Title: Levinas' notion of neighbor as an approach to understand Pío Baroja, otherness and modern Spain.

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Abstract: The Cold War era touched Spain only subtly. Because of the geopolitical situation of Europe during the second half of the 20th century, Spain remained almost isolated from macro politics, attempting impossible alliances with Italian and German fascism. For instance, whilst the rest of the world witnesses the beginning of the Cold War in 1947 and the Space Race, Spain's history is marked by the death of a "matador", Manuel Laureano Rodriguez "Manolete", who copes the newspapers' front pages for days and is followed by popular grief and controversy. Four decades before, Miguel de Unamuno already coins this ancestral voice of the Spaniard consciousness as "casticismo" and "intrahistoria". However, in literary terms, Iberian literature showed clear signs of modernity, and sometimes, even of hybridity. The Iron Curtain did not cover the shame of a dictatorship regime in Spain, and yet, authors like Baroja describe that atmosphere at a great extent, even, as this paper wants to show, anticipates the Cold War psycho-social atmosphere. Authors like Levinas, on the other hand, provide a philosophical and theoretical frame to understand better both the Cold War period and the literary experimentation of Iberian authors towards the concept of the Other. In this piece, I discuss the proximity of the notion of the Other in Levinas and Baroja, and contrast this approach with the canonical vision of Baroja in Iberian literature.

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A prequel of the Cold War in Baroja's *Camino de Perfección*

Pío Baroja's journeys during his life throughout Spain, and the Basque Country, played a twofold way because of the historical circumstances that surrounded them: born in San Sebastian, firstly his journey throughout the Spanish territory, where Baroja spent his childhood outside the Basque Country, in Madrid and Valencia mainly, which lagged his return to the Basque land in an almost melancholic belated manner in 1912; and second, when he is forced to flee to Paris because of the immediateness of the civil war in Spain, although he preluded this trip to Paris in a younger time in 1899, for very different reasons. This fragmented spatiality will accompany him and his work for the rest of his life. According to Sanchez-Ostiz, Baroja will also regret his frustrated trip to Argentina, during his second stay in Paris, complaining endlessly about it, and blaming his lack of social position to be eligible to such an escape route to America (Sanchez-Ostiz 2006). These innumerable journeys include some furtive visits to Tanger as a journalist in 1903, Rome in 1907, or Dickens' London in 1906, eventually.

As Roberta Johnson remarks, *Camino de Perfección* unpacks some philosophical questions that have been a constant in Baroja's writing. Johnson recalls how "[N]ot until *Camino de Perfección* does philosophy become a more integral part of the characterization and action of the novel, but Baroja's most interesting achievement in both novels [*Aventuras y mixtificaciones de Silvestre Paradox* and *Camino de Perfección*], and one of the sustaining features of his entire opus, is an off blend of genres that serves his philosophical purposes and gives his novels their modern flavor" (Johnson 1993, 59). Baroja struggles between the realist perspective and modern spirit, constantly, in his entire oeuvre. This eternal debate on Baroja's juggling with genres is explicit in Johnson's words, when she states that "the artistic achievement of *Camino de Perfección* lies in Baroja's borrowing from several genres –the decadent novel, mystic literature, the picaresque novel, the serial crime or adventure novel, Shakespearian tragedy and the nineteenth-century realist novel—to build his philosophical case" (Johnson 1993, 63). The constant progress, alterations and variations in Baroja's style has been well studied (Sanchez-Ostiz 2000, 2006, 2007; Elizalde 1990; Fox 1977; Gullon 1998; Minik 1972; Owen 1932; Sarria 1972; Templin 1944), yet, it is worth to pay attention to the outcomes of such philosophical positions, such as his confessed devotion to Schopenhauer's ideas, and his discovering of Kant's philosophy, throughout precisely of the former (Johnson, 1993).

Possibly, Levinas and Baroja differ in aspects that belong to deeper philosophical positions. Whilst Baroja understands live as a continuous action and suffering (see for instance the collection *Memorias de un Hombre de Acción*) –and even polemizes Nietzschean postulates at some point—, Levinas a vision of life based on interactions and relations, where "the final

relation is enjoyment, happiness" (Levinas 1979, 113). Nevertheless, as Johnson remarks, although there has been some consensus on how Baroja incorporates the ideas of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to both novels (*Camino de Perfección* and *Miserias de la Guerra*), "the novels are, in fact, a forum of an ironized and dialogized assessment of the contradictions in the philosophical positions of these and other philosophers" (Johnson 1993, 51), something that is mentioned too by Shaw (Shaw 1957).

For instance, Johnson highlights how Baroja will reject ataraxy (Johnson 1993), a concept that is developed in deep by Schopenhauer, which can conflict at some point with the Nietzschean position on will. Nietzsche, and the individual nihilism, seem to inspire Baroja's fond for anarchist ideas at some point. Although Baroja and Levinas will differ at some point in the alternative, both reject ataraxy as a form to face life. Levinas argues how "[I]t is an outcome, but one where the memory of aspiration confers upon the outcome the character of an accomplishment; which is worth *more* than ataraxy" (Levinas 1979, 113). Moreover, as Shaw indicates, it has been controversial to fix Baroja's position with regards to the very concept of action, opposed to the one of ataraxy with a clear reference to Nietzsche's idea of will and action, as such (Shaw 1957). Thus, almost every scholar agrees in the difficulty to anchor a solid set of principles in Baroja's philosophy, although Ortega y Gasset himself will affirm that "La inspiración energética que le anima [a Baroja] es una inspiración filosófica, no literaria"[1] (quoted by Johnson 1993, 106). In this impasse, it might help to focus on two different aspects that define, at a great extent, Baroja's writing: the space and the subject. As we shall see, both appear intertwined in his extensive work, and the dichotomies that polarize sometimes his own struggle to define himself philosophically, might be resolved around the idea of space and otherness, at an ontological level.

In this direction, Baroja, probably without reaching the extremes of Gloria Anzaldúa, writes –in part due to this nomadic spirit— from *within*, because of his personal journeys between territories and events that marked the recent history of Spain, indistinctively. There is a projection of space that Baroja describes in his novels –*La familia de Errotatxo*; *El cabo de las tormentas*; *Aventuras, inventos y mixtificaciones de Silvestre Paradox*; *Los Caminos del mundo*; *La ruta del aventurero*; *La casa de Aizgorri*; *El mayorazgo de Labraz*; *Aquí París* —that seems to escape the dichotomy urban-rural, and aspires to a supranational regional level. Simultaneously, the social charge of his writing exposes the otherness as a seize to measure the spatial distance, which sparks this philosophical rumination mentioned by Johnson –in novels, such as *Miserias de la Guerra*; *Camino de Perfección*; *Susana*; *Juventud, egolatria*; *Desde el exilio*; *La leyenda de Jaun de Alzate*; *Cesar o nada*; *Paradox, Rey*; *El arbol de la ciencia*—. It is because of this attention to the

[1] [The energetic inspiration that encourages Baroja is a philosophical one, rather than a literary one] Author's translation.

nuances of the landscape in a deep impressionist sense that Baroja coined the space after his own style, namely, *Barojiano*.

In some interviews[2], Bernardo Atxaga mentions how, generally speaking, the ghost of the writer's persona haunts the writer's characters in many ways, and how this phenomenon of insinuating an alter-ego –an alterity, per se— has provided Baroja with his distinctive touch on writing. Baroja interpellates and lets himself be interpellated by the circumstances of what he witnesses, in his daily life, as the natural voice of chronicles do. There is a direct influence of the places he describes in the characters, and vice versa. We should insist here on the idea that Other(ness) appears and disappears according to its own uncertain and ambiguous nature in many of his works.

In this vein, and as part of the effort to encompass Levinas and Baroja around some philosophical notions, I would like to gather these thoughts around what might be called the *gaze of the voice*. Baroja's voice, ghostly and haunting, intermingles with his characters endlessly. Therefore, this gaze shall function in a similar way that the visual gaze of cinema works. In critical theory, we define the gaze as the act of the transcendental to turn in the look to the viewer, the act of the observer to be observed − and unmasked− by an entity that ontologically has no presence, as discussed in authors like Foucault, Žižek, Sartre or Derrida, among others.

Both authors, Levinas and Baroja, are not *compatible* per se. Yet, this piece aims to establish some a priori bridges between them, exploring the idea of Levinas as the author that Baroja missed and had covered many of his philosophical gaps. Thus, the concept of the gaze of the voice might help to see Baroja's *Camino de perfección* (1902) from a different perspective, and understand the specific importance of otherness in his work, regardless of the distance that Levinas and Baroja maintain in certain philosophical aspects.

Camino de Perfección was published soon after Baroja's visit to Paris, and it is indeed an earlier novel that, however, epitomizes the evolution of Baroja's style that is finally fully applied in this work. Between the intrinsic tension of his predecessors, and specially Galdos' influence in his work, Baroja breaks through his literary époque and proposes a clearer modernist style that is as non-conventional as essential to this proper style as it can be: "'Nada de metáforas que en filosofía tienen aire de abalarios. Bastante cantidad de ringorrangos y de floripondios tiene el idioma de por sí para añadirle deliberadamente otros'"[3] (Quoted by Johnson 1993, 119). Moreover, Baroja navigates through impressionistic touches of realism into the modernist

[2] Extracted from "Pío Baroja. Ver en lo que es" documentary. Antonio Cristobal and Felipe Juaristi (directors), 2016.
[3] [No metaphors that in philosophy have the shape of trinkets. Language has enough adornments and angel's trumpets already, not to add deliberately some other"

style, without a clear cut between them in this oeuvre. Avoiding any supplementary elements on the narration, Baroja presents a raw text: a text constantly and consciously avoids and omits any lyrical gesture. This bidirectional relationship is broken only by the voice of the narrator, a heterodiegetic narrator, and the meta-voices of Baroja himself through different characters that dialogue with the narrator and the main character indistinctly. It is not clear if these meta-voices –the acquisition of some transcendental tones of these voices— can resolve into a metaphysical canvas, yet, there is an effort to play with these elements. In Baroja, metaphysics conflict with the materialist ontology, and the elusive spirituality of the voices embody this very conflict. As Johnson affirms "Baroja, while attracted to metaphysics, had his feet firmly planted in materialistic ground" (Johnson 1993, 53). For example, the protagonist of *Camino de Perfección*, Fernando Ossorio, roams the Castilian geographies of the late 30's of Spain in a Quixotesque gesture of Baroja of putting a mediocre hero in play with mediocre and ordinary peoples of Spain at that time, something that has been already highlighted in the prais of the picaresque novel by Johnson (Johnson, 1993). This extract shall serve to demonstrate this point:

> "El señor bajo y gordo, que dijo que era médico, al oír que Ossorio creía en la espiritualidad de las monjas, dijo con una voz impregnada de ironía:
> − ¿Las monjas? Si; son casi todas zafias y sin educación alguna. Ya no hay señoritas ricas y educadas en los conventos.
> − Sí. Son mujeres que no tienen el valor de hacerse lavanderas − afirmó el pedagogo− y vienen a los conventos a vivir sin trabajar.
> − Yo las insto −continuó el señor grueso− para que coman carne. ¡Ca! Pues no lo hacen. Mueren la mar; como chinches. Luego ya no tienen dinero, ni rentas; viven diez o doce en caserones grandes como cuarteles, en unas celdas estrechas, malolientes, con el piso de piedra, sin que tengan ni una esterilla, ni nada que resguarde los pies de la frialdad.
> − A mí me gustaría verlas −dijo el teniente−. Debe de haber algunas guapas.
> − No, no lo crea usted. Si no estuviéramos en Adviento −replicó el médico−, yo les llevaría a ustedes; pero ya no tiene interés.
> De pronto se oyó una voz de uno de los curas que, en tono de predicador decía: −Todo el mundo tiene derecho a ser libre menos la Iglesia, y ¿esa es la libertad tan decantada?"[4]

[4] [The short and fat man, who said he was a medical doctor, when he heard that Ossorio had faith in the nuns' spirituality, said with a voice impregnated with irony: −The nuns? Yes; they are all gross and without any education. There are no rich girls with education in the convents anymore. −Yes. They are women that do not have the courage to be washers said the pedagogue and they come to the convents to live without working. −I encourage them− continued saying the fat man to eat meat. Damn! But they do not do it. A lot of them die; they drop like flies. Then they don't have any money, neither savings; they live in houses

(Baroja 1902-2014)

This short dialogue epitomizes the concept of the *gaze of the voice* above mentioned. It is not only that the two references of the voice itself wrap up the short dialogue ("dijo con una voz impregnada de ironía" and "De pronto se oyó una voz de uno de los curas que, en tono predicador decía"), dedicated to the peeping of the nuns and the reference of insisting on "coman carne" that can be read as a carnal innuendo, but also the core voices of a state are present (the Church, the Army and the People), trespassing the intentions of the marginal (the women that become nuns) in their dialogue. This short paragraph also shows the spirituality of Spain at that moment, dealing with the transcendental (the Other in form of God) in cynic terms, present in the last rhetorical question of the priest about freedom: the lieutenant openly disclosing his desire to see the nuns, encouraging the group to join the gazing of the marginal women. As Johnson recalls "there is a mystifying duality in Baroja's works (…) This dualism (respect couple with cynicism) is typical of the '98 attitude toward philosophy, specially toward metaphysics" (Johnson 1993, 60-61). At the same time, the women are progressively dispossessed of everything and anything by the end of the paragraph ("ni una esterilla, ni nada que resguarde los pies de la frialdad"/"no tienen dinero, ni rentas"/"Mueren la mar; como chinches") and they only find their remorse by becoming nuns and serving the big Other. Yet, they are portrayed as religious agents without a real spiritual commitment, which would contradict one of the core arguments on Christianity by Chesterton: only when Jesus is forsaken in the cross by God the father, does he really start having faith (Chesterton 1908). Ossorio, in this meta-voice game, is also the replica and "expansion on the homonymous character briefly introduced into a chapter of *Aventuras y mixtificationes*" (Johnson 1993, 61). Along with this intersubjectivity level, where otherness is interiorized in order to discover the subject per se, there is a constant reflection on the landscape and spatiality that gives to the ontological subject its substance. As Johnson recalls, "The picaresque adventure novel elements reappear whenever Ossorio is in transit from one locale to another, signaling the role of environment in change" (Johnson 1993, 65). In this Cervantine manner, Ossorio debates himself along the journey he is covering, disclosing the tension between secular (material) and mystical (soul related) philosophical levels. We should recall here too that one of the central topics of the Cervantine style is precisely the quest of oneself through secondary or tertiary characters, namely, the encounter of the self through the other.

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like barracks, ten or twelve of them altogether, in narrow cells, stinking, on stoned floors, without having even a mat, or anything to cover their feet from the cold.− I would like to see them −said the lieutenant− There must be some pretty ones. − No, don't think so. If we were in Adviento −replied the doctor− I would take you there; but it has no interest now. All of the sudden, the voice of one of the priests in a preacher tone said: − Everyone has the right to be free except from the Church, is that that leaned freedom?] Author's translation.

It is through this exchange of semi-anonymous voices and languages that Ossorio has along the text and that truffes the plot that we meet these peoples. As a genuine globetrotter –where the entire globe is contained somehow in the abstract idea of Castilla as Spain, for Ossorio as it is for the ideology and society of pre-war Spain, the protagonist disguises himself in various ways without losing the perspective— his own perspective, which will validate the individualistic point of view necessary to catalogue this work as non-deterministic/naturalist but psychologically modern and non-linear novel, a prequel of the Cold War that appears more clearly later in *Miserias de la Guerra* (1951-2006). The gaze of the voice, therefore, describes the moment when, through the other (the marginal, the poor, the prostitute, the pariah, the worker, etc.), the character is able to self-emerge, gain existence. The voice of the other becomes the flesh of the self for the narrator, as described by Levinas when addressing the ontological neighbor, as we shall see. *Camino de Perfección* shall serve to explore further in the uncertain convictions of Baroja on philosophy. It seems that it will be hard to posit some unmistaken and proven basis that explain Pío Baroja's philosophical positions, even ideological and political views. Probably that uncertainty reflects better Baroja's position, but also the historical moment of radical transition and transformation that he is living. As Macklin affirms (Macklin 1983), Baroja is that "anomaly" that is absorbed as a constant in Iberian and Basque literature; the Baroja constant.

Cold War and the Split: the Speech of Traumatic Otherness

César Domínguez discusses how challenging it has been for the field of comparative literature to make progress because of the myriad layers constructing its reality. This problem extends beyond the complexity and diversity of native, indigenous or national literatures. Moreover, the topic of identity becomes evasive. It mutates when we intend to shed some light on an specific historical period:

> The problem of identity, in effect, has become an intrinsic component of numerous contemporary discussions of literary space, as questions o displacement, mobility, migration, and nomadism have influenced how boundaries are conceived and how cultures as depicted. European identity, in particular, has been on the minds of political theorists such as Jürgen Habermas, who as advocated the type of post-Cold War European cosmopolitanism that actively embraces otherness and difference, overlapping citizenships, cultural indeterminacies, and the broad complexity of relationships among the global, the local, the national, and the regional. (Domínguez 2010, 134)

As Dominguez indicates, the liberal theories of Habermas are undeniably constructive rubrics on democracy and cosmopolitanism. I think it can be

more interesting, however, to engage precisely with the notion of otherness and difference, departing from the approach of the German philosopher to embrace Emmanuel Levinas' notion of neighbor in order to propose Pío Baroja's persona and work as an example that precedes the Cold War's imaginary, despite of the formal affiliations to certain ideologies that Baroja has been inscribed into. Rather than establishing the discussion on Baroja's explicit statements in this direction, this paper deals with the interpretation of his literary work's structure and style, in the very Jamesonian sense of the word, to underscore the parallel lines between the French and Basque thinkers, around the concept of the Other.

These two dimensions–the bifurcation of the Western world and the psychological perception of this traumatic reality—that abruptly emerge during the Cold War period introduce abstract notions such as transcendence and otherness in the global conversation. The philosophical notions of Emanuel Levinas, related sometimes to theological and transcendental ontologies, result very convenient when we analyze this particular otherness during the Iron Curtain period: an otherness that ended up being too *familiar*, two countries that because of the display of the conflict in popular culture and their own propaganda were more neighbors than enemies. An otherness based on speech and the spread of the word, indeed. The style and structure of Baroja's novels in general, and more concretely in *Camino de Perfección* and *Miserias de la Guerra* resemble this complex otherness of the enemy so common in Cold War literature, and that fits with Levinas' notions on ontology: a *too familiar* otherness that lives in the outskirts of its own historical period in the cities of Spain.

As we have just seen, in *Camino de Perfección*, Baroja depicts the idea of otherness in such a way that reminds faithful to some basics of Levinas' philosophy: the discovery of the I, in the case of Ossorio mainly, comes from the discovery of the other that is embodied in a myriad of characters, which contribute by their speech interaction, to complete the picture of who Ossorio is.

Speech marks the traumatic split in Levinas and Baroja, as they both try to discover the ontological level of the I by reconciling it with the "thou". Baroja's style might suggest a certain philosophical concern, yet, it is important also to navigate through the structure of his thought, as we do it on his statements on political issues. On the other hand, Levinas provides a certain structure that seems to find an ally in some of the Baroja's characters, and moreover, on the coined style, namely, "Barojiano". This style, more than the endless fragments on his political views, reflects a set of ideas where, regardless the contradictions and particular readings on different philosophers –mainly Schopenhauer and Nietzsche—we can recognize an active priority to encounter the Other. It is in this very moment when Baroja and Levinas become close accomplices, the moment where the

split –which resembles a traumatic ontology—is “corrected” throughout the encounter of a radical alterity that nevertheless will constantly appear for the discovery of the I.

Following up with Levinas’ philosophy, speech and dialogue –in its intersubjective manifestation of speech— remain central to discover the I, the product of the interaction and navigation of presences in a given space: the ontological discovery of the self in a form of detour. Levinas makes it clear that there is no individual ontological position that is not conditioned and almost administrated by the “thou”. Levinas goes as farm as affirming that in the end it is enjoyment, and not necessarily the search of pleasure through contemplation –denying here the ataraxy—as we shall see, “the very pulsation of the I” (Levinas 1979, 113). Although Baroja and Levinas belong to different historical moments, they both share the traumatic event as a pulsation in their philosophy. In the case of Baroja, the Spanish Civil War; in the case of Levinas, the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War.

It is, in part, to these traumatic events that their philosophical positions belong to. Baroja discusses and returns to the otherness of his characters endlessly, in a canvas of Spain that depicts the traumatic events it is going through. Spain is filtered through Baroja’s impression of the landscapes, the rural areas that sustain the central metropolis, mainly Madrid, with the plain mythological addition of the Basque territory: an imagined projection, open to critique, and closed to the critical view upon it, as shown in *La leyenda de Jaun de Alzate* or *La casa de Aizgorri*. Levinas writes from a radical alterity, both in at level of the subject and space. As Badiou puts it “Levinas’s (sic) enterprise serves to remind us, with extraordinary insistence, that every effort to turn ethics into the principle of thought and action is essentially religious” (Badiou 2001, 23). This puts his *philosophy*, no longer as a philosophy or theology, but *ethics*, as such (Badiou 2001). Moreover, both authors belong to a century that has been coined as the century of The Real, by Badiou, which fits with the traumatic idea that Germany has worked, through the contributions of Brecht as “a descendant of Nietzsche rather than Marx (…) upon herself –against herself—is pivotal to the century’s dissasters” (Badiou 2007, 40).

The identity politics that emanate from the 20th century are discussed and, at some extent, denied both by Baroja and Levinas. In the case of Baroja, this denial does not come as a explicit statements as side notes in his memories, but as a constructions of the characters and plots in his oeuvre. In the case of Levinas, more clearly, as the theoretical construction of his work, who according to Badiou is “the coherent and inventive thinker of an assumption that no academic exercise of veiling or abstraction can obscure: distanced from its Greek usage (…), and taken in general, ethics is a category of pious discourse”, and *Camino de Perfección* by Baroja, somehow, proves this point.

Levinas: the Neighbor of Your Enemy

During the second half of the 20th century, the Soviets −as a political aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution− represent, in the imaginary of the Western world, the combination of a set of political principles applied with discipline and courage among a vast majority of population, which lacks a direct access to *western* democracy. The idea of this semi-authoritarian regime clashes with the idea of liberty and private property that defines the Western democratic system. This clash and/or reconciliation is exactly what the Iron Curtain represents, and what was performed with the collapse of the Berlin's wall 1989. César Domínguez portraits this dichotomy that affects as well the literary world when he asserts that "[T]he end of the Cold War challenged the grids used by writers to make sense of an ideologically polarized world. Emerging hybrid identities and narratives have filled the vacuum created by the collapse of the bipolar world" (Domínguez 2017, 38). There is certainly an ambivalent mechanism that operates behind the big picture of two superpowers fighting a silent war. Or, going to back to the figure of the spy, there is a public display of a mask that is certainly focused on hiding the real nature of the dialogues going in the back stage of both the United States and the Soviet Union. It is in this contrast that we can discover regions, rather than nations. As Domínguez notes, this has been highlighted by Spivak and the connection of the CIA to fund some projects related to regionality (Domínguez 2010, 41). The democratic materialism that emanates from the old liberal version of capitalism, epitomized by the United States, would clash thus with the communist hypothesis reloaded in an authoritarian superstructure. Yet, they were two manners of hiding the real intentions of each side. One could easily portrait a theatrical effort to perform in front of the enemy, as Badiou remarks while recalling the figure of Bretch and the theatrics of politics in the 20th century and Malevich's *White on White* as the epitome of a "vanishing difference" in political but also cultural terms (Badiou 2007, 55).

"I am as if enclosed in my portrait" (Levinas 1998, 24) says Levinas, in this vein. This brief but crucial statement is directed to understand the performative dimension of our identity. Emanuel Levinas' work aims to elucidate the ontological aspects of the self, and do it by taking into account the other as the agent that makes the self-appear in the world. Levinas argues that "[i]t is characteristic of contemporary polemic to *draw a portrait* of the adversary instead of struggling against his or her arguments" (Levinas 24, emphasis mine). These lines are part of the collection of essays titled *Entre Nous: Essais sur le penser-à l'autre*, published originally in French in 1991, and written few years earlier, around the same time the culmen of the Iron Curtain period, where imaginary deployed by both countries (via propaganda and popular culture) will be employed to colorfully invent and create an agency embodied in two national entities confronted to each other. Not far from the Sartrean affirmation that "the other is hell" ("L'enfer, c'est

les autres"), Levinas presents an accessibility to the self through the hellish otherness of the neighbor. The distance drew by Sartre between the self and the other is blurred, if not diluted, in Levinas. The investigation to ontologically define the self in both authors differs, however. There is an attempt to combine both not in an inclusive manner, but in a necessary one (either marking the distance as in Sartre, or bridging this distance as in Levinas). But, what happens when the self is enclosed in his own portrait? Is he his own adversary, is he avoiding the intellectual debate with himself? Or to the contrary, this limitation really is what activates the intellectual and critical perspective?

Levinas makes clear that the encounter with the "I" comes from the discovery of the "thou". This is a constant in his philosophy, even when he is talking about the Man-God, his humility and his imperfect nature. The fact is that Levinas suggests some kind of "ontological empathy" that is in the basis of the reality, since for Levinas too the "transcendental" does not exist: the otherness somehow *is* but does not *exist* in Levinas. After a brief preamble on the ontology of God, the uncertain and never-ending hunt of a ghostly presence that nevertheless determines the understanding of that humble I, Levinas posits the question in the otherness of the neighbor. It this through *saying* that human beings, according to Levinas, encounter each other, and this *saying* "the very relationship of the *saying* cannot be reduced to intentionality, or that it rests, properly speaking, on an intentionality that fails". For Levinas, there is a Husserlian "appresentation" phenomenon going on, or, as he puts it, the failure to experience something beyond experience, a transcendence. Yet, language will belong to one of the modalities that the responsibility inchoated from this failure produces. In conclusion "the nearness of my neighbor", Levinas argues, "instead of being considered a limitation of the I by the other person or the aspiration for a unity still to be accomplished, becomes desire, nourishing itself on its hunger, or to use a worn-out word, love, more precious to the soul than the full possession of self by self" (Levinas 1998, 71-72). This position of Levinas, arguing in favor of considering language as a responsibility beyond its intentionality, and the deliberation of the transcendence as the un-limitation of the self towards the elusive other, fits with the Baroja's characters, and as Baroja understands the process of writing too. "Appresentation", so to speak, is a constant in the novels of Baroja, where failure is the nexus from one episode to the other, on plot to the other, the sudden vanishing of one character to another and so on. Baroja himself has been accused many times of not being attentive enough in his writing and making grammar mistakes regularly. Mistake and errors are part of Baroja's intra-vocabulary. At the same time, the metaphor of the "Iron Curtain" can be understood in similar terms: a curtain that will not let the gaze to trespass the image, even in the case of a translucid one, but the voice (or the gaze of the voice) had been articulated in the period of the Cold War. More than public statements, private rumors or whisperings had created a tissue of suspicious, vague and speculative narratives. All

these characteristics had been referred to Baroja's writing as negative critiques. Baroja, as Sanchez-Ostiz remarks, praises many times the newspapers' chronicles as a valid and rich literary source. His style dances constantly wit this form of writing, more detailed in the statements of mundane people, rather than the construction of complex characters along his novels.

Levinas displays his ontological apparatus around the idea of being-of-the-self-through-the-other. Thus, the world becomes a translational space, a space of transition, and therefore a space of tension:

> This world acquires its ontological privilege neither from the ascesis it entails nor the civilization to which it gives rise: already in its temporal concerns an understanding of being is discernible. Ontology is accomplished not in the triumph of man over his condition, but in the very tension which that condition is assumed. (Levinas 1998, preface II)

The relationship of the being-of-a-man with the world is thus not the primary but a secondary factor. Levinas stretches the argument affirming that "The whole man is ontology" (Levinas 1998, preface ii). There must be, according to Levinas, a process of transitive knowledge of life. If not, "what simply lives is thus ignorant of the exterior world. Not with an ignorance constituting the outer limits of the known, but an absolute ignorance, through an absence of thought" (Levinas 1998, 14). Or as Donald Rumsfeld had put it: there are things that we don't know that we don't know regarding the happenings of Abu Ghraib, covered by Žižek more extensively (Žižek 2004), which moreover can be framed as the Freudian unconscious. Yet, Levinas' metaphysical approach is again contrary to Fernando Pessoa's approach, for instance, as I argue somewhere else (Arranz 2014). For Levinas "thought begins the very moment consciousness becomes consciousness of its particularity, that is to say, when it conceives of the exteriority, beyond its nature as living being, that encloses it; when thought becomes conscious of itself and at the same time conscious of the exteriority that goes beyond its nature, when it becomes metaphysical" (Levinas, 15). Clashing again with Sartrean notions on existentialism, Levinas describes a scenario closer to the contributions made by Aristotle, its categorical vision of reality, and encyclopedic knowledge. Moreover, the radical freedom in Sartre is *limited* to the thinking of the subject in Levinas: "Thought begins with the possibility of conceiving a freedom exterior to my own" (Levinas 1998, 17). This exterior freedom being the set of possibilities disclosed by the other, in this case. Furthermore, in order to bridge this exteriority with the self, Levinas articulates an original formula based in language, or *saying*. Thus, for Levinas "Consciousness of self outside of self confers a primordial function to the language that links us with the outside. It also leads to the destruction of language. We can no longer speak. Not because we do not know our

interlocutor, but because we can no longer take his words seriously, for his interiority is purely epiphenomenal" (Levinas 1998, 24). The link between the two agencies, the self and the other, appears and disappears as soon as it is placed in the world. Language, for Levinas can be destroyed, and this is something new. Levinas continues saying that "No one is identical to himself. Beings have no identity. Faces are masks. Behind the faces that speak to use and to who we speak, we look for the clockwork and microscopic springs of souls". Significantly enough, Levinas uses the terms of *masks* and the lack of *identity* to destroy the definition of the self. Only in *microscopic springs* can we recognize the other, and the I can be at that very uncertain moment. It is truly a precarious being of the I what Levinas is presenting here. It is a precarious being in such a way that if the world becomes a poetic world then it refers to "a world without beginning where one thinks without *knowing* what one *thinks*" (Levinas 1998, 25). The eternal visit of poetics to a world that can be thought without knowing it disturbs Levinas.

In this vein, Levinas' proposal to encounter the self through the other rests in the transcendental nature of the other. Thus, for Levinas, "The transcendence of the interlocutor and the access to the other through language show that man is a singularity" (Levinas 1998, 26). Language mediates, however, the singularity might disappear at the moment language is destroyed. Therefore, it is important to remark that rather than a relationship based on contingency or causality, Levinas describes a relation of necessity. It is a precarious existence of the self, in a precarious world with a language that can be destroyed. Levinas adds, "The *I* is ineffable because it is speaking par excellence; respondent, responsible. The other as pure interlocutor is not a known, qualified content, apprehensible on the basis of some general idea, and subject to that idea. He faces things, in reference only to himself. Only with speech between singular beings is the interindividual meaning of beings and things, that is, universality, constituted." (Levinas 1998, 26). Here, Levinas makes a clear statement that sets the constitution of both the self and the other, through speech. Speech, remains, apparently, in a underworld, the source and consequence simultaneously of the precarity of the beings of the self and the other.

Baroja and Levinas: A De-tour of Re-encounters

What, then, might constitute Levinas' philosophy's connection with the work and persona of Pío Baroja and the Cold War? Certainly, there are some spaces they do not share: controversial as he was, Pío Baroja left behind works that were more directed to appease a dictatorial regime and protect a clan-like family, such as *Comunistas, judios y demás ralea* (1938), a polemic work with very little intellectual value and composed of frequently unconnected chronicles. These works hardly form a solid ideological corpus. The scope of *Réflexions sur la Question Juive*, a piece where Sartre digs in the controversial figure of the Jew as alterity in 1944 for instance, separates

and unites Levinas and Baroja by the very concept of otherness, central and crucial to understand the core of the twentieth century. What Baroja affirms with pseudo-political notions probably is what Levinas denounces with his philosophy. Despite this take on the question of the Jews, Baroja simultaneously is known for populating his novels with marginal and alienated characters: the poorest of the citizens living in the skirts of the city, the little rascals with profound moral gaps, the women that are submitted to the men desires and injustices, etc. Certainly Baroja too had the ability to conveniently put the obliterated otherness of Spain's beginning of the 20th century in the spotlight, positing a clear double standard towards the identification and narration of the otherness: another contradiction in his persona that will be a constant in his life. Moreover, at some point Levinas describes what Baroja's persona has been accused in numerous times: "when, in a movement of sincerity, one rises up against an abuse or an injustice, one runs the risk of resembling the portrait of a chronic protester" (Levinas 1998, 24). Beyond the infamous book in communists and Jews, Baroja timely denounced the chronic situation of Spain, as a hopeless country with very little future and a fatal intellectualism. Baroja, more than any other member of the 98-generation, is pictured still today as a chronic protester. These contradictions, the internal non-dialogue that Baroja avoids, confirms somehow the ontological perspective of Levinas: the self, even in the case of Baroja's persona, is-throughout-the-other(ness). According to Levinas "language, in its expressive function, addresses and invokes the other" (Levinas 1998, 32). Levinas makes clear that language is not the conceptualization of the other, there is no equivalence in this case within the self and the otherness through language: "the other, the concept of whom we are using at this very moment, is not invoked [through language] as concept, but as a person" (Levinas 1998, 32). Language, both for Baroja and Levinas, interpellates.

Furthermore, Levinas advances the presence of an obliterated third space: "the interlocutor does not always face us. Pure language emerges from a relation in which the other person plays the role of a third party. Immediate speech is ruse. We watch and spy on the interlocutor as he speaks and answers questions" (Levinas 1998, 33). Albeit the distance that we can encounter with the definition of a third space, as in Bhabha (Bhabha 2014), is interesting to dive into. It provides a means to examine a non-explicit presence of the self-through-the-other via language, since it can serve us to shade some light in the complex figure of Baroja's persona and the structure of many of his works. We could even identify some Bhabhaian third spaces in Baroja's novels *(Miserias de la Guerra* being one of the most notorious example of a social novel written in the mode of chronicles on the pariahs of Madrid in the midst of the civil war). The accessibility to the self in Levinas is mediated, at a distance that is evasive and structured around language. However, because it belongs to an underworld as a guarantee of this very distance, it becomes, according to Levinas, *ruse*. The authenticity is

important, therefore, for Levinas. A certain social authenticity of the other in form, as we have seen, an ontological empathy. Somehow, the illusion of an iron curtain validates the canvas Levinas is painting, too. The cold war belongs to the description Levinas is making here. Baroja does not experience the Cold War because of the particular situation of Spain at that moment, however, the idea of iron curtain can be valid too to understand the separation of Spain in series of alliances and geopolitical gestures that every nation in Europe is making in order to face the German (and Italian) fascism: there was a certainly strange atmosphere of competition at that time to elucidate which one was the *authentic* fascist nation. After spending most of his childhood in Madrid (with a brief stay in the Mediterranean area of Valencia), Baroja's clan settles in the border region of Baztan, in Navarre. The "Bera" river splits the two countries that differ at that historical moment, more politically that culturally. At some point, Baroja will claim the "free republic of Bidasoa" as the optimal form of government.

A statement in favor of a republic, after the fiasco of the second republic in Spain, is an adventurous statement, which Baroja completes with the will of not having to deal with "priests, flies or carabineers". Baroja navigates between this kind of semi-anarchist statement, and the ones in favor a certain grade of authoritarianism as a form of government that Spain *needs*: "Esta última época ha demostrado lo que muchos hemos creído: que el parlamentarismo no es fecundo. Es imposible. El parlamentarismo es una hoguera que lo consume todo a su lado; la dictadura puede ser la salvación[5]" (Baroja 1938). These contradictions describe a complex persona, a chronic protester, never too valiant, never too compromised, never too exposed. The accessibility to the self of Baroja's persona is also mediated by his words, the public appearances where to criticize almost everything (from politics to social issues) and to confirm by its destruction of the fatal consequences of what Unamuno coined as the "intrahistoria" of Spain. It is not the case that Baroja believes in such a premonitory determination of history, albeit his proximity to Schopenhauer's philosophy of decadence and pessimism, following his statements one tends to think that he is more of a fatalist than a pessimist, and therefore would negate any pre-determining notion as the "intrahistoria" in Unamuno. There is no cause, in the case of Spain, to its ruin; however, the total decadence is a fact that drowns any possibility of hope and moves his discourse into a plain fatalism. This is the clearest picture we get after reading Baroja's work, and his statements as a writer: the figure of chronic protester emerges all over the place.

The idea of an "infinite conversation" in Levinas results appealing too in order to establish a line where the Basque author fills his innumerable characters with voice. Baroja is immersed always in a continuous search for

[5] [this last époque has shown what many of us thought: parliamentarism does not work. It is impossible. Parliamentarism is a fire that consumes everything around it; dictatorship might be the salvation] Author's translation.

a conversation among his characters. It is actually how they meet each other, through conversations, and it is only in few lines of short dialogues that we get to know them.

> “Cuando entré yo, Hipólito decía, refiriéndose a él y a sus camaradas:
> — Nosotros somos internvecionistas. Hacemos política de clase.
> — Todo eso es una candidez −le replicó Goyena −. Lo que pasa es que ustedes están entontencidos con la imitación de Rusia.
> — ¡No! Yo no pienso en mí al decir esto. Pienso en mis compañeros”[6]
> (Baroja 2006-2017).

In very short traces, Baroja offers a still picture of an ideological discourse and depicts an entire historical period: a conflicted Spain is struggling ideologically between liberal tendencies and communist experiments that happen at an exotic distance in the Easter Europe. Yet, the corollary is that there is no remedy for Spain, there is the affirmation of the negation in the end, which cancels the dialectical turn’s negation of the negation.

There is a constant effort in Baroja to capture the unique moment in the streets of different cities and towns, transcendental moments that only appear subtly. These moments occur as ephemeral glimpses in Barroja’s fiction, but we have to listen to them.

> “Al salir vestido, y despedirse de sus familiares, el político dijo a su mujer:
> − Si no me matan, antes de media hora sabrás de mí.
> Bajó la escalera y, al llegar a la calle, señalándole un asiento en la parte de la camioneta, el jefe le dijo:
> − Ese es su sitio”.[7]
> (Baroja 2006-2017)

In this manner Baroja, narrates the killing of Calvo Sotelo in Madrid the 13th of July of 1936, and gives him voice, but only briefly: one line, eleven words. The historical passage itself is a culmination of two previous attempts that very same night to execute a conservative and monarchic politician, series of nonsense errors that might fall into what Arendt called “banality of evil”[8].

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[6] [When I entered, Hipólito was saying, referring to himself and his comrades: - We are interventionists. We practice class politics. – All that is a naivety- replied Goyena-. What happens is that all you are fooled with this Russian imitation.- No! I don’t refer to myself when I say that. I am thinking about my comrades.] Author’s translation.

[7] [As leaving all dressed up, and saying goodbye to his relatives, the politician said to his wife: - If they don’t kill me, before half an hour you will hear from me. He went down the stairs and when he reached the street, pointing to the backseat of the truck, the boss told him: - That is your place] Author’s translation.

[8] Here Arendt’s approach is respected the way the author put it: evil when banal becomes a perfect bureaucratic machine, with its inevitable mistakes and errors that nevertheless point to an effective (not that efficient) monster.

The intentional anonymity of the actors involved in the action and narrated from a neutral distance is broken only in the brief and cold dialogue. There is a latent anonymity that empties the subject, and leaves only its agency in the air, captured in a brief conversation that fits with the announcements that Levinas does in his discourse of the relationship between the I and the Other.

The uncountable characters that appear and disappear do contribute to the novels, in general terms. Even when the characters disappear, their agency does not. Baroja rests frequently in the agency of his characters rather than in the presence of them, or the specific weight or importance that they have in the plot of the novel. And in this case, their agency is directly related to their capacity to talk one or two lines in that passage. They form a phalanx of the plot. This goes in favor in relocating him as an author that is not, neither a naturalist/determinist/romantic nor as a modernist. It is an author in transition, a “rara avis” that is only comparable to figures like James Joyce.

Pío Baroja works on this notion of “neighbor” and “portrait” described above around Levinas’ philosophy as a multiple level of characterization shapes the plot and the narration of his works. *Miserias de la Guerra* as any other work at that time, had to go through the censorship of Franco’s regime in 1951. For reasons we ignore it was abandoned in the archives, filled with corrections and comments by the censors. In 1998, one century later the naming of the infamous 98’s generation, the Basque scholar Joan Mari Torrealdai discovered it among other partially censored and corrected works of the Basque writer. His findings will appear in the book *La censura de Franco en los esccritores vascos del 98*: the book, too, was hiding for more than three decades.

In *Miserias de la Guerra* Baroja adopts a very peculiar character to narrate the preambles and out bursting moment of the Civil War in Spain in the end of the 30’s. Carlos Evans, a British diplomat and army man assigned to the British Embassy in Madrid, will be the figure that Baroja chooses to account these crucial but minimal(istic) events. Baroja will take advantage from his own experience those days, while he lives in a very centric street of Madrid, and some of the most tragic and meaningful happening will be experienced almost in a first hand. Baroja returns to Madrid in 1940, aged 78 at that time, and discovers what the impact of the Civil War has been in the city. It results relative easy to unmask Baroja’s own voice under the character of Evans.

The novel works at two different levels, bringing the split to the realities that are described within: on the one hand there is a macroscopic perspective where general (philosophical and political) assertions and statements are poured by Evans to significant intellectual figures of that moment in order to discuss the general situation of Spain and Europe, with a pessimistic perspective that has been related by some authors to the sympathy that

apparently Baroja would have for Schopenhauer. The former level is more clear presented in chapters such as ”Inquietudes”, the later in chapters such as “Siluetas de politicos”, “Falsedades callejeras” or “El Club del Papel” . This dichotomy within dichotomy is portrayed in short moments such as:

> “Se ha contado que ha habido una conferencia de dos generales en el monasterio de Irache (…) Se explicaron los dos generales, el más liberal y el más conservador, y este prometió no sublevarse, lo cual no fue obstáculo para que se sublevara días después.
>
> El liberal volvió a su ciudad y los revolucionarios le fusilaron por conservador.
>
> − ¡Cuanta barbarie y cúanto desatino, y qué poca genialidad!”[9] (Baroja 2006-2017)

In this brief manner is narrated the assassination of the General Batet, and the meeting with General Mola, and who killed Batet were not the revolutionaries but Mola’s troops the 18th of February of 1937, as Sanchez Ostiz reminds us in a footnote. There is also an implicit validity that Baroja constantly concedes to the rumor (“it was mentioned”): the orality of the peoples describes an uncertain reality that nevertheless lasts, with the only outcome of supporting the self, the I, as Levinas points out.

The novel is structured into chronicle like chapters. With concise titles like “El comandante”, “Paseo en auto”, “El estraperlo” or “El alzamineto nacionalista,” these subunits do not occupy more than a few pages, yet they structure with precision Baroja’s account of key episodes of the Civil War’s development in Spain. They function as the description of a preamble, from a pseudo-neutral position that the narrator adopts in the voice of Baroja’s alter ego Carlos Evans, and feed the collective imaginary mostly based in orality and rumors. For instance, in “Unos y otros”, Evans opens the chapter saying that “No pienso poner los nombres de la mayoría de los que intervienen en la política de España − dice Evans− porque no tengo seguridad de los hechos que se les atribuyen. Únicamente citaré esos nombres populares que todo el mundo conoce”[10]. Even in the most notorious cases, Evans avoids the situation of having to present any evidence. The rumors give voice to the collective imaginary truffled by fears, long animadversions, old conflicts or a myriad of conflicts. Evans, paraphrasing Levinas, is enclosed in his portrait as

[9] [it was mentioned that a conference was held between 2 generals in Irache monastery. Both generals explained themselves, the most liberal one and the most conservative one, the later promised not to revolt, which was not an obstacle to revolt few days later. The liberal one returned to his city and the revolutionaries shooted him for being conservative. – Such a barbarism and what a nonsense, and how little genius!] Author’s translation.
[10] [I have no intention to name the ones that participate in politics in Spain − says Evans− because I have no confirmation of the facts they are credited with. I will only mention those popular names that everybody know]Author’s translation.

well: relies in his role as an outsider in order to disclose the most intimate moments of this dramatic time for Spain.

All in all, Baroja's style and approach to the Other anticipate the transition from realism into modernism, without fully fitting either in one or the other styles. At the same time, and with the addition of notions that Levinas has elaborated on ontoligcal basis, we can affirm that Baroja also anticipates the Cold War epoque, because precisely of the incorporation of the other in his peculiar manner. It is this the very transition –realism into modernism, and literary into philosophical—what we witness in Baroja. Levinas helps to understand certain philosophical corners of Baroja that remained more obscure and paradoxical. Because of the exposed above, Baroja could be a perfect candidate for a minor or small literature category. Without a clear fit into the national literature of his historical period, along with some explicit remarks on refusing to be categorized within the concept of generation, and with his inaccessible uncertain style, Baroja struggles as an author that quite belongs to "anywhere" in the existing literary fields, the ones that remain traditional and canonical, at least. By incorporating Baroja to the field of minor and small literatures, we could possible incorporate him to a conversation that goes beyond national disputes, and possibly too make it accessible to broader perspectives in literary theory.

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