

THE STYLE AND RECURRING THEMES IN SELECTED WORKS OF AZORIN

A THESIS

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### SUMMARIES OF WORKS:

#### NOVELS:

La voluntad  
Antonio Azorin

#### DRAMAS:

Comedia del arte  
Lo invisible

#### SHORT STORIES:

Blanco en azul  
Espanoles en Paris

#### ESSAYS:

Los pueblos  
Castilla

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to investigate, within limitations, the style and recurring themes in selected works by the Spanish essayist, novelist, and dramatist Azorín.<sup>1</sup> For this purpose two novels, two dramas, two collections of short stories, and two groups of essays have been used from his vast output of nearly one hundred volumes. These are as follows: La voluntad, Antonio Azorín, Comedia del arte, Lo invisible, Blanco en azul, Espanoles en Paris, Los pueblos and Castilla.

Azorín, who is often credited with bestowing the title, Generación de 1898, to the outstanding literary group of that period, holds a unique position among Spanish authors. It is indeed unusual that a writer whose first literary work was published in 1893 should be still producing in 1961—a period of sixty-eight years.

The life of this author is interwoven within many of his works, especially some of his earlier ones which are considered largely autobiographical. Thus it is that a portion of this study is devoted to his life.

The character, Azorín, becomes emeshed with the writer, Azorín, as he portrays the character of the newspaper reporter

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<sup>1</sup>This is a pseudonym for José Martínez Ruiz.

who wanders through the pages of many of his books making comments upon the small daily occurrences of life. Also, the small town of Yecla, where, as a boy, the author spent many unhappy hours, becomes a symbol of all that he considered prosaic in the life of the Spanish people.

Because it has been said so often "the style is the man," a study of the style of Azorín, or rather of the life of the man who signed his work by that name, is interesting and informative in the light of the "literary yo." Though seemingly simple, both his writing and his life show many complexities. While he belonged to no one movement in literature, his work changed through the years, falling roughly into three periods: impressionism, surrealism, and post-expressionistic magic realism.<sup>2</sup>

These phases are evident in particular works which will be discussed later as the characteristics of Azorín's works are taken up in detail.

The ever-present Ya es tarde theme, so characteristic of many writers of Azorín's Generation of 1898, more or less dominates certain of his works, especially the novels Antonio Azorín and Las confesiones de un pequeño filósofo.

Mention of certain objects, such as bells and clocks, recur to remind the reader of the passage of time and the imminence of

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<sup>2</sup>Marguerite C. Rand, "Azorín, Prose Poet and Painter," Books Abroad, 27, no. 2 (1953), p. 133.

death. Also, there is an element of reform in many of Azorín's writings which, of course, shows his views gleaned from years of working as a newspaper reporter.

Probably foremost as a characteristic of Azorín's writing is a baffling sort of simplicity, which on the surface seems almost child-like at times, yet beneath the surface there is great depth. His prose has a poetic quality. There is a haunting beauty in his descriptions of the Spanish landscape which he made so much a part of his writings. His minute descriptions of everyday things; his portrayal of the common people of Spain; his pre-occupation with religion thrusting itself into the daily life of the seemingly gloomy Spaniards, are part of his stock-in-trade.

To the people of Spain, Azorín is a very real and appreciated writer as evidenced by the fact that in 1930 he was honored in his native town of Manóvar where his bust, the work of the sculptor Palacios, was unveiled. There, also, his theatrical work, Angelita, had its debut. Undoubtedly though there were times when his stand upon current situations was looked upon askance, as evidenced by sly remarks made by the Azorín character in his stories and an unfortunate experience involving the Madrid Newspaper Guild whereby he was expelled from membership. This followed the production of El clamor in 1928.

Thus, this literary figure typified by his monocle, cane, and spats lived a quiet, contemplative life spilling forth

reflections upon the life of his homeland in his numerous volumes.

"It is an achievement which has made him one of the great literary figures of twentieth-century Spain."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

### LIFE OF AZORÍN

The child, José Martínez Ruiz, known later in life as Azorín, was born of comfortably situated parents who hoped to have the boy follow in the footsteps of his father, a lawyer. His mother, Luisa Ruiz, came of a family of rich landlords. The father, Isidro Martínez, served as mayor of the town of Manóvar in Alicante. There were also five brothers and two sisters in the family.<sup>1</sup> Azorín's biographer, Angel Cruz Rueda, in his "Semblanza de Azorín" gives his birth date as June 8, 1873.<sup>2</sup>

At the age of eight, the child was sent to a Piarist school at Yecla. His loneliness and frustrations while attending this school are vividly told in his Las confesiones de un pequeño filósofo. Nevertheless, it was during these years that he delighted in class expeditions to collect plants and insects.<sup>3</sup> From this early interest stems his extraordinary knowledge and vocabulary of botany and entomology which crop up in many of his writings.

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<sup>1</sup>Kunitz and Haycraft, Twentieth Century Authors--A Biographical Dictionary (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1956), p. 921.

<sup>2</sup>Angel Cruz Rueda, "Semblanza de Azorín," Obras selectas de Azorín (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1962), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Marguerite C. Rand, "Azorín, Prose Poet and Painter," Books Abroad, 27, no. 2, (1953) p. 133.

There is one chapter in Antonio Azorín which is devoted almost entirely to a discussion of plant life wherein he discusses the affinity of plants for each other, or their dislike of one another. Another chapter of the same book concerns three spiders which he names Ron, King and Pic and whose distinct personalities he talks over at great length.

The father's wish that the boy become a lawyer caused him to attend the Universities of Valencia, Granada, and Madrid. As was the case of some others of the members of the Generation of 1898, such as Pío Baroja, he found himself unhappy with his studies and his teachers. Consequently, he turned to writing. In his Memorias inmemoriales, written in 1946, he mentions his compulsion to write:

Basta con que sepa que tengo que escribir; me veo en la precisión de escribir; he de escribir; tengo que sentarme ante la mesa de escribir. No es posible que me zafe de la tarea; no podré evitar el escribir (Memorias inmemoriales, p. 1253).<sup>4</sup>

Azorín's early years as a reporter in Madrid were difficult. One reference tells of his living in an attic and eating very frugally--having one roll for breakfast and another for supper--so that he might buy books.<sup>5</sup> His creative writing attempts followed.

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<sup>4</sup>The edition used for this study is Obras selectas de Azorín, published by Biblioteca Nueva, Madrid, 1962. Throughout the following discussion of these works the name of the selection will be given and the page on which the reference is found.

<sup>5</sup>Rand, loc. cit.

There is some doubt as to when the pseudonym Azorín was first used.<sup>6</sup> Angel Cruz Rueda, in his "Semblanza de Azorín," says: "Para la mayoría de las gentes, letradas algunas, el seudónimo de Azorín, con que firma don José Martínez Ruiz, nació con La voluntad. No es cierto." This novel contains 301 pages and introduces the newspaper reporter, Azorín, who is overwhelmed by his grief over the loss of his sweetheart, Justina, and his absorption with Nietzschean philosophy. The following year, 1903, another much shorter novel, Antonio Azorín, dealt with further meanderings of this gentleman through the small Manchegan towns and is definitely concerned with the abulia of the Spanish people. The word, abulia, refers to the apparent apathy of the people toward their ability to change the conditions under which they are living.

In spite of Azorín's inexorable necessity to write, there were several years during the early twentieth century when Azorín devoted time to pursuits other than writing. In 1907, he was elected deputy to the Cortes and served in that capacity, off and on, until 1919. He also served as Undersecretary of Public Education in 1917 and 1919.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>The pseudonyms, Cándido and Ahrimán, were used for his first works published in 1893 and 1894.

<sup>7</sup>Beatrice P. Patt and Martin Nozick (eds.), The Generation of 1898 and After (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1961), p. 140.

Azorín married Doña Julia Guinda Urganqui in 1908 and according to Marguerite C. Rand in her article entitled "Azorín, Prose Poet and Painter," published in 1953, they were still happily married and living in an apartment in Madrid.<sup>8</sup> During the Spanish Civil War, however, they lived in Paris.

Many newspapers of Spain carried articles written by José Martínez Ruiz. Chief among them was A B C, but, according to Angel Cruz Rueda, the name Azorín was first used as a signature in a newspaper article printed in España on January 28, 1904:

El número 8 de España (jueves 28 de enero) emplea el seudónimo de Azorín en las "Impresiones parlamentarias" (Cortes conservadoras); ...Es, de consiguiente, la primera vez que utiliza el seudónimo de Azorín en el periódico, salvo que lo hiciera el día anterior.<sup>9</sup>

Another quotation from Angel Cruz Rueda concerning the use of the signature "Azorín" which parallels the above information yet adds to it in connection with the novel is found as follows:

En suma, nuestro escritor utiliza el seudónimo de Azorín en la Prensa desde el número 8 (ó 7) de España, a fines de enero de 1904, y en el libro desde Los Pueblos (1905). Minucia para los unos, dato importante para otros.<sup>10</sup>

Among Azorín's principal friends were Ramiro de Maestu and Pío Baroja; these three formed the nucleus of the literary

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<sup>8</sup>Rand, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>9</sup>Cruz Rueda, op. cit., p. 31. (Angel Cruz Rueda is referring to the fact that number 7 of España was not to be found in the files and in number 6 the name José Martínez Ruiz had been used.)

<sup>10</sup>Cruz Rueda, op. cit., p. 32.

group, the Generation of 1898, which includes the names of many outstanding writers. Miguel de Unamuno, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Antonio Machado, and Jacinto Benavente were others of this group "cuya consciencia personal y española despierta y madura entre 1890 y 1905."<sup>11</sup>

During World War I, Azorín (probably because of his real love for France) supported the Allies, but was sent in 1917 to Paris as a correspondent for A B C, which was pro-German in its sentiments. His war experiences were recorded in several volumes.

Azorín's disappointment with politics is evident in the publication of El chirrión de los políticos (1923) as he exposes the petty tyrants and dishonest politicians. Following this, he devoted himself more exclusively to literary creations and, in 1924, was elected by unanimous vote to the Spanish Academy, a coveted honor. When, a few years later, Azorín's friend Gabriel Miró was refused admittance, Azorín no longer occupied his chair, and his name was omitted in the list of members as of January 1, 1936.<sup>12</sup>

As was mentioned in the introduction of this paper (cf., p. 3), Azorín was expelled from la Asociación de la Prensa. This came as a result of the play, El clamor, a farce in three acts, written in collaboration with Muñoz Seca. The press felt deeply

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<sup>11</sup>Patt and Nozick, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>12</sup>Cruz Rueda, op. cit., p. 48.

wounded at the attack made upon it. One authority calls this a "fábula caricaturesca" which "no toca a la colectividad."<sup>13</sup> It would seem that the press took itself too seriously by protesting too much.

A few years later (1930) the aforementioned honor conferred upon Azorín by his native town of Manóvar took place (cf., p. 3).

It was also in 1930 that Azorín severed his connections with the Monarchist paper and declared himself a staunch supporter of Republican ideas. When civil warfare broke out in 1936, Azorín and his wife fled, along with many refugees, to Paris where they remained until 1939. Azorín, luckily, was able to contribute a weekly column to La Nación of Buenos Aires, which helped their financial plight. During these anxious years of enforced absence from his beloved Spain, Azorín devoted many hours to strolling through the beautiful churches of Paris and visited the Louvre more than three hundred times.<sup>14</sup> His short stories, "Españoles en París" and "Pensando en España," reflect many of his experiences at that time. He was also working on the novels, Valencia and Madrid, which were printed soon after his return to Spain. Once home, Azorín again began to contribute his articles to the Spanish press.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Kunitz and Haycraft, op. cit., p. 921.

<sup>14</sup>Cruz Rueda, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

Among the honorary positions which Azorín occupied from time to time is that of president of the Pen-Club. His term of office was interrupted by the Spanish Civil War. In February, 1946, he was presented La Gran Cruz de Alfonso X, el Sabio, and in July of that year, La Gran Cruz de Isabel la Católica. The book dealers of Madrid held a ten-day exposition of Azorín's books in 1947 for the purpose of recognizing them as "great and fundamental literary values of our time."<sup>16</sup> The following year, 1948, Azorín became president of the Patronato de la Biblioteca Nacional. Also, several of his books have been selected as the mejores del mes.<sup>17</sup>

In the later years of his life, Azorín developed a fondness for motion pictures and became an avid aficionado of certain stars, among whom he mentions Greer Garson, Clark Gable, and Gregory Peck. Because of his love and enthusiasm for the cinema, he was made an honorary member of la Asociación Española de Filmología. In his own words he says:

He visto en tres años unas seiscientas; no es mucho; algunas, deliberadamente o por las circunstancias, las he visto dos, tres o más veces....estaba yo dentro del cine—en un mundo nuevo para mí...He visto, primero, las obras; he leído, después, los libros (El cine y el momento, p. 133).

In another paragraph, however, he mentions that occasionally he became impatient with a film and walked out.<sup>18</sup> He required more

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<sup>16</sup>Rand, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>17</sup>Cruz Rueda, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>18</sup>Rand, loc. cit.

than an image, but he truly appreciated the concepts to be gained through this artistic medium.

It was November 19, 1952, that Azorín announced his withdrawal from active participation in writing as he stated in A B C: "Ha terminado--le dice Azorín--mi carrera literaria. Paso de actor a espectador."<sup>19</sup>

Despite this determination, at the end of Obras selectas de Azorín there is a section (pages 1329-1359) of his writings which bear the dates 1953 to 1961. The last essay, "Maqueda y Toledo," from Recuadros, is credited as being from A B C, August 10, 1961. Thus it is, that this "grand old man" of Spanish letters continued to pursue his writing career far beyond his intentions.

On the surface, his life seems uneventful. He appears to be always contemplative, and to live as a calm, dignified gentleman. His life appears almost ascetic according to one account (written in 1953), which tells of his rising at 2 or 3 a.m. to write; his having his evening meal at 8 p.m. (very early for a Spaniard), and retiring a half hour later.<sup>20</sup>

Azorín's work encompassed a vast field: essayist, novelist, dramatist, writer of short stories, critic, and newspaper reporter. He is regarded as one of several men who gave forth the great reinterpretations of Don Quijote de la Mancha.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Cruz Rueda, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>20</sup>Rand, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>21</sup>Patt and Nozick, op. cit., p. 6.

In his native land, a vast number of commentaries have been written about the life and work of Azorín. In North America, there are at least two doctoral theses mentioned by Angel Cruz Rueda: that of Marguerite C. Rand of the University of Chicago, who has been quoted many times in this study;<sup>22</sup> also that of Ana Krause of the University of California, whose thesis is entitled Azorín, the Little Philosopher.<sup>23</sup>

In closing this chapter on the life of Azorín, the poem entitled, "Azorín," by Antonio Machado, one of the Generation of 1898, follows:

La roja tierra del tragal de fuego,  
y del haber florido la fragancia,  
y el lindo cáliz de azafrán manchego  
amó, sin mengua de la lis de Francia.

¿Cuya es la doble faz, candor y hastío,  
y la trémula voz y el gesto llano,  
y esa noble apariencia de hombre frío  
que corrige la fiebre de la mano?

No le pongáis, al fondo, la espesura  
de aborascado monte o selva huraña  
sino, en la luz de una mañana pura,

luene espuma de piedra, la montaña  
y el diminuto pueblo en la llanura,<sup>24</sup>  
¡la aguda torre en el azul de España!

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<sup>22</sup>The quotations, however, were from Marguerite C. Rand's article in Books Abroad, 1953, rather than from her thesis.

<sup>23</sup>Cruz Rueda, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>24</sup>Patt and Nozick, op. cit., p. 177.

These verses speak of Azorin as resembling a mountain which rises in the literature of Spain: one who loves the wheat fields, the blooming fields of beans, yet also loves the fleur-de-lis of France; one whose voice conveys a double aspect of candor and disgust, one who has a tremulous voice, who uses plain gestures, and yet appears to be a cold sort of man who tries to control the fever of his pen.

Note: Information contained in a letter from the Spanish Embassy, Washington, as of July 29, 1964, states that José Martínez Ruiz is living in Madrid at Calle de Zorrilla 21.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE STYLE OF AZORIN

Poetry is the one phase of writing in which Azorin did not participate, yet one of the outstanding characteristics of this versatile writer is his poetic style. "In Azorin's hands the novel and short story, the essay and sketch, all become lyrical instruments."<sup>1</sup> This method, then, of using poetical prose to state very ordinary facts and philosophical beliefs and also to describe the sometimes apparently dull landscape, is an all-pervading essence of Azorin's writings.

It was mentioned earlier in this study that Azorin did not belong to any one school of writing (cf., p. 2), but that his works show the influence of several trends: impressionism, surrealism, and post-expressionistic magic realism.

The impressionistic movement in literature parallels that of impressionism in art to a great extent: in literature it is the broad treatment of a subject without unnecessary explanatory detail; in art, it is the recording of the force and vividness of the artist's first impressions without elaborate details. Surrealism is a modern trend in painting, sculpture, literature, or other arts which strives to show the subconscious reaction.

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<sup>1</sup>Patt and Nozick (eds.), The Generation of 1898 and After (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1961), p. 6.

Post-expressionistic magic realism extends these ideas of thought transference by distortion and dramatic handling of surface characteristics. It carries great emotional impact and often stresses anti-war themes and revolt against the existing social order.

Azorin's works fall roughly into the three periods or movements mentioned above: impressionism until 1925, where his landscapes show beauty of color, light, and sensory details; surrealism, roughly from 1928 to 1930--namely El caballero inactual, El libro de Levante, and Pueblo; post-expressionistic magic realism, in his later works, where there is much evidence of unity of purpose--a desire to seek out the truth of Spain, its inherent and eternal values.<sup>2</sup>

Many allusions are made throughout Azorin's works to painting and sculpture. Mention has already been given to the fact that he visited the Louvre again and again when in Paris, (cf., p. 10) and he was an enthusiastic admirer of El Greco. In a way, Azorin was a painter--with words instead of oil or tempera. As Marguerite C. Rand so aptly states it:

There is a relationship between the qualities Azorin admires in painting and those he manifests in his own portrayal of landscape: an ability to paint the material and pictorial with marvelous shadings of color and light; a delicate artistic sensibility able to select the significant detail and eliminate the nonessential, particularly in his later work; and

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<sup>2</sup>Marguerite C. Rand, "Azorin, Prose Poet and Painter," Books Abroad, 27 no. 2. (1953), p. 135.

finally, a feeling for essence and spirit--the great mystery of things.<sup>3</sup>

Azorín's first important work, El alma castellana, introduced his characteristic style: his impressionistic descriptions of the Spanish landscape concerned especially with its arid plains, distant hills, crumbling old buildings, churches with towers, and plodding tenant farmers. He always tends to allow the reader to draw his own conclusions.

In the first paragraph of the Primera Parte, Chapter I, of La voluntad one finds a typical example of Azorín's descriptive powers as follows:

A lo lejos, una campana toca lenta, pausada, melancólica. El cielo comienza a clarear indeciso. La niebla se extiende en larga pincelada blanca sobre el campo. Y en clamoroso concierto de voces agudas, graves, chirriantes, metálicas, confusas, imperceptibles, sonoras, todos los gallos de la ciudad dormida cantan. En lo hondo, el poblado se esfuma al pie del cerro en mancha incierta. Dos, cuatro, seis blancos vellones que brotan de la negrura, crecen, se ensanchan, se desparreman en cendales tenues. El carraspeo persistente de una tos rasga los aires; los golpes espaciados de una maza de esparto resuenan lentos (La voluntad, p. 72).

Thus can be seen the brush strokes, so to speak, of the writer-painter Azorín as he describes the sounds and sights of morning on the broad canvas of the Spanish countryside. The bell sounding in the distance; the sky turning from dark to light; the sounds of roosters crowing as the town still sleeps; the town fading away at the foot of the hill; the wispy cloud which slowly changes form; the persistent rasping sound of a cough; the sounds of a

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

hammer with slow regularity of rhythm. These are but a few sentences taken from a lengthy description of the locale of the story at the beginning of this book.

Concerning the point of view which Azorín uses, it is mostly omniscient, but at times he changes to first person. This does not, however, pose a problem to the reader as the "Azorín" author is assumed to be the Azorín character.

Through the creations of such characters as Yuste, Lasalde, and Olaz in La voluntad and Sarrió and Verdú in Antonio Azorín, the author is able to incorporate his minute descriptions of places and the seemingly endless discussions of philosophy.

There is little dialogue in these novels, and what there is usually consists of paragraphs of unbroken soliloquies expressing views of Nietzsche, Kant, or Comte in relation to the problems of Spain. In some cases the conversations are arranged on the page rather like the speeches of a play--just the indication of who is speaking with no comment on tone of voice or the usual devices by which an author tells who is speaking.

Azorín uses very few similes or metaphors. There is one case in which Yuste pokes fun at writers who use similes to convey almost every thought. He says, "Comparar es evadir la dificultad..., es algo primitivo, infantil..., una superchería que no debe emplear ningún artista..." (La voluntad, p. 100). Then he gives examples in which one author compares an orange grove to a velvety succession of waves and another in which the tall smoke stacks of the irrigating

machinery are yellow as candles with the tips scorched. All of this, of course, is emphasizing Azorín's own conception of simplicity of form as representing the best in writing.

In a conversation with Pepita in Antonio Azorín, Azorín tells her that elegance is simplicity; that there are few elegant women because they will not resign themselves to simplicity. He draws a corollary between that situation and that of a writer. He says:

...escribimos mejor cuanto más sencillamente escribimos; pero somos muy contados los que nos avenimos a ser naturales y claros. Y, sin embargo, esta naturalidad es lo más bello de todo....los escritores que han leído y escrito mucho, acaban también por ser naturales (Antonio Azorín, p. 215).

He compliments Pepita on her simple and natural spontaneity. She has not learned it in any particular place any more than a bird has learned to sing. He continues:

Y yo, que he escrito ya algo, quisiera tener esa simplicidad encantadora que usted tiene, esa fuerza, esa gracia, ese atractivo misterioso—que es el atractivo de la armonía eterna (Antonio Azorín, p. 215).

There is, however, one simile which Azorín uses effectively at the end of Chapter VII, La voluntad. In this instance, Azorín has been thinking of theories of Montaigne and has become sad and nihilistic: "...dejó el libro y se dispuso a ir a ver al maestro—que era como salir de un arroyo para caer en una fosa" (La voluntad, p. 87). The "maestro" referred to is the character, Yuste, whose ideas of philosophy are so radically pessimistic. Thus, Azorín will become still more imbued by Yuste's ideas,

thereby leaving the ditch (Montaigne) to fall into a grave of pessimism (Yuste).

One other simile may be mentioned. It is found in La voluntad, Tercera Parte, Chapter VI, which concerns Azorín's convictions that some day the laborers will rise in wild revolt because of the accumulated hate of perhaps forty years, as Azorín says:

... como un muelle que va cediendo, cediendo, cediendo suavemente, hasta que de pronto se distiende en un violento arranque incontrastable (La voluntad, p. 87).

The comparison, then, is of a watch spring which functions quietly but bursts forth uncontrollably after being wound tightly for so long.

Such similes reflect careful consideration by Azorín and are effective because they are used so sparingly.

Azorín makes use of symbolism to a great extent as he uses endless references to bells and clocks to indicate the passage of time. Bells also represent the force of religion, an ever-present entity in the life of the people of Azorín's small country towns. They serve to remind the people of the power of the Church over their lives. Sometimes the bells are also symbolic of death.

In this connection it has been interesting to note the number of times the word campana or related words have been used in the two novels studied; also the fact that in telling of a bell or bells ringing, Azorín has so seldom repeated himself.

In La voluntad there are at least twenty-six times when these words are used; in Antonio Azorín, at least thirty-six.

Some random examples of Azorín's handling of such situations follow:

From: La voluntad

From Antonio Azorín

Las campanas tocan en multiforme campaneo (p. 73).

Y de pronto suena una campana dulce y aguda; (p. 180)

A lo lejos, las campanadas de las doce caen lentas (p. 76).

Y una campana tañe, a lo lejos, con lentas, solemnes vibraciones (p. 180).

A lo lejos las campanas de la iglesia Nueva planean abrumadoras (p. 78).

Suenan campanadas lejanas; (p. 182)

La campana tañe pausada.  
(p. 78)

...y va tocando una campanilla;  
(p. 183)

...una campana toca el Angelus  
(p. 80)

Y un viejo reloj lanza de hora en hora sus campanadas graves, monótonas (p. 198).

Una hora suena a lo lejos en campanadas imperceptibles;  
(p. 99)

Y han sonado lentas, una a una, las campanadas del Angelus.

Una campana toca cerca: en las maderas del balcón clarean...  
(p. 119).<sup>4</sup>

Y el viejo reloj da sus lentas campanadas (p. 213).<sup>5</sup>

From these few quotations one can see diverse phraseology which Azorín uses in conveying his ideas--his repetition and yet a varied repetition.

<sup>4</sup>cf., note 4, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

In regard to the use of symbolism in Azorín's plays, one or two symbols are used which suggest a possible influence by Maeterlinck. This is especially true of Lo invisible, which is actually a trilogy consisting of La araña en el espejo, El segador, and Doctor Death, de 3 a 5. In La araña en el espejo, the spider on the mirror is a symbol of death. This symbol was also used in Antonio Azorín (p. 184) when a little old lady in the story sees a spider on her mirror and realizes that her time on earth is up. The use of mysterious knocks at the door foretells death likewise. Also the use of the colors blue and green has symbolic significance. The scythe is used as a symbol of death as the gardener talks of using it in El segador, although the scythe actually never appears on the stage.<sup>6</sup>

Another interesting bit of symbolism is brought out in Antonio Azorín when the sleepy, silent character of don Victor wakes up at the mention of a cane. This cane is a symbol of one's attachment to an object which gives comfort, or a sense of attainment in life. When don Victor dies, his last words are concerning the loss of his precious cane.

In spite of the fact that Azorín is known as a writer who gives many sensory impressions, it is to be noted that he dwells almost entirely on those of sight and sound. There are few cases

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<sup>6</sup>Fredrick S. Stimson, "Lo invisible--Azorín's Debt to Maeterlinck," Hispanic Review, vol. 26, Jan. '58, pp. 64-70.

where he is found to deal with the senses of smell, touch or taste. The names of foods are mentioned, as in the case of Sarrió and his daughters' gift of a basket of sweets and fruits (Antonio Azorín, p. 222), but no particular emphasis is given to their texture or appetizing appearance.

The tone of Azorín's works, in general, is sober, searching endlessly for a meaning in life. Such bits of humor as may be found are droll. It would seem that Iluminada, the girl whom Azorín marries in La voluntad, is a lively, merry sort of creature, but this is never shown in the conversation although Azorín states that she laughs. In Antonio Azorín, the character Sarrió furnishes the only bit of humor to be found, and then only by some rather sly remarks made by the character Azorín. An instance of this is given in Antonio Azorín when Sarrió, who likes his food, is much more concerned with the taste of the savory lemon preserves than he is with the bishop's philosophizing about them. Azorín writes:

Sarrió calla y come. Yo barrunto que a Sarrió no le interesa mucho el símbolo de las cosas. El, al menos, puedo afirmar que no piensa en nada cuando saborea estos limoncillos (Antonio Azorín, p. 212).

Another time Sarrió and Azorín watch some ducks which belong to the bishop. It is obvious that Sarrió thinks only of how good they would taste.

In both novels, La voluntad and Antonio Azorín, Azorín uses the device of letter writing to carry forth the story. In the case of La voluntad, this takes the form of letters written

to Pío Baroja from J. Martínez Ruiz, who discusses their mutual friend. One sees the outcome of Antonio's rather desperate marriage to Iluminada. These letters bring the book to a close. In Antonio Azorín, the reporter Azorín receives letters from Verdú, and he writes letters to his beloved Pepita. They are used to further the story, though, rather than to end it.

These so-called novels by Azorín are not, strictly speaking, novels in the usual sense of the word. One authority comments that they "representa una reacción contra el concepto tradicional de la novela....el novelista atiende a presentar la vida del modo más impersonal."<sup>7</sup> Thus, while the style is impersonal, the writings are also an intimate revelation of the spirit of the author and his manner of seeing the world. M. Romera-Navarro continues by saying, "...no debe tener fábula, porque la vida, según él, no la tiene..."<sup>8</sup> Azorín contends that life is varied, many-sided, floating, and contradictory.

Many of the same characteristics of style are found in the short stories of Azorín as are to be found in the novels. Actually, many of these stories resemble sketches in that they, too, have no real conflict or denouement as in the accepted

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<sup>7</sup>M. Romera-Navarro, Historia de la literatura española (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1949), p. 676.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

short-story form. A dreamy, mystical sort of atmosphere pervades many of them, perhaps because at this stage of his writing Azorín is in his second and third phases (cf., p. 2).<sup>9</sup>

Another point of style very much in evidence in Azorín's novels, short stories, and essays is his almost constant use of the present tense. Of course, in a way, this helps the reader, but his unlimited flow of synonyms brings difficulties of translation to those not conversant with colloquial terms. So, while there is much in Azorín's writing which is simple, there is also much that is difficult, as one follows his philosophical meanderings, his minute descriptions, and his religious allusions.

As to sentence structure, one sees again the effort toward simplicity which Azorín advocated. While there are long, involved sentences to be found now and then, it can truthfully be said that the short sentence pattern predominates. To quote again from M. Romera-Navarro:

...Las frases son breves; omite en lo posible las conjunciones; rara vez emplea la metáfora. Y el resultado es la expresión clara y nitida, a menudo bellísima, y el estilo de singular rapidez.<sup>10</sup>

The use of minute details has been mentioned before but this is particularly evident in all of the mediums used for this

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<sup>9</sup>The collections studied were Blanco en azul (1929) and Españoles en París (1939).

<sup>10</sup>M. Romera-Navarro, op. cit., p. 678.

study. There are careful word portraits of such things as furniture, plants, insects, pictures on the wall, and interiors of churches. All of this is written in a style peculiarly Azorín's. This ability displayed by him has been discussed by J. López Prudencio who says of Azorín:

Prosa de gama rica en tonalidades, que ondulan siempre acompasadas al ritmo vario y múltiple de los rasgos, las líneas y de colores del objeto de observación, y de la emoción que sugiere cada pormenor, sorprendido, descubierto y plasmado con precisión exacta, concisa y siempre armoniosa.<sup>11</sup>

To conclude this chapter on the style of Azorín, reference is made to a quotation appearing in the Atlantic Monthly of January, 1961, where a special section is devoted to samples of Spanish literature translated into English. Among the articles is "Windmills of Criptana" by Azorín. The explanation accompanying the essay mentions Azorín's real name, José Martínez Ruiz, and states:

He is the oldest surviving member of the great literary group "Generation of 1898" and his delicate evocations of the Iberian landscape and its inhabitants are well-established classics of modern Spanish letters.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>"Azorín," Enciclopedia universal ilustrada, (1932 ed.), tomo, VII, 80.

<sup>12</sup>Azorín, "Windmills of Criptana," p. 125. (Introduction to the essay--author of comment not known)

## CHAPTER IV

### RECURRING THEMES OF AZORÍN

In discussing the recurrence of certain themes in the work of Azorín, it is apparent that style and theme often go hand in hand. Of necessity, then, certain repetitions will occur, particularly as Azorín's interest in the minutiae of life is concerned. One basic idea, however, pervades his work, namely his interest in the fate of Spain, especially as it affects the Castilian peasant or Spanish man.

It has been noted before that Azorín and others of his Generation of 1898, the group of authors whose works were published around the date of the national disaster, the Spanish-American War, had a common interest in the problems of Spain. They were a group who protested against the old thinking along lines of politics, religious beliefs, and literary works.<sup>1</sup> Thus Azorín's works, specifically those of his early novels, show much criticism and desire for change. In La voluntad and Antonio Azorín, he expresses anarchistic tendencies and shows the influence of radical thinking in many ways. He and his friend Olaz, who is actually Pío Baroja, in La voluntad discuss liberty, democracy, and socialism. In one instance, Olaz states bitterly that "La máquina que funciona

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<sup>1</sup>España en su literatura, edited by Nicholson B. Adams and John E. Keller (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1962), p. 265.

da más ideas que todos los libros de los sociólogos (La voluntad, p. 143). Olais is saying that science has brought about far more changes than this democracy for which man has been so desperately yearning. In other philosophical discussions the views of this disillusioned generation are aired by Azorín, always with subtle shadings of landscape and atmosphere in the background.

The two novels, La voluntad and Antonio Azorín, are built around the central character, Antonio Azorín, whose wanderings through the old towns and Castilian countryside furnish evidence of abulia, which so distresses the author.

This term, abulia, refers to the apparent apathy of the people toward coping with their problems--a tendency to shrug their shoulders and sigh, merely hoping that one day Spain will regain her proper position in the world. Azorín believes that this feeling stifles the people; they are living in the past, refusing to adopt measures to improve their land, their homes, and their lives in general. They lack the will which is so necessary to bring about change; they are rooted in the past; they find solace in religion and hope for better things in the next life. This condition is repeatedly emphasized in La voluntad.

As an example of this situation, in part three of La voluntad, Antonio Azorín is found in the depths of despondency saying:

...Ahora, en estos momentos, apenas si tengo fuerzas para escribir; la abulia paraliza mi voluntad. ¿Para qué? ¿Para qué hacer nada? Yo creo que la vida es el mal... (La voluntad, p. 155).

From the Epilogo of the same book, there is another reference to Antonio Azorín as being:

...un lamentable caso de abulia; es un hombre sin acabar, cosa nada rara en este pueblo, según queda consignado (La voluntad, p. 164).

Possibly in another atmosphere, Antonio Azorín would have been a wonderful example of an intelligent man, but here his lack of will has served to ruin his intelligence (La voluntad, p. 164).

The idea of Ya es tarde is another which Azorín emphasizes again and again. There is a distinct relationship between this idea and that of abulia. When the sound of the inevitable bells ring, many times Azorín's characters remark, Ya es tarde, and Azorín questions, "Why is it always late?"

...En los pueblos sobran las horas, que son más largas que en ninguna otra parte, y, sin embargo, siempre es tarde. ¿Por qué? La vida se desliza monótona, lenta, siempre igual. Todos los días vemos las mismas caras y el mismo paisaje... (Antonio Azorín, p. 186).

The thinking of the people, the dwelling on past glories, the feeling that it is too late to do anything about so many of their problems--these are the things which distress Antonio Azorín as he philosophizes with his friends over the fate of Spain.

As a corollary to the Ya es tarde obsession, the bells of the numerous churches toll out the hours reminding Azorín of the continuous passage of time and the timelessness of the difficulties of mankind. If the church bells do not serve to remind

the people that it is indeed late to be attacking their problems, then the striking of a clock does. At times there is even an hour glass to convey this idea of the eternal passage of time. These time-telling devices, then, serve a very real purpose toward Azorin's theme, yet are a part of his style also.

The transience of things--the wearing away of the old churches, the gradual decay in the life of the Spanish countryside, which Azorin notes as he wanders from one Manchegan town to another, leads to many philosophical discussions upon the "why" of things.

This, in turn, involves religious discussion, theoretical discussions of such persons as Nietzsche, Tolstoy, and Kant. Azorin also expresses many of his own opinions, through the mouth of Antonio Azorin, concerning the groove in which the Spanish people find themselves because of their inability to carry out reform ideas, whether these ideas be toward improving farming conditions, water supply, educational practices, housing, or even politics. He feels that being bound to tradition impedes progress on every hand. He scoffs at many of the old customs, such as continuing mourning customs for such lengthy periods of time, thus shutting out any attempts at gaiety and fun, making the Spanish populace emphasize gloom and sadness. In his early works, Azorin displays much anger at the Catholic Church and blames it for much of the backwardness of Spain. To quote from Antonio Azorin:

Y la idea de la muerte, eterna, inexorable, domina en estos pueblos españoles, con sus novenas y sus tañidos fúnebres, con sus caserones destartallados y su ir y venir de devotas enlutadas.

España es un país católico. El catolicismo ha conformado nuestro espíritu. Es pobre nuestro suelo (yermos están los campos por falta de cultivo); el pueblo apenas come; se vive en una ansiedad perdurable; se ve en esta angustia como van partiendo uno a uno de la vida los seres queridos; se piensa en un mañana tan doloroso como hoy y como ayer (Antonio Azorín, p. 238).

He continues to say that a government decree to abolish clericalismo will not bring about the needed changes, but something deeper and more effective is necessary. He says a poor populace is a populace of slaves and continues:

En regiones como Castilla, como la Mancha, sin agua, sin caminos, sin árboles, sin libros, sin periódicos, sin casas confortables, ¿cómo va a entrar el espíritu moderno?... (Antonio Azorín, p. 239).

With all this lack, Azorín points out the laborer works to no avail, yet the bells continue to ring for their endless novenas.

This disturbed reaction to the state of Spain in the early years of the twentieth century, as reflected in La voluntad and Antonio Azorín, becomes a more mellow resignation on the part of Azorín in his later works. The spirit of the reformer gives way to an acceptance of the status quo, and Azorín turns more toward the recurrence of events in the life of man. This is shown particularly in the novel, Doña Inés, read but not studied for this paper, and the drama, Comedia del arte; also in some of his short stories such as "No está la Venus de Milo" from Españoles en París.

As all Spanish writers, Azorín extols the greatness of Don Quijote and references to Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Quevedo appear often in his works. Of course, his La ruta de Don Quijote concerns the travels of this well-known hero, for which material Azorín traveled across the Manchegan plains in a mule-drawn cart, retracing Don Quijote's journey. However, Azorín regarded Larra as the "master of our generation," but found great fault with Echegaray, the literary hero of that time, as he thought his literary tradition obsolete.<sup>2</sup> Azorín praises Larra in La voluntad, where a chapter deals with Antonio Azorín and a group of his friends who make a pilgrimage to Larra's grave on his anniversary.

Among the many writers whom Azorín admires is Montaigne, who especially influences his thinking in his early writings. He also is fond of quoting Baudelaire, Schopenhauer, Aristotle, and Plato. Because of Azorín's wide knowledge of these and other literary figures, he wishes to rid the Spaniards of the pompous diction and excessive stress on rhetoric which has grown up in the nineteenth century. Thus, this effort is also part of his theme of exalting Spain.

Azorín, in his writings, brings the past into the present, attaining a sense of continuity in Spanish history; he senses the soul of this arid Castilian land. This capturing of time,

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<sup>2</sup>Kunitz and Hayscraft, Twentieth Century Authors--A Biographical Dictionary (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1956), p. 921.

for Azorín, becomes an absorbing occupation as he sees life involved with organic time. Lewis Mumford, in his article entitled "The Monastery and the Clock," makes this remark:

... organic time moves only in one direction--through the cycle of birth, growth, development, decay, and death--and the past that is already dead remains present in the future that has still to be born.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, it is this conception of time with which Azorín is concerned as it affects the life of Spain. Such an incident as the following may be cited to illustrate this. In La voluntad, Antonio Azorín recalls a picture by Daumier which shows a frenzied dance at the Opera of Paris and he thinks that the world is an immense lithograph of Daumier. He says:

Lo doloroso es que esta danza durará millares de siglos, millones de siglos, millones de millones de siglos. Será eterna! (La voluntad, p. 135).

He continues to think of some of Nietzsche's ideas of the recurrence of happenings and quotes the latter as follows:

Lo mismo sucede con este momento: ha sido ya una vez, muchas veces, y volverá a ser, cada vez que todas las fuerzas estén repartidas exactamente como hoy, y lo mismo acontecerá con el momento que ha engendrado a éste y con el momento al cual ha dado origen (La voluntad, p. 135).

Life is then compared to an hour glass which turns upside down and starts over again; each life being separated by a great minute of time.

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<sup>3</sup> A Quarto of Modern Literature, edited by Leonard Brown and Porter G. Perrin (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 550.

To follow through with further thoughts on this, there is in Antonio Azorín an instance where Sarrió and Antonio visit the bishop. The conversation turns to thoughts of youth, old age, and respect for the past. Antonio thinks:

La vida nace de la muerte; no hay nada estable en el universo; las formas se engendran de las formas anteriores. La destrucción es necesaria. ¿Cómo evitarla, y cómo evitar el dolor que lleva aparejado esta inexorable sucesión de las cosas? Habría que hacer de nuevo el universo... (Antonio Azorín, p. 212).

One other comment by Antonio Azorín may be given which brings to mind familiar feelings even as of now. Antonio is eating at an inn when a dog enters. As Antonio has recently been the recipient of a lecture by Lasalde (actually the name of one of his teachers at Yecla) on the transience of vanity, he looks at the dog and thinks:

Todo es vanidad; la imagen es la realidad única, la única fuente de vida y de sabiduría. Y así, este perro joven e ingenuo, que no ha leído a Troyano; este perro sin noción del tiempo, sin sospechas de la immanencia o trascendencia de la causa primera, es más sabio que Aristóteles, Spinoza y Kant..., los tres juntos (La voluntad, p. 129).

These examples serve to show the thinking so often expressed in regard to time in Azorín's novels, La voluntad and Antonio Azorín. The essays and short stories reflect similar trains of thought.

The fact that the ultimate end of life is death is another phase of Azorín's theme. Many instances of funeral processions or death scenes are found throughout his writings. Also there are discussions on the subject of death between Antonio Azorín and

various characters in those novels which have been studied. For instance, Yuste says in La voluntad:

--¡Ah, la inteligencia es el mal!...Comprender es entristecerse; observar es sentirse vivir...Y sentirse vivir es sentir la muerte, es sentir la inexorable marcha de todo nuestro ser y de cosas que nos rodean hacia el océano misterioso de la Nada... (La voluntad, p. 118).

This comment shows the pessimistic attitude of Yuste toward death.

Also in La voluntad, there is an account of Yuste's funeral. Antonio Azorín notices the callousness of the people at the crypt as they make absurd jokes among themselves, seemingly ignoring the immensity of death. The death of Justina, Antonio Azorín's sweetheart, who became a nun, is handled in an unusual way--as though she is having a religious hallucination.

In Antonio Azorín, the death of the little old lady (cf., p. 22), whose life was so pathetically meager, and the death of Verdú and don Victor represent the passing of different types of people. The little old lady represents a poverty-stricken land owner; Verdú, the unappreciated public-spirited author and politician; don Victor, the beggar-type of person who seldom has anything to call his own.

Some of the essays, especially those found in Castilla, tell of death. "Los toros," shows the bloody, unsightly kind of death as seen in the bull ring; "La fragancia del vaso," shows the loneliness experienced after one's friends and loved ones are gone; "Cerrera, cerrera," shows the sadness felt because of the death of a loved one, no matter how unworthy that person may

be; "Una lucecita roja," shows the death of a kind husband and father, and ties in a fatalistic attitude of life as following a timetable; "Una flauta en la noche," shows lingering melodies after the passage of time and death.

Among the short stories read for this study, there are several concerned with death. In Blanco en azul, these are "Fabia lánde," a weird sort of tale in which the doctors are the victims of death rather than the patient; "Tom Grey," whose self-inflicted death has an ironic twist; and "La mariposa y la llama," which shows the impossibility of running away from one's destiny, death. In Espanoles en Paris, the stories, "No está la Venus de Milo" and "Una carta de España," especially, deal with grief experienced either by the death of a loved one, or worry and uncertainty during wartime when death is a constant threat.

The drama, Lo invisible, is concerned almost entirely with death—from the prologue, where death appears in the form of a strange lady, to the end of the play, where La Enferma gladly enters the inner office of Doctor Death.

Another recurring theme—that of will, the opposite of abulia (cf., p. 28)—must be mentioned, although it appears mostly in the two novels, La voluntad and Antonio Azorín. In La voluntad, Antonio Azorín appears as a weak, vacillating sort of character, who lacks the will to make up his mind and chart a course for himself. He remarks that Iluminada, his future wife, has will enough for both of them, and after their marriage she continues

to assert her strong will. Justina, the sweetheart of Antonio Azorín, goes into the convent, so she says, under her own will, but actually has been goaded into it by her uncle, Puche. There are the monks and nuns, who have given up their own will and submit to the authority of the Church. The title of the novel, La voluntad, conveys the stress of will upon the lives of the characters, and, back of it all, is found the main connotation that the country of Spain is lacking in will power.

Antonio Azorín more or less continues the same trend of thought, yet not so emphatically. In an early part of the book, when discussing plants and animals, Azorín contends that even these lower forms of life show preferences for special types of associates. Some do not adapt well under certain circumstances; Azorín says they show will power and intelligence. The character, Antonio Azorín, lacks will power as he runs away from his strong attachment toward Pepita, who obviously loves him.

Mention must be made of the recurrence of Azorín's treatment of his feminine characters. They are, in the main, few and rather indistinct. However, in his mention of them, he is ever the reticent gentleman. His descriptions of their physical characteristics are usually confined to their faces or hands. A description of Pepita follows:

...Tiene un bello pelo rubio, abundante y sedoso; sus ojos son azules; su tez es blanca y fina; sus manos, estas bellas manos que urden los encajes, son blancas, carnosas, transparentes, suaves (Antonio Azorín, p. 215).

The undesirable females who are mentioned are handled delicately and inoffensively. In many instances the women are nameless, mostly wearing black mourning habits and are usually going to or from a church service or performing their daily household tasks. Justina and Iluminada, of La voluntad, and Pepita, of Antonio Azorín, are outstanding women characters. Cruz Rueda has said that the model for Azorín's heroines was his wife.<sup>4</sup> Of the three characters named above, both Justina and Pepita would be representative of Doña Julia, Azorín's beloved wife.

Thus, in this chapter the recurring themes of Azorín as to the general discontent with the status quo of Spain, the tendency toward abulia, the ever-present Ya es tarde idea, the eternal ebb and flow of time, the emphasis of death in life, the struggle of the will, and the treatment of womanhood have been discussed. In sampling the two novels, two dramas, two collections of short stories, and two collections of essays--these themes recur again and again.

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<sup>4</sup>Angel Cruz Rueda, "Semblanza de Azorín," Obras selectas de Azorín (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1962), pp. 37-38.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

After carefully considering the chosen selections written by Azorín, it is evident that he was a prolific writer of fluid prose which is poetic in quality. He reveals the soul of Castile, the land he loves; and, in so doing, reveals his own soul. Through the many years during which Azorín wrote, his more radical youthful ideas became tempered and mellowed. His descriptive powers remained as a vital characteristic of his varied forms of writing; likewise his impressionistic style of portrayal of both actions and characters.

Many references have been made to the two novels, La voluntad and Antonio Azorín, which were used as a part of this study. By the very nature of the fact that they were lengthy, there were more cited quotations from them than from the shorter selections. Furthermore, they represent examples of Azorín's earlier works and show many characteristics of dissatisfied youth which was a part of those years following the national disaster of the Spanish-American War. His thinking, as reflected in these two books, shows how much he had become imbued with the philosophical movements prevalent at that time.

The dramas selected for study were Comedia del arte and Lo invisible. More reference has been made to the latter, largely because it reveals so well Azorín's preoccupation with death as a

favorite theme. Comedia del arte deals mainly with a sort of reconstructed Oedipus story, also having to do with the recurrence of events. This relates to the time theme spoken of so often in the novels.

The collection of short stories called Blanco en azul contains several which show the development of plot. This is an entirely different situation than that of Azorín's novels, which, as has previously been mentioned (cf., p. 24), need no plot since the happenings in life seem unrelated, and often one's conflicts are unresolved. Such stories as "Los niños en la playa" and "La mariposa y la llama," particularly, conform more nearly to the usual pattern of the short story. The group found in Espanoles en Paris is of a more rambling type of construction resembling the essay or sketch.

Los pueblos, of the essay collections, deals with the old towns through which Azorín so loved to wander, the people he saw there, and bits of philosophy as a result of his observations. The essays in Castilla, having been written seven years later than those in Los pueblos, show a tendency to comment upon events of more recent times; for instance, at the beginning of the book there are two essays on the development of the Spanish railroads. Some of the selections in this collection are sketches of haunting beauty. Among these are "Una lucecita roja," "Una flauta en la noche," and "La casa cerrada."

It has been found that Azorín's manner of writing is calm, quiet, and dignified. His characters sometimes walk the floor in agitation or frustration, but are never violent. They tend to resign themselves to fate, accepting whatever befalls them with a sigh. This is the feeling of abulia which Azorín deplures. Especially in his early writings, one has the feeling that Azorín wishes to shake the Spanish people out of their lethargy.

The influence of Montaigne upon Azorín and his writings has been related (cf., p. 19). It may also be mentioned that Azorín says he not only read Montaigne but read him over and over.<sup>1</sup> It was probably from Montaigne that he learned the trait of recording incidents from the lives of "little" people--those whose lives seem inconsequential in the larger issues of life. This interest in detail, regarding the usually unnoticed aspects of everyday living, shows itself in all of Azorín's writings. He suggests some of the situations and leaves it to the reader to finish the picture. Often one senses a mood or a transient philosophical thought, which, as in the case of poetry, one wishes one could express as well.

A comment has been made concerning Azorín's having opened the eyes of the Spanish people to an awareness of their country,

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<sup>1</sup>Cruz Rueda, "Semblanza de Azorín," Obras selectas de Azorín (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1962), p. 41.

a new view of their own landscape and mode of life.<sup>2</sup> He also conveys a great deal of knowledge of poets, politicians, artists, and philosophers--not only of his own day, but of the past. Thus in an impersonal, intellectual, and unemotional way, Azorín speaks to his fellow Spaniards through his writings.

Simplicity of style is an outstanding characteristic of Azorín's writing. The predominance of short sentences, the use of semi-colons rather than conjunctions, the use of many synonyms for descriptive purposes--these points of style are obvious to the reader even upon short acquaintance with Azorín's works. There is a similarity between the writing of Azorín and that of Hemingway. Perhaps Hemingway was influenced by reading some of Azorín's writings. Certainly it is inevitable that anyone, after having read a few of Azorín's books, will become more observant of the ordinary, taken-for-granted things in daily life. One may even philosophize a bit over them, as does Azorín.

Some works by Azorín have been translated into English: Las confesiones de un pequeño filósofo, El licenciado Vidriera, visto por Azorín, y Old Spain. Others have been translated into French, Italian, German, and Norwegian. The translation, "Windmills of Griptana," mentioned before (cf., p. 26), is an example of at least one of Azorín's essays which has reached the American reading

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<sup>2</sup>España en su literatura, edited by Nicholson B. Adams and John E. Keller (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1962), p. 265.

public, not just students of a foreign language. In the dedicatory remarks addressed to Pío Baroja at the start of Antonio Azorín, the author says that Antonio is a man who experiences nothing particularly extraordinary, "tal como un adulterio o un simple desafío; ni piensa tampoco cosas hondas, de esas que conmueven a los sociólogos."<sup>3</sup>

A number of other selections from Obras selectas de Azorín were read but not used except for passing remarks in this study. They are Las confesiones de un pequeño filósofo, Doña Inés, Old Spain, and El cine y el momento. However, "Semblanza de Azorín," by Angel Cruz Rueda, which is included in the volume, Obras selectas de Azorín, has been of inestimable value as a reference for facts pertaining to the life of Azorín and also his works in general.

In closing this study of the style and recurring themes in selected works of Azorín, it may be said that it has been a rewarding experience. Many impressions gained from having read these selections will remain in memory, at least as poignant fragments, because of a sensitive author's perceptions toward life.

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<sup>3</sup>Cruz Rueda, op. cit., p. 29.



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This book contains some of the best known novels, dramas, essays, and short stories by Azorín (José Martínez Ruiz). It also contains "Semblanza de Azorín," by Angel Cruz Rueda. All of the selections used in this study are contained in this volume: La voluntad, pp. 71-166; Antonio Azorín, pp. 167-242; Las confesiones de un pequeño filósofo, pp. 243-277; Los pueblos, pp. 279-345; Castilla, pp. 433-469; Doña Inés, pp. 609-665; Old Spain, pp. 1009-1035; Comedia del arte, pp. 1037-1062; Lo invisible, pp. 1063-1082; Bianco en azul, pp. 1085-1103; Espanoles en París, pp. 1105-1119; El cine y el momento, pp. 1330-1336.

Cruz Rueda, Angel. "Semblanza de Azorín," Obras Selectas de Azorín. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1962. pp. 5-67.

A minute biographical account of Azorín incorporating many quotations to illustrate Azorín's theories and subject matter.

España en su literatura. Edited by Nicholson B. Adams and John E. Keller. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1962.

Comments as to Azorín's protest against the high-flown rhetoric of the late nineteenth century, his criticism of his generation, and his interpretation of Castile.

Huyghe, René. Art Treasures of the Louvre. New York: Harry N. Abrams Publishers, 1951. 178 pp.

Contains many paintings and art works of renown with commentaries on them. Much information is found pertaining to trends of art. The work of many Spanish artists is included.

Kunitz and Haycraft. Twentieth Century Authors--A Biographical Dictionary. New York: H. W. Wilson, 1956. P. 921.

Interesting information as to Azorín's personal life, honors conferred upon him, and his philosophy.

Mumford, Lewis. "The Monastery and the Clock," A Quarto of Modern Literature. Edited by Leonard Brown and Porter G. Ferrin. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950. Pp. 548-550.

An interesting article concerning the time concept as it developed, largely, from the regimentation of life in the monastery.

Patt, Beatrice P., and Martin Nozick (eds.). The Generation of 1898 and After. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1961. Pp. 4, 6, 140, 177.

An anthology prepared for classroom use containing comments about the lives, style, and themes of the authors of this period.

Rodríguez-Castellano, Juan. Introducción a la historia de España. New York: Oxford University Press, 1956. P. 188.

Comments on Azorín's special sensibility for small things and his interpretation of the soul of Spain.

Romera - Navarro, M. Historia de la literatura española. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1949. Pp. 676, 678.

Extensive remarks as to the impressionistic style of Azorín, his reactionary concept of the novel, and his extraordinary knowledge of the classics.

## B. ENCYCLOPEDIA

"Azorín," Enciclopedia universal ilustrada (1932 ed.), tomo VII, 80.

Contains a biographical sketch of Azorín, including comments by Cassou as to his revolutionary theatrical treatment, also comments by J. López Prudencio as to his style.

## C. PERIODICAL ARTICLES

Azorín, "Windmills of Criptana," Atlantic Monthly, 207: 125-6, January, 1961.

A translation of "Los molinos de viento" from la ruta de Don Quijote, retaining the spirit of Azorín.

Rand, Marguerite C. "Azorín, Prose Poet and Painter," Books Abroad, 27, no. 2, 1953. Pp. 133, 134, 135.

An account inspired by the eightieth birthday of Azorín and the sixtieth anniversary of his first book. Contains many points of style and theme as well as biographical information.

Stimson, Fredrick S. "Lo invisible--Azorín's Debt to Masterlinck," Hispanic Review, vol. 26, Jan. '58, pp. 64-70.

Points of similarity and dissimilarity between the two authors especially as to the use of symbols.

NOTES

LA VILLE DE  
MONTREAL

DE

APPENDIX

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## SUMMARIES OF WORKS

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La voluntad  
Antonio Azorin

### DRAMAS

Comedia del arte  
Lo invisible

### SHORT STORIES

Blanco en azul  
Espanoles en Paris

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## LA VOLUNTAD

There is a prologue at the beginning of La voluntad concerning the building of a great cathedral in 1775. Enthusiasm dwindles, then ceases. Work is begun again in 1859. It is a gigantic undertaking, but the people persevere.

With this beginning, a rambling series of seemingly unrelated incidents follow. A central character, Antonio Azorin, moves through the pages of the book, mostly listening to the philosophy of his friends and teachers. He seems to have no purpose in life; he is a listener rather than a contributor; he is a newspaper reporter who spends periods of time writing in Madrid.

Antonio has a sweetheart, Justina, a sweet, lovable girl. She, however, is turned away from worldly concerns through the efforts of her uncle, Puche, a priest. Azorin, though he loves her, seems to make little effort to dissuade her from becoming a nun. Justina, obviously hurt because Antonio appears indifferent, becomes a novice. Probably because of the rigorous discipline and her heartbreak, Justina grows pale and weak within the convent.

Meanwhile Antonio makes trips here and there carrying on endless discussions on philosophy, especially with his friend Yuste, who is very radical in his opinions. Another person with whom he discusses religion and philosophy is his old teacher, Lasalde, at Yecla.

Yuste dies, Lasalde leaves, and with Justina in the convent, Antonio is indeed at a loss. There is, however, a vital young woman, a friend of Justina's, who is in and out of Antonio's house carrying bits of gossip and laughing. She typifies, for Antonio, a person living a life and a half, while he is able to live only half a life. Soon Justina dies in an experience of religious fervor.

Antonio then goes to Madrid, where his life is one of complete perplexity. He longs for the solace of love and life, but is always confronted with death. He wanders first one place and then another, visiting his friends and teachers. He gets drunk occasionally to drown his sorrows. His feelings are hurt because his name was left out of a newspaper item. He loses faith in his ability to write. He goes to see Enrique Olaz, who lives in the slums of Toledo. It is not long after this that a group of young writers go to Larra's grave where Antonio speaks words of praise for this literary genius they so admire.

Later, Antonio journeys to the provinces. He is disgusted with politics. He even expresses disdain for books, the height of desperation. He feels himself to be two persons: one, a man of will who is almost dead; the other, a man of reflection. This last element is the more dominant.

He goes to his native town and no one appreciates him. He is concerned with the plight of the landowners, who, because of a treaty with France during 1882-1892, converted their land into vineyards and now have no market for their produce. Antonio foresees a rebellion of workers in the near future.

Back home once more, Antonio attends church with Iluminada and her mother. The priest, a modern cleric, laughs and jokes with them, and makes sly remarks, assuming a marriage between Antonio and Iluminada.

The story closes with an epilogue in the form of letters written to Pío Baroja from J. Martínez Ruiz. These tell of the latter's having stopped off at Yecla to see their old friend Antonio. By this time, Antonio has become a typical victim of a domineering wife, living in a veritable pigsty, and being supported by his mother-in-law. He no longer writes; his personal appearance is haggard and dirty; his study is a shambles of a sewing room and nursery combined. J. Martínez Ruiz ends his last letter by wondering how long Antonio will meekly submit to such a life.

#### ANTONIO AZORÍN

A minute description of a house in the country is given at the beginning of this book. Antonio Azorín is unpacking his suitcase, but he stops to read from a volume of Montaigne. There is a servant who waits on him; but, except for field workers, no other people are around. One assumes he is merely stopping over at this country home as an absentee landlord.

While the household enjoys a siesta, Azorín steps into the story and offers his dissertation upon plants and insects, maintaining that they show will and determination as to environment and nourishment.

As in *La voluntad*, there are disconnected events having nothing to do with a story. One of these concerns a visit to a friend who is a good pianist. Antonio asks the friend to play for him, which he does. This creates a veritable scandal as there had been a death in that family several months before.

Custom dictates a long period of mourning even though the relationship is far removed. Another is about a little old lady, already obsessed with the idea of death, who, when she sees a spider on her mirror, is resigned to her fate, and is found dead the next morning. There are "has-beens" mentioned: an old actor who now helps around the theater; the old men sitting around, gossiping, merely passing the time, yet, Ya es tarde.

Antonio's uncle, Verdú, writes to say he is ill and needs his one remaining relative. Verdú's career has been one of a literary and political nature, but now he feels abandoned. Antonio thinks this is representative of the treatment accorded these professions.

In the house of Verdú, there is a little old man, don Victor, who merely sits around. He is like the old folks who always preface their remarks with, "When I was young--" Verdú and Antonio have many discussions on immortality.

The character Sarrió, Antonio's very dear friend, is introduced in Antonio Azorín. He is described as being fat with dancing eyes, an epicure, fond of good surroundings, and while not a deep thinker, he is a foil for Antonio. The two are fond of walking together saying little, but enjoying each other's company. Sarrió has a wife, but she is hardly mentioned. His three lovely daughters, Carmen, Lola, and Pepita, figure in the story.

Verdú grows weaker. In one of his discussions with Antonio about life and death, Verdú chances a remark that old people attach a particular significance to an ideal, as one does to a fond possession, such as a watch or a cane. Old don Victor, always so phlegmatic, comes to life at the mention of a cane, as this recalls an outstanding happening of his youth. Someone stole the cane from him. Not long after this occurrence Verdú dies, followed soon by don Victor. Incoherent babbling about a cane was on don Victor's lips as he died. Someone had taken his ideal from him.

Sarrió, the epicure, encounters a bit of misinformation about cooking rabbits as he leafs through a book on food. This causes him to lose faith in books.

Antonio and Sarrió travel to some of the neighboring towns and discover sadness and poverty wherever they go. Among the places they visit is Alicante. Here they find inns that are almost comfortable, newspapers that are almost legible, and restaurants that are almost acceptable. It is the latter which most interest Sarrió. The sea causes Antonio to philosophize that man's efforts

in this world are as the foam beating against the shore. Antonio gazes through the window of the restaurant looking sad, while Sarrió also has a sad expression as he cuts his roast beef.

The two men return to Sarrió's house. It is obvious that Pepita is in love with Antonio and he is very fond of her, but there is quite a difference in their ages. He hurries away, probably because he is afraid of his feelings. He intends to go to Paris.

Antonio's letters to Pepita appear in the novel. They are always telling how he misses her, yet he never declares his love for her. He finds life demanding. He describes himself as like an old church near his lodgings--they both want solitude, but people and things crowd around them.

Many inland towns are visited by Antonio, where he finds life merely tolerable. The poverty of the people, the lack of water, the general apathy, all tend to depress him. He goes on to Madrid. There he looks through old newspaper files and finds that his writings were offending people then, even as now. He journeys to Infanta where he visits the house of Quevedo. The closed-up houses and general air of desolation are the result of absentee ownership which has been going on since the days of the decadent Hapsburgs. He also strikes out at the Catholic Church, blaming it for the emphasis on the next world rather than this.

Quite by chance, Antonio meets Sarrió in a theater in Madrid and once more they enjoy being together, talking quietly and walking about. As Sarrió departs, they wonder when they shall meet again. Antonio goes back to his lonely room where he dips his pen into ink and prepares to write more of his "terrible articles."

#### COMEDIA DEL ARTE

The play begins with a group of actors, supposedly on holiday in the country. Don Antonio Valdés, a leading actor, persists in studying his lines in spite of the admonitions of Doctor Perales and others of the cast. The poet, José Vega, says that actors never know reality from play-acting anyway.

A young, insignificant understudy, Pacita Durán, approaches and don Antonio departs, not wishing to be bothered with her. This leaves don José at her mercy. However, don José finds her to be a highly imaginative young woman as he cleverly envisions a scene to test her reactions. He requests a kiss on his forehead

so that he can recall it when she becomes a famous actress. Pacita asks if she can play with don Antonio for her debut.

Doña Manolita, the leading lady of the troupe, has a small son, Paquito, who aspires to become an actor. There is a clown-like character, Joaquín Ortáñez, who never ceases acting.

When don Antonio returns from his walk, still reciting lines from Oedipus, Pacita responds with the proper lines, so that it seems that she is perfect for the part of Antigone. Don José announces that Pacita will play that coveted role which, of course, distresses doña Manolita. Pacita is so overcome with emotion she is unable to speak. Don José says this is "comedia del arte," but Joaquín says, "tragedia del arte."

The events in Act II take place ten years later. Don Antonio is now blind and lives with doña Manolita and Paco (now eighteen). They are still a part of the theatrical group although don Antonio does nothing but read in braille and teach Paco. Pacita Durán has become an international success and Paco worships her from afar.

Paco asks his mother if Pacita were in love with don Antonio when playing the role of Antigone ten years before. His mother resents his questions, but admits the possibility. Someone is sending money, through Doctor Perales, so that don Antonio is not a burden on his friends. Times are hard, but Paco says he will soon become an actor and all will be well. He is doña Manolita's hope and she, too, feels he will be a success since don Antonio has taught him. Paco is convinced that don Antonio hears from Pacita because he has seen the letters and smelled their fragrance.

Doctor Perales arrives and informs them that Pacita is in Madrid, and will soon come to see them. The poet, don José Vega, is back in Spain also, so will accompany Pacita. Their visit is to be kept secret from don Antonio, and he is to be engaged in giving a lesson to Paco. Doña Manolita looks in the mirror, looks attentively at Pacita's picture, arches her eyebrows, and shrugs her shoulders.

According to plan, Pacita enters the room quietly, unbeknown to don Antonio, as he and Paco are rehearsing lines. As Paco sees her, he becomes inspired, his reading has a different quality. Don Antonio senses the change and rises to his feet saying Pacita is there. He has recognized her perfume. He is indignant that they have not let him know beforehand of her visit. Bitter because of his blindness, don Antonio belittles himself to Pacita. She comforts him and has an inspiration that they should do Oedipus

again. This time he could do the part of the blind Oedipus with even more sincerity. It can be given as a benefit for don José, who, though a great poet, is still poor. Upon hearing this don Antonio remarks, "Comedia, tragedia del arte." He is overjoyed to see his friend, don José.

There is great confusion at the beginning of the first scene of Act III, of Oedipus, as don Antonio is carried on the stage and placed on a divan. It is the night of the play, and don Antonio has become ill shortly after the rise of the curtain. Doctor Perales says it is a case of dizziness and he will be all right. Don Antonio says his attack was brought on by the terrible sensation of not seeing the audience reaction. The complete silence had bothered him. Joaquín reports the audience had a moment of doubt when don Antonio first appeared on the stage. This makes don Antonio indignant, and he wants to continue with the play.

Paco stops don José and begs for a few words. He wants to play opposite Pacita for his debut. Don José recalls a similar situation many years before when Pacita requested making her debut with don Antonio. Don José philosophically says this great production in which they wish to play is entitled "Amor," and people have been playing it for centuries. The scene ends on a note of hope for Paco.

The second scene portrays the cast celebrating in a tavern following the play. It is very late. They discuss their actors' superstitions. Joaquín is very drunk. Paco urges don José to tell Pacita of his wish, but Pacita divines it. She remarks that Paco is very young. The dam breaks and they describe it to don Antonio at his request. Pacita pours one last round of drinks, and they drink to love as she recites lines from Calderón. Pacita kisses a rose and hands it to Paco. Don Antonio tells Paco to get out of the way as he feels rejuvenated by the dam. Suddenly he falls into his chair and dies, surrounded by his ardent friends.

### LO INVISIBLE

This is a trilogy consisting of three separate themes. There is also a prologue in which a señora in a long, flowing gown appears to chide the author, who is Azorín himself. Among other things, she says she is truth; that she carries an hour glass and a scythe; that she tells the prompter what to do; and that people often do not hear her. She is also the principal person in the act of life. The author and actress think they are dreaming.

## LA ARANITA EN EL ESPEJO

Leonor's husband, don Fernando, is away at war. She, her father, don Pablo, and the maid, Lucia, live near the sea, as this gives Leonor a feeling of closeness to her husband. She watches the boats as they enter and leave the harbor.

This day don Fernando is due to come home, but, unbeknown to Leonor, a telegram has arrived telling of his death. Leonor has always been sickly. At one time she wondered if her husband felt only pity for her rather than love. Now she is sure it is love.

Last night she had dreamed fancifully of being part of a cloud. Today a beggar has expressed the hope she would not have bad luck. Meanwhile, her father has been summoning courage to break the news of her husband's death. Leonor goes to don Fernando's room to check it over and sees a spider on the mirror. It is a sign of death and she knows she is dying. Just to see her husband, though, will be enough. The boat whistle sounds while her father tries to break the sad news to her. She senses his meaning and cries out that she wishes to die.

## EL SEGADOR

This is a play concerning Maria, a young widow with a small baby, and two friends, who come to visit her at her lonely farm home. Pedro comes first, while his wife visits friends, whose child is very ill. Teresa, Pedro's wife, arrives and there is seeming conflict between husband and wife about worrying poor Maria overmuch about the danger to her child. It seems most of the children thereabouts are dying. They try to tell Maria she should leave this barren land, but she wishes to stay there in the home in which her husband has died. While she is gone out of the room for a moment, Pedro mentions that Maria's place could probably be bought for a song. It could be made into a productive farm. He then urges Teresa to tell of the mysterious segador (mower) whose mysterious knocks are heard at the door at night. This visitant knocks only at doors of houses where there are children. Maria is, of course, frightened out of her wits and grabs her darling. Pedro and Teresa have bragged on her child's healthy color and have expressed every hope that he will grow to be a healthy young man. Maria says that talk of the segador is only superstition. Crying is heard that signifies the death of another child. Pedro and Teresa leave. Maria is on her knees praying. She hears a noise, but it must be the wind. She prays

more, and three loud knocks are heard at the door. Maria prays to the Virgin for help as she cuddles her child.

### DOCTOR DEATH, DE 3 A 5

The setting is a room with blue walls, having two doors, one at the rear and one at the right. There are a small table and two chairs.

The doctor's helper is reading when someone tries to come in. It is La Enferma (the ill one) who mistakes the helper for the doctor. La Enferma remarks about the simplicity of the room. The helper replies that the doctor is a great simplifier. La Enferma has a feeling of complacency; she feels almost cured. There is a window looking out on a garden and the patio of the house. The helper remarks that they are too busy to notice the garden as the doctor works both night and day. Somebody needs him constantly, but he is in the office only from 3 to 5.

La Enferma thinks she hears a sound from the inner office as of something heavy falling. The assistant leaves. Left alone there, La Enferma wanders to the window and gazes at the garden. There are many cypress trees and many of the plants called "everlasting."

Un Viejecito (a little old man) enters, and he and La Enferma strike up a conversation. Nothing ails him except old age, as he is almost ninety. He has had a happy life, but now his friends are gone; he is like a flame which is almost extinguished. She does not like his laughter, especially when he asks if she has noticed the name of the doctor. When he translates it for her in Spanish, she wants out of there.

He says she will have no fear when she gets in to see the doctor, and one does not go out the same door after seeing him. La Enferma feels she is dreaming.

She feels that the little old man is insane. One sees such people at a doctor's office. It is growing dark. She wonders why they do not bring lights. She crosses to the window and is appalled to see that the garden is now full of crosses and tombs.

She wants to leave. She enjoys life. Why had she come here? She tries to open the door, but it will not open. A stranger enters, La Hermanita de la Caridad, and pats La Enferma on the back.

La Enferma has a strange feeling. She is a child again. She wants to be back upon her mother's knees. La Hermanita tries to calm her.

The scene becomes bathed in green light. Sobs are heard and La Enferma realizes they are praying for her. She seems to be floating on air. The helper of the doctor appears and goes toward La Enferma. There is an announcement that the doctor is waiting. The two, the doctor's helper and La Hermanita, pick up La Enferma and carry her toward the inner office, but she suddenly brushes them aside and goes through the door by herself.

### BLANCO EN AZUL

This is a group of short stories. Each story is briefly summarized as follows:

#### FABIA LINDE

Fabia Linde, whose mother dies at her birth, is not expected to live as she is such a weak, frail child. As she has no other immediate family, she lives with distant relatives. She is not pretty, but has beautiful eyes and a lovely voice. Her conduct is questionable at fifteen and, at the age of twenty, she disappears.

Years later she returns, an old lady riding in a carriage. She has bought a magnificent palace which has remained empty for years. She lives there with her servants. The servants summon a doctor when she becomes desperately ill. The doctor smiles at her illness and at the idea that she is dying, but shortly after this, the doctor dies and Fabia recovers. Time after time a similar happening occurs until at last the doctors refuse to answer the appeals of her servants. At last a doctor from a neighboring town comes to see her. He is not in the least superstitious, but as he enters the building, he has a strange feeling of apprehension and grows pale.

#### LOS NIÑOS EN LA PLAYA

Felix Vargas, a rich cultured gentleman and a bachelor, sits beside his spacious home by the sea watching the waves and sky, and chatting with a lovely lady, Plácida Valle. Felix is somewhat bored with life, having been everywhere and done everything. Children playing on the beach recall to him thoughts of

a childhood love he had long ago. As a pledge of their devotion, he and the little girl had exchanged snail shells which were perfectly matched. Each had small black points. He had recently chanced upon his shell while looking for some papers. How he wishes he knew that small girl's name! Flácida's eyes open wide, and she tells him to come to her home in a couple of days. On his arrival, she presents him with a snail shell identical to that of his. Felix is overcome with joy and looks at her as though seeing her for the first time. That evening, as she prepares for bed, she tells her maid that though she had doubted her ability to discover it, the snail shell is really the equal to that of Felix, which has the little black points.

#### ROSA, LIRIO AND CLAVEL

Lucila, Evelia, and Violante, three lovely girls, though seemingly having everything which should enable young girls to be happy, sigh and wish they were flowers. They follow through this whimsical thought by specifying: Lucila would be a rose; Evelia, a lily; and Violante, a carnation. The game of wishing continues and they point out the specific flower in the nearby garden.

Near their lovely, large home is a small, modest home. In this lives a girl who is very ill. Her sweetheart is at war and she has not heard from him for some time. Near her, in a vase, is a white rose. A step sounds in a passageway and she receives bad news. Still, the rose, so white, reposes in the vase. At the large house, a white rose, symbolizing death, lies on a cushion. The face of the girl in the small house is very white also.

In a convent, a nun places a blue lily at the altar. It glows there brightly among the black folds.

In a distant part of the city, a youth is killed as a result of a quarrel in a tavern. As the authorities examine the corpse, he is found to be wearing a carnation in the buttonhole of his coat. It is red like his blood. In each case the flower symbolizes death.

#### TOM GREY

Tom Grey, a circus clown, an artist at his profession, is a victim of fate. Debts pursue him and he wishes frantically

for twenty thousand duros. Several times he has just missed becoming rich--once with a lottery, and another time with an inheritance.

The news of two suicides appears in the newspapers the same day. One is that of Tom Grey, and the other, don Benito Carranza, an old miser. Benito had made up his mind to leave his money to Tom, since Benito, even in spite of his avarice, attended the circus and was an enthusiastic admirer of Tom. There would be one provision. If Tom turned the required number of turns in the air, the money should be his. Now Tom was in the habit of always turning the same number of times, seven, but this particular night there was a distraction in the audience. This startled him and he stopped with six turns. Both Tom and Benito decided to end their struggles.

#### LA MARIPOSA Y LA LLAMA

Blanca Durán recalls with pleasure a small square she had visited in León some years before. She is rich, bored, and although there seems to be no real reason why she cannot visit León again, circumstances continually intervene to prevent it. To her, the little square in León represents a peace and serenity, almost of death. After trips to Madrid, Rome, the Orient, the Swiss mountains--at long last Blanca arrives in León to see once again this sight that has become so fixed in her memory. As she gazes fondly around the lovely plaza, shots ring out from a bar across the way, and Blanca falls dead.

#### EL PRIMER MILAGRO

An old man, a householder, is locking up for the night. He is a man who is hard to please, always finding fault with his wife, his family, his food--in fact, he is a virtual terror to all.

This particular night, one of his shepherds is late in appearing to give his daily report. At last he appears and the old man demands an explanation. The shepherd seems incoherent. Nothing unusual had happened except that in a stable he had seen some people. The old man is angry at this. People in his stable! And not having his permission! He will see about this! A man and a woman!

He sets forth on his journey seething with anger. Reaching the stable he looks in the window. He stands transfixed. Never

has he seen such a marvelous spectacle. He returns home meditatively. His actions astound his family. He is quiet, reserved, kind--even remembering to thank people. All the servants are bewildered too. At last he tells them of having seen this marvelous sight in the stable. They do not know what to make of such foolish talk. In fact, they would prefer to have him as he was. He even gives money to the poor and needy. The wife, in desperation, calls a doctor, who does not wish to antagonize the patient and agrees that he must have actually seen this thing. The doctor tells the wife that her husband is indeed insane, but at least he is not violent. They will hope for the best.

### ESPAÑOLES EN PARIS

These stories were written by Azorín during his period of exile during the Spanish Civil War. A brief summary of each follows:

#### NO ESTÁ LA VENUS DE MILO

The duke of Bracamonte, don Rodrigo de Carvajal, rich and bored, lives in an attic room in Paris. He is an exile from Spain. On visiting the Louvre one day, he notices a similarity between the Venus de Milo and his wife. But she is dead. Three days later he notices that the pedestal of the statue is empty. When don Rodrigo comments on the statue's not being there, the attendant agrees but looks at him with misgivings. Suddenly, don Rodrigo sees a woman in mourning approaching. It is the Venus de Milo, but it is also his own wife! The miracle continues for several days. One day, don Rodrigo meets a lovely lady on the street, and admires her. On going to the Louvre the next day, the lady in mourning does not appear. The duke realizes that he has been unfaithful in thought, but his repentance is so sincere that the Venus is not on her pedestal for several days. The story ends with a friend helping the duke down the stairs and telling him what a nice place he will have to stay in, and how sympathetic he will find Doctor Bernheim.

#### UNA CARTA DE ESPAÑA

Daniel and Rosario, man and wife, are exiles in Paris during the Spanish Civil War. They live in a hotel and have

meager means. They are disturbed because they have had no word of their loved ones in Spain for some time. Each tries to hide from the other the terrible anxiety he feels. They walk about. They eat very little. One day on their return from a walk, there is a letter on the table. Instead of relief, a dreadful feeling of apprehension comes over them. They prefer not knowing the truth. Daniel calls a friend to come and read the letter. Meanwhile he and Rosario walk about the streets, and sit on a park bench facing the hotel. Daniel presses Rosario's hand as they look anxiously toward the window of their room.

### HAY LOTO EN PARIS

The lotus flower signifies forgetfulness, and Emilio Cantos wishes for it exceedingly. He would give almost anything to obtain a lotus flower that he might, like Ulysses' sailors, eat of it. But he cannot obtain it in Paris.

To Emilio, everything is ideas, and after five years of enforced emigration to Paris, his equilibrium is broken. At last, he learns of an Oriental from whom he is able to buy a small box of the lotus flower. Instead of eating of it, Emilio decides to save it for a later day, but he obtains great satisfaction out of seeing the small box on his table. One day, in the Sorbonne, he hears a talk by an Oriental, who says there is nothing to the old myth about the lotus flower. Emilio is already verging on insanity, so perhaps that will make him forget.

One day, while reading a book of poetry, mention is made of the fact that the lotus made one forget his native land. Emilio is horrified. As if he could ever forget Spain! But perhaps this is all phantasy. He decides to end his agonies. He goes to a bridge over the Seine and vows to himself that if a boat passes under the bridge within five minutes, he will drop the box of lotus into the water. Three boats pass by, and the lotus falls into the water.

### SU LLEGADA A PARIS

César Cuellar, much disturbed because of his wife's delicate heart condition, seeks the help of a doctor as to how to break the news to her of their son's being in Paris. César and Clara's son, Fernando, has been fighting for Spain and has been facing

death constantly. Now that he is safely in Paris, the sight of him, alive, may be too much for her.

The doctor advises César to contact Diego Reyes, a well-known author, who may suggest some artful way to present the son to the mother. Together, they devise a plan of suggestion.

Clara is visibly startled by seeing on the table a necktie smelling of jasmin, Fernando's favorite scent. It belongs to Fernando. This has been placed there purposely by César to evoke memories of the boy. Other devices follow, but soon César is disturbed because Clara suddenly has become secretive and remote; she goes off by herself for hours at a time.

In the meantime, the father continues to visit his son. One day César is startled to have the boy confess to him that he has acquired a love interest in Paris. He is sure his father will approve and understand his feelings. César hardly knows how to cope with such a problem and asks the boy to be reasonable for his mother's sake, at least. The door opens and Clara steps into the room. She asks César if he does not know a mother's instincts cannot fail.

#### POR GAIFEROS PREGUNTAD

An old refrain, "Ask for Gaiferos if you go to Paris" poses the question, "Who was he?" and "How does one find him?"

Esmeterio Pisa wants to find out. He visits many places in Paris and especially enjoys the churches. One small one, San Julián, intrigues him. As he wanders about the church garden, he sees a pretty girl, who is obviously Spanish. Thinking of Gaiferos, he somehow associates this girl with this son-in-law of Charlemagne--but why, he does not know. He sees a statue of Charlemagne and thinks Gaiferos cannot be too far away.

Summoning courage, one day Esmeterio politely asks the young woman if she knows where to find Gaiferos. She asks if he means Octavio Maldonado. She says they are the same. She invites him to her house to see him. He is her father.

Seated on a chair is an old man with an open suitcase before him. He excuses himself, but says they are leaving for Spain that evening. The old man is obviously out of his mind and speaks of being the son-in-law of Charlemagne. He is a writer and uses the pseudonym of Gaiferos. He is excited about seeing Spain once more.

The daughter talks with the visitor as he leaves and tells him they are not going anywhere. The old man never leaves his chair. He is paralyzed. Every two weeks he goes through the phantasy of packing his suitcase.

#### NO ROMPER SU VOLUNTAD

The setting is on a train traveling through France. Among the passengers is a lady, dressed in black, and a priest. The lady's eyes are bandaged and one cannot tell if she is young or old. A gentleman watches them and finally is convinced that he knows the lady.

The gentleman, a doctor, asks permission to speak to the lady. The priest says she is his sister, and seems reluctant to let the stranger speak to her. Nevertheless, the doctor speaks to her, calling her by name. She is an abbess of a convent and was formerly a marchioness. Several years ago the doctor cared for her through a long illness. He has recognized her because of her voice and a small blemish on one hand.

It develops that she has her eyes bandaged so that she would have no temptations to look at Paris, as nothing worldly must concern her now. The doctor admires her will power.

#### LA MARAVILLA DE PARIS

Azorin goes into detail as to many things in Paris which are considered marvelous; the Eiffel tower, the Louvre, and all the other sights which visitors enjoy. But, to him, the greatest of all is a small store on 24 Vignon street, where he is able to buy honey in every imaginable guise--bonbons, cakes, etc. This shop recalls his memories of the honey of Alicante, said to be the best in all the world. Azorin says that French honey is good but cannot compare with that produced in Spain. These thoughts lead him to the subject of bees, and he ends with the question: "¿Habr  todav  abejas en Espa a?"

#### LOS PUEBLOS

This is a collection of essays, many of which, as the title indicates, are concerning some of the towns through which Azorin loved to wander.

## LA FIESTA

An old man, don Joaquín, now blind, returns to attend a fiesta. He calls upon old friends; but, as is usually the case after a long absence, the talk fades out. When the hired man is brought in to receive instructions from his master, cicadas are mentioned. Don Joaquín says that poets are like the cicadas, and, when summer is gone, they no longer sing.

## SARRIÓ

Azorín returns to look up his old friend, Sarrió. He finds everything in a disorganized condition, and finally his friend comes down the stairs, looking unkempt and wild. His daughters, Carmen and Lola, have married, and Pepita, Azorín's favorite, has died. Azorín knows it is hopeless to stay, so he departs, and outside, the church tower looms above, surrounded by wheeling swallows, and the bells ring.

## LA MUERTE DE SARRIÓ

A telegram arrives, telling of the death of Sarrió. Overwhelmed with sadness, Azorín recalls the happy days they spent together. He remembers the peculiar little idiosyncracies of his friend, which only endeared him the more. This had been a unique, admirable man, of whom the world had taken small note, but for whom Azorín had great esteem.

## LA NOVIA DE CERVANTES

Like Cervantes, Azorín sometimes dreamed of being an hidalgo. One time, Azorín, holding a child on his knees, while riding on a train, imagines himself as the father of a family and an hidalgo. He comes back to reality and gets off the train. After walking several miles, he reaches the town where Cervantes was born. He enters the house in which the famous writer lived. Upon being served a refreshing drink, he feels that the girl, serving him in 1904, might be the reincarnation of Catalina, Cervantes' sweetheart.

## LOS TOROS

Don Tomás has a collection of hats. In fact, he says they represent the story of his life, as he can recall where he wore each one. He deplores the fact that one cannot buy hats and clothes as in the past. His daughter, like her father, is very style conscious, as she consults a fashion sheet as to the proper way to wear her carnations to the bullfight. Don Tomás is impatient because of the delay, and it begins to rain as they leave for the arena.

## EL BUEN JUEZ

A man buys a volume dealing with opinions of Judge Magnaud of France, and presents it to don Alonzo, a judge. Mildly curious at first, the judge begins to read the volume and reads through the night. In court the next day, the lawyers are astounded because the judge has reversed his opinions, using common sense and not the law. Even the family seem not to understand what has come over him.

## UNA ELEGIA

Julín was a girl Azorín had known as the daughter of a friend. He learns she has died during his absence. Again he experiences sadness and thinks beautiful things should be eternal.

## UN TRASNOCHADOR

This concerns a night spent with a friend, don Juan, in a typical small town. They attend a tavern, leave, and spend the rest of the night chatting and visiting at the home of a mutual friend. They return home as the sun comes up.

## UNA CIUDAD

This concerns the town of Santander. Azorín mentions the cathedral where he watches the canons as they enter the church. He wonders about them as all are so different in appearance. He smells the pharmacy as he goes by, recalling experiences.

of his childhood. He watches the waves foam up on the shore. The gas lights gleam from afar in the town. He thinks of anxious eyes watching for the light of the lighthouse. He feels the mystery of the night. He says that light represents the force of man; the sea, inquiet and everlasting, represents the force of nature.

### EL GRANDE HOMBRE EN EL PUEBLO

Azorin quotes Emerson, saying a man needs space in which to be observed. He relates a day's activities of Emilio Castelar, whom he considers a great man.

### EN LOYOLA

In this city, the Jesuit order of monks had their origin. The house of San Ignacio has been preserved with many mementos within. Azorin describes the chapels, oratories, and the convent.

### EN URBERUAGA

Urberuaga is a home for ill people. There are doctors about. Gestona is an elegant hotel. He contrasts the two places where people go to take advantage of the mineral waters. Some romances develop in places like these with their pale, dilatory people.

### UN HIDALGO

This refers to Lazarillo de Tormes. The hidalgo's sword makes up for all his lack of material possessions. The sword is representative of everything Spanish. Azorin imagines the hidalgo taking a stroll down the street and chatting with the women; but at the mention of lunch or refreshment, the gentleman has urgent need to hurry elsewhere.

Azorin brings the allegory up to date. Spain is like the hidalgo, suffering pain and poverty beneath a serene appearance. He said it is a characteristic of the country, but he thinks this trait is disappearing.

## EL IDEAL DE MONTAIGNE

At an inn, a man, Alejandro, has died. They are trying to find out about him. He was said to be a completely happy man. He died, as he had lived, without worry or sadness, without troubling people. This idea of dying in an inn was an idea of Montaigne's, who said that we live and laugh among our people but we should lament and die among strangers. The end of this incident revealed that Alejandro had but a minute fragment of a brain. It is necessary to be so constructed if one wishes to see life as a happy situation.

## LA VELADA

The setting is in a comfortable house in winter when friends drop in. There is a pleasant chat about ordinary things. Crops are discussed, and there is the usual teasing of a young girl about the boy friend.

## EL PEZ Y EL RELOJ

In wandering about a seaside town, Azorin finds he must pay every time he sits down to enjoy watching people stroll around. No sooner seated, he forgets, and wanders somewhere else. Each time he must pay. He wanders down to the wharf where he watches a fisherman bringing in his catch. As he is engaged in watching the struggles of a fish, now placed in a basket, he manages to drop his watch in the sea. This points up the fact that both fish and watch are often out of their proper element. Man often finds himself thus.

## EL "LOS SILUETAS DE ZAIDIVAR

Canduela represents the charming fellow who plays up to the ladies.

Don Bernardo is one who demands instant service from the waitress or other servants. He has little to say of any consequence and carries an impressive cane.

Maria is contrasted with her sister, Manolita. Everything about Maria is subdued. She would be the type for a good wife.

Merceditas is a Cuban singer with a beautiful voice. She inspires one with a certain sympathy toward her.

#### SILUETAS DE URBERUAGA

"La masa" deals with the fact that in Urberuaga there are no children, while in Castona, there are. The atmosphere is entirely different. There is gaiety and fun in Castona.

"Los dos" concerns two people, a man and a woman, who are often seen together. Azorín wonders about them. Suddenly the woman leaves the man, and he sits with his head in his hands.

"María" throws carnations at the young men. She is typical of the town of Bilbao. She has good posture, and her walk is rhythmic. She is also a good dancer.

#### LA ANDALUCIA TRAGICA

There is a different atmosphere as one crosses the Castilian plains toward Andalusia. In part I, concerning Sevilla, one senses joviality, laughter; even a little craziness is in the very air. Life is sunny, birds sing, the street organs play. But in other parts of Andalusia, life is not so happy. Not all Andalusians go about wearing scarlet flowers in their hair.

Part II describes Lebrija, a desolate sort of place, where there is no noise, no song; only an occasional laborer crosses the street, and he seems melancholy and sober. Azorín inquires of conditions, and the reply is always the same: things are bad, very bad. Azorín's indignation arises because the government is so indifferent to these conditions.

In part III, "Los obreros de Lebrija," Azorín questions a group of workers as to what their minimum subsistence costs would be. According to Azorín, many of the troubles of this land are due to absentee ownership with its sub-rental system, and he foresees serious trouble ahead.

"Los sostenes de la Patria," part IV of this group, describes a local doctor making his rounds among these undernourished, hopeless people. The prevalence of tuberculosis is appalling. The doctor himself coughs.

The last of this series describes a philosopher of Arcos, a local storekeeper, who tells Azorín that the people of this sad countryside are being crucified at the hands of the government.

#### EPÍLOGO EN 1960

In this satiric dialogue, Azorín is laughing at himself and saying that by 1960 no one will know who this man Azorín was, or even if there were such a man. A bit of humor is inserted as one character is sure Azorín wrote a book of verse and is prepared to search his mind and recall a few lines.

#### CONFESION DE UN AUTOR

This brief addition to the book, Los pueblos, is gathered within book form for the first time in the book Obras selectas de Azorín. However, it was published in the newspaper España, February 6, 1905, the same year of publication as Los pueblos.

This essay concerns the place where Azorín did much of his writing--a shadowy sort of attic among cast-off furniture and such, but where he could gaze out the window and see the landscape which he loved to describe. He says an author needs a place to hide himself, an idea he gleaned from Montaigne.

Azorín defends his preoccupation with the small things of life and his love of the old, insignificant Castilian towns. He says we tend to disdain the ordinary; if one is contemptuous of life in a small place, the commonness and monotony is in oneself, rather than in the town.

#### CASTILLA

This is a book of essays written by Azorín in 1912. They are summarized as follows:

#### LOS FERROCARRILES

Spain was slow in getting railroads. It was not until about 1848 to 1851 that they were constructed there. Most Spaniards were fearful about their ingress into the country. English

engineers were finally called in for help in establishing railroads, but the work was slow in progressing.

### EL PRIMER FERROCARRIL CASTELLANO

Guillermo Lobé made a trip from Cuba to the United States in 1837 to study the railroad situation. He studied railroads in both the United States and Europe. His was a vision of Spain being crossed by railroads in all directions.

Ramón César de Contí made a drawing in 1829 showing a tiny train, or something resembling a train.

The first English train was in 1830. It was 1845 when the Englishman, Sir J. Walmsley, went to Spain to give impetus to the establishment of a railroad. Opinion was divided as to its worth. Spain was wary because of invasions during 1808 and 1823. The line from France to Spain was completed in 1860. Sir J. Walmsley invited George Stephenson of England to study the situation; but, because of much haggling, he returned shortly to England.

### VENTAS, POSADAS Y FONDAS

Much has been made of the inns of Spain, dwelling on their poor quality. Azorín describes them very much as he has in his novels, *La voluntad* and *Antonio Azorín*. He says arriving at an inn at night is often a harrowing experience. He comments that a Spaniard's tolerance of noises has something to do with his character. These inns are full of noises.

### LOS TOROS

This is a discussion concerning bullfights. Azorín quotes other writers who tell of them. He comments on the horror of them. One gets the idea that Azorín was not fond of this sport.

### UNA CIUDAD Y UN BALCÓN

This concerns a fanciful view through a telescope from the bell tower of a cathedral.

The first view represents a view about the time of the Renaissance, showing a knight wearing a plumed hat traveling with his retinue through Spain. On a balcony, there sits a man, looking sad, with his head in his hand.

A second view shows a scene at about the time of the French Revolution, and there is a man on the balcony, in a similar position as in the first view.

The third view is a prediction of the future when man will fly through the air and travel across the seas in magnificent fashion. Still, there is the man on the balcony, seated with head in hand and looking sad.

#### LA CATEDRAL

The reader is taken back to Roman days when there was a huge Roman bath. This later became a cathedral. Many people added to this structure, time intervened, even an earthquake occurred. Nevertheless, the cathedral remains, looming above the other buildings of the town. It is an inspiration to all, at all seasons of the year, and at all times of the day.

#### EL MAR

Castile is too far from the sea. Most natives there do not know the sea. Azorin gives vivid descriptions of the sea. He stresses the fact that man will always view the sea and stars, and wonder at their majesty. He describes the sea from different vantage points—one from the height of a mountain—and also at different times of day. Then he goes back to his Castilian plain.

#### LAS NUBES

In this, Azorin takes liberties with characters from La celestina. He gives minute descriptions of the beautiful home where Calixto and Melibea live with their daughter Alisa. Calixto ponders in the solarium. He seems to have everything life can offer, except a son. Past and present have no significance for him, yet he contemplates the clouds. The clouds change, yet are constantly there—gray, fleecy white, now golden, red, violet.

The clouds offer a spectacle of life; it passes like the clouds. They are the image of time.

Calixto goes to the garden where his daughter Alisa is. There he sees a young man pursuing a falcon. The young man sees Alisa and smiles at her, even as Calixto had done when he met his beloved Melibea under similar circumstances. Life, like the clouds, is ever-changing, but always the same.

## LO FATAL

This essay harkens back to the old story of Lazarillo de Tormes.

The hidalgo and Lazarillo live on the scraps which the boy can beg. According to Azorin, the hidalgo later inherits money and land. He has nothing to do with other nobles. His beautiful home, his arms, seem to bring him no pleasure. He cannot even enjoy his food, which is now plentiful. Doctors cannot cure him. The barking of dogs causes him to have sleepless nights. He journeys to the city and has his portrait painted by El Greco.

## LA FRAGRANCIA DEL VASO

A lady, Constanza, married, and as the mother of two grown sons, returns to her childhood home after many years of absence. Her foster parents are dead, and no one remains thereabouts whom she used to know except an old beggar woman who is blind and deaf. Constanza tries to make the old beggar realize who she is, but to no avail. Constanza returns to her own home convinced that one cannot revive the past as only the fragrance of the vase remains.

## CERRERA, CERRERA

At the University of Salamanca in the sixteenth century, there was a young man, a student, who preferred silence to the hustle and bustle of the campus. He lived apart; he was thoughtful, but he did not study much. He fell in love with a young woman whose character was not good, but she was so clever she fooled even her father-in-law.

The story shifts to an allusion to Don Quijote where the shepherd says the wild goat must follow its instincts.

Years later, an old gentleman, an alumnus of a university, is seated by a mill, watching people cross a bridge. There are all kinds of people and vehicles. He receives a letter of which the handwriting is familiar. He leaves hurriedly; and, as he reaches his destination, the home of his former wife, he sees a doctor's rig in front of it and realizes that she is dying.

After her death, he returns to his former life and, years later, on reading Ovid, wonders what meaning his life has had.

### UNA FLAUTA EN LA NOCHE

In 1820, the sound of a flute could be heard by the travelers as they approached the inn called Estrella. An old man with white hair was teaching a young boy. The stage passed their home each evening at nine.

In 1870, the stage still rounded the corner at nine and the sound of a flute could be heard. An old man and two children are in the room this time. Only one is playing the flute as the other looks around with wide blue eyes. When the playing is done, the silent and absorbed child runs quickly to an old house where he finds books to read. The guests at the inn, Estrella, are fewer still.

Without mentioning the year, a man with a white beard is reading in a room seemingly full of books. But some have disappeared from the shelves. There is a photograph of a woman and a child, but no voices can be heard. During the day the little old man goes from here to there, carrying bits of paper with writing on them. Often he brings them back and puts them in a box.

In 1900 there is a train in place of the stagecoach. An old man with blue eyes and white hair steps from the train, gets into a coach, and is taken to a new inn, as the old Estrella is no longer sufficient. Strangely enough, he finds the new inn is his old home, and he is assigned to the same little room he used to occupy. Feeling the need for air, he takes a walk, and in the silence of the night he hears the sound of a flute. He approaches the vestibule and sees an old man and a child. The child is playing the old familiar melody. The old man sits on a rock with his hand pressed to his breast.

## UNA LUGECITA ROJA

If one went to the house of Henar, one would find it deserted, the garden overgrown with weeds, and a general feeling of decay all around. Yet at a certain time of night, the little red light of a train would appear and then disappear.

The house of Henar was once a beautiful place, where a man, woman, and child enjoyed the good things of life together. They often watched the glow of the little red light as it appeared at its proper time. Sometimes the conversation turned to the light and either the man or wife would remark about the fatality of the light. It had its moment, and then was gone.

The woman and the child are waiting at the station. The woman is red-eyed and in mourning. But from the empty house the little red light can be seen shining at the regular time as usual.

## LA CASA CERRADA

Two travelers are speaking together in a carriage. One asks the other questions concerning their whereabouts. Later they enter a house where the questioner is especially interested in the conditions of the books, pictures, views from the windows, and such. It has been many years since he was there, and now he is blind.