SCIENCE FICTION AS MAINSTREAM LITERATURE: THE SPANISH SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE AND ITS RECEPTION BEFORE THE 1936 SPANISH CIVIL WAR[1]

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Abstract

After humble beginnings in the 19th century, early Spanish science fiction experienced a boom in the early decades of the last century, after the first translations of the Wellsian futurist narratives were extremely well received by the public and the critics. This happened at a time when several young Spanish intellectuals were looking for a more cosmopolitan world view in contrast with the traditional isolationism of their country. Some of them even lived in London for a period of time, where they became familiar with British institutions and culture, including the*scientific romance*, which was rapidly assimilated. Indeed, both the Wellsian and Swiftian models would soon be combined in a series of original scientific fictions, such as Vicente Blasco Ibáñez's *El paraíso de las mujeres* (*Women's Paradise*, 1921), Luis Araquistáin's *El archipiélago maravilloso* (*The Marvellous Archipelago*, 1923), or Salvador de Madariaga's *La jirafa sagrada*, translated by the author himself from his English original (*The Sacred Giraffe*, 1925). All these works follow a speculative and satirical pattern that uses irony to convey a message of intellectual freedom. Due to their fusion of thought, humour and reasoned imagination in an innovative fictional framework, they were acknowledged by contemporary critics as brilliant examples of modernist writing. Furthermore, there was virtually no pulp literature as such, but rather weekly mass publications which were not genre oriented, as they used to publish all kinds of literature, from erotic tales to social narratives, along with science fiction short stories, usually written by renowned authors. Scientific romance in the Wellsian or other modes was then considered a respectable form of literature, as well as an adequate vehicle for social and political commentary. Therefore, it was a legitimate part of the Spanish mainstream literature, at least until the 1936 Spanish Civil War put an end to the Silver Age of Spanish culture.

Keywords: scientific romance, Spain, mainstream literature, reception

English is today the only *lingua franca* of science fiction. As a result, the different national traditions in the literature of this genre are internationally non-existent unless their history is also written in English, or their main works are translated into English. Spanish science fiction has not fared particularly well in this regard. Not a single name from Spain appears in the world science fiction canon yet. While this canon remains overwhelmingly Anglo-American, several Spanish-American writers such as Adolfo Bioy Casares are regularly mentioned in international encyclopaedias and surveys of the genre. In contrast, the rich science fiction literary production in Spain is largely ignored, with some exceptions. An anthology entitled *Cosmos latinos* (2003) offered the English-speaking readership a selection of science fiction stories originally written in Spanish, both from Latin America and Spain. However, putting together Spanish-American and peninsular science fiction implies that a common language means also a common tradition. This idea can be historically misleading. Science fiction had its own dynamics in Spain. Despite the fact that some of its features can also be seen in Latin America, such as its former mainstream status (Cano 2006, Ferreira 2011), its history reflects rather the European framework in which it evolved, at least before the Americanisation of Western European science fiction after the Second World War virtually put an end to the main feature of the continental scientific romance: the fact that it was fully integrated into the mainstream literary realm, as its reception by the intellectual establishment demonstrates. In Spain, this was certainly the case. Speculative fiction[2] reached a level of quality perhaps not unworthy of the cultural glory of the Spanish "Silver Age", which began around 1900 and ended in 1936, when the Civil War tore apart the country, and its literature.

However, the genre had an inauspicious beginning in Spain. The satirical and philosophical imaginary voyages, as well as the utopian tradition inaugurated by Thomas More, were not completely absent from Spanish literature,[3] but the few instances that could be mentioned are usually unoriginal, being adaptations or pale copies of foreign models, most of them French, while others such as the nationalist utopia *Sinapia* (probably end of 17th century) remained manuscript until modern times. Proto-science fiction began to be increasingly cultivated in Spain only in the second half of the 19th century,[4] when the *novela científica* (scientific romance or novel) started to circulate as such. This particular "forgotten subgenre" (Dendle 1995) was primarily didactic.[5] The narratives looked rather like fictional textbooks, and their plot was usually a mere means to popularise science. For instance, the anatomy and functioning of the circulatory system are pleasantly described in Amalio Gimeno's novel *A Blood Inhabitant* (*Un habitante de la sangre*, 1873) through the adventures

of a red blood cell endowed with sentient individuality, and the cells in the body portrayed as a metaphorical city where health and disease fight each other as do the virtues and vices in medieval allegories. The symbolic character of this novel reappears in some of the speculative stories of Santiago Ramón y Cajal, which he wrote in the last decades of the century, although he published them much later in his *Vacation Stories* (*Cuentos de vacaciones*, 1906), which has recently been translated into English by Laura Otis (Ramón y Cajal 2006). In fictions such as "The Corrected Pessimist" ("El pesimista corregido") scientific method becomes an instrument to confer additional authority on what is essentially as a moral parable, without any attempt to gain the reader's suspension of disbelief as to the likelihood of the extraordinary facts reported. Therefore, these stories can hardly qualify as science fiction in the modern sense, and their didacticism probably makes them quite unattractive today. In addition, they were often fairly one-dimensional in their positivist optimism. For most of their authors, science was nothing short of a panacea. For instance, futuristic fantasies such as "Four Centuries of Good Governance" ("Cuatro siglos de buen gobierno", 1885), which is probably one of the earliest uchronias,[6] is a rewriting of the country's history by Nilo María Fabra, according to which Spain "has retained its global power in the late nineteenth century and is about to leave Earth to colonise Mars",[7] thanks to the implementation of rational policies similar to those advocated by Cajal, among others. As Bell and Hawk argue, "indeed, Fabra's most common motif is the portrayal of science as a positive and essential element for society's progress and human happiness" (2003: 36). Nevertheless, technical progress was not always seen as inherently good – not even then. Fabra's most famous short story in his country[8] foreshadows both future descriptions of totalitarianism and the warnings posed in many scientific romances against technology no longer checked by a humanist world view. "Teitan the Proud" ("Teitán el Soberbio", 1895) is Fabra's portrayal of a dictator ruling over the whole world as a "personification of the state-God",[9] who gets a mechanical device to read people's thoughts in order to complete his grip on power.

This tale is an exception in Fabra's extensive proto-science fictional production, but it can be symptomatic of a European-wide change in the field. Speculative literature increasingly became a warning exercise. The future was no longer imagined as the illusory security promised by Positivism. On the contrary, current shortcomings could become worse and bring about nightmarish societies, as well as the demise of mankind, whose fate was to be dictated by the inexorable laws of evolution anyway. Darwinism and the spread of the proletarian movements and doctrines were two of the forces calling into question former certainties, and these gave rise to the new scientific romance. This eschewed blatant

didacticism[10] in favour of an ironic questioning of reality, following the example of the philosophical tale in the Age of Enlightenment. As in the fictions of Jonathan Swift or Voltaire, "scientific romance is always inherently playful and is never without at least a hint of seriousness. Both these things are inherent in the nature of the exercise and we should not fall into the trap of considering playfulness and seriousness to be contradictory. (...) This combination of playfulness and seriousness makes scientific romance inherently iconoclastic" (Stableford 1985: 9). It also makes it inherently ambiguous, as its construction usually reveals a search for a plurality of readings, as in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872) or, above all, in H. G. Wells' first scientific fictions, which were deservedly acclaimed both in Britain and abroad, while their critical appeal has subsided little since their publication. Wells' reputation was essential for the shaping of the European scientific romance. In Spain, the translation of *The War of the Worlds* (1898) by one of the leading young intellectuals of the age, Ramiro de Maeztu,[11] was of paramount importance for the genre's acceptance as a respectable literary endeavour there. A highly influential critic, Eduardo Gómez de Baquero, hailed the arrival of "a new form of the marvellous in literature".[12] Wells had carried out "a recovery of wonder in literature with originality and skilfully building on the materials furnished by current scientific culture"[13] in order to "give the fantastic an appearance of historical reality".[14] Thus, speculation and plausibility had been combined to renovate imaginary fiction in a modern way.

After this clear-sighted and highly positive appraisal, some of Wells' scientific romances were rapidly translated and published in Spain (Lázaro 2004: 50). Their success can be inferred from the fact that they even gave rise to parodies.[15] However, almost a decade passed before Wells' model was followed in earnest. The engineer Carlos Mendizábal Brunet intended to fill up the gaps in the plot of *The Time Machine* by describing in realistic minute detail the protagonist's second journey into the future in his long narrative *Elois and Morlocks* (*Elois y Morlocks*, 1909; as Lázaro Clendábims). The Spanish author spared no effort to explain how both races had come to be, and how the rediscovered Christian faith redeemed them to build up a new common humanity according to doctrine of the Catholic Church. The novel is, accordingly, full of preaching: "If Wells places on top of a social subject matter scatological views typical of a philosopher of History, Mendizábal crushes it with them"[16]. His novel is, therefore, heavily didactic and rather old-fashioned. Nevertheless, it was well received, mostly by the Catholic press, and it was followed by a sizeable number of confessional scientific romances set in an apocalyptic future, such as Antonio Ibáñez Barranquero's *Jerusalem and Babylon* (*Jerusalén y Babilonia*, 1927) or Carlos Ortí y Muñoz's

Times End (*El fin de los tiempos*, 1933).[17] All these works were well-regarded in Spanish Catholic fundamentalist circles, but the literary establishment largely ignored them, probably due to their limited aesthetic ambitions. Ramiro de Maeztu himself published a devastating review of Mendizábal's novel,[18] in which he also rejected the genre[19] which he had done so much to introduce into Spain, maybe unwillingly.

The main current of the Spanish scientific romance is indeed represented by some of Maeztu's followers. Although Maeztu never wrote any speculative fiction, he played a crucial, if indirect, role as mentor for a group of young intellectuals who moved to London after him to complete their education as Maeztu had prompted them to do after the defeat of Spain in the Spanish-American War in 1898. This defeat entailed, among other things, Spain's geopolitical marginality, which contrasted so much with its former historical prominence. To face this bitter reality, many believed that the technical modernisation advocated by the positivists was not enough to bring Spain back to Europe's heart. It was also considered necessary to know first-hand what was triggering the success of the major industrial and colonial powers, and to put an end to the traditional isolationism of Spanish culture. The young writers who later formed the "Generation of 1914", whose *de facto* leader was the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, adopted this cosmopolitan approach with enthusiasm. Many of them went to study or work abroad. Some went to France or Italy, but most chose Germany and/or Britain. London, as the centre of the largest empire and economical power of that time, was the preferred destination, following Maeztu's example. Three of the most influential Spanish intellectuals of that generation (the novelist Ramón Pérez de Ayala, the journalist and socialist politician Luis Araquistáin and the versatile writer and one of the parents of Europeanism, Salvador de Madariaga) were some of the "London boys" (*chicos de Londres*, as Maeztu called them in a letter; Santervás 1990: 142 and footnote 45) who settled there for at least a couple of years, familiarising themselves with the practices of a truly liberal democracy and meeting British men of letters such as George Bernard Shaw or Wells himself. They became directly acquainted with modern English literature, the spirit of which pervades their original works, even if their writing was deeply rooted in their country's intellectual life and traditions. The fact that these three authors also wrote scientific romances is, therefore, little surprising.[20]

The first one to move to London and to return to Spain was Pérez de Ayala, who was also the first in applying aptly the Wellsian model in a curious dystopia in dramatic form, *Sentimental Club* (1909). Despite its brevity, this is an important work, at least historically, being one of the clearest precedents of the modern dystopian mode, long before 20th-century

experiments in totalitarianism. His work was so pointedly prophetic that he hardly had to modify the contents of his attack on imposed collectivism when he rewrote *Sentimental Club* and published it under the title of *The Sentimental Revolution* (*La revolución sentimental*, 1929), when Russian red terror was widely known to all those whom utopian delusions had not blinded. This short play takes us to a distant future in which all humankind is subject to a radically egalitarian communist regime. Any external distinctiveness in clothing or appearance has been suppressed, as well as sexual reproduction itself, in this technologically advanced but emotionally void future. Centuries-long repression of sentiment has resulted in a peaceful and obedient mankind. The sentimental revolution will come after a historian has access to documents of the barbarian past, and shows them to a group of men and women who gradually rediscover, guided by him, the joys of romantic love, together with the ones brought by the deadly sins. The end is open, as only the preparation of the revolution is described, although it is implied that it will triumph. Contrary to most dystopias, there is neither a tragic catharsis, nor an oppressive atmosphere. The tone is rather light, even farcical, as the author desires to warn his readers pleasantly, not to impress them with a vision of horror. Nevertheless, its clever portrayal of a system where "any form of sexual activity other than that sanctioned by authority is seen as inherently subversive", in which "it is the instinctual, spontaneous, uncontrollable quality of sexual desire that makes it a threat to officially imposed conformity" (Ferns 1999: 122), calls to mind the later classical dystopias of George Orwell and Aldous Huxley. It is precisely this dystopian character that has instigated some academic attention. His author esteemed it enough to compile a second version together with other short fictions in a volume also entitled *La revolución sentimental* as late as 1959. This is the book which made the play more widely known in critical and literary circles, as both *Sentimental Club* and *The Sentimental Revolution* were first issued in pulp collections,[21] which were not usually reviewed by critics, if only due to their staggering number (there was a different text published every week, and there usually were several collections competing for the public's favour at the same time), which prevented them from doing so. However, unlike its American counterparts, pulp publications were then fully integrated into the main literary realm in Spain. The fact that an intellectually demanding work such as Pérez de Ayala's appeared in two of such periodicals is in no way exceptional. On the contrary, what made them a unique phenomenon in Europe was not only their abundance and massive success, but above all their overall literary quality, which remained high throughout the period between 1907 (when the first, *El Cuento Semanal*, appeared) and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. Their paratextual features were as poor as those of the Anglo-Saxon pulps

or the French *feuilletons*. Actually, they were not books, but low-quality booklets that did not exceed sixty pages in general. However, the contents were usually far better than the material on which they were printed. They often had beautiful illustrations, such as Art Deco drawings by Rafael de Penagos in the 1920s, while many of their authors make up the canon of early 20th-century Spanish literature.[22] Therefore, what could seem commercial literature from a sociological perspective was only a convenient way for writers and intellectuals to reach a large readership without debasing their art. In fact, they used to publish their fictions in the press, the pulp collections and in volumes without any real distinction regarding the texts themselves. Short stories first published in newspapers or pulp periodicals were often collected in volumes with only a few or even no changes. There were also cases in which a story passed from a book to a widely distributed pulp periodical. All this shows that virtually only mainstream literature existed in Spain in that period. In addition, there was indeed little place in the market for specialised genre collections, in which a distinctive lowbrow genre literature could really develop. Most weekly mass publications were actually not genre oriented. Their listings include mostly erotic tales and realistic social narratives, but also fantastic tales and a few scientific romances and plays.

Along with *Sentimental Club*, one could mention a couple of these highbrow pulp stories that have been collected in modern anthologies, such as Luis Antón del Olmet's *Truth in Delusion* (*La verdad en la ilusión*, 1912), a sarcastic vision of an aseptic future not unlike the one depicted by Pérez de Ayala, albeit anarchist, or José María Salaverría's finely ironic tale *The Wonderful Planet*, aka *A World Revealed* (*El planeta prodigioso*[23] or, *Un mundo al descubierto*, 1929), which takes the form of a historical lecture delivered by a Martian scholar to an audience in their planet about the Earth, its inhabitants and their irrational ways. Due to its inclusion as a "Fantastic Colophon" ("Colofón fantástico") in his successful nonsensical book[24] *The Man Who Bought a Car* (*El hombre que compró un automóvil*, 1932), Wenceslao Fernández Flórez's *The Recent Fauna* (*La fauna reciente*, 1928) has also been widely read; it describes humorously the car's evolution to animal sentience. On the other hand, some interesting stories published in serial collections await rediscovery, such as Emilio Carrere's satirical *The Moon Ambassador* (*El embajador de la luna*, 1925), which narrates the visit of a grotesque Selenite to popular neighbourhoods in Madrid, while a more serious tone predominates in three other interesting tales that combine imaginary scientific innovations with fantastic tropes.[25] Artificially induced telepathy turns out to be a tragic gift in Marcos Rafael Blanco Belmonte's *The Science of Pain* (*La ciencia del dolor*, 1907). Devolution to an ancestral animality reveals the woman's true being in Rafael López de Haro's *Doctor Iturbe's*

Case (*El caso del doctor Iturbe*, 1912). Finally, in Alfonso Hernández Catá's *The Abortion* (*El aborto*, 1921 in the volume entitled *La voluntad de Dios*,[26] or *God's Will*; 1922 in the pulp weekly *La Novela Corta*, or *The Short Novel*), the invention by a German-speaking scientist of a device able to transfer all the skills of a dying person to a living one is tested on a village idiot in rural Spain where a friend of his does archaeological research, with terrible results: the formerly happy idiot commits suicide after receiving a philosopher's mind, and the foreign inventor and his friend are stoned to death by the villagers. Thus, Hernández Catá succeeds in criticising both the colonial approach of foreign science in a backward country and the brutality of a rural society deeply reluctant to scientific progress. The realism of the tale sharpens the effect of an anti-pastoral mode that is quite typical of modern Spanish literature, at least in mainstream literature, which clashes with the rural nostalgia that characterises the works, speculative or not, coming from more developed countries. After all, technical progress was still a prerequisite for Spain's *regeneration*,[27] although the modernist approach was, as said before, ambiguous. Knowing more does not bring happiness to Hernández Catá's characters, and the anti-technological stance can also be seen, as a secondary topic, in Pérez de Ayala's play, as in subsequent dystopias such as the prophetic short story by Miguel A. Calvo Roselló entitled "A Strange Land" ("Un país extraño", 1919), or in a pacifist warning such as the apocalyptic tale by Blanco Belmonte "Mankind's Twilight" ("El ocaso de la humanidad", 1920), both written in the aftermath of the industrialised massacres of the Great War and the Russian Revolution. Nonetheless, an unconditional attack on mechanisation such as Miguel de Unamuno's story "Mechanopolis"[28] ("Mecanópolis", 1913) was rather uncommon in Spain. One of the leading European intellectuals of his age, Unamuno had abandoned the progressive ideals of his youth to champion an essentialist approach which saw the quest for eternity as the main human goal, a primarily spiritual task for which technical advances were not relevant, or were even counterproductive. Written "under the inspiration of *Erewhon: or, Over the Range* (1872), a pioneering novel by Samuel Butler, it describes a city inhabited and controlled by thinking machines; the denunciation of the mechanized, inhuman and phantasmagorical world of Mechanopolis fits perfectly the anti-industrialist views of its author".[29] But, unlike Butler's narrative, "Mechanopolis" makes little use of irony. It is rather a poetic parable with a symbolic richness that provides a literary attraction of its own. Nothing less could be expected from such a consummate writer as Unamuno, although he was not really congenial with the workings of scientific romance.

However, it might be convenient to say that Unamuno wrote his tale in a moment when the genre had not yet fulfilled its promise in Spain. *Sentimental Club* remained virtually

isolated until the period following the Great War. Wells' translations also ceased to be published back then. All of a sudden, the situation changed dramatically, and science fiction, deriving from the British model or otherwise, experienced nothing short of a boom in the early 1920s. Wells was again at the origin of this regain in interest. In 1919, the Spanish-Cuban novelist Alfonso Hernández Catá offered the Spanish readership a translation, with an interesting preface, of several of Wells' short stories in a volume entitled *El país de los ciegos y otras narraciones* (*The Country of the Blind and Other Stories*). This initiative was followed by a wave of new Spanish versions, thanks to the publication between 1921 and 1926 of almost all Wellsian scientific romances by the Barcelona publishing house Bauzá, including the most recent ones. In addition, Hernández Catá's translation was intelligently reviewed by poet and critic Gabriel Alomar, who put Wells' work in its right literary context. This British author had learnt from precursors such as Jules Verne and Edgar Allan Poe, but he belonged to "the English tradition of Thomas More's social planning and Swift's humor, being at the same time a citizen of Utopia and of Lilliput".[30] His "transcendental art"[31] was, indeed, Swiftian in its origin. It shared with the old master a philosophical beauty able to communicate us a shuddering sense of man's relativity, in both his nature and his social order, allowing us to question every false certainty towards a personal and more solid reading of the world. After the Great War crisis and the subsequent downfall of the former idols of the tribe, the Swiftian lesson, updated in the modern scientific narrative as "the romance of the disenchanted universe" (Stableford 1985: 9), was heard again loudly. Alomar pointed out its literary potential for a Spain that, while it remained neutral, was nevertheless suffering the universal crisis of values characteristic of Modernity in its zenith, a crisis which was also aesthetic. The traditional novel was losing ground to a variety of narrative experiments, and the public seemed to embrace them. The use of a science fictional *novum* in a framework inherited from the classical imaginary voyage was one of the procedures tried out to build up a kind of narrative fitted to the new times.

Among the Spanish contributions to that neo-Swiftian romance, two works stand out clearly even at an international level, and should be counted among the masterpieces of early science fiction in their language. The first one, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez's *Women's Paradise* (*El paraíso de las mujeres*, 1922), was probably the most successful of both among the general public. This is hardly surprising given its author's global best-selling status. After becoming his country's leading naturalistic and social novelist, mundane narratives such as *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (*Los cuatro jinetes del Apocalipsis*, 1916) had brought him fame and money, specially in America, where his latest novels were turned into early blockbusters.

Women's Paradise was actually born as a film project. Hollywood had asked him for a screenplay, but Blasco Ibáñez was primarily a novelist, and ended up writing a text so long and complex that it rapidly became unfilmable. No film was actually made out of it, and it was not translated into English either. Nevertheless, the writer took the opportunity to try his hand at what he deemed a new sort of "cinematic novel",[32] as he insisted in his preface to the novel, where he also tried to tone down the obvious satirical content of the work by saying that, "some wrongly believe, even in the United States, where women have an enormous and legitimate influence, that my novel is a satire against contemporary feminism".[33] But was it really an anti-feminist narrative? American civilization was far more advanced than Spain with regard to women's rights and role in public life, and a leftist and liberal writer as Blasco Ibáñez does not seem to resent it. On the contrary, he uses in *Women's Paradise* a "strategy of denunciation of woman's social marginalisation and of other social shortcomings",[34] namely militarism, traditionally identified with masculinity. In his novel, which belongs to the subgenre of *Gulliver's Travels* continuations, an American man arrives at Lilliput, long after Gulliver's departure, and finds out that women, by keeping the monopoly of a ray which cancels the destructive power of any weapon, exclude all men from any position of authority, until a male inventor discovers how to deactivate the ray, men revolt asking for equal political rights, for a new, more egalitarian order. The result is not known, as the main character wakes up before that: the whole story had been a dream. This limits the science fictional character of the novel, although its use of scientific devices as sources of wonder had a model in Wells, as Gómez de Baquero stated in its review of the book.[35] Its description of Lilliputian gynaecocracy is at any rate a good example of cognitive estrangement, while the whole book benefits from an ironic lightness of tone, as well as from his author's remarkable narrative skills, which provide for pleasant reading. The work is still in print, and it has been translated at least into six languages,[36] a fortune rarely encountered by Spanish modern speculative fiction. However, this fact has not encouraged modern scholars to study it seriously yet. In spite of its appealing subject for a feminist approach, it has aroused indeed little interest in the academia. This is perhaps due to a continuing bias against commercial successful authors, which is far from new: Blasco Ibáñez's contemporary critics usually preferred to forget the true novelty of the book, which was mainly its speculative dimension, to insist on its all too real failure as cinematic narrative.[37] Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that its genre was not the reason why most reviewers disliked the novel, since the second great Spanish modern imaginary voyage, published just a year after, was a critical success.

Luis Araquistáin's *The Wonderful Archipelago* (*El Archipiélago maravilloso*, 1923) "is a novel in the manner of *Gulliver's Travels*", as the author himself stated in a letter sent to a British publishing house when he was trying unsuccessfully to see it translated into English (Martín Rodríguez 2011a: 45). It describes three imaginary Pacific isles visited by two sailors after their ship sank. The first one is the Isle of Immortals, where a highly advanced society completely stagnates following the discovery of an immortality pill, which also confers youth and invulnerability but results in an everlasting boredom. The second isle is home to a primitive society where a naturally occurring crystal allows to see other people's intentions, which eventually becomes ends obviously being a source of disappointment and ultimately of violence. The last isle hosts an (anti)utopian gynaecocracy in which infant males are slaughtered and their fathers, moved by the perspective of the possibility of limitless intercourse with the native girls, are sexually used to death. These societies are "pessimist replicas of the social and political utopias concocted by contemporary man",[38] whose description results in "a parodic, incisive and disenchanted vision both of the redeeming emerging ideologies in general and of the European frustrations in the period between the wars".[39] Araquistáin's three targets were, respectively, Unamuno's eternalist obsession, psychoanalytical pretence to uncover the unconscious and feminism, although he denied any heavily ideological intent, stating all too modestly in his manuscript sequel entitled *Uchronia* (*Ucronia*) that *The Marvellous Archipelago* "is a burlesque and light book, which does not deserve to be ranked among the utopian ones".[40] This is precisely how it was received by contemporary reviewers, starting with the defender of scientific romance, Gómez de Baquero. For him, *The Marvellous Archipelago* was a "novel of Utopia"[41] which reflected "what does not exist in the map of reality"[42] but "can exist in the wider map of the possible".[43] Far from being arbitrary and absurd, utopian discourse could confer plausibility to fictional wonders, broadening realism with a moralist and philosophical stance, as Araquistáin had proved in his novel in an exemplary manner:

> Araquistáin's book has a combined philosophical and literary interest. The mission of the novel is not just uncovering what is under the roofs [...]. Utopias are not forbidden for them, and this kind of voyage can be as attractive as touring the usual scenes of the human comedy, if the guide succeeds in giving colour and expressiveness to the images, as the author of *The Marvellous Archipelago* has achieved.[44]

Araquistáin's colourful, but clear, prose was also widely praised by contemporary critics. Their positive reception was probably shared by Spanish intellectuals, if not the general public. The book must have made a good impression on the literary establishment. Azorín, one of the most renowned writers of the Spanish Silver Age, paid a fictional tribute to it by adding to the isles imagined by Araquistáin another one, "The Isle of Serenity" ("La isla de la Serenidad", 1923), which appeared in *ABC*, one of the leading newspapers in Madrid. *The Marvellous Archipelago* was soon translated as well. An Italian version appeared in 1928, prefaced by an enthusiastic note by its translator.[45] Furthermore, it was considered as a model for a new universalistic literature in Spain. Araquistáin had overcome any "nationality constraints thanks to his ideas, his temperament and his culture",[46] thus becoming a leading example for his generation. He had indeed taken advantage of his stay in England as one of Maeztu's "London boys" to become acquainted with the spirit of the British scientific romance, which he cultivated for the first time in Spain in its pure form with intellectual success. Araquistáin himself acknowledged it in an interview, although he also claimed that *The Marvellous Archipelago* "is English only in its genre",[47] perhaps in order to defend both its originality and its rightful place in Spanish literature. Was he also implicitly objecting to the exaggerated foreignness of a recent speculative novel by his friend, the ideologically liberal Salvador de Madariaga, another prominent member of the London group and of his generation? Despite the speculative character of such a contention, there is no doubt that *The Sacred Giraffe* (1925), Madariaga's only scientific romance, was so intentionally British that it can hardly qualify as a Spanish example of this genre, although it appeared in a Spanish version made by Madariaga himself a few months before the English original (Madariaga 1925b), and has received far more critical attention in Spain than in the country for which it was intended. Although the narrative was attributed to a writer with a Hispanic sounding name, Julio Arceval, the prologue of the Madrid edition leaves no doubt about the language in which the book had been written, as well as its purpose:

> There is hardly any need to explain to the readers of this book why its author wrote it in English. It is quite clear since its first chapter that the description of the utopian Ebania is only an excuse to satirise current civilisation as it appears in English life. Julio Arceval uses very successfully in this satire alternatively the parallel, the contrast, or a subtler approach which could be called *reductio ad absurdum*, transposing the observation point to a very distant future. Only those who, like him, have resorted to exceptional natural conditions of psychological insight and to

> exceptional personal qualities of intimacy with the English people in order to truly know England could handle this matter with such pertinent irony.[48]

Ebania is an African country where, in the year 6922, and despite a growing masculinist movement, women leave men out of any serious activity, from politics, which reflects mockingly the English party system, to science. The latter is mainly historical. This future society is not technologically advanced, but rather a humanist scholar's paradise, where the primary endeavour is to study the scanty remains of the vanished European civilization, with hilarious results. The practices of the white past, primarily British, are thus seen from an estranging viewpoint, exploiting its comic potential with irony. Unfortunately, Madariaga pays so much attention to the satire of diverse modern ridicules that he often forgets that there is a story to be narrated. It has been argued that *The Sacred Giraffe* is mostly "an unbroken succession of humorous episodes with reference to customs and beliefs of our civilization"[49] (Sanz Villanueva 1987: 298). The plot is actually quite thin and a traditional reading would probably find this book wanting. However, nothing prevents us from sharing the views of one of its first reviewers, the prestigious critic Enrique Díez-Canedo (1925), for whom its serious intent becomes more effective and convincing following a minor solemnity of the narrative tone. *The Sacred Giraffe* was for him a carnivalesque work, and it should be taken as such. He therefore understood that the scientific romance asked for a different approach than the traditional novel of manners, technically updated as in the great Modernists or not. Its value had to be assessed according to its own frame of reference. This is what the Spanish contemporary reviewers usually did (for instance, Díez-Canedo mentions *The Marvellous Archipelago* as belonging to the same *utopian* genre as Madariaga's novel), and this is why their appraisals sound still relevant today, namely when they reviewed the works more congenial to their common intellectual background. Thus, they tended to favour the narratives which combined thought, humour and reasoned imagination in a balanced and innovative fictional framework, creating in the process a potential canon of Spanish modernist speculative writing.

Among this kind of work, there was one that responded to a more national model than the commented scientific romances. Ricardo Baroja's highly original play entitled *The Pedigree* (*El Pedigree*, 1926) adopted the carnivalesque mode to mock the eugenic ideals of his time in a roar of laughter that gives no quarter. In the far future, a contemporary man from Madrid called Medoro arrives at the Gynaeceum, the place where a clearly authoritarian organisation is preparing the arrival of a eugenic superman by carefully controlled matings of

the perfectly proportioned inmates.[50] Faithful to its name, the atmosphere in this place is starkly neoclassical and apparently idyllic. The presence of the voyager (or atavistic survivor) from the past plays a similar role to the one played by John Savage in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) but there is a huge difference between them. In his play, Baroja's Medoro is far from being a positive character: he is indeed full of the greed, the uncontrolled lust and the overall vulgarity typical of the males of his time and country in the author's view, who presents a cruel caricature of the traditional Spanish gentlemen praised by conservative circles. The past is hardly a positive model for a future that appears as dystopian in its use of men as breeding tools towards the goal of reaching such doubtful ideal as the one represented by the *Übermensch* promoted by Friedrich Nietzsche. Zoroastro (Spanish for the German Zarathustra) is, indeed, the name of the long-awaited superior man, who eventually graces the Earth with his presence, but he is no other than a descendant of Medoro and his wife, a female gorilla, that had been designated as his only appropriate mate by the Gynaeceum planners... Thus, very influential scientific and philosophical doctrines of his time are comically ridiculed by Baroja. His humour is not very subtle, being too hyperbolic to match, for example, the ironic quality of George Bernard Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* (1921), a play that could be mentioned as formally similar and ideologically opposite to *The Pedigree*. However, this must not be taken as an indication of Baroja's inferior writing, but as the result of a very different literary approach. Although Baroja knew the British scientific romance well, his choice was rather to write a play comparable to Ramón María del Valle-Inclán's experiments in the grotesque, the *esperpentos*. As in these plays, in *The Pedigree* the characters turn into tragicomic puppets within a distorted reality that reflects mockingly, but effectively, the horrors of the contemporary society and the utter inconsistency of its ideological bases from an ethical point of view. These works do not lack a bitter irony, but their kind of laughter is primarily Rabelaisian. Therefore, *The Pedigree* is perhaps the only genuine *esperpento* not written by Valle-Inclán, who implicitly recognised his friend's exploit by writing a complimentary preface to the first edition of the play in a volume that appeared in 1926. This volume was positively reviewed in the press, among others, by Cipriano Rivas Cherif (1926) and Gómez de Baquero, who praised its "ironic vein",[51] as if it were one of his beloved orthodox scientific romances. Rivas Cherif examined it rather as a piece of innovative theatre that unfortunately could not find the place it deserved in the Spanish stage, in spite of the interest shown by Luigi Pirandello, who had announced its première in Rome by his own company. The Italian playwright had read the first, shorter version of the play, which had been published in June-August 1924 in the prestigious journal *Revista de Occidente* founded

by José Ortega y Gasset. Unfortunately, lacking funds, Pirandello's theatre was forced to close down before this, and Baroja decided to publish his play as a book, adding long staging directions as highly ornate and literary as the ones written by Shaw or Valle-Inclán. The play has not premièred yet, and it is not as well-known today as it perhaps should be, but it represents a highlight in the very Spanish tradition of comic science fiction,[52] and it did not remain without successors. For instance, one of the undisputedly successful plays of Spanish modern drama and stage is Enrique Jardiel Poncela's *Four Hearts with Brakes and Reverse Gears* (*Cuatro corazones con freno y marcha atrás*,[53] 1936). In this comedy, a few extravagant characters take a potion invented by one of them in order to stay eternally young, eventually getting so bored that they ask the inventor to create another potion which reverses their aging. The time paradoxes that this situation entails are seriously treated from a speculative point of view. However, Jardiel Poncela is mostly interested in the comic potential of his subject.[54] An element of parody is clear, as it is in *The Pedigree*, but there is no obvious critical intent in *Four Hearts...* This is rather commercial drama at its best, but with an innovative nonsensical humour that has incorporated the lessons of Ramón Gómez de la Serna. This master of the Spanish Avant-garde was, by the way, also the author of a science fiction narrative, although only marginally speculative, entitled "The Master of the Atom" ("El dueño del átomo", 1926), which has been translated into English (Gómez de la Serna 2005).

Neither Ramón, as he was generally known, nor Jardiel Poncela were political writers. They were reluctant to adopt any stance other than the artistic in their works. To act this way in the 1920s was still relatively common, but this changed dramatically following the 1929 Great Depression and the subsequent rise of the political extremes in Europe. In Spain, the monarchy had been replaced in 1931 by a democratic republic threatened by an anarchist or socialist revolution to the left and by a fascist reaction to the right. Scientific romance began to be seen not only as an adequate vehicle for social and political commentary, as it had almost always been, but also as a way to promote particular ideologies, or just to warn against any kind of political commitment which could turn utopia into its opposite regardless of intentions. The black comedy *Orestes I*, by Felipe Ximénez de Sandoval and Pedro Sánchez de Neyra, showed already in 1930 how an invention intended to inhibit the human impulse to steal caused the collapse of the economy and the subsequent rise to power of a providential man which had succeeded in destroying the formula, killing his inventor and founding a hereditary dictatorship with popular support in the process. It was a clear parable of the fascist response to the utopian impulse which had failed in Russia. Both revolutionary and

reactionary alternatives are implicitly condemned by the authors, who extensively use the typical irony of the satiric scientific romance, although in a rather heavy-handed and theatrically awkward manner. This is probably the main reason why the play failed in its première in Madrid, as reviewers pointed out.

A similarly sceptical approach to politics dominates in another combined effort, the novel *Earth Number 2* (*La Tierra nº 2*, 1933), the only fictional work by two young doctors, Manuel Torres Oliveros y Federico Oliver Cobeña. They depicted a parallel Earth where both an utopian and a dystopian social order were ironically promoted. The book was widely commented and rather well-received by the critics, in spite of the limited narrative skills of his authors and its confusing wealth of poorly structured science fiction tropes. However, its positive reception might have also to do with the fact that it was a scientific romance in the classical tradition, something visibly appreciated by Spanish intellectuals, as we have seen. On the contrary, speculative fictions which looked overtly political might have been considered rather as utilitarian literature by those same intellectuals who supported the genre. Nevertheless, some of them should be mentioned, at least because of their historical interest. To the right, political anticipations such as Ricardo León's *Under the Yoke of the Barbarians* (*Bajo el yugo de los bárbaros*, 1932) vividly described the chaos brought about to the country by a proletarian revolution.[55] To the left, an anarchist engineer, Alfonso Martínez Rizo, provided the blueprint for a forthcoming state dissolution in *1945* (1932). In *Love in 200 Years' Time* (*El amor dentro de 200 años*), also published in 1932, this writer imagined the workings of a libertarian society where there would be free love (including homosexual) and social control would be collective: a ray destroyed criminals and dissidents, but the weapon could be operated only through the concentrated will of hundreds of people. When a scientist finds a way to cancel out the deadly effect of this mob ray, a truly anarchist utopia is made possible at last. A year later, Salvio Valentí presented a few Spanish speculative dystopias with a purely tragic mood since the genre's beginnings in the country[56]. *From Exodus to Paradise* (*Del éxodo al paraíso*, 1933) takes up the plot idea of a man who falls asleep for a century to wake up in a better world, but Valentí uses it with a twist. The awakened character looks backward to understand how a revolution made to efface any authority and to bring back Paradise on Earth had degenerated in a tyranny in which the union leaders had unlimited political power, while they planned to throw the revolutionary masses in a war of conquest to seize abroad everything that they had destroyed in their country and that they had proven unable to rebuild in their theoretically egalitarian society. The last image of this powerful novel, which is often reminiscent of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948) for its

writing and atmosphere, shows the starving masses marching on to the world as a sort of political apocalypse.

Those were indeed apocalyptic times. If imagining the last things to come was nothing new, the general crisis which foreshadowed another Great War favoured narratives in which the end of mankind was, first of all, the work of man himself. In the two main Spanish apocalyptic fictions written before the 1931 Second Republic, the agent of man's demise was rather the Other, either the aliens or Nature. *The Disaster* (*La catástrofe*) was the first to appear, first in 1922 in Russian (*Katastrofa*), which was the mother tongue of the author, N. Tassin, a Russian Jew exiled in Spain at the time, and afterwards in the expanded and definitive Spanish edition of 1924. As in *The War of the Worlds*, the Martians invade the Earth, but they are not as easily defeated. They are gigantic flying animals which destroy at random from the air. The inhabitants of the attacked cities, starting from Paris, where the story takes place, must dig subterranean cities, where a socialist economy of war imposes itself as the only viable option until the invaders are expelled through magnetic fields. Life under surface of the Earth is harsh, but also increasingly utopian-looking at first. However, as in many disenchanted scientific romances, this does not last: the old powers reassert themselves.

The other significant apocalyptic scientific romance of this period, *Cayac-Hamuaca's Confessions* (*Las confesiones de Cayac-Hamuaca*, 1931), by José Lion Depetre, is a story of the absolute end, as the cooling of the Sun gradually freezes the Earth until only the tropics are habitable. Even there, the ice arrives, and the cold death of the lovers who play the leading role in this skilfully written novel makes up a truly moving last vision of the Inca prophet Cayac-Hamuaca, who is a character introduced by the author as a solution to the narrative problem of telling what cannot be told once man is over, after having acted disgracefully up to the end. “Humanity dies out due to an external cause, a cosmic phenomenon that the Earth cannot face, but this does not mean that no judgement on the dying mankind is given”[57] in both novels. As it fits the apocalyptic subgenre of science fiction, there prevails in both of them a pessimistic view on human nature, although man was not really responsible for what was forced on him. In the artificial apocalypses, there was no room for this indulgence and the readers could not take them lightly. They were not mere fantasies exploiting the fears of their readers and, in those best examples, their sense of the sublime. Instead, scientific romances on the forthcoming destruction could easily be taken as realistic warnings of what was to come, given the way international politics looked at the time. Even if Spain was busy enough with its local (counter)revolutionary processes, paying little attention to contemporary European

war-drumming, it could boast of a very attractive apocalyptic future war novel, which was also well-received by its contemporary reviewers. David Arias' *After the Gas* (*Después del Gas*, 1935) achieves an enthralling narrative of a near future conflict[58] fought out until the utter downfall of civilisation, while the horrified inventor of the destructive gas extensively used in this war witnesses humanity's demise from a bunker. Nonetheless, this book, which reaches "moments of supreme greatness",[59] namely in its descriptions of the battles, is rather optimistic at the end, as the collapse of any order due to the war gives rise to a pacifist utopia of cooperative mutual aid. Like Wells in *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933), Arias must have felt the need to give his readers some hope to compensate for his dark forebodings. *After the Gas* appropriately closes the brilliant pre-war history of the Spanish scientific romance as a highly intellectual and literary genre, just before the fulfilling of Arias' warning in the killing fields both in his country and globally. But how this near-apocalypse also nearly killed the European school of speculative fiction as mainstream literature, at least in the Western part of the continent, and certainly in Spain, is another (hi)story to be told another time.[60]

ENDNOTES

[1] This essay reproduces, with some updated bibliography (to which one should add all the articles published by Agustín Jaureguízar/Augusto Uribe in his website http://www.auguribe.com) and additions, the one entitled "Science Fiction as Mainstream Literature: The Spanish Scientific Romance and its Reception before the Spanish Civil War", published at the British journal *Foundation* (volume 39, number 110, winter 2010 (*sic!*), 38-59) with too many printing errors. We are grateful for *Foundation*'s kind permission to reissue this paper here. This should be considered as its final version.

[2] I follow the elegant definition of this term used by W. Warren Wagar (1982: 9):

> (…) we shall use the phrase "especulative literature" (...) to denote any work of fiction, including drama and narrative poetry, that specializes in plausible speculation about life under changed but rationally conceivable circumstances, in an alternative past or present, or in the future. Nearly all "science fiction" adheres to this definition.

[3] By the term "Spanish literature" I mean the literature written in Spanish in Spain. For the rich science fiction literary output in Catalan prior to the Spanish Civil War, there is a comprehensive overview (Munné-Jordà 2002). In Galician, one should at least mention *The Man Who Gave Life to a Dead Person* (*O home que deu vida a um morto*, 1926), a short story by Leandro Carré Alvarellos that can also be read as fantastic, and the tale entitled "Eleven Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty-Six" ("Once mil novecentos vinteseis", 1927), by Rafael Dieste, which has been translated into Spanish and reprinted several times. I am not aware of any work of this genre in the Basque language until quite recently.

[4] There is a recent short overview of the Spanish science fiction in the 19th century and its intellectual circumstances, with a useful bibliography (Lawless 2011). As my focus is on the scientific romance in the Spanish "Silver Age", I only mention the works not considered in that overview, and which are good examples of the positivist stance adopted by many Spanish intellectuals in the last decades of the 19th century.

[5] There were also a few speculative narratives with satirical or merely comic intent, such as Clarín's (Leopoldo Alas) "A Future Tale" ("Cuento futuro", 1886) and Enrique Gaspar's *The Anachronopete* (*El anacronópete*, 1887). This name, that means "what flies against time", designates what is considered to be the first fictional time machine.

[6] This subgenre has been hardly cultivated until recent times. In the Spanish Silver Age, one could mention Ricardo Baroja's leftist *True History of the Revolution* (*Historia verídica de la revolución*, 1931), as well as a very short alternative history of Spain by Azorín (José Martínez Ruiz) entitled "What should have happened. Historitory" ("Lo que debió pasar. Historiatorio", 1934; *historiatorio* is a neologism created by

Azorín on the model of *laboratorio*, or laboratory), while Augusto Martínez Olmedilla's novel *How Napoleon Died* (*Cómo murió Napoleón*, 1930) is both alternate and secret history.

[7] (...) *une Espagne restée une puissance mondiale majeure en fin du XIX^e^ siècle et sur le point de partir à la colonisation de la planète Mars* (Henriet 2009: 34). All the translations are mine.

[8] In *Cosmos latinos* (37-43), the translated story is "On the Planet Mars" ("En el planeta Marte", 1890) instead.

[9] *personificación del Estado-Dios* (Fabra 2006: 215).

[10] Nonetheless, nineteenth century didacticism survived in scientific romances written by older authors, such as José Ferrándiz's *Two Worlds Speaking* (*Dos mundos al habla*, 1922), an astronomical romance which presents a Venusian eugenic utopia seen through sympathetic lenses.

[11] Published in instalments in *El Imparcial*, one of the main Madrid newspapers in March-April 1902.

[12] *una nueva forma de lo maravilloso en literatura* (Gómez de Baquero 1902). The use of the term "maravilloso", which in Spanish has mostly to do with fairy tales, might sound odd in science fiction today, but it coincides with the French denomination (*merveilleux scientifique*) used to distinguish the modern speculative romance by the likes of J.-H. Rosny aîné and Maurice Renard from the Vernian tradition in French, which was still followed in Spain by popular science fiction novelists such as *Coronel Ignotus* (José de Elola), who wrote a series of *Planetary Voyages in the 22^nd^ Century* (*Viajes planetarios del siglo XXII*, 1919-1927), and *Capitán Sirius* (Jesús de Aragón), author of interesting scientific tales of adventure such as *A Strange Love Adventure on the Moon* (*Una extraña aventura de amor en la Luna*, 1929), and *The Aerial Continent* (*El continente aéreo*, 1930). However, the French *merveilleux scientifique* seems to have been ignored by Spanish intellectuals, except for an essay by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (1933) on Rosny's work (including his "novelas científicas"), and its narratives were not translated in Spain until much later. In fact, European speculative literature other than the British one had apparently little influence in the development of this genre in Spain, although the German best-seller *The Tunnel* (*Der Tunnel*, 1913), by Bernhard Kellermann, inspired Jesús Rubio Coloma's Iberian imperialist fantasy *Between Two Continents - The Novel about the Tunnel Under the Straits of Gibraltar* (*Entre dos continentes: la novela del túnel bajo el estrecho de Gibraltar*, 1928).

[13] *Una restauración de lo maravilloso en literatura realizada con originalidad y aprovechando hábilmente los materiales de la actual* (Gómez de Baquero 1902).

[14] *dar color de realidad histórica a lo fantástico* (*ibidem*).

[15] One of the most outstanding is Juan Pérez Zúñiga's *Six Days Out of the World* (*Seis días fuera del mundo*, 1905), which parodies *The First Men in the Moon*. Nevertheless, in Zúñiga's short novel, where inspiration from Wells' novel is overtly acknowledged, the Moon is not inhabited by intelligent insects, but by stools… A later parodic tribute to another romance by Wells, *The Invisible Man* (1897), is Francisco Vera's rather fantastic *The Bisquared Man* (*El hombre bicuadrado*, 1926). There are also some parodic Martian romances, such as Luis Gabaldón's *The Conquest of a Planet* (*La conquista de un planeta*, 1905), and Benigno Bejarano's *The Madman's Secret* (*El secreto de un loco*, 1929; this work was strongly revised by Bejarano in its second edition of 1932, entitled *The End of an Astral Expedition* [*El fin de una expedición sideral*]), which is an interesting comic modernist narrative.

[16] *Si Wells superpone a la temática social perspectivas escatológicas propias de un filósofo de la Historia, Mendizábal la aplasta con ellas* (Uribe 2002: 39).

[17] There is a recent study (Jaureguízar 2011b) on this kind of religious apocalyptic romances which mentions some other works, such as Bernardo Morales San Martín's *Man's Twilight* (*El ocaso del hombre*, 1920), and Juan José Valverde's *The Beast from the Book of Revelation* (*La Bestia del Apocalipsis*, 1935), but both of them are rather allegorical. A further paper by the same scholar (Jaureguízar 2011c) gives a useful overview of Spanish apocalyptic scientific tales, usually not religious and most of them quite well written, such as Azorín's "The End of a World" ("El fin de un mundo", 1901), and Ángeles Vicente's "An Absurd Tale" ("Cuento absurdo", 1908), among others.

[18] Both volumes [Mendizábal's is a *two-decker*] could be summed up in one, without losing a single idea or nuance, much to the advantage of the dynamic movement of the action and, consequently, the inside of the work (*sus dos volúmenes podrían compendiarse en uno solo, sin que se perdiese ni una sola idea ni matiz, y con enorme ventaja para el movimiento dinámico de la acción y consiguientemente del interior de la obra*; Maeztu 1909).

[19] When these science fantasisers devote themselves to ramble about the influence of future research on the human nature, they enter dangerous territory, and this explains their naivety when addressing human action (*cuando estos fantaseadores de la ciencia se meten a divagar acerca de la influencia de las futuras investigaciones sobre la naturaleza humana, entran en un terreno peligroso* [...]. *De ahí su candidez al ocuparse de las obras humanas*; *ibidem*).

[20] I give more details on this particular example of international cultural exchange in a recent essay in Spanish (Martín Rodríguez 2011b).

[21] *El Cuento Semanal* (*The Weekly Tale*) and *La Novela de Hoy* (*Today's Novel*), respectively.

[22] For instance, the renowned novelist Emilia Pardo Bazán published in *El Libro Popular* (*The Popular Book*) an interesting femininist prehistoric fiction entitled *In the Caverns* (*En las cavernas*, 1912). I am not aware of other prehistoric romances published before 1936 in Spain than the one entitled *The King of Cavemen* (*El rey de los trogloditas*, 1925), by paleontologist Jesús Carballo.

[23] Its first edition, under this title, was published in a volume together with Salaverría's novel *The Hidden Sin* (*El oculto pecado*, 1924).

[24] It has been translated into at least three languages: French, German and Portuguese.

[25] Furthermore, Carrere combines science and spiritism in *The Sixth Sense* (*El sexto sentido*, 1921). There are also some faustian novels which use science in a gothic mode, such as *Doctor Wolffan's Son* (*El hijo del doctor Wolffan*, 1917), by Peruvian-born Manuel A. Bedoya, Bernardo Morales San Martín's *Immortal Eve* (*Eva inmortal*, 1917), and Carlos Mendizábal Brunet's *Pygmalion and Galatea* (*Pygmalión y Galatea*, 1922). The tale "Five Hundred" ("Quinientos", 1936), by José María Salaverría, can also be mentioned.

[26] Hernández-Catá also published in this same book a tale of genre interest entitled "Fraternity" ("Fraternidad").

[27] Once a world power, Spain appeared to be at the beginning of the 20th century a backward country that needed to be *regenerated*, both politically and economically, in order to recover its rightful place among the leading European nations. The Spanish *regenerationist* movement also produced some works of genre interest, such as Antonio Ledesma Hernández's long novel *Canuto Espárrago* (1903), which includes some scenes of biological warfare.

[28] This tale has been translated into English and published in *Cosmos latinos* (2006: 48-51).

[29] *Bajo la la inspiración de* Erewhon: or, Over the Range *(1872), novela precursora de S. Butler, se describe una ciudad deshabitada y controlada por máquinas pensantes; la denuncia del mundo mecanizado, inhumano y fantasmagórico de Mecanópolis encaja perfectamente con las tendencias antiindustrialistas de su autor* (Santiáñez-Tio 1995: 24).

[30] *La tradición inglesa del proyectismo social de Tomás Moro y a la del humorismo de Swift. Wells es, a la vez, un conciudadano de Utopia y de Liliput* (Alomar 1921).

[31] *arte trascendental* (*ibidem*).

[32] *novela cinematográfica* (Blasco Ibáñez 1922: 9).

[33] *Hasta en los Estados Unidos –país donde las mujeres ejercen una enorme y legítima influencia– creen algunos, equivocadamente, que mi novela es a modo de sátira del feminismo contemporáneo* (*ibidem*: 15).

[34] *estrategia de denuncia tanto de la marginación social de la mujer como de otros defectos de la sociedad* (Castillo Martín 2000: 820).

[35] It is not difficult to make out the origin of the various elements that have entered into the composition of Blasco Ibáñez's fable in the form of a novel. Its invention broadly follows that of Swift; the fantastic element, the *scientific sense of marvel*, are represented by the black rays, the cables of the flying machines and the submersible ships which defend the women's paradise come from Wells' work or have in this famous English writer their immediate forerunner. (*No es difícil distinguir el origen de los varios elementos que han entrado en la composición de la fábula novelesca de Blasco Ibáñez. En las líneas generales de su invención sigue a Swift; el elemento fantástico, de* maravilloso científico*, los rayos negros, los cables de las máquinas voladoras y de los buques sumergibles que defienden el paraíso de las mujeres, proceden de Wells o tienen en las novelas del célebre autor inglés un antecedente inmediato*; Andrenio 1922).

[36] Italian, Latvian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian and Russian.

[37] For instance, Gómez de Baquero condemned the attempt to write a novel as it were a film, because "the writer has to think mostly in what is apparent. His vision must be superficial and ancillary to an exterior and theatrical interest" (*El autor tiene que pensar, ante todo, en lo plástico, en lo aparente. Su visión tiene que ser superficial, esclava o servidora de un interés externo y efectista*; Andrenio 1922).

[38] *réplicas pesimistas de las utopías sociales y políticas del hombre contemporáneo* (Calvo Carilla 2010: 273).

[39] *una visión paródica, mordaz y desencantada tanto de las ideologías redentoras emergentes como, en general, de las frustraciones de la Europa de entreguerras* (*ibidem*: 274).

[40] *Es un libro caricaturesco y ligero, que no merece ser clasificado entre los utópicos* (Araquistáin 2011: 195).

[41] *novela de la utopía* (Gómez de Baquero 1923).

[42] *lo que no existe en el mapa de la realidad* (*ibidem*).

[43] *puede existir en el mapa más ancho de los posibles* (*ibidem*).

[44] *El libro de Araquistáin une al interés literario el filosófico. La misión de la novela no se reduce a levantar los tejados de las casas de vecindad* (...)*. Las utopías no le están vedadas, y estos viajes pueden ser tan*

atractivos como el paseo por las escenas corrientes de la comedia humana, siempre que el guía acierte a dar colorido y plasticidad a las imágenes, como lo ha conseguido el autor de El archipiélago maravilloso (*ibidem*).

[45] I do not recall having read another any other fantastic voyage narrative, except the very famous *Gulliver's Travels*, which I have liked as much as this *Marvellous Archipelago* by the prince of the Spanish journalists. It has the same sarcastic conception of life as regards its inner meaning, the same thoroughly logical distortion of reality regarding the technical process. In addition, it has an essential element for our modern spirit entirely lacking in Swift: the pathos, the feeling, a feeling so intense that it takes your breath away. (*Non rammento di aver letto altra narrazione fantastica di viaggi, fuor dei celeberrimi di Gulliver, che tanto mi sia piaciuta come quest'*Arcipelago Meraviglioso *del principe tra i pubblicisti spagnuoli. La stessa concezione sarcastica della vita, quanto all'intima significazione, la stessa diformazione rigorosamente logica della realtà, quanto al procedimento tecnico. Con in più un dato fondamentale per il nostro spirito moderno e che nello Swift manca affatto: il pathos, il sentimento: un sentimento che vi prende talvolta alla gola tanto è penetrante*; Pillerich 1928: 5).

[46] *los límites de la nacionalidad por su ideación, por sus dotes temperamentales y por su cultura* (Ballesteros de Martos 1923).

[47] *no tiene de inglés más que el género* (Giménez Caballero 1926).

[48] *Apenas precisa explicar a quien este libro leyere por qué lo escribió el autor en inglés. Bien se echa de ver desde su primer capítulo que la descripción de la utópica Ebania no es sino pretexto para satirizar la civilización actual vista a través de la vida inglesa. Julio Arceval utiliza con singular acierto en esta sátira ya el paralelo, ya el contraste, ya un método más sutil que podríamos llamar la reducción al absurdo por trasposición del punto de observación a un porvenir muy lejano. Sólo quien, como él, puso en juego para conocer a Inglaterra excepcionales condiciones naturales de penetración psicológica y excepcionales condiciones personales de intimidad con gentes del país podía manejar tal asunto con tal atinada ironía* (Madariaga 1925a: X-XI).

[49] *una serie una serie ininterrumpida de episodios humorísticos con referencia en usos y creencias de nuestra civilización* (Sanz Villanueva 1987: 298).

[50] Eugenics was not the only means to obtain fictional supermen. Some Spanish interwar science fantasies present characters endowed with superpowers due to their special minds, such as Francisco Vera's *Bisquared Man*, which has already been mentioned, or the members of a white African evolved race who are able to become invisible at will in the short story entitled *The Uncatchable* (*El Inapresable*, 1923), also by Vera. In Tomás Borrás' work *The Power of Thought* (*El poder del pensamiento*, 1928), a man discovers his capacity of changing the minds of his fellow citizens, and makes them act in a surreal way until he is controlled by Norma (Spanish for *norm*), the female *de facto* leader of the city. This short story is a very interesting piece of avant-garde writing in Spain.

[51] *vena irónica* (Gómez de Baquero 1926).

[52] Some parodic scientific romances have already been mentioned, to which one could add a couple of fine tales belonging to the same genre that satirize moral hypocrisy or established religion, such as Eduardo Bertrán Rubio's "A Stunning Invention" ("Un invento despampanante", 1906), and Pompeyo Gener's "The Theological Palace" ("El *Theological Palace*", 1912).

[53] Jardiel Poncela first titled this play *Dying is a Mistake* (*Morirse es un error*), but he modified it when the 1936 Spanish Civil War took the wit of that title away.

[54] A contemporary farce of resounding success, *The Materializing Device* (*La plasmatoria*, 1935), by Pedro Muñoz Seca and Pedro Pérez Fernández, also uses a fictional technological *novum* (a device able to materialize spirits) mainly to make the audience laugh, both at the spiritist craze, and at Dr. Gregorio Marañón's very serious and widely discussed theories on the defective virility of the Don Juan character, who is *materialized* in the play. However, the scientific/speculative content in this fine comedy is far smaller than in Jardiel Poncela's *Four Hearts...*

[55] A similar kind of disastrous socialist/anarchist revolution had been formerly narrated in some minor Spanish prophetic political romances, such as Nilo María Fabra's *The Social Problem* (*El problema social*, 1890), Adelardo Ortiz de Pinedo's *East 1953…* (*Oriente 1953*…, 1903), and Pascual Santacruz's *A Communist's Disappointments* (*Los desengaños de un comunista*, 1925).

[56] The first Spanish dystopian novel seems to be the rather light-hearted *A Drama in the 21st Century* (*Un drama en el siglo XXI*, 1902), by Camilo Millán. This fast-paced narrative calls to mind early anti-capitalist nineteenth-century French dystopias such as Émile Souvestre's *The World As It Shall Be* (*Le Monde tel qu'il sera*, 1846). Martínez Rizo's *Love in 200 Years* can also be considered as an "ambiguous utopia", or even as a dystopia, as I have argued elsewhere (Martín Rodríguez 2011c). It is also worth mentioning an earlier short story by Antonio Porras entitled "The Mysterious Murderer of Potestad" ("El misterioso asesino de Potestad", 1922), which combines crime fiction and a dystopian picture of an authoritarian and technologically advanced future state. Spanish utopian scientific romances are rare; Modesto Brocos' *A Voyage to Mars* (*Viaje a Marte*, 1930) is

perhaps the main one. Traditional utopias are, however, more common in Spain, mostly within the anarchist movement. Among them, Ricardo Mella's "The New Utopia" ("La nueva utopía", 1890) is probably the finest.

[57] *La Humanidad se extingue por una causa exterior, un fenómeno cósmico que la Tierra no puede enfrentar, aunque no deja de darse un juicio sobre la Humanidad que perece* (Jaureguízar 2011a: 193).

[58] Other Spanish future war scientific romances are, for example, *The Last Hero* (*El último héroe*, 1910), by Roque de Santillana (Julio Eguilaz), and *Rinker, the Destroyer of the World* (*Rinker, el destructor del mundo*, 1933), by Agustín Piracés. Furthermore, Spain shared the European wartime interest in fictional speculations on the future course of the Great War and its aftermath, although the country had remained neutral. Some of them are perhaps still readable, such as Domingo Cirici Ventalló's starkly pro-Central Powers *Lord Kitchener's Secret* (*El secreto de lord Kitchener*, 1914), which was translated into German and Swedish, and Elías Cerdá's neutralist *Don Quixote at the War* (*Don Quijote en la guerra*, 1915).

[59] *momentos of suprema grandeza* (Somoza Silva 1935).

[60] My special thanks to Jorge Jiménez Bellver and Charles Gittins for having corrected and much improved the poor English of my first draft. Of course, the mistakes are all mine.

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