Being a lawyer and knowing the Peruvian credit system, it is easy for Alcides to ruin the already precarious economy of Serafin. Having offended Blanca's honor, Alcides should have had a duel with Serafín, but this fight never occurs. By aggravating his economic crisis

⁵⁵ "Among the beautiful qualities that adorned the young Lescanti, and that all, friends and enemies recognized him, being these undoubtedly those that gave him a sympathetic face in the eyes of the fairer sex, we will mention his patriotism and his courage. And these qualities that women are so passionate about, were in him as the aura of his personality, by other titles already highly esteemed."

⁵⁶ "Don Serafín's mortgage deeds were all with expired terms; therefore, it was easy for Alcides to buy those credits, which, poorly paid interest, and worse assured the payment of the capital, endorsed the documents, believing the creditors, to get rid of an almost insolvent debtor."

and causing his mental breakdown, Alcides determines the future of Blanca's destiny and that of her family. Serafin is interned in a mental hospice, while Blanca, alone with no money and six children, turns into a prostitute to support her family. In this sense, Alcides becomes the social castigator of the coquettish woman and her indolent husband.

To sum up, Cabello and Matto present two individuals of Italian descent that reach different level of integration in Peruvian society according to their personality. While both have a strong passionate nature congenital to their Italian legacy, this irrational behavior is controlled in different ways by the two. Aquilino is driven always by his instincts and exploits his attractiveness to marry Camila, after having raped her during their first meeting. On the contrary, Alcides is able to better control himself and his passionate behavior, because he has American blood in his veins, and he is the son of a virtuous Italian immigrant. To a certain extent, Aquilino's epilogue can be read as the description of the negative and infamous way in which Alcides's father could have reached his economic position, if instead of hard working and creating his own company of local convenient stores, he would have raped a wealthy Peruvian to become rich. In this sense, Matto shows a conservative attitude towards migration, very close to Cambaceres's xenophobia. Conversely, Cabello has a more progressive vision of Italian immigration. While she shows that these immigrants have a passionate behavior, this impulse can be controlled if positively canalized by the virtuous Peruvian woman (in the novel Josefina). Cabello's view is explicitly expressed in the following passage:

En honor de la verdad y de nuestras liberales costumbres, diremos, que, a pesar de este pasado azás, prosaico, todos damos buena acogida a los que, debido a su honradez y su constancia en el trabajo, hanse levantado desde la condición de

miseros pulperos o buhoneros, hasta la de grandes señores, no solamente de nuestra elegante sociedad, sino también de la aristocrática sociedad de su patria, donde han necesitado un título comprado, para tener derecho de rolar con las clases nobles: derecho que nosotros les concedemos, sin más título que su honradez y su fortuna (Cabello de Carbonera 40).⁵⁷

Here, Peru is celebrated as an example of truly democratic and meritocratic society in which even Italian immigrants can improve their social condition through their hard work and become wealthy citizens. Cabello critiques Italian classist society in which individuals despite their honesty and perseverance cannot change their status and must buy a title to change it. Ironically, Matto makes her Italian immigrant follow exactly this path—Aquilino becomes a count through Camila’s dowry, thus “purchasing” the title. In this way, Matto shows that the progressive liberal society praised by Cabello instead of rewarding its immigrants for their hard work, fostered their laziness by allowing them to improve their situation only because of their physical appearance.

A similar critique was expressed by Cambaceres in *En la sangre*, where Genaro instead of studying to become a lawyer and improve his social status, takes a short cut, and rapes the wealthy Máxima to marry her. However, there are some differences in the way that Italian immigrants were portrayed in Peru and in Argentina, and those go back to the different origin of the Italian immigrants described in the novels. While Genaro is the son of southern Italian immigrants, and Cambaceres echoes Lombrosian theories

⁵⁷ “In honor of the truth and of our liberal customs, we will say that, in spite of this, prosaic, past, we all welcome those who, due to their honesty and their perseverance in work, have risen from the condition of miserable grocers or peddlers, to that of great lords, not only of our elegant society, but also of the aristocratic society of their homeland, where they have needed a purchased title, to have the right to roll with the noble classes: right that we grant them, with no other title than their honesty and their fortune.”

circulating in Argentina to reaffirm the prejudices circulating at that time, Aquilino and Alcides's father come from Rome. Also, in comparison with the invisibility of Genaro's body in *En la sangre*, Aquilino's and Alcides's physical appearance is constantly stressed in the narrative and does not correspond to Lombrosian criminal theories. Both Cabello and Matto remark Italians' beauty, while stressing that it is because of their congenital passionate nature that they pose a problem to Peruvian society. On a first instance, these differences in the ways Italian immigrants are described might be related to their regional origins. Cambaceres could more easily justify the criminalization of his protagonist, than Matto and Cabello. Moreover, it is important to notice that while Lombrosian theories were popular in Peru at the end of the nineteenth century, they were used to understand, categorize, and criminalize lower classes' conduct, and especially those of the "indio criminal" (Orbegoso Galarza 127).⁵⁸ In this sense, it does not surprise that the two Peruvian authors do not refer to Lombroso to characterize their immigrants. Nevertheless, Matto turns to the local racist imaginary to describe Aquilino. For instance, he is called twice a *bachiche*, a popular pejorative term to describe Italians in Peru (Matto de Turner 75, 175).⁵⁹ Matto fictionalizes the xenophobic vision popular at the turn of the twentieth when as Bonfiglio puts it, Italians were tolerated but not well accepted (131).

In conclusion, even the act of including or suppressing the description of the immigrant's body is a sign of the different degrees of toleration of Italians in Peru and

⁵⁸ "Criminal Indian."

⁵⁹ *Bachiche* is a common and derogatory term from the 19th century to refer both to Italian immigrants and their descendant in Peru and is easily associated with *pulperos*.

Argentina at the end of the nineteenth century. Building on Marcel Velázquez Castro, the act of describing a body is not an innocuous operation, as it uncovers an exercise of symbolic power (14). This biotechnology constitutes a device of representation, inscription, and exclusion of bodies in the logic of power, that writers fictionalize through their descriptions in their novels. The rational act of writing is a way for the authors to join the contemporary debates on biopolitics, migration, and economy, through the inclusion of symbolic representatives from different races, genders, and social classes. The inter-classes and interracial marriages that occur in the novels symbolize the possible direction that the Peruvian and Argentine society can take if they follow that path. The union with an Italian is considered as a tricky one for his irrational nature, violent behavior, drinking and gambling tendency. These excessive characteristics are seen as congenital to the Italian race, and as a threat for the socio-economic stability of the receptor country. Finally, immigrants emulating common social practices to integrate in Argentina and Peru constitute the perfect fictional excuse to criticize both the receptor society and the original one.

4. *Femmes fatales*, Tobacco Workers, and Lovers

Low-class women constituted a particular marginal category in nineteenth-century literature. The same patriarchal society that reinforced hegemonic discourses on their virtue, prevented their entrance in the job market, thus, impeding to the humble woman her economic survival. There were few job options for a low-class woman at that time, and included being a seamstress, a service maid, working in a fabric or in the fields. In all these cases, by entering a public sphere dominated by men, they became a threat for the social stability. Their sexuality, and their need of improving their material conditions, made them prone to find alternative ways of surviving in the patriarchal capitalist system. This chapter analyses the different solutions that writers proposed when describing different kinds of southern women. In the first part, it examines the figure of the *cigarrera*, i.e., tobacco worker in Galicia, through Emilia Pardo Bazán's *La tribuna*. It explores how the author connotes women workers as easily manipulated by the new revolutionary claims circulating in Spain during the Glorious Revolution, not only for political reasons, but also because of their desire of improving their conditions through interclass marriages. Only in a truly democratic society a humble woman could have married a middleclass man on an egalitarian basis. Similar problems were endured by urban low-class women, as demonstrated in the second part of this chapter. It examines the description of urban seamstresses and maidservants in Benito Pérez Galdós's *Tormento*. It shows how this author portray the tension between the ideal of the *honrada pobreza* (honest poverty) that these women should have represented and the social threat

they represented because of their sexuality. Galdós is pessimist about a possible virtuous way of overcoming indigency: Amparo in *Tormento* escapes poverty by becoming a concubine, while her sister Refugio becomes a prostitute.

Finally, the analysis of the character of the mother is at the center of the third part of this chapter. It considers the resemantization of this character through the Italian periphery, and it analyzes the representation of Peppa in Verga's "L'AG." Her traumatic experience—symbolized by her offspring as the result of violent intercoursés with a brigand—propose a critique of the Italian unification process.

4.1 Subversive Cigarreras

Spanish novels written at the end of the nineteenth century are mainly set in towns or in the countryside and delineate a clear contrast between the urban type and the rural one. In this Manichean opposition, the working class is mainly absent from Spanish naturalist novels. One rare exception to this trend is Emilia Pardo Bazán's *La tribuna* (1883; *The Tribune*).¹ This novel is widely regarded as one of the earliest Spanish naturalist novels and is one of the few cases in which a worker is the main character of the story. Moreover, it is even more important to notice that the protagonist of the novel

¹ *La tribuna* is set in a Galician town called Marineda—the fictional name for La Coruña—during the first year of the six-year Revolution of 1868. The novel tells the story of Amparo, a tobacco factory worker, called "the Tribune" for her tireless efforts advocating for the Republican Party in her hometown by her coworkers. Hoping that the revolution will eventually level out social hierarchies, she falls in love with Baltasar, a selfish and calculating lieutenant who seduces her with the promise of marriage. However, after getting her pregnant, he leaves her for Josefina, a rich bourgeois woman.

is not a simple worker, but a woman worker employed in the tobacco industry in Marineda, a fictional northern Spanish town in Galicia.

Before *La tribuna* was published some novels and short stories focusing on tobacco workers appeared in the Spanish panorama. For instance, in 1872 Faustina Sáez de Melgar published *Rosa la cigarrera de Madrid*, a novel about the homonym protagonist set between Huesca and Madrid from the 1830s to 1854. In her comparative essay on this novel and *La tribuna*, Cristina Enríquez de Salamanca traces several points of contact. On the one hand, both texts focus on detailed description of the tobacco workers' social group and portray their protagonists as the victims of love seduction perpetrated by unscrupulous men (Enríquez de Salamanca 238). On the other, both authors put a strong emphasis on the social *milieu* and the reconstruction of the historical moment in which the action happens, to the point that according to Enríquez de Salamanca, *Rosa* surely inspired *La tribuna* (238).

Another text that critics consider as an antecedent of Pardo Bazán's novel, is Prosper Mérimée's *Carmen*. This *nouvelle* was first published in *La Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1845, and later as a book in 1847. However, according to González Herrán, while the protagonists of the two stories are similar, i.e., a *cigarrera* and a soldier, their characterization is completely different: in *Carmen* the homonym protagonist is described more as a *gitana* (gipsy) than a tobacco worker and don José is deeply in love with her; on the contrary, in *La tribuna*, Amparo is primarily described as a *cigarrera* and Baltasar is only superficially attracted by her (200). Moreover, the Pardo Bazán had also contributed to the *costumbrista* volume edited by Sáez de Melgar, *Las mujeres españolas*,

americanas y lusitanas pintadas por sí mismas (Spanish, American, and Portuguese Women Portrayed by Themselves, 1881), with an entry entitled “La cigrarrera” (“The Tobacco Worker”) in which she condensed some of the motifs that would be later be part of her novel.

In this sense, one may think that *La tribuna* should have not been considered as a novelty in Spain. Nevertheless, when it appeared, it provoked a huge scandal in the Iberian *republic of letters* because of its experimental usage of literary devices promoted by naturalism.² It was unacceptable for a respectable writer to defend such an immoral literary style, let alone for a woman writer to do so. This public disapproval dated back to the publication of a series of articles on French naturalism in *La Época* between October 27, 1882, and April 16, 1883, under the title *La cuestión palpitante* (*The burning issue*). The social pressure against her was so high that her husband, José Antonio de Quiroga y Pérez, influenced by public opinion, asked Pardo Bazán to negate the opinions she expressed in *La cuestión palpitante* and to recall the edition of *La tribuna* from the market because of its lack of morality.

One of the main reasons why Pardo Bazán’s novel was considered a scandalous book was because of the realist description of women workers employed in the tobacco industry between 1868–1873. Moreover, talking about the revolutionary instances of the period, the writer explicitly commented on the recent political events that had upset the

² 1882 was a breakthrough year in Pardo Bazán’s literary style. Indeed, the focus on the urban and industrial *milieu* and the similarities with Zola’s *Nana* (1880) make *La tribuna* a perfect example of the reception of naturalist devices in Spain (Varela Jácome, 22–53).

country during the Sexenio Democrático, thus entering a sphere that was forbidden to women in that epoch.³ In this sense, the author had to conceal this primary aim by merging it with an instructive purpose, as she states in the prologue “al escribir *La tribuna* no quise hacer sátira política; la sátira política es género que admito, sin poderlo cultivar; sirvo poco ó nada para el caso. Pero así como niego la intención satírica, no sé encubrir que en este libro, casi á pesar mío, entra un propósito que puede llamarse *docente*”.⁴ Moreover, to protect herself from the harsh criticism of commenting on “sucesos políticos tan recientes como la revolución de septiembre de 1868,” Pardo Bazán claims that her book “es en el fondo un estudio de costumbres locales” (Pardo Bazán 57 [1998]).⁵

Similarly to Pardo Bazán, in *Rosa*, Sáez de Melgar commented also on political events but focused on those that preceded the Glorious revolution. She also had a didactic purpose: “la instrucción de esa clase popular á la que está más plenamente dedicada” (Sáez del Melgar 72). According to Enríquez de Salamanca, Sáez de Melgar clearly

³ After the end of the Glorious Revolution (1868), Spain became a federal republic divided into regional territories that had heterogeneous ideologies and governments. This period between the overthrow of Queen Isabel II (after the Glorious Revolution) and the Bourbon Restoration in 1874 was called the Sexenio democrático. More concretely, in *La tribuna*, Pardo Bazán refers to the *juntas provinciales* that right after the Cádiz military coup in 1868 rebelled and demanded the establishment of a federal government in Spain. For more details on the historical context of *La tribuna*, see Raymond Carr (305–46).

⁴ “When I wrote *The Tribune*, political satire was not what I wanted to achieve. Satire is a genre which I accept but cannot cultivate; I have little or no ability in that area. But just as I deny any satirical intention, I cannot hide the fact that finding its way into this book, almost in spite of myself, is a purpose that might be called *instructive*” (Whittaker 65).

⁵ “Political events as recent as the Revolution of September 1868;” “It is fundamentally a study of local customs” (Whittaker 65).

defends the working class in her novel and is against the noble class which is identified with the *Ancien régime* and Carlism (237). In this sense, while portraying similar heroines—Rosa and Amparo work in the tobacco industry and both become the leader of the riots organized in the factory—the two authors express two opposite ideologies. This different approach is also symbolized by the retrospective way the narrator tells *Rosa*: the story begins *in medias res* when the protagonist is 40 years old. On the contrary, *La tribuna* follows Amparo from her childhood to the beginning of her adult age, proposing a more lineal timeline of the plot and a more accurate recreation of the historical period in which the story is set. According to González Herrán, a feature that distinguishes Pardo Bazán's text from Sáez de Melgar's one is the likelihood of the fictional action in *Rosa* (198). Basically, the two authors follow two opposite approaches to explain the vital events that have marked their heroines' behavior and personality and merge the description of their loving affairs together with the historical events to appeal to the public's taste of their epoch.

In *La tribuna*, the plot wisely combines the love story between Amparo and Baltasar with a careful recreation of the political events happening during the revolution. In order to portray the sociopolitical environment of those years in a realist way, she observed daily for two months the *cigarreras* (cigar makers) in their working environment, and she merged her notes with her memories of childhood in La Coruña. In addition, Pardo Bazán studied the newspapers of the epoch and reproduced that language

in her novel.⁶ Thanks to a careful analysis of the political language used in those newspapers Pardo Bazán describes the emergence of mass politics in Spain in those years. Moreover, she also examines the manipulation of workers through the merging of religious and political language. On this note, the habit of reading among the working class is highly criticized by Pardo Bazán as well as Sáez de Melgar. Both writers consider reading as a danger because it promotes the spread of new desires among workers and assumes even worse connotations for women workers. In *Rosa* the narrator states:

Para ella fue un gran mal aprender a leer, porque antes se encontraba dichosa entre las carrascas de aquel monte donde había nacido, y después, cuando pudo devorar los libros que le mandó su tío y otros que a escondidas de sus padres se pudo proporcionar en Huesca, ya no estuvo conforme, comprendiendo que había otro género de vida más feliz y más en consonancia con sus aficiones y gustos (Sáez de Melgar 160).⁷

Being able to read is described as the greatest misfortune that has happened to Rosa in her life. Before learning to read she was satisfied with her life and was not aware that there was another happier way of living. Similarly, in *La tribuna* reading is considered as a dangerous hobby for Amparo who, according to Pardo Bazán, lacks abstractive and critical skills, and believes everything that is written in the newspapers. Indeed, this media becomes the means used by the socialist parties to promote their

⁶ Sáez de Maelgar also studied the press of the epoch and indicates as her sources “las páginas ilustradas que escribió D. Vicente Barrantes y se publicaron en ‘La Ilustración’” (“the illustrated pages written by D. Vicente Barrantes and published in ‘La Ilustración’;” 579).

⁷ “It was a great misfortune for her to learn to read, because before she was happy among the oaks of the mountain where she was born, and then, when she was able to devour the books that her uncle sent her and others that she could get from her parents in Huesca, she was no longer satisfied, realizing that there was another kind of life happier and more in line with her hobbies and tastes.”

political message among the popular masses. In this sense, in her “Apuntes autobiográficos” (“Autobiographical notes”) the writer strongly remarks that in reproducing that kind of language in her book she avoided any kind of sarcasm as “ni el más leve conato de sátira encerraba el libro; lejos de recargar los efectos cómicos, hasta se me figura que los atenué, y con los periódicos que conservo lo demostraría fácilmente” (Pardo Bazán 75 [1886]).⁸ She also adds that one of her goals with the novel was “estudiar el desarrollo de una creencia política en un cerebro de hembra, a la vez católica y demagoga, sencilla por naturaleza y empujada al mal por la fatalidad de la vida fabril” (Pardo Bazán 74 [1886]).⁹ The usage of the naturalist language here indicates how Pardo Bazán conceived her novel as a study of the consequences of the development of the politic beliefs in a woman’s brain in which demagoguery and Catholicism converge. In order to achieve this aim, Pardo Bazán carefully reproduces the language used in the newspapers of the epoch by mixing political and religious vocabulary.

The reproduction of semantic Catholic language within dialogues and comments on the political activities of the novel’s protagonist, Amparo, and the federal groups, serves more than a merely mimicry purpose. It goes beyond a mere recreation of the reality of the epoch as the writer deploys it, often ironically, to convey her political stance before the working masses and to criticize contemporary society. In this sense, the

⁸ “Not even the slightest hint of satire was contained in the book; far from exaggerating the comic effects, I seemed to have attenuated them, and the newspapers I have kept could easily prove it”.

⁹ “To study the development of a political belief in a female brain, simple by nature, at once Catholic and demagogic, and driven to evil by the doomed fate of factory life”.

naturalist narrative form and her Catholic conservative ideology merge and are problematized in the attempt to reproduce this pseudo-religious political discourse. In the novel's prologue, Pardo Bazán herself clearly articulates her criticism on the proletarians' action, as she states,

no necesité agrupar sucesos, ni violentar sus consecuencias, ni desviarme de la realidad concreta y positiva, para tropezar con pruebas de que es absurdo el que un pueblo cifre sus esperanzas de redención y ventura en formas de gobierno que desconoce, y á las cuales por lo mismo atribuye prodigiosas virtudes y maravillosos efectos (Pardo Bazán 58 [1998]).¹⁰

In this quote, the author stresses her attention in reproducing reality as it is.

Nevertheless, the usage of adjectives like *absurdo*, *prodigiosas* and *maravillosos*, underlying the author judgement toward the people's ability of understanding politics. This attitude of the people, later summarized in Pardo Bazán's expression "culto fetichista é idolátrico" (58 [1998]) is expressed from a stylistic point of view through the irony implicit in the use of religious language to refer to political characters, workers, and rituals connected to the revolution.¹¹

In spite of her straightforward contempt for revolutionary practices, Pardo Bazán has provided one of the most effective portraits of the liturgicization of politics of her time as her novel is based on an examination of the press during the time the novel is set. Focusing on the contrast between the supposedly realistic descriptions and the morality

¹⁰ "I did not find it necessary to group together events, nor distort their consequences, nor deviate from concrete and positive reality in order to encounter the evidence that it is absurd for a people to place their hopes of redemption and happiness in forms of government that are unknown to them, and to which for that reason they attribute prodigious virtues and marvelous effects (Whittaker 65- 67)".

¹¹ "Fetichistic and idolatry worship (Whittaker 67)".

implied by the author's instructive purpose, Victor Fuentes claims that while the latter expires because of its temporality, nowadays the reader can still appreciate "el valioso documento de las condiciones de vida y de las aspiraciones de la clase obrera en el periodo 1868–1873" (91).¹² Indeed, the realist aim declared by the author in the prologue, clashing with the thesis novel, produces a political satire of the revolutionary republican movements. The denouement of the political moral articulated by Pardo Bazán is condensed in chapter 18, significantly entitled "Tribuna del pueblo."¹³ The description of the banquet there can be compared with the Last Supper. Amparo is symbolically referred to as the tribune of the people, who represents her community and pays homage to the patriarch with a floral tribute. The old man, described as a patriarch, is so moved that he embraces her, while Amparo's actual father—who had been part of the royal army—symbolically dies because of the pain that his daughter has given him by "embracing" revolutionary ideas.

The rhetorical and stylistic devices used in the novel are a result of the liturgicizing of the language and of collective political imagination. Both are designed to reach the masses and make ideas more accessible through assimilation of already recognizable structures. Juan Linz and Ignacio Sancho, in an essay on the religious use of politics and the political use of religion, highlight that the secularization process in the nineteenth century constituted a crucial moment in the development of the ersatz

¹² "The valuable document about the living conditions and aspirations of the working class in the period 1868–1873"

¹³ "Tribune of the People"

ideology and ersatz religion.¹⁴ The political religion at its peak when *La tribuna* was published, is described as a “fenómeno complejo y con múltiples facetas,” that is,

un sistema de creencias sobre la autoridad, la sociedad y la historia, que proporciona una visión comprehensiva del mundo, una *Weltanschauung*, que pretende tener un valor de verdad, incompatible con otras visiones, incluyendo la tradición religiosa existente. Este sistema de creencias se apoya en la sacralización de las personas, lugares, símbolos, fechas, así como en la elaboración de rituales relacionados con estas creencias” (Linz and Sancho 14).¹⁵

This system of beliefs was created during the modernization process in Spain and it incorporated both the secularization of spiritual life and the generalization of politics. These elements appear in a conflict in *La tribuna*. The author is highly critical of these supposed “religious” rituals, as they pertain to the political sphere, specifically the federal republicans. The meaning of human action is secularized and outside of the Church’s sphere of control, as the proletarian masses find their consciousness in the political community and not in any religious enclave. Here Pardo Bazán, at the height of her Catholicism, exemplifies what happens to the working class if they disregard religion and

¹⁴ Linz and Sancho clarify that: “la íntima relación entre política y religión, en la cual la religión sirve para legitimar no sólo el orden social y la autoridad, sino también un determinado régimen político—una concepción específica del Estado y de la comunidad política—. En el caso extremo, esta relación se presenta como una ‘ideología-sucedáneo’ (*Ersatz-ideologie*) en contraste con la religión política, que en gran medida sirve como ‘religión-sucedáneo”” (The intimate relationship between politics and religion, in which religion serves to legitimize not only social order and authority, but also a certain political regime—a specific conception of the state and the political community—. In the extreme case, this relationship is presented as an “ersatz-ideology” [*Ersatz-ideologie*] in contrast to political religion, which to a large extent serves as a “ersatz-religion”) [11].

¹⁵ A “complex and multi-faceted phenomenon”; “A system of beliefs about authority, society and history, which provides a comprehensive vision of the world, a *Weltanschauung*, which claims to have a truth value, incompatible with other visions, including the existing religious tradition. This belief system is supported by the sacralization of people, places, symbols, dates, as well as by the creation of rituals related to these beliefs”.

turn away from true faith to embrace a false and political one. Indeed Amparo from the very beginning of the novel is presented as a rebel: this tendency to escape from the “jaula” (cage) and to go back to “su libre vagancia por calles y callejones” (Pardo Bazán, 69 [1998]).¹⁶ is due to the protagonist’s natural predisposition as defined from a determinist perspective: “De estos instintos nómadas tendría no poca culpa la vida que forzosamente hizo la chiquilla mientras su madre asistió a la Fábrica” (Pardo Bazán, 69 [1998]).¹⁷ The author weaves her moral judgment into the realistic description of her protagonist's humble life, inverting her ethical system and presenting her as predestined to failure because she is not under the protection of divine grace. The antiphrasis of the character’s name is a clear example of Pardo Bazán’s irony as Amparo, meaning shelter or sheltered as in naïve, clearly stands out in the novel as an example of insubordination to patriarchal authority. Because of her naivety she believed that the revolution would have canceled any distinction between social classes and that her love with Baltasar would have finally be legitimized by the political upturn.

The tragic end of Amparo’s affair with Baltasar is foreshadowed from the beginning of the novel. In chapter three, the church of Marineda acquires a symbolic value in the moral fall of the protagonist and works against her ascension. The type of music that accompanies the religious function is not sacred but profane, an aria from *La Traviata* “cabalmente los compases ardientes y febriles del dúo erótico del primer acto”

¹⁶ “Freely wandering the streets and alleys” (Whittaker 79).

¹⁷ “Such nomadic instincts could be blamed in no small measure on the life the child was forced to lead whilst her mother was at the factory” (Whittaker 79).

(Pardo Bazán 73–74 [1998]).¹⁸ Considering the plot of the opera, it is not difficult to predict the outcome of the romance involving Amparo and Baltasar. Even if the reader does not yet know how the love story will end, it is obvious that the church encounter between the protagonist and the young bourgeois man will be important in the development of the plot. This reinforces the idea that the church does not fulfill its role of guiding devotees but rather serves as a place of encounter and subversion of the social order through momentary confusion among the different social classes.¹⁹

This crisis in church leadership is condensed in the following passage:

y a un tiempo murmuró el sacerdote: *Introibo*, y rompió en sonoro acorde la charanga, haciendo oír las profanas notas de la *Traviata*, . . . para cesar, de repente, al alzarse la Hostia; cuando esto sucedió, la Marcha Real, poderosa y magnífica, brotó de los marciales instrumentos, sin que a intervalos dejase de escucharse en el altar el misterioso repiqueteo de la campanilla del acólito (Pardo Bazán 73–74 [1998]).²⁰

Here, within the outline of a simple religious function, Pardo Bazán offers an example of politicized religion in the mixture between the opening of traditional Latin mass with the prayer that starts “et introibo ad altare Dei” (and I will approach the altar of God) and the royal march. This practice is described by Linz and Sancho as “el uso político de la religión para legitimar la autoridad y la obtención de apoyo para un régimen, y describir

¹⁸ “Precisely the ardent and feverish measures of the erotic duet in the first act” (Whittaker 89).

¹⁹ In this regard, it is worth mentioning the short interval between the publication of Leopoldo Alas (Clarín)’s *La regenta* and Benito Pérez Galdós’s *Tormento*, which both appeared in 1884, a year later than *La tribuna*.

²⁰ “And at the same time the priest murmured: *Introibo*, and the brass band broke out into loud strains, with everyone hearing the profane notes from *La Traviata* . . . suddenly stopping when the Host was raised; when this happened, the national anthem burst forth powerfully and magnificently from the martial instruments, without it stopping the mysterious tinkle of the acolyte’s handbell being heard every now and then on the altar (Whittaker 89)”

cómo los líderes religiosos, la jerarquía eclesiástica y los clérigos usan el apoyo de autoridades políticas para perseguir su propio ideal y sus propios intereses morales y materiales” (Linz and Sancho 13).²¹ In this sense the usage of the secular march and of *La Traviata* during the mass signals how religion and politics mutually borrowed symbols, music and language in order to better share their message.

Vice versa, the mimicry of biblical language in the political real is made clear in the chapters that describe the arrival of the Unión del Norte in Marineda. For instance, the narrator describes “aquella llegada de los individuos de la Asamblea de la Unión fue para Amparo lo que sería la de los Apóstoles para un pueblo que oyese hablar del Evangelio y de pronto viese arribar a sus costas a los encargados de anunciarlo” (Pardo Bazán 147 [1998]).²² The use of the conditional tense conveys the sacrilegious parallelism between these men and the apostles, and continues in the usage of sacrificial imagery when referring to the deeds accomplished by them throughout chapter 17. For instance, Pardo Bazán describes their efforts as “fuerzas de abnegación y sacrificio” (147–148 [1998]);²³ and highlights this concept of sacrifice here: “¡Sacrificarse por cualquiera de aquellos hombres, venidos de Cantabria a vaticinar la redención; inmolarse por el más viejo, por el más feo, prestándole algún extraordinario y capital servicio!”

²¹ “The political use of religion to legitimize authority and gain support for a regime, and to describe how religious leaders, the ecclesiastical hierarchy and clerics, use the support of political authorities to pursue their own ideals and their own moral and material interests”.

²² “That arrival of the individual members of the Assembly of the Union was for Amparo what the arrival of the apostles would be for a people who had heard speak of the gospel and suddenly saw those charged with its announcement arriving at their shores (Whittaker 217)”.

²³ “Forces of abnegation and sacrifice (Whittaker 217)”.

(148 [1998]).²⁴ These examples of the liturgicization of political discourse reach their apogee in the transfiguration of the group of men from apostles into “martyrs of freedom” and their leader into a Patriarch—“El que, merced a su ancianidad venerable, podía ser llamado patriarca” (150 [1998]).²⁵ The irony implied by the narrator in these description conveys Pardo Bazán’s criticism toward the working masses that ignorantly substitute sacred texts for the press, interpreting the surrounding reality through pre-interiorized schemes to which the revolutionaries appeal to propagate their political ideology.

Therefore, in the political debates of the time, politics could not be separated from religion.²⁶ According to López, religion was “el conflicto más importante en la España del momento (López 94)”.²⁷ However, the term *religion* here should not be understood as a debate between different types of faith on the peninsula, but as “una forma de debatir la modernidad”.²⁸ This is why the usage of religious images or symbols in thesis novels, such as *La tribuna* and others, indicates the importance of religion in these works.

²⁴ “To sacrifice oneself for any of those men who had come from Cantabria to predict the redemption; to immolate oneself for the oldest of them, for the ugliest, rendering him some extraordinary and capital service in this way! (Whittaker 217).”

²⁵ “The one who, thanks to his venerable old age, could be called a patriarch (Whittaker 220–21)”

²⁶ In the aforementioned introduction to *Doña Perfecta*, a novel that shares a number of similarities and a common literary genre with *La tribuna*, López quotes authors of the time to also support the relevance of religion in the political debates between the seventies and the eighties. Among the authors cited is Urbano González Serrano, who in his *Cuestiones contemporáneas* of 1883, affirms that “in every social or political question of some scope, the religious problem beats” (López 6–7). On the other hand, on the reactionary front Gabino Tejado in *El catolicismo liberal* of 1875 writes that the role of the Church is include Spanish original “today, not merely a political question, but the whole political question” (López 82).

²⁷ “The most important conflict in Spain at the time”.

²⁸ “A way of debating modernity”.

This idiosyncrasy between politics and religion in the tobacco factories characterized also other genres. For examples, in her entry for Sáez de Melgar's volume on "La cigarrera," Pardo Bazán focused on the rituals and symbols used by tobacco workers to express their worship:

[...] atienden al culto de las veneradas imágenes cuyos altarcitos se alzan en las salas de la fábrica, a la Virgen del Carmen y a la de los Dolores; a San Antonio de Padua y al Niño Dios no les ha de faltar su *novenita* ni su función solemne, con mucha cera y manifiesto [...] Punto es el de la devoción en que todas andan conformes desde la más rígida maestra hasta la operaría más inhábil; desde la más timorata hija de María hasta la más cruda republicana federal (Pardo Bazán 801[1881]).²⁹

The attention paid to the sacred images and their worship by all the *cigarreras*, disregarding their age and status in the factory, signals how at least from a superficial point of view, they all are connected by religious faith. Later on, Pardo Bazán adds that these beliefs inside of the factory environment are complemented by political ones:

Porque la cigarrera, a diferencia de la mujer que vive entre las cuatro paredes de su casa, suele tener sus opiniones políticas como el más pintado, y en su cabeza fermenta la levadura democrática que abunda hoy en toda masa humana. No profesa la cigarrera un cuerpo de doctrinas enlazadas y coherentes, pero conoce esas ideas que se transmiten por eléctrico modo en los talleres, en las asociaciones trabajadoras todas [...] Si a la condición de jornalero se une la de mujer, y mujer impresionable, resultará un republicanismo efervescente como la magnesia, pero en el fondo bastante inofensivo. (Pardo Bazán 801 [1881]).

²⁹ “[...] they attend to the worship of the venerated images whose little altars are erected in the halls of the factory, to the Virgin of Carmen and the Virgin of Dolores; St. Anthony of Padua and the Child of God must not lack their *novenita* or their solemn function, with much wax and manifest [...] A point of devotion in which all are in agreement, from the most rigid teacher to the most unskilled operator; from the most timorous daughter of Mary to the most crude federal republican.”

The usage of political and religious language in this passage foreshadows that deployed later one by the author in the novel. While the author is recognized today for her (proto) feminism, it is undeniable that in these lines she underscores the intellectual skills of women workers in their capability to clearly understand the political message of the republican party at that time. Referring to *La tribuna*, Geraldine Scanlon claims that in text the focus is displaced from political issues to psychological and romantic ones in order to highlight Pardo Bazán's disbelief in political movements and ultimately her conservative views (Scanlon 137–138).

Critics have not agreed about Pardo Bazán's religious stance. Some see her as ultra-Catholic, while others consider her progressive and open to renewal within the Catholic faith. This ambiguity surrounding her ideological positions reflected her prudence, but also convenience. In fact, Xosé Ramón Barreiro Fernández affirms that only this position, which could be defined as moderate, “era la única forma de poder escribir en xornais liberais cunha audiencia ampla e cualificada, e porque así tamén podía conciliar e consolidar afectos tan dispares como os de Cánovas, Castelar, Salmerón ou o seu remoto parente Vázquez de Mella, “el Macabeo carlista” (39).³⁰ Ultimately, Pardo Bazán concealed her political ideology to exploit the publishing industry and to render her opinions worthy to her male counterparts. Indeed, as Barreiro Fernández

³⁰ “Was the only way to be able to write in liberal journals with a wide and qualified audience, and because in this way she could also reconcile and consolidate affections as disparate as those of Cánovas, Castelar, Salmerón or her remote relative Vázquez de Mella, “the Carlist Macabbe.”

demonstrates, it was only through nuancing her true political ideology that she could publish both in liberal and conservative newspapers (39–41).

Therefore, after a period in which the author explicitly declared herself a Carlist, she retreated towards more cautious political positions.³¹ In fact, it is difficult to find a well-defined ideological stance in any of her later articles or essays, and she does not clearly comment on politics in her novels. This is likely why it is difficult to find studies on Pardo Bazán's political ideology, despite the fact that “se trata de la única mujer con una obra narrativa y crítica no sólo extensa sino importante que fue capaz de reivindicar su derecho a intervenir en cuestiones políticas, unas veces desde la tribuna periodística, *El Imparcial* o *La Ilustración Artística* son buenos ejemplos, y otras” (Sotelo Vázquez 356).³² She clearly exposed herself, only to denounce gender injustices and the disenchantment that followed Spain's colonial losses of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in 1898. Nevertheless, Pardo Bazán did not hide her Catholic faith and never criticized the church. As Saurín states: “Contribuye a confirmar esta sensación la constante tendencia de Pardo Bazán a exteriorizar fidelidad a ultranza a los dictados de la autoridad religiosa. Pero, aun así, no faltan en otros escritos señales explícitas de una

³¹ Jordi Canal defines Carlism as “a socio-political movement which is anti-liberal and anti-revolutionary in nature, formed soon before the fall of the Ancient Régime and still surviving to the present day, albeit in a clearly diminished form. The terms ‘Carlism’ and ‘Carlist’ were coined during the second absolutist restoration of Fernando VII, between 1823 and 1833; they were derived from the name of the prince, Carlos María Isidro de Borbón, who would later become the legitimists’ King Carlos V. Carlism ‘represented the culmination of several pre-existing trends, whose principal outlet had previously been royalism.’” (293).

³² “She is the only woman with extensive and important narrative and critical work who was able to claim her right to intervene in political issues, sometimes from the journalistic tribune, like *El Imparcial* or *La Ilustración Artística*, and others”

indudable atracción hacia el modernismo, indicios que el buen entendedor localiza sin dificultad, salpicadas aquí y allá” (177).³³

For these reasons, an analysis of *La tribuna* focusing on ideological themes from a perspective that encompasses politics and religion is legitimized by the nuanced positions that Pardo Bazán assumed in her mature age. By referring to the revolutionary events of the 1868 more than a decade later, she was able to articulate a critique of postrevolutionary, and even contemporary, events, from a perspective that encompassed the Sexenio Democrático and the early years of the Bourbon Restoration. For this reason, the epilogue of the novel can be read as a failure not only for Amparo, but also for the newborn republic: the fact that Baltasar escapes with Josefina, who has increased her fortune through an inheritance from a relative in Madrid, has symbolic value. As a first important point, it illustrates the inability of a lower-class woman to marry a bourgeois man and rise socially, thereby confirming the failure of the egalitarian ideal that was intended by the adoption of democracy. In addition, it illustrates the failure of the pro-independence stances of the Northern Union, since the republic was imposed throughout the entire peninsular territory of Madrid (which was the same place in which Baltasar symbolically fled, imposing his authority over Amparo in his absence).

³³ “Contributing to confirm this sensation is Pardo Bazán’s constant tendency to externalize her extreme fidelity to the dictates of religious authority. But, even so, there is no lack of explicit signs in other writings of an undoubted attraction to modernism, indications that the discerning reader will find without difficulty, sprinkled here and there.”

In conclusion, the failure is twofold for Amparo from a woman's point of view: she will not only be barred from social ascendancy through marriage, but will also likely lose her social position through the possible unions outlined in the novel's closing pages. At the end of the novel, Chinto is again suggested as a possible husband for Amparo, while Baltasar is united with Josefina, who has become attractive to him thanks to the money she inherited. Women are placed in a position of loss in these two unions. In Amparo's case only a reparatory union within the church with Baltasar could save her social image. This will be the topic for *Memorias de un solterón* (1896), the sequel to *La tribuna*, a novel in which an old and poor Baltasar, reconciles with Amparo and marries her thanks to the intervention of his son. However, this ending shows how, according to Pardo Bazán, an improvement in the living conditions of common people may happen only through Catholic morality.

4.2 The Honor Question: Seamstresses and Maidservants in Madrid

Low-class women were a constant concern in the 19th century. Because of their lack of education and the social conventions of the century, they only had access to jobs that did not provide them with sufficient means to survive. Seamstresses and maids were the most common jobs available to urban women. However, the income produced by these jobs was barely enough to cover the minimum expenses that women had to cover for rent in the big cities. In *Tormento*, Benito Pérez Galdós presents the character of Amparo, a humble woman who initially works as a servant, and subsequently takes

service in the house of wealthy relatives.³⁴ Similar characters appear in the Peruvian novels *Blanca Sol* by Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera and *Herencia* by Clorinda Matto de Turner. Here, Josefina and Adelina, respectively, appear as lonely and destitute women who live from their work as maidservants and seamstresses. These shared concern that society nurtured about these poor young women was their lack of protection by their families. Thus, their sexuality and the preservation of their integrity became a problem to be solved.

Despite the naturalistic/realistic tendencies that these novels present, the image of the three young women is literary rather than realistic. In *Tormento*, for example, the character of Amparo vacillates between two opposing poles: that of *honrada pobreza* (honest poverty) and that of *cursilería* (kitsch), two models of nineteenth-century feminine beauty. Building on a long tradition of Galdosian studies that have read these texts from both feminist and economic frameworks, such as Sieburth's (1994) and Labanyi's (2000), I read this text as an example of the critique of modernity offered by Galdós through his female protagonist. My thesis is that the opposition between *honrada pobreza* and *cursilería* is limited only apparently to two models of feminine beauty and serves the author to articulate a deeper critique of Madrid's society and, by

³⁴ *Tormento* is the story of Amparo, a poor, orphan, single woman that works as a seamstress in Madrid. She has a turbulent past, as she had a relationship with Polo, a priest, that gives her the nickname of Tormento, to define the physical and psychological consequences that their relationship has on him. She starts to work as a maidservant for the Bringas to increase her income. There she meets Agustín Cabellero, a well-off *indiano* who has recently come back from the Americas. They fall in love but as soon as he discover her turbulent past, they cannot get married and escape to France to live their love far from Madrid's social constrictions.

extension, of his contemporary Spain. In fact, I contend that these two models represent two socioeconomic alternatives to the patriarchal capitalist system, which prevent development and impede the creation of a new paradigm of national progress.

Examples of *honrada pobreza* and *cursileria* are detailed through Amparo's physical description in opposition to that of the other female characters: Rosalia and Refugio. From the beginning of the novel, Amparo is presented as an orphan and a poor, and she is characterized by her extreme beauty. In the first chapters of *Tormento*, Ido del Sagrario describes to Centeno the heroines of his *feuilletons* who represent the fictionalized version of his neighbours, Amparo and Refugio Sánchez Emperador:

Como te decía, he puesto en la tal obra dos niñas bonitas, pobres, se entiende, muy pobres, y que viven siempre con más apuro que el último día de mes... Pero son más honradas que el Cordero Pascual. Ahí está la moralidad, ahí está, porque esas pollas huerfanitas que solicitadas de tanto goloso, resisten valientes y son tan ariscas con todo el que les hable de pecar, sirven de ejemplo a las mozas del día (119).³⁵

In this fragment the woman's beauty is complemented by poverty and honesty. The religious semantic field goes back to the image of the Petrarchan angel woman and the nineteenth-century *ángel del hogar*, i.e., angel of the home, so much so that the Emperador sisters are 'more honest than the Paschal Lamb.' Their honesty is sustained, on the one hand, by the work from which they support themselves (Amparo and Refugio

³⁵ "As I was telling you, I have placed in this work two pretty girls, poor, it is understood, very poor, and who always live with more trouble than the last day of the month... But they are more honest than the Paschal Lamb. There is morality, there it is, because those little orphan cocks that, in demand of so many sweet-toothed, resist bravely and are so surly with anyone who speaks to them of sinning, serve as an example to the wenches of the day."

are seamstresses and sell artificial flowers), and, on the other, by the fact that they bravely resist the unscrupulous *madrileños* who want to harm their virtue. For this reason, they are a model of morality and are praised by Ido del Sagrario. Moreover, they live in “garrets” or near the roof, thus, being closer to heaven, and it should not be forgotten that they are ‘orphans’ and therefore lack parental (or better said paternal) guardianship.

On a similar note, the first description given of Amparo in the first chapters of the novel resembles the one that Ido del Sagrario details in his *feuilletons*.³⁶ In the following excerpt, the two sisters are presented as heroines: “las dos huérfanas en la casa más reducida y más barata que encontraron, e hicieron ese voto de heroísmo que se llama vivir de su trabajo. El de la mujer sola, soltera y honrada era y es una como patente de ayuno perpetuo; pero aquellas bien criadas chicas tenían fe, y los primeros desengaños no las desalentaron” (136).³⁷ What stands out are the economic hardships that a poor, single woman goes through because her work does not cover her primary needs. For this reason,

³⁶ This mixture of genres in Galdós’s novels has been extensively studied, and in these two novels the connection with the folletinesco genre stands out. Andreu (1980), for example, shows how in *La desheredada*, Galdós uses as a literary model for his heroine *La Cruz del Olivar* written by Faustina Sáez de Melgar and published in installments in the *Correo de la Moda* between March and May 1867. In addition, Sieburth (1994) analyzes the idiosyncrasies provoked by the mixture between the folletín and the realist novel. From these studies, my argument is that by showing the artifice of such an ideal through “the blackness” of realism over “the whiteness” of the folletín, in Sieburth’s terminology Galdós proposes a questioning of the ideal of the angel of the home connected to that of honest poverty, through an economic critique, by means of desire, which is what apparently opposes the two protagonists.

³⁷ “the two orphans in the smallest and cheapest house they could find, and they made that vow of heroism that is called living by their work. That of the single, unmarried, honest woman was and is like a patent of perpetual fasting; but those well-bred girls had faith, and the first disappointments did not discourage them”

work becomes a ‘vow of heroism,’ and one must ironically have ‘faith’ to think that working as a seamstress provides the sufficient income for material sustenance. In fact, Rosalia de Bringas, the well-off relative that hires her as a maidservant, as a solution to her economic problems, proposes that she becomes a nun with the dowry that the Queen offered to the girls of humble condition, because with her reserved character and her lack of capital she would not marry ‘well.’ In the first chapters Amparo is presented as a faithful copy of the “angel of the home” as she is

siempre la misma, de humor y genio inalterables, grave sin tocar en el desabrimiento, callada, sufrida, imagen viva de la paciencia, si esta, como parece, es una imagen hermosa; trabajadora, dispuesta a todo, ahorrativa de palabras hasta la avaricia, ligeramente risueña si Rosalía estaba alegre, sumergida en profundísima tristeza si la señora manifestaba pesadumbre o enojo (141).³⁸

It is interesting to note that what is detailed is a description of Amparo’s character and not her physical appearance. She is not corporeal, she is an angel, and because of this, she is asexual. In fact, from this quote, readers cannot yet understand whether she is a “beautiful image” because of her virtues or her physical appearance. Moreover, throughout the novel her weakness is emphasized, she herself says that her greatest flaw is “ser debil.”³⁹ This lack of character, the conforming to external events and letting

³⁸ always the same, with an unalterable mood and temper, serious without touching on the unpleasantness, quiet, long-suffering, living image of patience, if this, as it seems, is a beautiful image; hard-working, ready for anything, sparing of words to the point of avarice, slightly laughing if Rosalía was happy, submerged in deep sadness if the lady manifested grief or anger.

³⁹ The emphasis on Amparo's weakness recurs very often in her long interior monologues in her sleepless nights or in her dialogues with Polo, for example:” Por débil me pasó lo que me pasó. Esto de la debilidad no se cura nunca [...] Dios castiga a las personas cuando son malas y también cuando son tontas, y a mi me castiga por las dos cosas, sí: por mala y por necia...”(206; "Because I was weak, what happened to me happened to me. This weakness can never be cured [...] God punishes people when they are bad and also when they are foolish, and he punishes me

herself be carried away by them without being able to oppose them, becomes the driving force of the action in the novel and this same characteristic, so praised in the angel of the home, is the one that Galdós attacks and demystifies.

Agustín Caballero is the first to provide details about her beauty: he affirms that she is “bonita” (beautiful) in a compliment (Ch. VIII) and through an interior monologue we discover that he falls in love with her because of her conformity to the ideal of the angel of the home. Moreover, in his marriage proposal he tells her that “Los enamorados de veras tenemos doble vista; y sin haberla conocido a usted antes, me consta, sí, me consta que estoy hablando ahora con la virtud más pura, con la lealtad más... Y no me habla usted sólo al corazón y a la cabeza, sino también a los ojos, porque es usted más guapa que una diosa” (116).⁴⁰ Only in chapter XX appears, finally, the complete physical description of Amparo:

Estaba tan guapita, que al más severo se lo podría perdonar que se enamorase locamente de ella, sólo con verla una vez. Ojos de una expresión acariciante, un poco tristes y luminosos como el crepúsculo de la tarde; tez finísima y blanca; cabello castaño, abundante y rizado; con suaves ondas naturales; cuerpo esbelto y bien dotado de carnes; boca deliciosa e incomparables dientes, como pedacitos iguales de bien pulido mármol blanco; cierta emanación de bondad y modestia, y otros y otros encantos hacían de ella la más acabada estampa de mujer que se pudiera imaginar (232).⁴¹

for both, yes: for being bad and foolish...”). In this way, weakness acquires a primarily sexual valence.

⁴⁰We who are truly in love have double sight; and without having met you before, I know, yes, I know that I am speaking now with the purest virtue, with the most loyalty. And you do not speak only to my heart and head, but also to my eyes, because you are more beautiful than a goddess

⁴¹ She was so beautiful that even the most severe person could be forgiven for falling madly in love with her, just by seeing her once. Eyes of a caressing expression, a little sad and luminous as the evening twilight; a very fine and white complexion; brown hair, abundant and curly, with soft natural waves; a slender body and well endowed with flesh; a delicious mouth and incomparable teeth, like equal pieces of well polished white marble; a certain emanation of kindness and

Amparo's description draws on romantic literary clichés, in fact, the gaze of the pious woman is compared to the 'twilight of the evening' and the woman herself becomes a work of art by comparing her to a statue (note the reference to the marble of the teeth) or "a print" that comes to life.

If in the *feuilletons* a beautiful woman of humble class, due to her virtues, could have access to a marriage with a man of a higher class, in the reality of the time, a poor woman without a dowry had only two paths open to her: to become a nun—as Rosalía proposes to Amparo—or to prostitute herself—as Amparo's sister, Refugio will do. The solution that Amparo finds remains halfway in a system of *amancebamiento* where she allows the man to enjoy of her body and her sexuality outside the conjugal system—a solution that represents a suicide from a social point of view for the protagonist.⁴²

In her study on *cursileria*, Noel Valis underlines how the vanity of the petty bourgeoisie to emulate the aristocracy through fashion and a fondness for consumer goods was a constant in nineteenth century in Spain. This phenomenon is connected to desire while at the same time shying away from that kind of qualification. In fact, Valis states that: "Lo *cursi* is really a form of disempowered desire, since no one wanted to be *cursi*. No one wanted to be seen as imitative, in bad taste, pretentious, or cheaply

modesty, and other and other charms made of her the most finished stamp of a woman that could be imagined (232).

⁴² *Amancebamiento* is currently translated in English as common-law union, however in 19th-century Spain, the term described the relationship between a man and a woman that were not married, but had intercourses.

sentimental. It is t[he] language of the middle class” (15). Indeed, if Amparo does not quite fit the ideal of honest poverty, this does not mean that she fits that of *cursileria* either. In fact, Galdós shies away from calling his heroine *cursi* while at the same time she is always at risk of falling into this category. In *Tormento*, the ones that the narrator and Refugio label as *cursi* are the Bringas, and above all Rosalía, the wealthier relatives that hire Amparo as a maidservant, even if they do not have fully the means to pay her for that position. Indeed, Refugio harshly criticizes them and refuses to work as a maidservant for them, deciding instead to work as a prostitute.

The only instance in which Amparo uses the word *cursi* referring to herself is when she is looking for a way to confess her sin to Caballero and thinks, “No, no, esto no, esto era un disparate. Mejor era: «yo he sido víctima...». Esto le parecía cursi. [...] ¿Tendría ella el valor del principio? Sí, lo tendría, se proponía tenerlo, aunque muriera en las angustias de aquella revelación semejante al suicidio” (247).⁴³ Here, *cursi* is not only associated with suicide, but also anticipates the central motif of the novel’s ending. In fact, Amparo commits “social” suicide and escapes with Agustín to France to become his concubine. This resolution has been interpreted by Sieburth as a utopian ending: “In this way, *Tormento* creates a utopian compensation for what was *not* achieved in reality by the revolution of 1868 and the Restoration- that is, a clean break with the ancien regime” (132). However, Sieburth also asserts that by presenting the union between a man who

⁴³ "No, no, no, no, this was nonsense. It was better: "I have been a victim...". This seemed corny to him. [...] Would she have the courage of the principle? Yes, she would, she intended to have it, even if she died in the anguish of that revelation similar to suicide"

embraces this revolutionary spirit with a woman who conforms to and is praised for her adherence to Elizabethan ideals, the author is not undermining the patriarchal system in place. In fact, he attributes a submissive role to “Amparito” who remains silent and takes no part in the conversation between Caballero and Bringas at the train station when they are escaping to France—“en el opuesto ángulo del coche, atendía sin chistar a las maniobras de la estación y observaba sin chistar los viajeros [...]” (339).⁴⁴ However, if it is true that Amparo presents herself as mute and a victim of a system that does not allow her to legitimize her relationship with Caballero and considers her a sinner, it is important to point out that she chooses to escape with Agustín and not with Polo—the priest with whom she had previously an affair—who had proposed her to run away and start over together in a place where no one knew them (207-209). For reasons, also of an economic nature, Amparo escapes with Agustín and not with the ex-priest.

For this reason, it must be recognized that *cursilería* is not contemplated in this novel as an option for its heroine, since she prefers the death of her social being rather than being branded as *cursi*. The addressee of this type of criticism is the bourgeoisie represented by the Bringas, who are considered by Galdós as incapable of producing a model of autonomous development and are bent on reproducing the mistakes made by the aristocracy through a fondness for fashion coming from France. In fact, this country becomes the model of development and society that Spain wanted to reproduce without

⁴⁴ “in the opposite corner of the carriage, she attended without a murmur to the maneuvers of the station and watched the travelers without a murmur [...]”

having the same economic and political conditions. France represented the ideal revolutionary country and modern nation-state free from the bureaucratic impediments represented by the monarchic and classist society, that there were in Spain. Here, the affirmation of a small bourgeoisie was prevented by their desire to emulate the hobbies and fashion of the upper classes, instead of creating an autonomous and profitable economic model of development.

To conclude, the poor woman is left with no other option than escaping from her economic hardship by becoming a prostitute, a nun, or a concubine. Both the ideal of the honest poverty, with its lack of material resources, and that of *cursilería* are compared with death. The two novels present the lack of options that the woman of the time had to be able to enter the capitalist economy as an equal, having no means of material sustenance because she could not freely access the labor market. In this way, Amparo represents the very limits of a Spain that wants to create a liberal market without having capital to foster it (Valis, Sieburth). As lower-class women cannot economically support themselves because of the low income that honest professions provide, so middle class women like Rosalía want to emulate those of the upper class without having sufficient economic resources, thus, becoming *cursi*. In this way, both the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie try to assert themselves in the national market through debts, without creating any real economic alternative, because of their lack of education. While they have no liquid money to invest in the progress of the nation and limit themselves to going into debt to continue with their fondness for luxury and material goods such as clothes, a character like Agustín Caballero, who has enriched himself by exploiting the colonial

system, is the only one who can inject capital into the depleted national market. In this way, the Spanish economy is presented as a system incapable of sustaining itself autonomously and dependent both on the colonies and on imports. Therefore, Galdós's criticism is not targeted to the fondness for luxury *per se*, but to that kind of expenditure that is unsupported by one's own capital. The usage of female protagonists who cannot access the capitalist market is functional to the critique of it, although Galdós is not in favour of a change in the status of women. The French model is presented as an alternative, somewhat negative, because of the dependence created by the attempt to follow this model of development, which represents, on a large scale, national *cursilería*. Consequently, in his *novellas contemporaneas*, Galdós focuses on the pre- and post-revolutionary moments to demonstrate how from a political and socioeconomic point of view, the revolution has not changed the situation, hence the only solution is the creation of new models of development. Only in this way can Spain recover an exhausted economy.

4.3. Rape and Violence in Post-Unitarian Sicilian Countryside

In *Sublime madre nostra*, Alberto Banti analyzes the evolution of the figure of the mother in the construction of the Italian national discourse from the Risorgimento to Fascism. Through its morphological analysis, he claims that this kind of discourse is articulated by means of “figure profonde” (deep figures): recurrent images, metaphorical-allegorical systems that are constantly recycled and actualized, but which are actually part of a centuries-old value continuum. Often based on binary oppositions, such as those of gender roles, these “figures” converge toward three fundamentals: “1. la nazione come

parentela familiare; 2. la nazione come comunità sacrificale; 3. la nazione come comunità sessuata, funzionalmente distinta, cioè, in due generi diversi per ruoli, profili e rapporto gerarchico” (Banti VI-VII).⁴⁵ For instance, the mother is one of these deep figures of the national discourse *par excellence* as it is transversal to the three aforementioned categories. Considering the importance that the figure of the mother has had in nation-building discourses, an analysis of how southern mothers have been portrayed from the periphery of the national discourse is key to understand their positionality. Peppa in Verga’s “L’AG” and Maragrazia in Pirandello’s “L’altro figlio” are two emblematic Sicilian mothers: their offspring is the result of violent intercoursing with the other sex, and they approach their maternity in not conventional ways.⁴⁶

In “L’AG,” right from the title Peppa is presented as the lover and therefore the illegitimate partner of the brigand. She is a resolute woman who throws away her marriage to the best man in the village, Finu “candela di sego,” because she has fallen in love with Gramigna through the stories she has heard about him. This long-distance falling in love is described as a possession by the demon/Gramigna and manifests physically on the woman’s body as a constant ardor and thirst. The mother goes so far as to invite the village priest and have her daughter undergo an exorcism ritual. Her

⁴⁵ “1. The nation as familial kinship; 2. the nation as sacrificial community; 3. the nation as gendered community, functionally distinct, that is, into two genders differing in their roles, profiles and hierarchical relationship.”

⁴⁶ A synopsis of “L’AG” can be found in Chapter 2, while the summary of “L’altro figlio” appears in Chapter 3.

character, as I mentioned already, is molded out of Capuana's maidservant, as he recalls in "La Sicilia nei canti popolari"

La poverina udiva parlare della sete, della fame che il latitante , inseguito come una bestia feroce, dicevasi patisse spesso per più giornate; e il pensiero di quell'uomo affamato e assetato la invasava; la tormentava sveglia, le agitava i sonni la notte, la faceva deperire, diventava fissazione, fantasma, che le pareva le chiedesse, in grazia, una goccia di quell'acqua ch'ella cavava dal pozzo; una goccia della altra che le serviva per risciacquare i piatti che a lui, riarso, sarebbe parsa nettare deliziosissimo; un boccone di quel pane ch'ella buttava ai cani; un pugno di quella crusca ch'ella intrideva per l'animale immondo! E quando il latitante, diventato brigante per necessità, avuta spezzata una gamba da una fucilata, era stato preso, la poveretta s'era sentita liberare da quell'incubo, ed era presto riorita, pensando che oramai, nel carcere, colui non avrebbe più patito né fame né sete (196-7).⁴⁷

As if by enchantment, the brigand's thirst, and hunger torment Capuana's service maid, who is not able to sleep, eat, and work properly. Only when she discovers that the brigand is in prison and, thus, is not thirsty and hungry anymore, she is able to resume her normal life.

In *Sud e magia* (*South and Magic*; 1959), Ernesto de Martino, an anthropologist who studied magic in Italian southern society, describes *fascinazione*, i.e., fascination, as a "condizione psichica di impedimento e di inibizione, e al tempo stesso un senso di

⁴⁷ "The poor girl heard of the thirst, of the hunger that the fugitive , pursued like a ferocious beast, was said to suffer often for several days; and the thought of that hungry and thirsty man invaded her; it tormented her while she was awake, agitated her sleep at night, made her wasting away, became a fixation, a phantom, who seemed to ask her, in grace, for a drop of that water that she drew from the well; a drop of the other she used to rinse the dishes that to him, parched, would seem most delicious nectar; a morsel of that bread she threw to the dogs; a fistful of that bran she dipped for the unclean animal! And when the fugitive, who had become a brigand out of necessity, having had his leg broken by a rifle shot, had been caught, the poor girl had felt herself freed from that nightmare, and had soon flourished again, thinking that now, in prison, he would no longer suffer hunger or thirst."

dominazione, un essere agito da una forza altrettanto potente quanto occulta, che lascia senza margine l'autonomia della persona, la sua capacità di decisione e di scelta" (15).⁴⁸

In southern magic thought, fascination is a psychic condition that inhibits as well as rules the fascinated subject. Capuana's service maid is clearly acted upon by the bandit and is not able to live her normal life.

De Martino signals that in case the fascinated subjected is dominated by a personality that is not accepted by popular social conventions, and their behavior varies, then, the subject is a "*spiritato*, cioè un posseduto o un ossesso, da esorcizzare" (16).⁴⁹ This is exactly the case of Peppa in "L'AG," as her mother says "Ah quel demonio è venuto sin qui a stregarmi la mia figliuola!" (162).⁵⁰ As soon as Peppa's mother has assessed that her daughter is possessed she follows the particular conventional rituals to break her daughter's fascination, including the exorcism:

La povera madre aveva acceso una lampada alle anime del purgatorio, e persino il curato era andato in casa di Peppa, a toccarle il cuore colla stola, onde scacciare quel diavolo di Gramigna che ne aveva preso possesso. Però ella seguitava a dire che non lo conosceva neanche di vista; ma che la notte lo vedeva in sogno, e alla mattina si levava colle labbra arse quasi avesse provato anch'essa tutta la sete ch'ei doveva soffrire (Verga 162 [1881]).⁵¹

⁴⁸ "Psychic condition of impediment and inhibition, and at the same time a sense of domination, a being acted upon by a force as powerful as it is occult, which leaves the person's autonomy, his or her capacity for decision-making and choice without margin."

⁴⁹ "*Spiritato*, i.e., a possessed person or an obsessed person, to be exorcised."

⁵⁰ "Ah that devil has come so far to bewitch my little daughter!"

⁵¹ "The poor mother had lit a lamp to the souls in purgatory, and even the priest had gone to Peppa's house, to touch her heart with his stole, in order to drive out that evil Gramigna who had taken possession of it. However, she went on to say that she did not even know him by sight; but that at night she saw him in her dreams, and in the morning she rose with burning lips as if she too had felt all the thirst he must have suffered."

Similarly to Capuana's service maid, Peppa's fascination is described as an intense thirst that burns her lips and prevents her from sleeping. From the outset, therefore, even before Peppa gets to know Gramigna personally, the relationship between the two is described in terms of her physical and psychic discomfort. He obsesses her also during her dreams and passes onto her his thirst. Even if her mother has practiced two different rituals, they do not have the desired effect, and Peppa is still obsessed with Gramigna. According to de Martino's study, in women, exorcism sorts an effect more slowly, and it is important to understand who has operated the fascination and how they have done it, to revert this psychic condition (17).

Therefore, Peppa's mother goes on to see if other rituals result in a better outcome. The fascination must have been carried out through the sense of hearing and not sight. Indeed, Peppa claims: "Io non l'ho visto. Ne ho sentito parlare. Sentite! ma lo sento qui che mi brucia!" (Verga 163 [1881]).⁵² Considering that Peppa says that she has never seen him, and that she has only heard the popular stories circulating about him, her mother decides to hermetically close their house: "Allora la vecchia la chiuse in casa, perché non sentisse più parlare di Gramigna; e tappò tutte le fessure dell'uscio con immagini di santi. Peppa ascoltava quello che dicevano nella strada dietro le immagini benedette, e si faceva pallida e rossa, come se il diavolo le soffiasse tutto l'inferno nella faccia" (Verga 163 [1881]).⁵³ Putting the picture of saints behind the windows does not

⁵² "I haven't seen him. I've heard about him. Listen! but I feel it here burning me!"

⁵³ "Then the old woman locked her in the house, so that she would never hear of Gramigna again; and she plugged all the cracks in the doorway with pictures of saints. Peppa listened to what they

prevent Peppa to hear the evil stories about Gramigna, and to physically manifest her possession through pallor and redness.

Even though Peppa's mother is not able to free her daughter from her obsession, in the rituals that she follows to break it, she shows her knowledge of basic magic, and she is called a witch—"Ah! gridava la mamma per la casa, coi capelli grigi al vento, che pareva una strega" (Verga 168 [1881]).⁵⁴ This reference is not a secondary detail, as specialized magic operators were mainly women (de Martino, 16-7). *Fattucchiere*, i.e., witch doctors, were popular figures in southern communities that helped the population in getting rid of the different kinds of spells that could dominate their psyche. In "L'AG" the fact that Peppa's mother is called a witch does not have a negative connotation. Indeed, she is portrayed as a caring and loving mother that is worried for her daughter. Her abnegation is impeccable, as when Peppa is arrested with Gramigna, she sells all her belongings to rescue her daughter and her grandson from prison. Thus, Peppa's mother represent a positive model of motherhood and is opposed to her daughter who stands for a different kind of femininity and maternal spirit.

For her passionate nature and the ambivalent feelings toward her son, conveyed in the two different short story endings, Peppa has been compared by critics with 'gna Pina, the protagonist of "La Lupa" ("The she-wolf"). Aurelio Navarria summarizes the

were saying in the street behind the blessed images, and she turned pale and red, as if the devil were blowing all hell into her face."

⁵⁴ "Ah! cried the mother through the house, her gray hair in the wind, looking like a witch."

similarities between the two short stories, which were also written at the same time, as follows:

la fantasia di Verga illuminò di vita contemporaneamente Peppa e la ‘gna Pina, perché le due creature, infiammate d’amore come da una follia, sensuale per l’una e di dedizione per l’altra, vincono ogni ritegno del proprio utile e delle condizioni sociali, spezzano inconsapevoli, ma come obbedendo a un imperativo supremo, la dura crosta di una vita pietrificata per essere libere nella loro passione finché l’una non è morta per forza e l’altra non decade tristemente in una sorta di ebetismo animalesco (197).⁵⁵

Both Peppa and ‘gna Pina are described as mad women because of their love that manifests in all its irrationality as an illogic dedication for a brigand in “L’AG” and as extreme sexual desire in “La Lupa.” For opposing accepted social norms they are punished at the end of the short stories as ‘gna Pina dies, while Peppa works in an alienated status for the Carabinieri, the same armed body that has arrested her lover. According to Susan Amatangelo, the situation of Peppa “who supports both sides at different points in the story, lays bare the connection between outlaw and law in the post-Unification period while offering a perspective on the meaning of danger and security, order and chaos, in the lives of Sicilian women, whose stories were mostly excluded from official histories” (118). In this perspective, “L’AG” offers an uncommon point of view about the war against brigandage, as the main protagonist of the short story is a woman.

⁵⁵ “Verga’s imagination illuminated Peppa and the ‘gna Pina with life at the same time, for the two creatures, inflamed with love as if by a madness, sensual for the one and of devotion for the other, overcome all restraint of their own usefulness and social conditions, break unconsciously but as if obeying a supreme imperative the hard crust of a petrified life to be free in their passion until the one is dead by force and the other decays sadly into a kind of animalistic ebetism.”

Peppa's body is the place in which opposite poles—law/outlaw, security/danger, order/chaos—manifest. Peppa's body in the short story represents a map in which the consequences of her relationship with Gramigna are marked in terms of a physical and psychic decay. From being one of the most beautiful women in the village ("L'AG"160) she progressively becomes "povera, malata, svergognata, brutta anche lei come Gramigna" (Verga 168 1881), and at the end of the short story is called "lo strofinacciolo dei Carabinieri" (Verga 170 [1881]).⁵⁶ The identification between Peppa and Gramigna starts when she goes through an initiation rite: to get rid of her, he invites her to fill his water flask at the stream, where he knows the police are stationed. On the way she is wounded, but she returns with the water for Gramigna and earns his trust. Giovanni Cecchetti claims that, after Peppa has proven herself, "Her process of identification with her man is complete" (52). This means that she becomes a criminal woman as implied by the malicious popular chorus in the short story: "La gente diceva che Peppa aveva imparato il mestiere, nel bosco, andava di notte a rubare" (Verga 168 [1881]).⁵⁷ However, the narrative voice resists to criminalize her and negates this gossip by claiming that "[i]l fatto era che stave rincattucciata nella cucina come una bestia feroce, e ne uscì soltanto allorchè la sua vecchia fu morta di stenti, e dovette vendere la casa" (Verga 168 [1881]).⁵⁸ The usage of the verb *rincattuccire*, to hide in a corner, diminishes the

⁵⁶ "Poor, ill, has lost her honor, and ugly like Gramigna;" "the duster of the Carabinieri."

⁵⁷ "People said Peppa had learned her trade, in the woods, she would go at night to steal."

⁵⁸ "[T]he fact was that she was hiding in a corner in the kitchen like a ferocious beast, and only came out when her old woman died of hardship, and she had to sell the house."

connotation of *bestia feroce*, ferocious beast, in an armless threat. Now that her mother is dead, she ceases to be a daughter, and is presented as a mother.

The conflictive relationship she has with Gramigna, she loves him irrationally and is beaten in return, is reflected in the way Peppa's motherhood is portrayed in the short story. What is interesting is that this motherhood as a sign of the bond with Gramigna is honored in the 1880 version (both in the "L'amante di Raja" and later in "L'AG" published the same year), while it varies in the 1897 version. In the first epilogue, Verga recounts that after the death of her mother, Peppa moves to the city and goes to work for the armed forces near the prison where Gramigna was previously locked up. In this way she can support herself and her son. By throwing stones at the children that call him "Il figlio di Gramigna!" (Verga 170 [1881]), Peppa defends her son from his father's negative legacy and protects him from the association with his negative reputation, thus, being a caring mother.

On the contrary, in the 1897 version, Verga changes the ending and says: "Allora, di notte, se ne andò via dal paese, lasciando il figliuolo ai trovatelli, senza voltarsi indietro neppure, e se ne venne alla città dove le avevano detto che c'era in carcere *Gramigna*" (Verga 283 [1897]).⁵⁹ This refused motherhood indicates that she is rejecting the product of the months lived as a fugitive with Gramigna. Considering that their relationship is described in violent terms, by abandoning her son, Peppa is distancing

⁵⁹ "Then, by night, she went away from the village, leaving her son with the foundlings, without even looking back, and came to the town where she had been told that *Gramigna* was in prison."

herself from the traumatic experience she has undergone. The negation of motherhood is an affirmation of the woman's right to decide on her own body and its extreme consequences.

In this sense, I would like to propose a reading of Peppa's experience in the terms of trauma as it has been elaborated in the post- and decolonial contexts. Frantz Fanon theorizes that the trauma of colonialism permeates all levels of social subjectivity. In the decolonial sphere, the term colonial subject has been coined, which encompasses individuals oppressed in the context of coloniality to this day and is a product of the traumatic origins of colonialism. Since the beginning of colonization, the encounter between the locals and the colonizers has been permeated by violence. This kind of violence as we have seen is present in the stories in the form of sexual and physical abuse. Building on Fanon's *The wretched of the earth*, Walter Mignolo elaborates the concept of "colonial wound"

The wretched are defined by the colonial wound, and the colonial wound, physical and/or psychological, is a consequence of racism, the hegemonic discourse that questions the humanity of all those who do not belong to the locus of enunciation (and the geo-politics of knowledge) of those who assign the standards of classification and assign to themselves the right to classify (Mignolo 8 [2005]).

The psychological effects created by the Risorgimento process are therefore persistent and symbolized by the trauma that Peppa experiences on her skin. The product of the relationship with a brigand is either partially accepted as in Verga's case of 1880 or repudiated as in Verga's case of 1897 and Pirandello's.

Norma Bouchard considers Italian *Risorgimento* as a transgenerational trauma and states that “The present of this complex past has profoundly marked Sicilian literature from the nineteenth to the twentieth-century and has been the object of endless revisiting on the part of authors as diverse as Verga, Piradello, Lampedusa, and Consolo. In this sense, then, Risorgimento truly emerges as that transgenerational specter described by Abraham as a trauma that is transmitted and repeated from earlier to later generations (1994: 174-175). More fundamentally still, this is a trauma that has given rise to those unique patterns of historical representation and understanding that characterize the Sicilian imaginary.” In conclusion, both authors describe the trauma that marks the unification process, and as shown by the various drafts with the changes undergone by the stories fail to come to terms with the facts of the Risorgimento, thus demonstrating that at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, 20 and 40 years later the accomplishment of territorial unification, the wounds that caused the annexation were not healed yet.

5. Degener(N)ations: Disfunctional Families in the Upper Classes

“Degener(N)ation” hints at the problematic notion of the nation in Spain, Italy, and at the way it was defined in the nineteenth century. The second half of this century was marked by important political events that reconfigured the notion of the nation-state in these countries: Italy became a unified nation-state, while Spain was coming to terms with the idea of becoming a modest nation-state within the borders of the Iberian Peninsula after having been an international imperial power.¹ Therefore, this period was marked by political turmoils in all these countries accompanied by cyclical economic crises that impacted people’s trust in the State and undermined their belonging to the national community.² The 19th century is a key moment for the definition of national identities, and for the creation of what Benedict Anderson calls “imagined communities.” However, in the specific cases of Spain and Italy, these nation-building processes were challenged by the presence of a “degenerate” group of individuals that arrested the modernization of the country and also threatened their co-nationals with their poor moral conduct and pathological conditions.

¹ Spain lost its last colonies—Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines—in 1898.

² In Spain, the Glorious revolution and the beginning of the Sexenio Democrático, the Restoration and the turnover between conservative and liberals constituted the decline of the revolutionary instances coming from France. Finally, in Italy, the unification, the discontent in the South, the siege of Sicily, and Crispi’s government marked the first decades of the newborn nation-state.

While previous chapters analyzed degenerate characters from the lower classes—mainly peasants, miners, workers, seamstresses, service maids, and prostitutes—this chapter focuses on the descriptions of members of the upper classes as affected by physical, psychic, and moral illnesses that prevented the regeneration of the nation states. The two novels here analyzed present similar preoccupations towards the transmission of genetic, mental, and behavioral threats to the new generations. By using the metaphor of the family as the dysfunctional social nucleus of the nation-state, these writers negatively consider the leading function of the upper classes in the regeneration of the nation. Novels such as Federico de Roberto's *I vicerè* and Benito Pérez Galdós's *Lo prohibido*, fictionalize the decadence of the old noble classes by putting at their center the description of the degenerative illnesses that are running in the families. The offspring of these degenerate families is described as a monster in de Roberto and Galdós. Moreover, the theme of the *race* emerges in these novels as a metaphor of the bonds between the family members/nation citizens, and it is influenced by the local anthropological, ethnographic, medical, and criminal discourses that treated this topic from different perspectives in that moment.

This chapter examines the theme of degeneration in *I vicerè* and *Lo prohibido*. De Roberto and Galdós fictionalize similar concerns in their novels and understand legacy as the genetic mechanism that passes, from one generation to the other, physical, psychic, and moral pathologies. This understanding of the genetic legacy differs from Latin American novels such as Matto's *Herencia*, which literally means legacy, presents a different understanding of the term, as it is mainly the transmission of behavioral traits in

a matrilineal system. The moral tendencies of the mothers are transmitted to the offspring mainly by their examples and educational practices. In this view, women have a central role in the way they can change the destiny of their nation/family through their virtuosity and maternal abnegation. In *Herencia*, the Aguilera family is the best example of the degeneration in noble families in Peru. In the novel *Camila*, the daughter of Doña Nieves, cannot escape maternal legacies and is portrayed as an excessive young woman driven by sexual desire. The maternal example, the *herencia*, that she has received as marked her for the rest of her life. Indeed, she is seduced and manipulated by Aquilino Merlo, an Italian immigrant, who gets her pregnant to marry her and improve his social status. The definition of legacy in this novel is different from the one previously analyzed as it has a behavioral and moral connotation. As demonstrated for the Italian case, in Verga's short story, in the novel scientific discourse on race and popular culture in the form of idioms intersect to show a peculiar aspect of legacy.

The only way to revert the social degeneration affecting Peruvian society is through mixed race unions. However, Matto de Turner is very selective in this regard, and proposes as a regenerative force only unions that promote the inclusion of the indigenous population, over black people (see *Espiritu*) and Italian immigrants (Aquilino). Therefore, the Aguilera family is destined to a dead end as *Camila*, the daughter of an excessive lustful woman, marries an Italian immigrant. While the union of Ernesto Casa Alta with Margherita (a woman of indigenous descent) represents the only solution to the physical and moral degradation of the Peruvian society. However, Matto's

understanding of legacy strongly differs from de Roberto's and Galdós's novels, as it will be showed in the following section.

5.1 The Decadence of an Old Race

In "Family Narratives," April Trees, Jody Koenig Kellas, and Myra Roche analyze the theme of the construction of 'family stories,' narratives about the familiar diseases that run into a family created by the patients as a strategy used by health-care practitioners "to make sense of a genetic diagnosis, construct an identity and communicate this to others" (68). They underline the importance of narrative as crucial in making sense of life experiences, especially in the context of the provision of genetic information to the practitioner (Trees et al. 68). The narrative process in this context is constituted by three components: "1. The family history, 2. Making sense of the diagnosis, and 3. Coping with the implications of a genetic diagnosis" (Trees et al. 69). Surprisingly, this narrative process, elaborated through the intersection of narratology and biology/genetics, is at the center of many nineteenth century novels. For instance, Benito Pérez Galdós's *Lo prohibido* (1884-85) and Federico De Roberto's *I viceré* (1894) focus on the pathological and the degenerative processes of the human subject by analyzing the transmission of physical and psychic illnesses from one generation to the other. As outlined by Trees, Kellas and Roche, the plot of these novels can be summarized around the three nuclei of the narrative process. First, they open by giving an overview of the family history. Second, they elaborate and make sense of the diagnosis. Third, they cope with the implications of it. By using medical discourse, they represent examples of naturalist trends.

However, critics of these novels often argue that their stylistic devices betray the naturalist premise of objective narration.³ On the one hand, in *Lo prohibido*, Galdós provides a first-person narration based on José Maria Bueno de Guzmán's memoirs. A detailed discussion of the novel's unreliable first-person narrator in *Lo prohibido* has been undertaken by Arthur Terry (a study complemented by Linda Willen's analysis of the novel's narrative premise and how the first-person narration is mediated in the last part of the novel by Jose Ido del Sagrario and by an anonymous editor). On the other, *I viceré* is mainly written in free indirect speech which foregrounds the individuality of each character – a strategy that, as Vittorio Spinazzola and Margherita Ganeri have argued, undermines all expectations of naturalist objectivity. Both novels, moreover, parody different styles of writing - telegraphic style, heraldic prose, elegy, lyrics, journalistic article, agricultural and economy treaty, romantic novel, political speech, medical and scientific treaties etc.- and in so doing reveal the construction and artificiality of language as a whole. Through these stylistic devices, Galdós and de Roberto certainly distantiate themselves from French naturalism, revealing the subjective

³ *Lo prohibido*, narrates the last four years of José Maria Bueno de Guzmán's life where he sells his sherry company in Andalusia, moves to Madrid, and tries to seduce his three married cousins, Maria Juana, Eloisa, and Camila. He gets involved with Eloisa, first, and Maria Juana, later, but he is ultimately obsessed with Camila, and suffers from a stroke when she refuses him. This event leads to his semi-paralysis and eventual death.

De Roberto's *I Vicere* takes place primarily in Catania, Sicily, between May 1855 and October 1882. The story follows the members of the Uzeda di Francalanza family, descendents of Spanish viceroys, the representatives of the Bourbon crown in Sicily. The novel presents the decadence prevalent in the family and regional nobility during the unification of Italy through the death of the old matriarch, the princess Teresa, and the political rise of Consalvo, her grandchild and heir to the family title.

mechanisms that intervene in the creation of a work of art, and anticipating trends that were developed later on by modernism.

I read these two novels through an intersectional approach where ‘degener(N)ation’—both in its biological and national iterations—dismantles and critiques the rigid hierarchy between race and family, class and gender. Both Galdós and de Roberto problematize the notion of blood purity through the use of medical discourse. They condemn the pervasive and intransigent elitism of the families and propose unions across classes as an alternative solution for the regeneration of an exhausted race. This analysis is informed by Jobst Welge and his seminal study of what he calls “genealogical novels” (1) and takes for granted the problem of nationhood in Italy and Spain as two countries that are considered peripheral in the context of European modernity. The strong regional identities that proliferate inside of the national borders of these two countries problematize the usage of the metaphor of the family as the allegory of the national enclave. The examples that we get from these two novels are those of dysfunctional families made up of pathological and degenerate individuals who pursue their own interests and do not collaborate for the wellbeing of the family, and, thus, the nation. The portrayal of these family members echoes the medical and racial discourses of their time, and through this characterization, Galdós and de Roberto come closest to emulating the novels of *Émile Zola*.

However, while *Zola’s* discourse was based on the biological-hereditary connection received from Bernard and Taine, in the case of Galdós and de Roberto they incorporated local racial theories received by Cesare Lombroso and Rafael Salillas. Their

understanding of race was related to a problematization of an ethnic uniformity inside of national borders. While Lombroso conceived these differences in terms of a racial hierarchy where the inhabitants of the south were inferior and belonged to a different racial group; Salillas considered that his co-nationals were the result of a genetic selection of the best characteristics inherited by the different ethnic groups that had inhabited Spain through the centuries. Both racial discourses promoted eugenic practices that were intended to encourage the growth of the most well suited to survive. In both novels, the writers emphasize the congenital transmission of unique physical characteristics and mental illness passed on from one generation to the next, and the need to promote new unions to regenerate the Uzeda and the Bueno del Guzmán families.

The decadence and degradation of these families is linked to the preservation of power through inbreeding. The reconstruction of the family history in *I viceré*, is conceived through lengthy descriptive portraits of its members that give visual prominence to the abnormal physical characteristics of the Uzeda family:

I due fratelli, quantunque avessero la stess'aria di famiglia, non si rassomigliavano neppure fisicamente: Raimondo era bellissimo, Giacomo più che brutto. Nella Galleria dei ritratti si potevano riscontrare i due tipi. Tra i progenitori più lontani c'era quella mescolanza di forza e di grazia che formava la bellezza del contino; a poco a poco, col passare dei secoli, i lineamenti cominciavano ad alterarsi, i volti s'allungavano, i nasi sporgevano, il colorito diveniva più oscuro ... (de Roberto 89).⁴

⁴ “The two brothers, though having the same family air, did not even resemble each other physically; Raimondo was very handsome, Giacomo very ugly. The two types could be seen in the Portrait Gallery. More distant forebears had that mixture of strength and grace which gave the young count his charm. Gradually, as the centuries passed, features began to alter, faces lengthened, noses grew, skin darkened [...]” (Colquhoun 146).

The *aria di famiglia*, the family air that connects the two brothers to their ancestors surfaces through the opposite characteristics of these two *types* of extreme beauty and ugliness. With the passing of time, faces lengthened, noses grew and skin darkened. The Uzeda family, described at the very beginning of the story as a “Razza di matti” (12), a race of fools, becomes a case study to map moral decadence onto physical portraits of the latest representatives of the Spanish type in Sicily. In the Italian context, Lombroso used the term “type” to describe genetic and phrenologist characteristics associated with different races, and links criminality and intellectual inferiority to the race that inhabited the south of Italy. The term “type” as a metonym for race significantly appears in a letter that De Roberto sent to Di Giorgi in 1891, where he presents his novel in the following way: “La storia d'una gran famiglia, la quale deve essere composta di quattordici o quindici tipi, tra maschi e femmine, uno più forte e stravagante dell'altro. Il primo titolo era *Vecchia razza*: ciò ti dimostri l'intenzione ultima, che dovrebbe essere il decadimento fisico e morale d'una stirpe esausta” (Navarria 273 [1974]).⁵

Like in the case of Verga’s “Rosso Malpelo,” characters as *tipi*, are reduced to one intrinsic characteristic that fixes them physically and therefore, in a Lombrosian way, morally. Here, the reference to the family has to be read as coextensive with that of race, shifting from the sentimental tone of romance to a positivistic one: to the narrative of the

⁵ “The story of a great family, which must be composed of fourteen or fifteen types, including males and females, one stronger and more extravagant than the other. The first title was *Old Race*: this shows you the ultimate intention, which should be the physical and moral decay of an exhausted lineage.”

family romance produced by love, de Roberto substitutes descriptions of characters related only by blood ties, rather than by feelings. It is a shift, to say it with Lukacs, from narration to (static) descriptions that arrest the story, the unfolding of the new – a romanzo antistorico, as Spinazzola would have it. And this unproductivity of storia, in the double meaning of storytelling and history, hinges on the portraits of the Uzedas, an “old race,” says de Roberto, that has lost vitality to the point, as we will see, of remaining unproductive and unable to procreate. Thus, old becomes coextensive with the pathological.

On this line, Welsh emphasizes that “the term “race” (razza) is more frequently used in referring to the Uzedas than “family,” which testifies to the fact that at the end of the nineteenth century the idea of the sick family was at the intersection of different scientific discourses, both sociological and biological” (55). However, I posit that if we consider that the Uzedas family represents an hyponym of the term family, and their positionality in the newborn Italian kingdom, the race of the Uzedas becomes a minoritarian and almost extinguished branch in the new enclave of the Italian family.

This is demonstrated in a passage from the novel in which the narrator uses the expression “vecchia razza” to describe the survival of the original essence of the Spanish race in Teresa, and Raimondo, the only two exceptions to the Uzedas’s biological degeneration:

La vecchia razza spagnuola mescolatasi nel corso dei secoli con gli elementi isolani mezzo greci, mezzo saracini, era venuta a poco a poco perdendo di purezza e di nobiltà corporea: chi avrebbe potuto distinguere, per esempio, don Blasco da un fratacchione uscito dai lavoratori della gleba, o donna Ferdinanda da una vecchia tessitrice? Ma come, nella generazione precedente, s’era vista

l'eccezione del conte Raimondo, così adesso anche Teresa pareva fosse venuta fuori da una vecchia cellula intatta del puro sangue castigliano (de Roberto 454).⁶

In this excerpt, the interracial unions of the old Spanish race with the Sicilian one, that was already the result of the fusion between Greek and Arab elements, is the cause of the physical decadence of the Uzeda. The local genes are considered inferior not only because they come out of lower races (i.e., the Greeks and the Saracens), but also in terms of class. Indeed, the physical appearance of both don Blasco and donna Ferdinanda is compared to the lowest exponents of the social ladder: a feudal serf and a weaver. In this sense, nobility, which is directly associated with purity of blood, is understood as a recessive gene that has very low probabilities of being transmitted. Thus, de Roberto is showing how in a historical moment such as the Unification of Italy, when the social hierarchy was changing, the nobility gene was no longer considered fundamental to hold power in the new nation. Indeed, even if Teresa is free from the hereditary physical defects, she is not exempt from the neurosis that grips the whole family.⁷

An understanding of neurosis as a family disease that is genetically transmitted also appears in *Lo prohibido*. As soon as José Maria, the protagonist and main narrator of the story, moves to Madrid he is afflicted by the “mal de familia” (Galdós 12) “the family

⁶ “The old Spanish race, mixed in the course of centuries with island stock part Greek, part Saracen, had gradually lost its purity and nobility of form. Who, for example, could have distinguished Don Blasco from any fat friar of peasant stock, or Donna Ferdinanda from any old spinning woman? But just as in the preceding generation there had been the exception of Count Raimondo, so now Teresa too seemed to have come from some old cell of pure Castilian blood left intact” (Colquhoun 646-47).

⁷ Teresa falls in love with her cousin Giovannino, but in order not to disappoint her parents, she marries Giovannino’s older brother. This event causes Gioavnnino’s suicide and her conversion to religious fanaticism.

disease” which is described as a psychotic disorder that is as invalidating as the herpes or hereditary phthisis. Rafael, José Maria’s uncle describes to him the effects of this family disease through the decades:

Todos padecemos en mayor o menor grado [...] los efectos de una imperfeccioncilla nerviosa, cuyo origen se pierde en la crónica oscura de los primeros Buenos de Guzmán de que tengo noticia. [...] Por esto, abundando tanto en nuestra familia las altas prendas de entendimiento y de carácter, ha habido en ella tantos hombres desgraciados. No han faltado en la raza tragedias lastimosas, ni enfermedades crónicas graves, ni los manicomios han carecido en sus listas del apellido que llevamos (Galdós 12-13).⁸

While the idea of a genetic transmission of a specific characteristic is stressed in this passage as in de Roberto’s one, here this feature is defined primarily in psychic terms as a ‘a nervous imperfection,’ ‘a craziness’ that has undermined the Buenos de Guzmán’s sanity. Similarly to *I vicerè*, Galdós presents a fluctuation of how these imperfections emerge in different individuals, as it can be either an invincible passion that has a great influence on their lives, or a more or less rare mania that passes almost unperceived. The usage of the term ‘race’ in this excerpt is once again connected with that of ‘family,’ as in *I viceré*. It refers to the transmission of chronic diseases and madness from one generation to the other as a “singularidad constitutiva que viene reproduciéndose de generación en generación, debilitándose al fin, pero sin extinguirse nunca.” (Galdós 12).⁹

⁸ “We all suffer, to some degree [...] from a slight nervous defect whose origin is lost in the dark chronicles of the first Buenos de Guzmán that I’m aware of. [...] That’s why, even though our family line has so many streaks of high intelligence and outstanding character, there have been so many unfortunate men in it. There has been no dearth of heartbreaking tragedies or serious chronic illnesses in our line, nor has our family name been absent from the rolls of insane asylums” (Rudder & Arjona 6).

⁹ “Constitutive singularity that has been reproduced from generation to generation, weakening in the end, but without ever becoming extinct.”

This “constitutive” singularity transmitted from one generation to the other weakens over time but never fully extinguishes. For this reason, José Maria is described as the last of a genealogy of *don Juans*, a tendency that has been passed down from his great grandfather to the male members of his family. José Maria and his father are described as follows:

Tu papaíto, hijo del del panteón, merece capítulo aparte. Fue el hombre más guapo de Andalucía. A él has salido tú, y llevas su retrato en la cara. Fue también el primer enamorado de su tiempo, y jamás puso defecto a ninguna mujer, porque le gustaban todas, y en todas encontraba algún *incitativo melindre*, que dijo el otro. Cuando se casó con la inglesa, tu madre, creímos que se corregiría, pero ¡quia! tu mamá pasó muchas amarguras. Demasiado lo sabes (Galdós 14).¹⁰

José Maria is described as a copy of his father both in physical and moral terms.

His father was the most beautiful man in Andalusia and he loved every woman for different reasons. The offspring of the rational north (Great Britain) and the irrational south (Spain), he should, at least theoretically, represent traits from both races. However, he is described as a facsimily of his father and in the moment that he sells his sherry company in Andalusia to move to Madrid, he completely repudiates his British heritage. In this way Galdos deterministically remarks on the importance of the environment in the development of José Maria’s personality. Finally, the idea that José Maria “lleva[s] un retrato de tu padre en la cara” brings back to the portrait painting as one of the best ways to assess the genetic transmission of specific somatic traits.¹¹ However, José Maria’s

¹⁰ “Your daddy, the son of the one who built the pantheon, deserves a chapter all to himself. He was the handsomest man in Andalusia. You’re just like him: his spit and image. He was also the greatest lover of his time. He never found fault with any woman, because he loved them all, and he had a certain incitement to love as someone once said. When he married that English woman, your mother, we thought he would straighten out. But, devil take it, your mother suffered a great deal! As you well know” (Rudder & Arjona 7).

¹¹ “You’re just like him: his spit and image” (Rudder & Arjona 7).

sterility presents another example of the degeneration of his race, and contrasts with the tendency of over-reproduction that his father and grandfather had.

A similar tendency to demonstrate the degeneration of the Bueno de Guzmán family is symbolized by Alejandrino, José María's godson, and Camila's first child, born sick at birth and dead soon after. In this episode the degeneration of the offspring is symbolized by the pustules and sores that cover the infant's body and lead to his death: "El niño de Camila, mi vecina, se puso tan malito, que daba dolor verle y oírle.

Cubriósele el cuerpo de pústulas. Todo él se hizo llaga lastimosa. ... y al sexto día Alejandrino fue atacado de horribles convulsiones, que le repitieron a menudo, hasta que el séptimo una más fuerte de las demás se lo llevo. .." (Galdós 306).¹²

Physical decay represented by illness is visually portrayed by the emergence of p[ost]ules and sores. The tendency to reification reaches its climax in the usage of the synecdoche. He not only becomes an ulcer, but is also identified through his basic material instincts: "Se fue de la vida sin conocer de ella nada más que el apetito y el dolor. Fue un glotón y un mártir. Se quedó yerto en el regazo de su madre, y nos costó trabajo apartar de los brazos y de la vista de ella aquel lastimoso cuerpecito, que parecía picoteado poravecillas de rapiña" (Galdós 307).¹³ The reduction of the human being to the basic

¹² "My neighbor Camila's child became so terribly ill that it was heartbreaking to look or even listen to him. His body was completely covered with pustules. He was nothing but a pitiful wound. [...] On the sixth day Alejandrino went into a horrible series of convulsions, and on the seventh day one stronger than all the others carried him off" (Rudder & Arjona 168).

¹³ "He left life, knowing nothing more about it than hunger and pain. He was a glutton and a martyr. He fell still in the lap of his mother, and it took an effort for us to pry her arms and eyes from that pitiful little body that looked as though it had been pecked by tiny birds of prey" (Rudder & Arjona 169).

instincts of hunger and the feeling of pain promotes a material interpretation of life.

Moreover, the image of the body carved by birds provides a grotesque representation of the illness that contrasts with the pathetic tone conveyed by “lastimoso cuerpecito.”

Similarly, the degeneration that afflicts the Uzedas is represented through another ‘child’ who dies immediately after ‘its’ birth. However, in *I viceré*, De Roberto pushes this narrative device to its limit as Chiara gives birth to a monster: “A un tratto le levatrici impallidirono, vedendo disperse le speranze di ricchi regali: dall’alo sanguinoso veniva fuori un pezzo di carne informe, una cosa innominabile, un pesce col becco, un uccello spiumato; quel mostro senza sesso aveva un occhio solo, tre specie di zampe, ed era ancora vivo” (de Roberto 258).¹⁴ In this episode, the reader participates in the climax of animalization and reification all together. The degeneration of the race culminates in the horrific fetus that Chiara has born. A creature that cannot be defined (*innominabile*), a mixture between a fish and a bird, a fish with a beak or a bird without feathers, which has only an eye and three paws. Moreover, the limit of degeneration is a procreational dead end: the line ends here.

In the representation of these two deaths both Galdos and de Roberto are basing the description of the two infants on medical treaties and scientific essays of their time. In the case of Galdos, who was a close friend of the pediatrician Manuel Tolosa Latour, Alejandrino’s death conveys the complications of a case of neonatal pustulosis, a disease

¹⁴ “Suddenly the midwife went pale, seeing her hopes of rich tips vanish; from the bleeding womb came a piece of formless flesh, an unnamable thing, a beaked fish, a featherless bird; this sexless monster had one eye, three things like paws, and was still alive” (Colquhoun 378).

that led to infant death when not appropriately treated. De Roberto, on the other hand, was inspired by a real case reported in an article of the “Giornale di scienze, lettere ed arti per la Sicilia” (n.184-5) of a medical conference held on March 10, 1825. The author of the article, the abbot Salvatore Portal di Biancavilla, doctor of medicine from the Accademia di Scienze Naturali, documented the childbirth, accompanied by anatomical pictures, of “senza capo , senza collo , e senza braccia , ma nel rimanente sviluppato come un feto ordinario” (Portal 308) by the peasant Agata Alessi in Catania.¹⁵

Both deaths in the two novels reflect both a narrative impasse – the story of the two families comes to an end—and larger sociopolitical and historical processes. First off, the horrific childbirth in *I viceré* coincides with the first political elections after Italian unification. Thus, the fetus, which Chiara preserves in a glass jar, becomes a graphical representation of the Uzeda’s destiny in the new parliament that had been just elected. If the family is not able to adjust and follow the new conventions of the democratic process, it will become a monstrosity to preserve like Chiara’s fetus. On the other hand, Alejandrino’s death is placed at the end of the first volume of *Lo prohibido* thus anticipating and echoing José María’s death at the end of the second volume. Moreover, José María’s death coincides with the birth of Camila’s twins. In this sense, since José María was sterile and Alejandrino was his godson, the extinction of his branch of the Bueno de Guzmán, and the expansion of a new one represented by Camila’s

¹⁵ “[H]eadless, neckless, and armless, but in the remainder [of her body she was] developed like an ordinary fetus.”

offspring, metaphorize a renovation inside of the family. José María's legacy is based only on his fortune that he will leave to Camila's twins to subsidize their education. In this way, his death presents the extinction of a way of conceiving life based on forbidden incestuous desires which can be considered as an unnecessary life energy expenditure.

To sum up, the families in both novels function as a microcosm of the Italian and Spanish nation-states. Through the biological and mental degeneration of their family members, conveyed by the usage of medical discourse, they symbolize the end of a system based on the inheritance of privileges through the blood line. The decline of these families is metaphorically embedded in the impossibility to generate a healthy offspring. In the case of *Lo prohibido* José María's sterility and his godson's death stand for the extinction of the weakest branch of the Bueno de Guzmán family. Similarly, in *I viceré*, Chiara's impossibility to give an heir to her husband, and Zia Ferdinanda and Lucrezia's lack of maternal instincts, trace the annihilation of the Uzedas.

Their physical deformities and psychological illnesses reduce them to basic instincts provoked by sexual desire and economic drives. However, their inability to create a suitable offspring reduces them to a surplus that cannot be absorbed by the Spanish and Italian society, losing all their privileges and becoming mere excess. On a stylistic level, this excess finds its correlative in the multiplication of points of view. In Galdós, the first-person narration is filtered through the narrative point of view of José Ido del Sagrario—the scribe engaged by José María to write his memories when he is paralyzed—and that of the anonymous editor—that publishes the memoirs after José María's death. In de Roberto, we have a kaleidoscopic variety of points of views that

conflict with and negate each other. In both cases, the reader is alone in the reconstruction of the external events, and since everyone lies and has a natural inclination to hypocrisy, one never knows the truth. This dimension of falsity, this illusion of reality, can be extended to the world, of which the Uzedas' and the Bueno de Guzmán's family/race are a micro-cosmic representation of the different degrees of degeneration that humanity can achieve. Nor can the modern nation-state provide a narrative solution to the sterility and degeneration of the old race, if, to conclude with Consalvo's words, "Un tempo la potenza della nostra famiglia veniva dal Re; ora viene dal popolo... La differenza è più di nome che di fatto [...] il mutamento è più apparente che reale [...] La storia è una monotona ripetizione." (de Roberto 624-5) ¹⁶

¹⁶ "Once the power of our family came from kings; now it comes from the people. The difference is more in name than fact [...] And then the change is more apparent than actual. [...] History is monotonous repetition; men have been, are and will always be the same." (Colquhoun 881-82)

6. Epilogue: Civilization and Barbarism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

The nineteenth century was a key moment for the definition of national identities, and for the creation of what Benedict Anderson describes as “imagined communities.” However, in the specific cases of Spain, Peru, and Italy, these nation-building processes were challenged by the presence of “degenerate” groups of individuals that arrested the modernization of the country and also threatened their co-nationals with their poor moral conduct and pathological conditions. In fact, the emergence of disciplines such as phrenology, criminology, and alienism (the study and treatment of mental illnesses) were an attempt to control the reproduction of these individuals, at the same time that they studied the conditions that fostered their emergence. These new practices and discourses considered the nation a patient in need of treatment and promoted eugenic practices for the sake of a strong and healthy national enclave. These positivist and determinist methodologies spread from the sciences to the realm of art and influenced the emergence of naturalism in the second half of the 19th century, a genre that purported to present reality in objective terms. Novels written in this style played a key role in shaping national identities and creating genealogical accounts of their nations.

To date, the majority of the scholarship investigating the reception of naturalism and realism in these disparate geopolitical territories (Iermano, 1996, Pellini, 1998; González Herrán, 1989; Gnutzmann, 1998; Voysest, 1997) was produced in the 1990s and emphasize a partial “failure” on the part of Italian, Spanish, Peruvian and Argentine

authors in using these styles. While these comparative studies give a valuable account of the outreach of naturalism and its implications, they endorse a narrative that characterizes local productions as “failing” to master this literary trend. Due the importance of late-nineteenth century literature in producing national discourses that are also key nowadays (Anderson 2006), “South as a method” embraces these differences as productive heuristic tools and highlights the idiosyncrasies between French naturalism and its local receptions in Italy, Spain, Peru and Argentina. Focusing on why they differ instead of describing only the how is crucial to gain a better understanding of the emergence of the modern novel in these geopolitical locations.

Collectively the novels analyzed in this dissertation, with their stylistic preoccupation for objectivity and their desire to reproduce reality as it was, provide an entry point in the ways Italy, Spain, Peru, and Argentina, articulated an autonomous national discourse that did not mechanically reproduce a literary trend imported from France. By converting the south and its inhabitants into the subject of their narrative, authors such as Eugenio Cambaceres, Mercedes Cabello, Federico de Roberto, Clorinda Matto, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Benito Pérez Galdós and Giovanni Verga, propose a local understanding of international literary and sociological trends.

Interestingly, nineteenth-century literature and sociological texts were at the basis of the essays written in the 1930s by ‘eccentric’ Marxist theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, and José Carlos Mariátegui. This chapter creates a dialogue between these thinkers to create an alternative genealogy of the Global South. Their works have been influential in the development of this field of study. Indeed, even

if they never used that term, they created the basis for an epistemological shift from their geopolitical positions; and they pushed toward the creation of an independent and autonomous intellectual body able to analyze those specific social, political, and economic environments. Pushing back the emergence of South-to-South connections and Southern thoughts at the turn of the 20th century shows the limitations of area studies in current academia and reclaim southern centrality in epistemologies where the South is neither the object nor the subject. By shifting the locus of enunciation from the Global North to the Souths, “South as a Method” dispels the idea that the south is incapable of producing its own art and knowledge. This chapter examines the origin of the emergence of the south as a geopolitical object of study and points out how these thinkers converted it in a subject able to produce its own epistemological categories to revert hegemonic discourses of power. Relationality is key in establishing these discourses and that is exactly the reason why it should be the way to overcome the rigid and intransigent oppositions between north and south nowadays. The south becomes then a method and not an object of study.

6.1 Of Oaks and Shrubs: The South in the Early Thirties

Addressing the reader of his *Italia barbara contemporanea* (*Contemporary Barbarian Italy*), 1898, the Sicilian sociologist and criminologist Alfredo Niceforo wrote: “Se voi entrate in una foresta, notate accanto alle grandi e forti quercie che tendono le cime al cielo, tenui arbusti che, per mancanza di luce o di baci di rugiada, sono rimasti

piccoli, coi loro rami ancor tenerelli” (2 [1898]).¹ Through the prosopopoeia, and behind the allusion to the “shadowed forest” of the *Inferno* in the *Divina commedia* (*Divine Comedy*), Niceforo personifies the shrubs and oaks in order to pathologize the relationship between them. Just like the atrophy that a child with rickets experiences, so do the shrubs under the shadow of the oaks fail to grow. Already from these few lines, the reader could glean that the narrator’s reference to the ‘shadowed forest’ was not in this case a metaphor for a personal midlife crisis, but rather alluded to a crisis of national proportions:

Essi vegetano nell’ombra, e cercano invano il sole; essi vedono sol da lunge, tra gli intrecci dei rami, che fanno loro denso riparo, un angolo di cielo, e non possono manifestare con un rigoglio di verde e di fiori, quella vita potente che il sole e la linfa concedono alle grandi quercie, ma che le tenebre soffocano in essi. La nostra Italia non è dissimile da quella foresta (Niceforo 2-3 [1898]).²

If Italy is the forest — so went the syllogism of Niceforo’s metaphor — then the prosperous northern regions are the oaks nourished by progress and clad in leafy growth; the southern regions, by contrast, are the scraggy shrubs that live in the shadow of the oaks and cannot see the sunlight. The allusion to pathology in what seemed a botanical account, introduced Niceforo’s racial theory about the inferiority of southern Italians. Furthermore, the shrubs’ fragility and incapability to grow well resembled the wide-

¹ “If you go into a forest, you will notice, next to the great and strong oaks that stretch their tops to the sky, tenuous shrubs that, for lack of light or dew, have remained small, with branches still tender.”

² “They [the shrubs] vegetate in the shadows and search in vain for the sun; they can hardly see, from afar and with difficulty, among the tangles of branches that shelter them, a corner of the sky, and they cannot manifest with a luxuriance of green and flowers, that strong life that the sun and the sap grant to the great oaks, but that the darkness suffocates in them. Our Italy is not dissimilar from that forest.”

spread rickets, a disease that affected children of humble origins above all in the poorer southern regions and alluded to a paternalistic relationship in which the oaks were the adults, while the shrubs were the dependent youngsters. Niceforo, importantly, never suggested that the oaks, blocking sun and dew, were the very cause for the shrubs' inability to grow. He lingered instead over the equation discussed in the previous chapters: In his line of thinking, North equals civilization, whereas the South equals barbarism. So could Niceforo suggest that the shrubs ought to be eradicated in order to impede the parasitization of the oaks, and let the latter grow even stronger.

What strikes a contemporary reader of Niceforo — apart from the latter's quasi-racialization of northern and southern Italy — is the intentionality with which the Italian latitudinal divide is perceived already as a reflection of a more general, international phenomenon. Indeed, in his subsequent publication titled *Italiani del nord e italiani del sud* (*Northern Italians and Southern Italians*; 1901), Niceforo compared the Italian case with other national realities. We read, for example, “Il fatto di una nazione la quale abbia, come oggi l'Italia, nel suo stesso seno due società a tipo di civiltà ben diverse, l'una più civile, e l'altra meno,—è fenomeno che si riscontra spesso in non poche nazioni” (Niceforo 6 [1901]).³ Niceforo mentioned the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Spain, and the United States as examples of countries that shared the same “illness” of a

³ “The fact of a nation that has, like Italy today, in its own bosom two societies with very different types of civilization, one more civilized and the other less,—is a phenomenon that is often found in many nations.” The idea of two civilizations co-existing in the same country goes back to Franchetti, as explored in the second chapter of this dissertation.

“barbarian” South. This idea that Europe has been inhabited by two different complexes of civilizations was certainly not a new one. As Roberto Dainotto argued in *Europe (In Theory)* (2006), starting from Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of Laws* (1748), Europeans had defined themselves not only against an “Oriental” *Other* but also against the *Other* within European borders: the Southerners.⁴

Niceforo was not the only Italian writer to identify this dichotomy of North and South. In Italy, it had been a hot topic since the Unification (1861-1870), when the rise of the criminology school of Cesare Lombroso and Enrico Ferri ‘discovered,’ and experimented on, the inferior races of the South. Such alleged discoveries, legitimated with the imprimatur of the latest scientific paradigms, could not be easily refuted even by those who tried to oppose them. The historian Francesco Carabellese, for instance, published *Nord e sud attraverso i secoli* (*North and South across the Centuries*) in 1905 with the specific intention of opposing Lombroso’s racialization of the south, which he understandably found problematic and outright discriminatory. In his analysis, history, rather than genetics, would explain the divide of north and south, and this origin went back to the times of the Roman Empire. That said, however, Carabellese could not but confirm Lombroso’s theory of a trans-historical gap between north and south, nor could

⁴ The innovation to this paradigm brought about turn-of-the-twentieth-century social sciences was that Niceforo’s dichotomy was extended to the whole world, and that the modern North and the barbarian South were more explicitly racialized on the basis of a genetic science that was barely in its infancy in Niceforo’s Italy.

he refute Niceforo's finding that southern barbarism was a phenomenon of international magnitude. In a rhetorical question he asked to his readers

O la medesima condizione antitetica di cose non si riscontra quasi dappertutto, non solo nelle nazioni single, come ad es. tra la Francia del Nord e quella del Sud, ma ancora nei continenti interi, come ben di vede oggi dell'Europa settentrionale rispetto alla meridionale, o dell'America del Nord su quella del Sud, sebbene da una età storica all'altra un tale predominio è venuto ad invertirsi? (Carabellese vi-vii).⁵

For Carabellese, the North-South divide was a condition that was extended to entire continents and that from a historical point of view could evolve according to the cultural and economic conditions of the single nations in a specific historical period. It seems then that by the turn of the twentieth century the old paradigmatic opposition between East and West was being supplemented, long before the Bandung Conference in the 1950s and the Nonaligned Movement of the 1960s, by the idea of some Global South of sorts.⁶

As mentioned above, the discussion of a barbarian south, in fact, was not an exclusively Italian matter: it crossed the Atlantic and was at the core of the national debate in post-independence Argentina. Already in the nineteenth century, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888) discussed southern barbarism in *Facundo o civilización y barbarie en las pampas argentinas* (*Facundo or Civilization and Barbarism in the*

⁵ “Or can't one the same antithetical condition find almost everywhere, not only in individual nations, for example between Northern and Southern France, but also in entire continents, as we can see today in Northern Europe compared to Southern Europe, or in North America over South America, although from one historical age to another such dominance has come to be reversed?”

⁶ See Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena, and Patricia O. Daley. *Routledge Handbook of South-South Relations*. London: Routledge, 2018; and Mahler, Anne Garland. “Global South.” *Oxford Bibliographies in Literary and Critical Theory*, ed. Eugene O'Brien, 2017.

Argentine Pampas; 1845) in the same vein as Niceforo's *Italia Barbara contemporanea*.

In Sarmiento's view, Argentina too was peopled by two distinct races, the civilized Europeans inhabiting Buenos Aires, and the indigenous savages and gauchos living in the Pampas:

La ciudad es el centro de la civilización argentina, española, europea; allí están los talleres de las artes, las tiendas del comercio, las escuelas y colegios, los juzgados, todo lo que caracteriza, en fin, a los pueblos cultos.

[...] Saliendo del recinto de la ciudad, todo cambia aspecto: el hombre de campo lleva otro traje, que llamaré americano, por ser común a todos los pueblos; sus hábitos de vida son diversos; sus necesidades, peculiares y limitadas; parecen dos sociedades distintas, dos pueblos extraños uno de otro (57-58).⁷

Sarmiento opposed European civilization to the American one, considering the latter as based on impulses and instincts rather than on rational thought. Symptomatic of these differences were countrymen's clothing and lifestyle, which looked like those of other 'lesser races,' such as Arabs, Asians, and Cossacks: "la vida primitive de los pueblos, la vida eminentemente bárbara y estacionaria, la vida de Abraham, que es el beduino de hoy, asoma en los campos argentinos, aunque modificada por la civilización de un modo extraño" (Sarmiento 58-9).⁸ In Sarmiento's view, barbarism was coextensive with the primitive and nomadic life of the Arabic and the Pampas rural communities.

⁷ "The city is the center of the Argentine, Spanish, and European civilization; there are the workshops of the arts, the business activities, the schools and colleges, the courts, everything that characterizes, in short, the educated peoples. [...] Leaving the enclosure of the city everything changes its appearance: the country man wears another costume, which I will call American because it is common to all peoples; his habits of life are different, his needs are peculiar and limited: [the city and the country] look like two different societies, two peoples, strangers to each other."

⁸ "The primitive life of the people, the eminently barbarian and stationary life, the life of Abraham, who is the Bedouin of today, appears in the Argentinean countryside, although modified by civilization in a strange way."

This projection of orientalism onto the Argentinean context represented the internalization of racial colonial hierarchies by nineteenth-century white intellectuals in Latin America, whose effects perdured after the political independence from the Spanish Empire.⁹

It is difficult to overestimate the role that the Italian school of positivist criminology played in the establishment of the idea of the ‘south’ as the locus of a barbaric racial inferiority at the turn of the twentieth century. Phrenology and the measurements of craniums justified the epistemological subservience of the south to the north, and the transformation of the former to an agrarian colony of the north. By the 1930s, however, the nineteenth-century equation — North : civilization = South : barbarism — came to be refuted by scholars, writers, and poets from different parts of the Italian south and the South of the Americas. The Italian Antonio Gramsci, the Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui, and the Argentinian Ezequiel Martínez Estrada called for an epistemological shift from their geopolitical locations, taking into account a critique of the racialization of the South of the late Nineteenth century. In this sense, could we take the works of these scholars as part of a genealogy that culminates in contemporary theories of the Global South?¹⁰

⁹ However, what changed by the end of the century was the scientific discourse justifying the racial inferiority of one of the two complexes of civilization sketched out by Sarmiento, and to regulate European immigration to Argentina.

¹⁰ There are no comparative studies on these three authors together. Gramsci and Mariátegui have been compared only concerning Marxism theory (see: Dias Lopes, Túlio César. “Partido e revolução em Lenin, Gramsci e Mariátegui.” *World Tensions/Tensões Mundiais* 13.24. 2017; Fernández-Díaz, Osvaldo. “Gramsci y Mariátegui: frente a la ortodoxia.” *Nueva Sociedad* 115. 1991. 135-144; and Gordy, Katherine “Gramsci and Mariátegui: Breaking Down the Theory and

6.2 The Theorization of the South in the Early Thirties

Contemporary scholarship on what has come to be called the Global South has largely ignored what Gramsci, Mariátegui, and Martínez Estrada had written in the 1930s about the respective souths of their countries. The theorization of the Global South in the Anglophone academic community is a recent one, as it started with the Bandung Conference in 1955 and the Non-Aligned Movement of the 1960s', and it focuses on the present and most recent past, undervaluing the theoretical production of the early twentieth centuries, especially from the southern hemisphere. Moreover, the Global South's emphasis on economics and politics parallels the attention that was paid by positivists like Niceforo and Sarmiento to the poorness of the south. In this sense, scholars of the Global South ironically fall into the same paradox that they theorize in their work: they dismiss or do not take into account the theorization that was produced about the south by actual southern scholars. To disentangle Global South studies from this impasse, it is fundamental to redeem the production of the Italian and Latin American thinkers of the early twentieth century who made a case for, from, and on behalf of the south.

Experience Organizational Divide." *Western Political Science Association 2010 Annual Meeting Paper*, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1580810>) or their analysis of fascist regimes (See: Calil, Gilberto. "José Carlos Mariátegui e Antonio Gramsci: a interpretação do processo de ascensão do fascismo (1921-1922)." *História: revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto* 10.1. 2020; Galastri, Leandro. "Mariátegui, Gramsci e as afinidades eletivas de dois pensamentos 'für ewig.'" *Ammentu: Bollettino Storico e Archivistico del Mediterraneo e delle Americhe* 2. 2020. 52-68).

In this sense, to reclaim southern centrality in epistemologies in which the south is the subject of inquiry rather than the object, should help us not to reduce the south to a mere antithesis of the north, and to recognize instead its epistemic independence. A careful reading of Gramsci's, Mariátegui's, and Martínez Estrada's inquiries into their respective Souths, helps us identify a different methodology in which the analysis of their respective realities starts from within their geopolitics of knowledge, one that is grounded in their biographic epistemic foundations. Starting from a critique of the positivistic school of the nineteenth century that reduced the North-South divide to a racial difference, they called for a reconceptualization of their connationals' intellectual production in order to reform social and political life. It is no coincidence that their works were inspired by the economic and political crisis in Italy, Peru, and Argentina. As Walter Mignolo has already explained, Gramsci and Mariátegui "were facing 'similar' historical processes in 'different' historical trajectories" (200 [2012]). Similarly, Martínez Estrada, living through the political turmoil of the first decades of the twentieth century, criticized those intellectuals who advocated European civilization and solutions without analyzing the specific conditions and the real social problems of his country.

Returning to Niceforo's *prosopopeia* at the beginning of this chapter, what were the shrubs' broken branches for these thinkers, and how did they define the South in their writings? Perhaps the real question to consider is whether there were, indeed, shrubs, oaks, or broken branches for them. An initial response could be that the botanical metaphor would be appropriate only to describe their perception of the South as a rural reality, as evidenced in the texts that I would like to briefly take into consideration:

Mariátegui's *7 ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (*7 Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*), first published in 1928; Gramsci's "Alcuni temi della questione meridionale" ("Some Aspects of the Southern Question"—written in 1927, but published only in 1930 in *Lo Stato Operaio*); some notes from Gramsci's own *Quaderni del carcere* (*Prison Notebooks*); and Martínez Estrada's *Radiografía de la pampa* (*X-Ray of the Pampa*). In these works, the national crises of their respective geopolitical contexts are related to a new approach to the study of the North-South divide.

According to Gramsci, who wrote voluminously on this topic, the south was not an ontological reality; rather, it needed to be understood in relational terms. His analysis of the south started from the very basic meaning of a geographic spatial reference to extend to the broader meaning that it acquired through culture. For him, north and south, like east and west, were:

rapporti reali e tuttavia non esisterebbero senza l'uomo e senza lo sviluppo della civiltà. È evidente che Est e Ovest sono costruzioni arbitrarie, e convenzionali [(storiche)], poiché fuori dalla storia reale] ogni punto della terra è Est ed Ovest nello stesso tempo: costruzioni convenzionali e storiche non dell'uomo in generale, ma delle classi colte europee, che attraverso la loro egemonia mondiale le hanno fatto accettare a tutto il mondo (Gramsci 874 [2014]).¹¹

Gramsci firmly believed that the only way to understand east, and, thus, south was in relation to west, thus, north. In addition, society — i.e., 'man' — was crucial to such a

¹¹ "[R]eal relations and yet they would not exist without man and without the development of civilization. It is evident that East and West are arbitrary and conventional [(historical)] constructions, since [outside of real history] every spot on the earth is simultaneously East and West: they are conventional and historical constructions not created by man in general, but by educated European classes, which through their world hegemony have made them accepted by the whole world."

relationship. To qualify, the creation of these historical and ‘arbitrary conventions’ was the work of only some part of society — the elites of European intellectuals who played a hegemonic cultural role both in their own local realities, as well as over the colonies and semi-colonies. In short, the power of ‘arbitrary conventions’ resided in the power of hegemonic classes and hegemonic geopolitical positions that could impose them as objective, essential facts. As one may notice, in fact, ‘arbitrary and conventional (historical) construction’ could be the very same definition of language itself.¹² Indeed, he claims that “il valore puramente storico di tali riferimenti appare dal fatto che oggi le parole Oriente e Occidente hanno acquistato un significato extra cardinale e indicano anche rapport fra complessi di civiltà” (Gramsci 874 [2014]).¹³ The very reference to east and west as concepts (‘words’ for Gramsci) with extra cardinal meaning established by a historical civilization points out both to their conventionality and to its linguistic naturalization. This is particularly important considering that, in Gramsci’s view, language is an ‘integral view of the world’: as such, it determines social beliefs, value systems and behaviors (Gramsci 644 [2014]). In summary, for Gramsci “questi riferimenti sono reali, corrispondono a fatti reali, permettono di viaggiare per terra e per mare e di giungere proprio dove si era stabilito di giungere, di prevedere il futuro, di ‘oggettivare la realtà’, di comprendere la ‘oggettività reale del mondo esterno’. Razionale

¹² The usage of the word “arbitrary” is significant as it refers to Ferdinand de Saussure’s semiotics. When Gramsci lived in Moscow in 1922-1923, there was a great debate on Saussure’s *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) that arrived in Saint Petersburg in 1923 (Rigotti, 429).

¹³ “[T]he purely historical value of these references appears from the fact that today the words East and West have acquired an extra-cardinal meaning and also indicate the relations between complexes of civilizations.”

e reale si identificano” (874 [2014]).¹⁴ By rejecting the ontological status that the positive schools of the late nineteenth century had conferred to the south, Gramsci acknowledged the power of culture in attributing a value system to what were mere spatial references. Only in culture, did facts become meanings. The rationalization of spatial reality in relation to the arbitrariness of the original cardinal meaning allowed Gramsci to relativize the negative connotation that had been attributed to the south for centuries. In this view geography became a cultural construction and not a mere objective reality.

Similar preoccupations moved Mariátegui's reflections, who also paid close attention to space as an essential analytical category that allowed him to challenge contemporary conceptions on Peruvian rural areas. As he argued in the essay on “Regionalismo y centralismo” (“Regionalism and Centralism”), while Peru did not have historical political regions, the country could be divided into different geographical areas – the coast, the sierra and the mountains – which reflected geopolitical and social realities.

La montaña, sociológica y económicamente, carece aún de significación. Puede decirse que la montaña, o mejor dicho la floresta, es un dominio colonial del estado peruano. Pero la costa y la sierra, en tanto, son efectivamente las dos regiones en que se distingue y separa, como el territorio, la población. La sierra es indígena; la costa es española o mestiza (como se prefiere clasificarla, ya que las palabras “indígena” y “española” adquieren en este caso una acepción muy amplia) (Mariátegui 170).¹⁵

¹⁴ “[T]hese references are, in fact, real; they yield to real facts; they allow one to travel by land and sea and to arrive at a predetermined destination, to foresee the future, to ‘objectivize reality,’ to understand the ‘real objectivity of the external world.’ Rational and real identify with each other.”

¹⁵ “The mountain, sociologically and economically, still lacks significance [for the State]. It can be said that the mountain, or rather the forest, is a colonial domain of the Peruvian State. But the coast and the mountains, meanwhile, are indeed the two regions in which the population is

Here, the Peruvian geographical structure becomes synonymic of cultural differences between the sierra and the coast. The power differential between these two areas represented for Mariátegui the long-lasting effects of colonial legacies. Significantly, the Sierra lies in the South of Peru, thus the categories of ‘Spanish’ and ‘indigenous people’ acquire a broader connotation similar to Gramsci’s ‘complexes of civilizations.’ In this light, the opposition between the sierra and the coast engenders other relations of power, such as the opposition between town and the country, liberalism and *gamonalismo*, indigeneity and colonialism (or *coloniaje* as he calls it).

The dichotomy between town and country is central to Martínez Estrada’s essay as well. It is another metaphor of the relationship between ‘complexes of civilization’ in which one part is considered more civilized than another. Consequently, it becomes the key to understand not only colonial relations but also the colonality of power¹⁶ and of being.¹⁷ With *La radiografía de la pampa* Martínez Estrada responds to the long-lasting backlash Sarmiento’s *Civilización y barbarie* had on Argentine intellectuals and politicians in the 1930s, promoting a European legacy of development that created a gap

distinguished and separated, like the territory. The sierra is indigenous; the coast is Spanish or mestizo (as you prefer to call it, since the words “indigenous” and “Spanish” have a vast meaning in this case).”

¹⁶ Colonality of power is the “interrelation among modern forms of exploitation and domination (power)” (Maldonado Torres, 242). It refers to the leftovers of the colonial period, and it is still present in the relationship between previous colonies and colonizers after the political independence.

¹⁷ A definition of “colonality of being” was given by Nelson Maldonado Torres, who claims that it refers to the lived experience of colonization and its influence on the language, indeed: “colonial relations of power left profound marked not only in the areas of authority, sexuality, knowledge, and the economy but on the general understanding of being as well” (242).

between a developed, civilized and European Buenos Aires on one side of the spectrum, and a barbarian, uneducated gauchesque Pampa on the other. Martínez Estrada reacts to Sarmiento's dichotomy and reverses it. He argues,

[...] civilización y barbarie eran una misma cosa, como fuerzas centrífugas y centrípetas de un sistema en equilibrio. No vio que la ciudad era como el campo y que dentro de los cuerpos nuevos reencarnaban las almas de los muertos. Esa barbarie vencida, todos aquellos vicios y fallas de estructuración y de contenido, habían tomado el aspecto de la verdad, de la prosperidad, de los adelantos mecánicos y culturales (256).¹⁸

For Martínez Estrada, the dichotomic relation between the discrete categories of town and countryside, metropolis and colony, is muddled in Buenos Aires, a city where the contradictions of the European civilization and Pampa's barbarism coincide and are reversed. In the Argentinian capital there is no positive and negative pole between a civilized city and a barbarian countryside, but only a shared traumatic experience, where colonization permeates every aspect of national life. Since Spanish colonization, the Pampa was considered property: Spanish settlers came not to populate the desert, but to possess it. These same characteristics define the modern immigrant to Argentina, drawn by the possibility of easy social advancement through the possession of a piece of land, a piece of Pampa, facing the desert. The Pampa, just like Argentina in its entirety is "una ilusión" (7).¹⁹ Buenos Aires, the country's capital, becomes a fantasy that is defined as an

¹⁸ "[...] civilization and barbarism were the same thing, as centrifugal and centripetal forces of a system in equilibrium. Sarmiento did not see that the city was like the countryside and that inside the new bodies incarnated the souls of the dead. That defeated barbarism, all those vices, and failures of structuring and content had taken on the aspect of truth, of prosperity, of mechanical and cultural advances."

¹⁹ "[A]n illusion."

“maravillosa aspiración llena de grietas” (149) in which “azar-temor-ficción son los tres términos de casi todas las ecuaciones” (193).²⁰ Buenos Aires, as well as Argentina and the south, became “Trapalanda,” a colonial myth referring to a town in the south cone whose king wore gold dust on his body.

Colonial relationships defined, thus, the North-South dichotomy and justified the subservience of the latter both in the Peruvian and in the Argentinean contexts. Gramsci analyzed colonial legacies related to nation-building practices too. In his analysis, the opposition between country and town doubled into that of north and south in Italy:

La ‘misera’ del Mezzogiorno era ‘inspiegabile’ storicamente per le masse popolari del Nord; esse non capivano che l’unità non era avvenuta su una base di uguaglianza, ma come egemonia del Nord sul Mezzogiorno nel rapporto territoriale di città-campagna, cioè che il Nord concretamente era una ‘piovra’ che si arricchiva alle spese del Sud e che il [suo]incremento economico -industriale era in rapporto diretto con l’impoverimento dell’economia e dell’agricoltura meridionale. (Gramsci 2021-2 [2014]).²¹

Gramsci considered the dichotomy between the north and the south as analogous to the opposition between the city and the countryside. According to him, Italy’s formation into a nation-state was analogous to other countries where colonial situations were at play. For him, Italy was not born out of a unification, rather than from a colonization of the South by the North, that after 1861, controlled both politics and the

²⁰ “[W]onderful aspiration full of cracks;” “[f]ate-fear-fiction are the three terms of almost all the equations.”

²¹ “The ‘misery’ of the *Mezzogiorno* was ‘inexplicable’ historically to the popular masses of the North; they did not understand that the unification had occurred not on a basis of equality, but as the hegemony of the North over the *Mezzogiorno* in the territorial relationship of town-country, that is, that the North concretely was an ‘octopus’ that enriched itself at the expense of the South and that [its]economic-industrial increase was in direct relation to the impoverishment of the Southern economy and agriculture.”

economy, creating an environment of ‘internal colonialism.’ In other words, the North-South division was a result of the way in which politicians and sociologists had treated people from the South from the Unification onwards:

Il popolano dell’Alta Italia invece che se il Mezzogiorno non progrediva dopo essere stato liberato dalle pastoie che allo sviluppo moderno opponeva il regime borbonico, ciò significava che le cause della miseria non erano esterne, da ricercarsi nelle condizioni economico-politiche obiettive, ma interne, innate nella popolazione meridionale, tanto più che era radicata la persuasione che della grande ricchezza naturale del terreno: non rimaneva che una spiegazione, l’incapacità organica degli uomini, la loro barbarie, la loro inferiorità biologica (Gramsci 2022 [2014]).²²

Just like Martínez Estrada, Gramsci dismissed the discussion of the Italian south’s barbarism and racial inferiority in order to reveal its subordinate (‘subaltern’) position as a direct consequence of the ‘objective economic and political conditions,’ which led to a sharpening economic gap between the two regions after the Unification. In other words, the north exploited the resources of the south for its own economic development. As a result, the south was reduced to a “mercato di vendita semicoloniale” (Gramsci 2038 [2014]).²³ As such, Italy served as a case study for understanding colonial relationships, both internationally, since it had been both colonized by and subject to external forces; and domestically, since it was but a domination of the north over the ‘biological inferiority’ of the south.

²² “The people of Upper Italy thought instead that if the South did not progress after being freed from the constraints that the Bourbon regime opposed to modern development, this meant that the causes of poverty were not external, to be sought in the objective economic and political conditions, but internal, innate in the southern population, mainly since it was rooted the persuasion of the great natural wealth of the land: there was only one explanation, the organic inability of men, their barbarism, their biological inferiority.”

²³ “[S]emi-colonial market.”

This racial discourse that the north projected onto southern Italy was eerily similar to the colonial racism practiced in British and French colonies, which not only subordinated but also criminalized its colonial subjects. Gramsci rejected the common perception that the north was ‘supporting’ the south; in fact, he argued that the wealth generated in the south, by rich landowners and feudal landlords who exploited agricultural labor, was diverted to the north through an allegedly ‘scientific’ positivistic assumption of its superior ability to manage economy and produce commodities:

Queste opinion già diffuse (il lazzaronismo napoletano era una leggenda di vecchia data) furono consolidate e addirittura teorizzate dai sociologi del positivismo (Niceforo, Sergi, Ferri, Orano, ecc.) assumendo forza di ‘verità scientifica’ in un tempo di superstizione scientifica. Si ebbe così una polemica Nord-Sud sulle razze e sulla superiorità e inferiorità del Nord e del Sud (cfr. i libri di N. Colajanni in difesa del Mezzogiorno da questo punto di vista, e la collezione della ‘Rivista popolare’). Intanto rimase nel Nord la credenza che il Sud fosse una ‘palla di piombo’ per l’Italia, la persuasione che più grandi progressi la civiltà industriale moderna dell’Alta Italia avrebbe fatto senza questa ‘palla di piombo’, ecc. (Gramsci 2022 [2014]).²⁴

For Gramsci, in short, the rhetoric of southern “shrubs” and northern “oaks” promoted by the school of criminology—Cesare Lombroso, Enrico Ferri, Giuseppe Sergi, Alfredo Niceforo, and Paolo Orano—only ‘naturalized’ the hegemony of the north and

²⁴ “These opinions, already widespread (the Neapolitan *lazzaronismo* was an old legend) were consolidated and even theorized by the sociologists of positivism (Niceforo, Sergi, Ferri, Orano, etc..) assuming the force of ‘scientific truth’ in a time of superstition of science. There was thus a North-South controversy on race and on the superiority and inferiority of North and South.²⁴ In the meantime, there remained in the North the belief that *Mezzogiorno* was a ‘lead ball’ for Italy, the persuasion that the greater progress the modern industrial civilization of Upper Italy would have made without this ‘lead ball’, etc., the greater the progress the modern industrial civilization would have made without this ‘lead ball’.”

the subalternity of the south.²⁵ Through this interpretational schema, even rioting and brigandage were understood not as a rebellion to political and economic exploitation, but as the ‘natural’ propensity to crime that was supposed to be inherent to the southern race. Moreover, as Marcus Green points out, Gramsci disagreed not only with the methodology followed by the Lombrosian school but also with the fact that a lot of its practitioners considered themselves as socialists and Marxists (59).²⁶ Gramsci, instead, interpreted northern racism toward the south as a result of the north’s exploitation of southern material resources after Unification. He equated the south with the southern peasantry that was exploited by the local landlords who, through a partnership with the central government, were able to maintain their privileges while sustaining the material improvement of the North.

²⁵ Italian criminology school became popular not only in Europe but also in the Americas. In the United States, there are several mentions to Ferri’s, Sergi’s, and Niceforo’s studies on the inferiority of Southern Italians in the *Dictionary of Races and People* (1911), on pages 57; 81-82, to promote the immigration of Northern Italians, who were more prone to integrate in the American society, and discourage the entry of Sicilians, Calabrians, and Southern Italians, in general because of their proneness to crime. On this topic, see: D’Agostino, Peter. “Craniums, Criminals, and the ‘Cursed Race’: Italian Anthropology in American Racial Thought, 1861-1924.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 44, no. 2, Cambridge University Press, 2002. 319–43.

On the criminalization of the South of Italy based on its alleged racial inferiority, see: Gibson, Mary. “Biology or Environment? Race and Southern “Deviancy” in the Writings of Italian Criminologists, 1880–1920.” *Italy’s “Southern Question.”* Routledge, 2020. 99-115. While, on the spread of Lombroso’s theories and on his international reception in the social sciences, see: Nye, Robert A. “Heredity or Milieu: The Foundations of Modern European Criminological Theory.” *Isis* 67.3, 1976. 335-355.; and Villa, Renzo. “Lombroso and his School: From Anthropology to Medicine and Law.” *The Cesare Lombroso Handbook*. Routledge, 2013. 20-41.

²⁶ Orano was a socialist who became a fascist, and Mussolini appointed him in the 1930s to critically analyze the Jewish question that could intellectually and scientifically justify the racial laws (Green, 58).

6.3 Colonialism and the South

In the analysis of Gramsci, Mariátegui, and Martínez Estrada, the south could not be separated from its rural reality, and the people that inhabited it. The question became then to understand if the barbarism of the south was caused by southerners' biology or by different factors. In this sense, the problematization of late nineteenth century racialization of the south became a large part of their arguments. For example, Mariátegui opposed the end of the century philanthropist view of the indigenous problem and presented a new perspective to the issue. According to him, the indigenous problem was a socio-economic issue, rather than an educational one. In his essay on "El problema del indio" he stated: "TODAS LAS TESIS sobre el problema indígena, que ignoran o eluden a éste como problema económico-social, son otros tantos estériles ejercicios teóricos— y a veces solo verbales—, condenados a un absoluto descrédito" (26).²⁷ The rhetoric of the conservative class that eluded the indigenous problem on the basis of their lack of education and/or rational skills was opposed on the basis of an economic analysis. Philanthropist enterprises were dismissed as instances of a white savior complex, and not as real solution to the exploitation of the indigenous people. Thus, for Mariátegui,

La cuestión indígena arranca de nuestra economía. Tiene sus raíces en el régimen de propiedad de la tierra. Cualquier intento de resolverla con medidas de administración o policía, con métodos de enseñanza o con obras de vialidad,

²⁷ "The problem of the Indian;" "ALL THE THESESES on the indigenous problem, which ignore or avoid it as an economic and social problem, are as many sterile theoretical exercises – and sometimes only verbal, condemned to absolute disrepute."

constituye un trabajo superficial o adjetivo, mientras subsista la feudalidad de los ‘gamonales’ (Mariátegui 26).²⁸

The feudal system that existed then, which did not end with Peru’s independence in 1821, continued to exist a century later when the *Seven Essays* were written.

According to him, only the abolition of the feudal system, and the division of the lands could give to the indigenous people the material and economic independence they were lacking.

In this sense, according to Mariátegui the racial issue was secondary to the economical one because he clearly distinguished between socialism and Indigenism. On the contrary, other socialists like Luis Valcárcel, one of the fathers of *Indigenismo*, used ‘race’ as a means of defining socialist liberation.²⁹ He and other provincial intellectuals supported the indigenist movement as a rejection of colonial legacies. It was a significant shift in Peruvian politics because philanthropic enterprises of the late nineteenth century believed that the indigenous populations could not free themselves since they lacked intellect. Mariátegui doubted that this philanthropic spirit could aid the indigenous people

²⁸ “The indigenous question starts from our economy. It has its roots in the land ownership regime. Any attempt to resolve it with administrative or policy measures, with teaching methods or with road works constitutes superficial or adjective work, as long as the feudalism of the ‘gamonales’ subsists.”

²⁹ Valcárcel claimed that “the Indian problem will be solved by the Indian” (130), because “it is the strong race, rejuvenated by contact with the land, which claims its right to action” (20); finally: “the day that all consciences feel the pride born of this sublime mother - the Race - that awaits for long centuries the hour of its rehabilitation, the Indian problem will have disappeared” (111). According to Valcárcel only the appearance of leadership was missing to carry out the revolution: “the indigenous dictatorship looks for its Lenin” (125). Significantly, this Lenin was not to be found among the indigenous community.

through education, or that it would help them integrate into republican Peru. He attributed the indigenous question, as we have seen, mostly to economic and social factors, such as land expropriation and servitude. His writings made it clear that the ‘problem’ of the Indians should be solved by improving the living conditions of native peoples, ending gamonalism, and modifying the land ownership regime:

At this time, with the emergence of a new ideology that translates the interests and the aspirations of the masses – which gradually acquire class consciousness and class spirit – a current or a national tendency arises that feels solidarity with the fate of the Indian. For this tendency the solution of the problem of the Indian is the basis of a program of Peruvian renovation or reconstruction. The problem of the Indian ceases to be, as in the time of the dialogue between liberals and conservatives, an adjective or secondary issue. It came to represent the capital theme (165). In this sense, the dialogue between the old liberal generation and the new indigenist one made clear how the Indian problem was the key to solving not local or tribal, but national problems. The solidarity promoted by Mariátegui changed the paradigm of pity into one of empathy. It destabilized normal conventions based on the alliances of the wealthiest to keep the colonial status-quo, and fostered a democratic division of the land to the people that were working as slaves on it. Nevertheless, Mariátegui argued, the solution to the Indian problem was not easy: “El Perú tiene que optar por el gamonal o por el indio. Este es su dilemma. No existe un tercer camino. Planteado este dilema, todas las cuestiones de arquitectura del régimen pasan a segundo término. Lo que les importa primordialmente a

los hombres nuevos es que el Perú se pronuncie contra el gamonal, por el indio” (179).³⁰

Therefore, the advent of the new Indigenist movement was a positive development because it brought the Indian problem at the forefront of the political scene as a national issue. The choice of the Indian over the *gamonales* represented a rejection of old and new colonialism in contemporary Peru, as most of the times latifundia were exploited by international companies.

As a result, Mariátegui attacked the politicians bartering Peru to the highest bidder. In essence, he advocated for an autonomous, independent mode of production capable of transcending the tyranny of the London or New York markets which subordinated the country. The masked and harmful forms of exploitation of backward capitalism which he saw as being perpetrated by large cotton and sugar-producing companies in the central coastal region utilized the feudal system to exploit the indigenous labor force. It was necessary to nationalize and emancipate the country’s economy, because “La clase terrateniente no ha logrado transformarse en una burguesía capitalista [...] Este sistema económico, ha mantenido en la agricultura, una organización semifeudal que constituye el más pesado lastre al desarrollo del país” (Mariátegui 21).³¹ Since feudalism was to blame for the misery not only of peasants and indigenous groups

³⁰ “Peru has to opt for the *gamonales* or the Indian. This is its dilemma. There is no third way. Once this dilemma has been posed, all the issues of the regime’s architecture take second place. What matters to them is that Peru should speak out against the *gamonales*, for the Indian.”

³¹ “The landowning class has not managed to transform itself into a capitalist bourgeoisie, leader of the national economy [...] This economic system has maintained in agriculture, a semi-feudal organization that constitutes the heaviest burden of the country’s development.”

in the interior of the country, but also of the coastal populations, as explained by de la Cuadra, Mariátegui wanted to deepen capitalist forms, not deplore them (135).

Similarly to Gramsci then, for Mariátegui the national problem originated in the lack of participation of the peasant class, i.e., the indigenous people, in the independence process (84). Since natives were marginalized during the revolution by creoles and Spaniards, an indigenous-inclusive revolution would be the only way to solve the Indian as well as the land problem:

[...]la liquidación de los residuos de feudalidad colonial se impone como una condición elemental del progreso, la reivindicación del indio, y por ende de su historia, nos viene insertada en el programa de una Revolución. Está, pues, esclarecido que de la civilización inkaica, más que lo que ha muerto nos preocupa lo que ha quedado. [...] Lo único casi que sobrevive del Tawantinsuyo es el indio. La civilización ha perecido; no ha perecido la raza. El material biológico del Tawantinsuyo se revela, después de cuatro siglos, indestructible, y, en parte, inmutable (Mariátegui 283).³²

Mariátegui advocated the recovery of what could be saved from Inca culture as the only way to resolve the national problem: since the agrarian communism of the Tawantinsuyo had perished because of the Spanish colonial system, what had survived was the Indian 'race' and people. Revaluation of native ways of life was motivated by the desire to recover their worldview that had been erased by the colonizing and civilizing project, not by a romantic anticapitalism (de la Cuadra 136). What Mariátegui preserved

³² “The liquidation of the residues of colonial feudalism is imposed as an elementary condition of progress, the vindication of the Indian, and therefore of their history, comes to us inserted in the program of a Revolution. It is, therefore, clear that of the Inca civilization, more than what has died, we are concerned with what is left of it [...] The only thing that almost survives of the Tawantinsuyo is the Indian. The civilization has perished; the race has not perished. The biological material of the Tawantinsuyo reveals itself, after four centuries, indestructible and, in part, immutable.”

from Inca agrarian communism was its social foundation and ethic of cooperation and solidarity rather than a development strategy based upon specific production and work processes. Similarly, he expressed disapproval for those who advocated a return to the productive forms employed by the Incas.

In a sense, then, the Southern Question in Italy and the Land Question in Peru can be considered along each other in similar terms, despite their different historical contexts. Both Mariátegui and Gramsci relate their respective ‘questions’ to the failure of independence, and, with it, the permanence of feudal latifundia in both southern Italy and Peru. Both independent states, in short, failed to form a true bourgeoisie. Neither the newborn Peruvian republic nor the Italian kingdom succeeded in solving the systemic problem associated with the latifundium in these different geopolitical spaces.

However, Mariátegui’s and Gramsci’s solutions differ. The only way to resolve the question according to Mariátegui was by giving the land to the indigenous people to allow them to gain their independence economically and politically. This course of action was not sufficient for Gramsci, who urged the southern peasants to ally with the northern workers. Already in *Some Notes on the Southern Question* he claimed that

Il proletariato distruggerà il blocco agrario meridionale nella misura in cui riuscirà, attraverso il suo Partito, ad organizzare in formazioni autonome e indipendenti, sempre più notevoli masse di contadini poveri; ma riuscirà in misura più o meno larga in tale al suo compito obbligatorio anche subordinatamente alla sua capacità di disgregare il blocco intellettuale che è l’armatura flessibile ma resistentissima del blocco agrario (Gramsci 24 [1935?]).³³

³³ “The proletariat [would] destroy the agrarian bloc in the South to the extent that it succeed[ed] through its Party, in organizing in autonomous and independent formations, more and more remarkable masses of poor peasants; but it [would] succeed to a greater or lesser extent in this

In the context of fascist hegemony in Italy, material independence was not a priority for Gramsci. He wanted to create a new political alliance based on an epistemological shift in Italy, changing the intellectuals of the agrarian bloc with those produced by the proletarian movement. One could argue that Mariátegui's proposal of the land division to the indigenous people is more radical than the Gramscian peasants-proletariat alliance in that he promoted the material independence of the indigenous community. On the contrary, Gramsci reproduced in a new Marxist form the nineteenth century intellectual subordination of the peasants.

On another note, Mariategui's more pragmatic solution was based on the recuperation of Inca's forms of work and social organization through "Inca Communism." The goal was to improve living conditions for the people of Peru and Latin America. As Miguel Mazzeo highlights, "[l]a reivindicación del pasado incaico y la idea de que 'los incas no violentaron nada', indirectamente proponen un cuestionamiento a las formas absurdas, antisociales y antieconómicas impuestas por el régimen colonial primero y luego por la modalidad específica del desarrollo capitalista (dependiente y neocolonial) en Perú" (308).³⁴ The revindication of Peruvian autonomy from the neocolonial market based on a return on autochthonous working practices constitutes a

compulsory task also subject to its ability to break up the intellectual bloc which [was] the flexible but very resistant armor of the agrarian bloc."

³⁴ "The vindication of the Inca past and of the idea that 'the Incas did not violate anything', indirectly proposes a questioning of the absurd, antisocial and antieconomic forms imposed first by the colonial regime and then by the specific modality of capitalist development (dependent and neocolonial) in Peru."

critique of the Eurocentric matrix of modernity and capitalism. In his prologue to his edition of *7 ensayos*, Anibal Quijano states that “Mariátegui alcanzó a percibir en la economía peruana de su tiempo, como un momento de subversión epistémica y teórica en el marco del propio ‘materialismo histórico’. Esa configuración específica, histórico-estructuralmente heterogénea, es el núcleo de lo que hoy se discute sobre la colonialidad del poder” (CXXIX).³⁵ The epistemic and theoretical subversion described by Quijano is central to the reevaluation of Mariátegui’s thought as a forerunner of a theory of the Global South. By delinking from Marxism *tout court*, both Mariátegui and Gramsci created their own individual perspective by taking into account the particularities of Italy and Peru.

Similarly, Martínez Estrada, starting from a study of a large corpus of sources, refused the theological vision of modernity, and focused on geo-politics to create a new system of understanding.³⁶ His work differs from European and Latin American sources, and constitutes a new and original “pieza orgánica de un cuadro de ecología cultural” or “etnología cultural” (quoted in Cvitanovic 331).³⁷ This could not be otherwise since the study examines Argentine society using a thorough examination of its environmental and historical background. Like Mariátegui, Martínez Estrada criticized politicians and

³⁵ “Mariátegui was able to perceive in the Peruvian economy of his time, as a moment of epistemic and theoretical subversion within the framework of ‘historical materialism’ itself. This specific configuration, historically and structurally heterogeneous, is the core of what is being discussed today about the coloniality of power.”

³⁶ Among his readings, there were essays from Spengler, Keyserling and Frank, Freud, Kafka, Dostoyevsky, Weil, and Thoreau that played a fundamental role in the elaboration of the structure of the work (Antonowicz, 320).

³⁷ “Organic piece of a picture of cultural ecology;” “cultural ethnology.”

intellectuals who wanted to develop Argentina along the lines of European capitalism, and called them “soñadores” (253).³⁸ Intellectuals and politicians perpetuated Trapalanda’s myth to maintain the illusion of progress and keep up with European heritage. Politicians and subjugated intellectuals perpetuated Trapalanda: “Frente a la política, el arte queda como una manifestación esporádica y subsidiaria, como un fenómeno restrictivamente porteño dentro del otro metropolitano” (Martínez Estrada 179).³⁹ Politicians, as well as writers, were similar to “el curandero, el brujo y la comadrona” (Martínez Estrada 178).⁴⁰ Culture and art were limited in the capital, creating a gap between Buenos Aires and the provinces and expressing a “fusión simbiótica de la política y la literatura, del alfabetismo y de las artes gráficas” (Martínez Estrada 179).⁴¹ As a result, in this ecosystem, the capital produced for the provinces, and there was no difference between politics and the arts or between propaganda and reading. In the country, people did not read and did not write, for

[el talento] fuera de la capital arrastra su existencia parasitaria de lo que aquí se produce, y emigra o sucumbe. Sin embargo, el talento no es oriundo de la metrópoli [...] la inmensa llanura es refractaria [...] y los artistas que fatídicamente nacen en ella, tienen implicado el trágico destino de ser una negación en diversas formas, de la llanura; de no aclimatarse ni acá ni allá (Martínez Estrada 179).⁴²

³⁸ “Dreamers.”

³⁹ “In the face of politics, art remains as a sporadic and subsidiary manifestation, as a restrictively *porteño* phenomenon within the metropolitan other.”

⁴⁰ “the healer, the sorcerer and the midwife.”

⁴¹ “Symbiotic fusion between politics and literature, literacy and graphic arts.”

⁴² “Outside the capital [the talent] drags its parasitic existence of what is produced here [in the capital], and it emigrates, or it succumbs. Nevertheless, the talent is not native of the metropolis, [...] the gigantic plain is refractory [...] and the artists who are born in it, have implied the tragic destiny of being a negation in diverse forms, of the plain; of not acclimatizing neither here nor there.”

Intellectuals and politicians like Sarmiento created a dependency of the province to the capital that emulated colonial relations, without noticing that they were still living in a colonial state mortgaging the land and the infrastructure to the United Kingdom and lately to the U.S. In promoting this coloniality of power and being, politics and culture become the same as civilization and barbarism for “ruler and pedagogue, artistic or scientific institution and authors enter into a coordinated action of reciprocal rights and duties” (179). Martínez Estrada emphasized the double dependency of the politician on artists and scientists, which in turn created a dependency on the European matrix of power.

6.4 Was there a Southern Race?

For Gramsci, Mariátegui, and Martínez Estrada, the creation of a new paradigm required a thorough critique of nineteenth-century social-scientist and positivist debates. Race still played a major role in their essays, but with a different connotation. They did not produce the same sort of analysis as Lombroso, Ferri, or Niceforo, nor did they approach the South in the same manner that Sarmiento or Carabellese did. Mariátegui believed that a true revolution could not happen in Peru unless the indigenous population was involved: they were the majority. In his essay on literature and on the indigenist trend in the arts, he claimed:

El indio no representa únicamente un tipo, un tema, un motivo, un personaje. Representa un pueblo, una raza, una tradición, un espíritu. No es posible, pues, valorarlo y considerarlo, desde puntos de vista exclusivamente literarios, como un color o un aspecto nacional, colocándolo en el mismo plano que otros elementos étnicos del Perú. A medida que se le estudia, se averigua que la corriente indigenista no depende de simples factores literarios sino de complejos factores

sociales y económicos. Lo que da derecho al indio a prevalecer en la visión del peruano de hoy es, sobre todo, el conflicto y el contraste entre su predominio demográfico y su servidumbre—no sólo inferioridad—social y económica (Mariátegui 281).⁴³

In the first part of this quote, Mariátegui set out to clarify that race was not a biological factor but a cultural one, ‘a tradition, a spirit.’ He criticized the role that literature had played in reducing the Indian to a picturesque element, rather than recognizing his economic exploitation. He also emphasized the injustice that four million of indigenous Peruvians out of a population of five million were living in servitude. However, despite the fact that Mariátegui rejected nineteenth-century theories based on biological determinism, scholars like Grijalava have argued that nonetheless he considered race as a fundamental element of his utopian political program (318).

The rejection of the positivist view of race was central for Gramsci as well. This concept appeared in several notes, both on national and international issues. In his writing, he never associated race with Southern Italians, and whenever he did so, it was because he was reporting on other people's views, such as in the case of Niceforo or Lombroso. Like Mariátegui, he saw race as primarily a social and economic construct: “Spesso i gruppi subalterni sono originariamente di altra razza (altra cultura e altra

⁴³ “The Indian does not represent only a type, a theme, a motif, a character. He represents a people, a race, a tradition, a spirit. It is not possible, then, to value and consider him, from exclusively literary points of view, as a color or a national aspect, placing him on the same level as other ethnic elements of Peru.

As it is studied, it is found out that the indigenist trend does not depend on simple literary factors but on literary factors, but rather complex social and economic factors. What gives the Indian the right to prevail in the vision of today's Peruvian is, above all, the conflict and contrast between their demographic predominance and their social and economic servitude – not only inferiority.”

religione) di quelli dominanti e spesso sono un miscuglio di razze diverse, come nel caso degli schiavi” (Gramsci 2286 [2014]).⁴⁴ Here, Gramsci is talking about slavery in Rome, but the association between subalterns and race is obvious and always connected to economy. Indeed, in another note on the philosophy of praxis, he states:

Si può dire che il fattore economico (intenso nel senso immediato e giudaico dell'economismo storico) non è che uno dei tanti modi con cui si presenta il più profondo processo storico (fattore di razza, religione ecc.) ma è questo più profondo processo che la filosofia della prassi vuole spiegare ed appunto perciò è una filosofia, una 'antropologia', e non un semplice canone di ricerca storica (Gramsci 1917 [2014]).⁴⁵

Here, 'anthropology' refers to the relevance of human subjectivity in his personal interpretation of the philosophy of praxis. Human beings are at the center of all the relations between the different economic factors that shaped the development of national and international entities.

According to Martínez Estrada, the racial question is examined through the psychological effects of the rape of indigenous women on the creole offspring who descend from them. According to Frantz Fanon, colonialism's trauma permeates all levels of social subjectivity. The Latin American modern subject, what has been called the *colonial subject*, is the outcome of its traumatic origin and includes the oppressed individuals in the context of the ongoing coloniality. Violence permeated the encounter

⁴⁴ “Often the subaltern groups are originally of a different race (other culture and other religion) than the dominant ones and are often a mixture of different races, as in the case of slaves.”

⁴⁵ “We can say that the economic factor (understood in the immediate and Judaic sense of historical economism) is but one of the many ways in which the deeper historical process (the factor of race, religion, etc.) presents itself. Still, it is this deeper process that the philosophy of praxis wants to explain. Precisely for this reason it is a philosophy, an 'anthropology,' and not a simple canon of historical research.”

between indigenous peoples and colonizers from the very beginning of the conquest. It is mostly in the form of rape that Martínez Estrada described this trauma perpetrated on indigenous women:

Las uniones casuales del invasor y la mujer sometida, dejaban una consecuencia irremediable en el mestizo, que llegada su hora se volvería contra el pasado y la sociedad; de ella brotarían las guerras civiles y las convulsiones políticas posteriores, con sus cabecillas mestizos o mestizados casi siempre. Pero también dejaban una sustancia inmortal y avergonzada, que en cada cópula perpetuaría la humillación de la hembra (Martínez Estrada 18).⁴⁶

Latin American society was negatively affected by the colonizers' unions with indigenous women outside of marriage in three ways: first, mestizos emerged, second, political instability prevailed, and third, machismo developed. According to Martínez Estrada, this complex is transmitted genetically from mothers to children, and is reflected in indigenous women's submission to white male colonizers, and is engraved in the mestizo culture born out of the power differential caused by the racist assumption of his inferiority that "[el mestizo a]cabó por convertir en una modalidad psicológica el recelo. Casi todas sus taras espirituales son cicatrices de su cuerpo" (Martínez Estrada 21).⁴⁷ This 'scars' can be interpreted as the "physical and/or psychological" effects caused by the colonization and are called by Mignolo "colonial wound" (8 [2005]).⁴⁸

⁴⁶ "The casual unions of the invader and the subdued woman left an irremediable consequence in the *mestizo*, that when the time came would turn against the past and society; from it would spring civil wars and later political convulsions, with their leaders almost always *mestizos* or *mestizados*. But they also left an immortal and ashamed substance, which in each copulation would perpetuate the humiliation of the female."

⁴⁷ "He [the mestizo] ended up turning suspicion into a psychological modality. Almost all of his spiritual defects are scars on his body."

⁴⁸ Based on an analysis of Franz Fanon *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Mignolo affirms that coloniality names:

6.5 What about Southern Shrubs and Northern Oaks?

Hence, in Gramsci's, Mariátegui's, and Martínez Estrada's writings there is no reference to broken branches of weak shrubs that need to be pruned out. They believed that if only the other larger oaks cut their branches and stopped parasitizing, the South could become an oak as well. What are these if not invitations to break free from Eurocentric colonial power structures, and to step outside deterministic views of the South and explore the national past holistically? In this view the Southern question, the Land question, and Trapalanda were something more than a sociological problem. They become an epistemological question that should be analyzed in the south for the benefit of the south and by southerners. The south ceased to be a 'lead ball' to become the promoter of a shift in the way it had been conceptualized for over a century. In this view, the challenging of the emergence of southern thoughts similar to what is nowadays envisioned as the Global South becomes a legitimate move to allege its Southern origin and disentangle it from its theorization from the Global North.

As Mignolo claims in his study on delinking, this intellectual move "cannot be performed [...] within the frame of theo- and ego-logical politics of knowledge and understanding [...]. For this reason, early delinking projects (such as the one advanced by

"the experience and views of the world and history of those who Fanon calls *les damnés de la terre* ('the wretched of the earth,' those who have been, and continue to be, subjected to the standards of modernity). The wretched are defined by the colonial wound, and the colonial wound, physical and/or psychological, is a consequence of racism, the hegemonic discourse that questions the humanity of all those who do not belong to the locus of enunciation (and the geo-politics of knowledge) of those who assign the standards of classification and assign to themselves the right to classify" (Mignolo 8 [2005]).

Samir Amin) were not radical de-linking but rather radical emancipation within the rhetoric of modernity” (460 [2007]). In general, emancipation differs from delinking since the former is aimed primarily at politics. It led Latin America to overthrow the colonial power in the nineteenth-century following European patterns, like the French revolution. The Italian Unification followed a similar path. In contrast, delinking is an epistemological change, not only in terms of the content of the conversation, but also in terms of the rhetoric of modernity (458 [2007]). Geo- and body-politics are crucial to performing delinking, as seen in the essays that I have analyzed so far. This intellectual shift locates Gramsci, Mariátegui, and Martínez Estrada in a genealogy of decoloniality among those who performed radical emancipation. The critique Mariátegui and Martínez Estrada made to the “‘dependent-independence’ of the Mestizo Creole elite” (Mignolo 470 [2007]), and that Gramsci articulated to “la funzione internazionale e cosmopolita dei suoi intellettuali” (1524 [2014]) represented an early attempt of border-thinking that allows them to understand the limits of a political emancipation not supported by a cultural, economic, and epistemological decolonization.⁴⁹

These essays starting from a critique of the Nineteenth-century sociologist school of the contemporary intellectual class proposed a different view of the respective national issues. If their analysis were articulated using the language of Marxist theory (for Gramsci and Mariátegui) and psychoanalysis and social anthropology (for Martínez

⁴⁹ “International and cosmopolitan function of its intellectuals.”

Estrada), their outcome was innovative. Their essays dwell on the interior exteriority of the rhetoric of modernity as described by Mignolo:

the imaginary persists as much in its hegemonic imaginary, despite its transformations, as in the constant adaptations from the planetary colonial exteriority. This is an exteriority that is not necessarily outside of the West (which would mean a total lack of contact), but which is an interior exteriority and exterior exteriority (the forms of resistance and opposition trace the interior exteriority of the system) (27 [2007]).

Here the exterior exteriority of the hegemonic imaginary would be a complete decolonial epistemology in the direction of the affirmation of transmodern pluriversality which goes against the Western *pensé unique* in order to propose alternatives to modernity from different geo- and body-political spaces. In fact, the interior exteriority also refers to radical social projects from the inside European imperial spaces (Southern and Eastern European) that opposed Eurocentric imaginaries.⁵⁰

Lastly, these essays seem contemporary still today because they blur the boundaries between economics, politics, and cultural production. By taking into account the colonial wound and revendicating a different genealogy for the south, they can be seen as early attempts to explore national histories, rescuing the south from its criminalization. By including Gramsci, Mariátegui, and Martínez Estrada in a new genealogy of the Global South, one can shift the locus of enunciation from the Global North to the South and delink from the colonial matrix of power. Only then can a more just and equitable future be imagined, one that recovers history, knowledge, and

⁵⁰ See: Dussel, Enrique and Grosfoguel Ramón. *Filosofías del sur: Descolonización y Transmodernidad*. Akal, 2016.

experiences that have been systematically undermined and subverted by Northern hegemonic projects, and in which shrubs can turn into oaks and are not lead balls for their growth.

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Biography

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