II. A REINTERPRETATION

SINCE Azorín's invention of the term "Generation of 1898" in 1912 commentators have placed their main emphasis on the impact of the Disaster and the consequent preoccupation of certain writers with the problem of Spain. I should prefer, in my own brief survey, to start with something that I believe is more fundamental: spiritual disorientation. I shall draw my evidence from four writers commonly held to be members of the Generation: Unamuno, Ganivet, Azorín and Baroja.

1 The substance of this second part of my study was delivered as a lecture in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester on the 6th March 1974. To the editions of complete works indicated in the first footnote of Part I are to be added the following:
MU-LA: Letters from Unamuno to Leopoldo Alas (in Epistolario a Clarín, Madrid, 1951, pp. 33-103).
MU-PM: Letters from Unamuno to Pedro de Mugica (in Cartas inéditas de Miguel de Unamuno, Santiago de Chile, 1965).

2 As I hope will become apparent in the pages that follow, I do not consider these to be the only members of the Generation. It is my belief that when we use the term 98 Generation we should be referring neither to a whole generation of writers (which is what the term suggests) nor, at the other extreme, to a clearly definable group of writers (which is what most modern scholars in fact concern themselves with). I am myself concerned, ultimately, with a movement. But I know of no reliable way of approaching a movement except by comparative textual study operating initially within a limited range of reference. I place my main emphasis on the four writers indicated, firstly, because they are commonly accepted as members of the so-called 98 Generation and, secondly, because in their writings they bring together into a significant—and significantly similar—pattern a number of characteristics that we associate immediately with the literature of their age. It is my aim in this study to outline that pattern and thereby to offer a working hypothesis that others may care to scrutinize and eventually perhaps, by the judicious application of Lain Entralgo's indefiniciones, test and refine both with reference to the above four writers (for their works reveal variations on and departures from the proposed basic pattern that I cannot here explore)
In a letter to Pedro de Mugica dated 1st September 1890 Unamuno wrote: “me ha atacado una pertinaz hipocondría con una tendencia a la pereza casi invencible; no hago nada, no estudio nada, nada trabajo y me consumo en las ansias de un paso que no me resuelvo a dar. Es cosa la más terrible este carácter tímido e irresoluto que me gasta en imaginar sin objeto, en deliberar, en proyectar y en no hacer nada.” Only his studies, he declared, and his visits to Concha saved him from total 
*abulia* and *apatía*. It is a revealing observation that recalls a letter of a few months earlier, also to Mugica: “Proponerse un objeto, una tarea larga, es atarse a la vida por el trabajo” (29 April 1890). Nor is it only to work that Unamuno looks during the following years as a means of fastening on to life. Science, history, rationalism, socialism, marriage, attempted returns to the faith of his childhood—all are looked to as possible solutions, sometimes with optimism (“Pedid el reino de la ciencia y su justicia y todo lo demás se os dará por añadidura”),¹ at other times with anguished uncertainty (“y sus energías y sentimientos morales van desfalleciendo, y siente cansancio y que el mundo le devora el alma”, MU-LA, 31 May 1895).
And always, underlying these things, one senses the desire to belong, the search for roots, the need for a vision of order and direction amidst the confusion and apparent pointlessness of human existence. Martínez Ruiz made the essential point in an article prompted by *Paz en la guerra*: “[Unamuno] es un espíritu paradójico, inquieto, tormentado [. . .]. El autor de *Paz en la guerra* no sabe dónde va.”² A few months later, in his *Diario íntimo*, Unamuno confirmed the observation: “¡Con qué razón escribía Martínez Ruiz que yo no sabía a dónde iba!” (viii. 837).

In his first doctoral thesis (1888–9) Ganivet noted only two fields of faith and, thence also, of enthusiasm and activity in

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² In *El País*, 16 January 1897.
the Spain of his day: that of religion and that of science and empirical study, "el espiritualismo y el materialismo" (ii. 592-6, 662). For the rest, he found everywhere apathy, indifference, lack of direction, lack of ideals and, underlying it all, scepticism, "el escepticismo, que nada afirma ni nada niega, que priva a la inteligencia de la seguridad o fijeza en el conocimiento y a la voluntad de la convicción y la firmeza en sus determinaciones" (ii. 586). A few years later, in letters to Navarro Ledesma, he revealed the special relevance of these observations to his own mental state. "Cada día me va siendo más difícil concretar mis ideas y fijar mi pensamiento sobre un objeto determinado." Lacking the "instrucción compacta" of either seminary or Institución Libre, he found the world around him aimless and repugnant and was unable to assimilate its data. "En tal estado," he declared, "el espíritu se va [. . . pero. . .] el espíritu que abandonó la realidad por demasiado baja no puede elevarse a la infinitud por demasiado alta." The outcome was inaction: "la vida retrograda, no pudiendo vencer la pereza, que le impide continuar asimilándose elementos nuevos para renovar la vida al compás del tiempo". Ganivet diagnosed his malady as "abulia o debilitación de la voluntad" (1893; ii. 811-13). He was scornful of society and the order that sustained it, and he would gladly see it destroyed. But in 1895 he still had nothing to offer in its place. We find him dominated by "la desesperación sin causa, que es la más terrible de las desesperaciones" (ii. 1013). Life, he feels, is empty and pointless. He must content himself with his imaginings, "para disfrazar las miserias de la vida e impedir que se acerque la idea del suicidio" (ii. 1016-17).

In his Diario de un enfermo (1901) Martínez Ruiz presents the diary of an "angustiado artista", "nostálgico de ideal" (i. 691). The opening lines set the tone of the work:

¿Qué es la vida? ¿Qué fin tiene la vida? ¿Qué hacemos aquí abajo? ¿Para qué vivimos? No lo sé; esto es imbécil, abrumadoramente imbécil. Hoy siento

1 "Mi enemiga contra la sociedad y el orden que la sostiene es irreconciliable" (1894; ii. 950); "odio con toda mi alma nuestra organización y todas sus infinitas farsas, y veré con entusiasmo todos los trabajos de destrucción" (1895; ii. 1010).
Striving and defeat, illusion and despair, and, underlying all, a profound obsession with the pointlessness of human existence. In the following year the author probed the dilemma further in his autobiographical novel, *La voluntad*. "Azorín, en el fondo, no cree en nada" (i. 912). He is repelled by the frivolity of men of letters, by the abjectness of politicians, by the oppressiveness of the Catholic religion, by the stagnation of Spanish society. Yet he lacks the energy to do anything about it. *Abulia* paralyses his will (i. 974). "¿Para qué? ¿Para qué hacer nada?" (ibid.). He oscillates between faith and scepticism, between illusion and despair, between a longing for action and the acceptance of defeat. He is an atheistic mystic, he says (i. 934), a man of his time in whom intelligence has developed at the expense of the will (i. 968):

Azorín es casi un símbolo; sus perplejidades, sus ansias, sus desconsuelos bien pueden representar toda una generación sin voluntad, sin energía, indecisa, irresoluta, una generación que no tiene ni la audacia de la generación romántica, ni la fe en afirmar de la generación naturalista (i. 959).

In *Camino de perfección* (1902) Baroja finds similar characteristics in his own autobiographical "hero". Irritated with society, impatient with politics, disillusioned with religion, Fernando Ossorio oscillates between vague indefinable longings for a guiding ideal ("¿Habré nacido yo para místico?", vi. 69) and despair at the ultimate emptiness and pointlessness of his life. "¡Ah! ¡Si yo supiera para qué sirvo!" he exclaims, "Porque yo quisiera hacer algo, ¿sabes?, pero no sé qué" (14). "Como no tenía deseos, ni voluntad, ni fuerzas para nada, se dejó llevar por la corriente" (20). His character, then, like Azorín’s, is unstable, "tan pronto lleno de ilusiones como aplanado por el desaliento sin causa" (26). As Azorín is haunted by his "pesimismo instintivo" (i. 912), so Ossorio is haunted by his "pensamiento amargo" (13). He is an idealist unable to find an object worthy of his idealizing, a sceptic tormented by his scepticism. Words applied to another character in the book
What are the causes of this spiritual desolation? Spanish society, certainly, is blamed for much. So are politics and politicians. So are the unacceptable values—or lack of values—of established Spanish writers. On all these things there is an abundance of evidence and it has been much studied. But more fundamental, perhaps, is the somewhat less studied sense of lost religious faith and the agonizing awareness of one’s inability to fill the resulting void. “¡Ah!” exclaims Unamuno, “¡qué triste es después de una niñez y juventud de fe sencilla haberla perdido en vida ultraterrena, y buscar en nombre, fama y vanagloria un miserable remedo de ella!” (MU-LA, 9 May 1900). “Hoy ya los dioses que nos formamos,” says Ganivet, “somos nosotros mismos, como pensaba Feuerbach, y por esto y por no poder salir de nosotros y por encontrarnos insuficientes, es por lo que nos desesperamos” (1894; AG, Ji. 976). “Ha venido la fe a mi alma,” thinks Ossorio at one moment; “Pero, al salir de la iglesia a la calle, se encontraba sin un átomo de fe en la cabeza” (PB, vi. 66). “La fe nos hace vivir,” declares Yuste, “¡sin ella la vida sería insoportable... ¡Y es lo triste que la fe se pierda! ¡Y se pierda con ella el sosiego, la resignación, la perfecta ataraxia del espíritu que se contempla rodeado de dolores irremediables, necesarios!” (1902; Azorín, i. 889–90).

The men of 98, I suggest, in their early years at least, were religious spirits without faith, sceptics tormented by their scepticism, atheistic mystics. On the one hand there was a “disgregación de ideales” (1902; Azorín, i. 959); on the other hand, a lack of “plan”, “idea”, “finalidad” with which to construct anew (1901; Azorín, i. 693). “Dícese, y con razón,” commented Martínez Sierra, “que la juventud actual, si no es

1 This and similar expressions are commonplaces of the time. “Se puede ser místico ateo”, says Unamuno (1892; MU-PM, p. 178), and Martínez Ruiz refers to his alter ego’s “misticismo ateo” (1902; i. 934). Similarly, Ganivet finds within himself “una especie de misticismo negativo” (1893; ii. 811) and Ossorio’s psychological state is referred to as “misticidad” (1902; vi. 43; cf. the subtitle of the book, “Pasión mística”).
frívola, es triste; yo creo que su frivolidad o tristeza son sen-
cillamente desconcierto, por falta de finalidad [. . .]. Anti-
guamente hablaba la Iglesia y daba la fórmula del vivir [. . .];
 hoy todo es silencio." ¹

Except for a single comment by Martínez Sierra I have so
far confined myself to the evidence of four writers who are gener-
ally accepted as members of the 98 Generation. But I have
suggested no grounds for a distinction between the 98 Generation
and Modernism. As D. L. Shaw has pointed out, the most
notable Modernists, too, were obsessed with a sense of fallen
values and lost finality.² " How many of those who quote the
memorable opening lines of [Silva’s] famous Nocturno as a sup-
reme example of modernista technical innovation go on to recall
that its climax coincides with the poet’s reference to ‘el frío de
la nada ’? " (op. cit, p. 199). And how many of those who
emphasize the ‘ nota galante, versallesca, parisina ’ of Manuel
Machado’s early writings, one might add, go on to emphasize
also the important ‘ ¡Dios no nos quiere! ’ of El reino interior?
Nor do the similarities end there. The Modernists, like the
men of 98, are ‘ nostálticos de ideal ’, tormented by their
awareness of an abyss between inner vision and surrounding
reality. ‘ Quisiéramos que el mundo fuese, no como es, sino
como a nosotros se nos antoja que debiera ser ’ (1905 ; i. 1268).
The words are by Unamuno and they epitomize the attitude of
the four writers with whom I have so far been principally con-
cerned. But they could almost equally have been written by
Rubén Darío or Manuel Machado or Francisco Villaespesa or
the young Juan Ramón Jiménez. Consider, for example, Juan

¹ In Alma Española, 6 March 1904. The origins of the 98 Generation’s
religious crisis are presumably to be found in what López-Morillas, with reference
to Sanz del Río, Fernando de Castro, Giner and Azcárate, has referred to as a
“ crisis de la conciencia española ” (Hacia et 98 (Barcelona, 1972), pp. 119-59).
On the impact of this crisis on the men of 98—and their resulting lost sense of
finality—D. L. Shaw has two valuable and insufficiently known articles: “Gani-
vet’s España filosófica contemporánea and the interpretation of the Generation of
1898 ”, in Hispanic Review, xxviii (1960), 220–32, and “ Il concetto di finalità
nella letteratura spagnola dell’Ottocento ”, in Convivium, xxviii (1960), 553–61.
² D. L. Shaw, " Modernismo : a contribution to the debate ", in Bulletin of
Hispanic Studies, xlv (1967), 195–204.
Ramón’s review of Timoteo Orbe’s *Rejas de oro*. He contrasts the play’s “dulcisima vida de ensueños” with the coarse reality that greets one outside the theatre—“la impenitencia de esa sociedad pecadora; la imposibilidad de sacarla del cieno en que está hundida [. . .] para hacerla entrar por la puerta blanca de la felicidad”—and comments on modern society: “No; no podrá nunca templar su alma al unísono con el Ideal. La sociedad moderna es un gran organismo material; se traga a los seres, los digiere penosamente en su vientre ayudada por el jugo aurífero, y los arroja al exterior en excrementos nauseabundos . . . Ahí no puede existir parte alguna de idealismo. . .”

Perhaps one can draw a line between Juan Ramón’s “no puede existir” and the more typically 98 “¡Si yo pudiera encontrar. . .!”, but the distinction is a fine one and it becomes finer still if one recalls that mere weeks before writing this review Juan Ramón had been presented to the readers of *Vida Nueva* as one who wept for the needy, for the exploited, for the persecuted and humble, “no con lamentos femeninos, sino con impulsos de arrebatada ira, cerrando el puño y alzándolo amenazador al cielo de donde no nos ha venido ni vendrá nunca la justicia.”

In their initial idealistic reaction of abhorrence to the real world in which they found themselves immersed, as in their questioning of life’s ultimate finality, *modernistas* and *noventayochistas*, I suggest, were alike. Alike they shared the “gran aspiración hacia el infinito”, the “ansia indeterminada a la idealidad”, that Baroja, in 1900, believed to be characteristic of the literary generation to which he belonged; alike they were characterized by what Azorín, before his invention of the term 1898 Generation, believed to be the “rasgo distintivo” of his generation: “el desinterés, la idealidad, la ambición y la lucha por algo que no es lo material y bajo, por algo elevado, por algo que en arte o en política representa pura objetividad, deseo de cambio, de mejora, de perfeccionamiento, de altruismo” (1910; ix. 1138);

1 In *Vida Nueva*, 4 February 1900.
2 Ibid. 3 December 1899.
3 In the prologue to Martínez Ruiz’s *La fuerza del amor* (Azorín, i. 737).
4 I quote with misgivings the words “pura objetividad” but my misgivings refer no less to the men of 98 than to the Modernists—as I hope to show later in this study.
alike they were ególatras acutely conscious of a conflict between
the yo and the non-yo: "El sentimiento primordial del hombre
es el dolor, la molestia, la sensación de obstáculo y estorbo, que
experimenta su voluntad al chocar con el mundo" (1892; MU,
iv. 294-5); "Nada hay más doloroso que ambicionar grandezas
que están fuera de nuestra acción" ([1895-6]; AG-NML, 57).
These are all aspects of a basically Romantic dilemma and, up
to this point, at least, I find no clear grounds for distinguishing
between Modernists and the men of 98.

The difference appears when we turn from the dilemma to
the solution. And at first sight the difference is enormous.
Whereas the Modernists seek refuge and consolation in a hedon­
istic, ivory-tower world of self-contemplation away from the
problems of real-life involvement,1 the men of 98 look for a
solution in the reality in which they are immersed. "Cada uno
de nosotros buscaba salvarse como hombre," commented
Unamuno, "Pero ¿hombre y sin patria? Por eso partimos a

1 The question of Modernism lies outside my present concern and must
regretfully be left aside. The following quotations will serve merely as brief
pointers to what I take to be characteristic Modernist responses to the basic
dilemma that they share with the men of 98:

veréis en mis versos princesas, reyes, cosas imperiales, visiones de países
lejanos o imposibles: ¡qué queréis!, yo detesto la vida y el tiempo en que
me tocó nacer; y a un presidente de República no podré saludarle en el
idioma en que te cantaría a ti, ¡oh Halagabal!, de cuya corte—oro, seda,
mármol—me acuerdo en sueños... (Rubén Darío, "Palabras liminares",
Prosas profanas, 1896).

Mi voluntad se ha muerto una noche de luna
en que era muy hermoso no pensar ni querer...
Mi ideal es tenderme, sin ilusión ninguna...
De cuando en cuando, un beso y un nombre de mujer.
(Manuel Machado, "Adelfos", Alma, 1902)

Si penas y dudas olvidar ansias,
su clásica copa te ofrece el poeta.
En márfil y oro la esculpió un atleta...
Fue copa de besos en noche de orgías.
[... ] ¡Alma soñadora, embriágate en ella
de rojos delirios y ensueños azules!
(Francisco Villaespesa, "Ofrenda", La copa del rey de Thule, 1900)
la conquista de una ” (1918; viii. 408). Spain, then, is looked to for an answer to personal concerns. But reality does not easily conform to the longed for ideal. The initial reaction of anger and involvement is well known: the radical standpoints in politics, the activities of “Los Tres”, the desire to “romper la vieja tabla de valores morales” (1902; Azorín, i. 920), the attacks on Spain’s national heritage, the response to the Disaster... But the abundant criticisms that we find under these headings are perhaps more consequences than causes, attempts to assuage an indeterminate, inner, insoluble malaise, “la desesperación sin causa, que es la más terrible de las desesperaciones” (1895; AG, ii. 1013), by attributing it to specific, external and possibly remediable causes; attempts, too, perhaps, to fasten on to life by action in the same way that Unamuno sought to fasten on to life by work.¹ Baroja himself supports the suggestion in his Juventud, egolatria: “Como todos los que se creen un poco médicos preconizan un remedio, yo también he preconizado un remedio para el mal de vivir: la acción. Es un remedio viejo como el mundo, tan útil a veces como cualquier otro y tan inútil como todos los demás. Es decir que no es un remedio” (1917; v. 173). And this, it appears, is what the men of 98 in general discovered: that ultimately action was not a remedy, that by action alone one could not adapt reality to the cherished inner vision. Moreover, despite the prevailing “ambiente de romanticismo y de idealidad” (1910; Azorín, ix. 1137) the men of 98 lacked the audacity of the Romantics (1902; Azorín, i. 959). The interventionist consolation of action, the Romantic consolation of emotive self-projection, the Modernist consolation of hedonistic escapism—initially, at least, all seemed inadequate. Something more solid was needed.

Nineteenth-century science appeared to show the way. In his first doctoral thesis Ganivet had observed that only churchmen and scientists could stand out against the prevailing apathy and lack of direction with a firm guiding ideal (1888–9; ii. 586–96). His own choice was declared a few years later: “Es preciso

¹ “Proponerse un objeto, una tarea larga, es atarse a la vida por el trabajo” (MU-PM, 29 April 1890).
tener fe en la ciencia” (1893; ii. 926). But what science? Unamuno suggests the obviously justified answer: “El principio de unidad y la doctrina de la evolución son hoy las ideas madres en la ciencia” (1894; i. 879). In the following year Martínez Ruiz added his own comment: “El triunfo de las nuevas ideas vendrá por la ciencia” (1895; i. 171); the idea of evolution, he added twenty years later, is the “madre del pensamiento moderno” (1915; iii. 260). “La ciencia es la construcción sólida de la Humanidad, la única bienhechora,” declared Baroja in 1924 (v. 533), and he recalled later how he had championed the work of men like Darwin and Pasteur as “mucho más transcendental para el mundo que la de Baudelaire o de Verlaine” (1947; vii. 837). The science of our age, declared Antonio Machado’s Juan de Mairena, “aludiendo al siglo xix”, is “biologismo, evolucionismo, un culto a los hechos vitales sometidos a la ley del tiempo”.1 It is difficult to stem the flow of evidence. We are touching on a basic credo of the time:

La ciencia es el carácter dominante de nuestro tiempo. Todo tiende a someterse a ella, desde la industria hasta la milicia. La misma política se reconoce que debiera ser patrimonio de los sociólogos. Y el arte no puede quedar excluido de este movimiento intelectual (Antonio Royo Villanova, in Alma Española, 21 February 1904).

“Tal vez esta disgregación de ideales sea un bien,” commented Martínez Ruiz on his alter ego’s “perplejidades, sus ansias, sus desconsuelos”; “acaso para una síntesis futura—más o menos próxima—sea preciso este feroz análisis de todo” (1902; i. 959). Unamuno made a similar point: “Sólo creo posible una nueva integración sobre elementos diferenciados merced a la desintegración de antiguas categorías” (1898; iii. 1289). It was to science, I suggest, and more especially to evolutionism, that the men of 98 looked for the “síntesis” and “integración”—and thence also for the sense of direction—that they felt their heritage denied them.

One thinks immediately, of course, of Darwin and his Origin of Species (1859) and his name appears frequently in the writings with which we are concerned. Nevertheless, evolutionism, I believe, in its application to human institutions, reached Spain not

1 Juan de Mairena (Madrid, 1936), pp. 99–100.
principally through Darwin—not through Spencer—but through the French historian and philosopher, Hippolyte Taine. "La influencia directa de Taine sobre los intelectuales ha sido enorme," wrote Pompeyo Gener in 1898; "él es quien ha hecho positivistas a casi todos los pensadores y artistas de Europa que hoy tienen de treinta a cuarenta años; él, más que Darwin y Spencer, ya que éstos son más técnicos, más complicados, más abstrusos, menos artistas."1 "La literatura contemporánea está saturada de su pensamiento," declared J. Uña Sarthou in 1901; "ninguno de sus contemporáneos poseyó en tan alto grado el espíritu sintético [...]. No hay para qué entrar a detallar las ideas de Taine: todo el mundo las sabe."2 From 1893 to 1900 "La España Moderna" published fifteen volumes of Taine's works in translation. For the editors of Vida Nueva the acceptance or non-acceptance of Taine's methods was a basic criterion by which to distinguish the new from the old in Spanish thought.3 "No hay en los tiempos modernos," wrote Azorín in 1904, "otro ejemplo de una vida intelectual más intensa, más perseverante, más noble y más sincera. Nosotros hemos encontrado en Taine un fervoroso amor a los grandes problemas del espíritu."4

Taine's system is basically determinist. Man is a product and a producer: a product of a given physical environment, formed by that environment, and a producer of certain works—historical activity, institutions, literature, etc.—that bear inevitably

1 Amigos y maestros (2nd ed., Barcelona, 1915), pp. 125-6. The words "positivismo" and "positivista" are used in two rather different senses by writers of the time: on the one hand, generally scornfully, to refer to the mere formless amassing of facts ("El criterio excesivamente positivista en que se inspiran hoy los estudios históricos obliga a los historiadores a colocar todos los hechos sobre un mismo plano y a cifrar todo su orgullo en la exactitud y en la imparcialidad", 1897; AG, i. 224); on the other hand, with approval—and more correctly, at least if the term is to be considered relevant to Taine—, to refer to the collecting of facts and the framing of laws ("Hamon es un obrero intelectual de una laboriosidad extraordinaria; positivista convencido, trabaja sobre los hechos, y de ellos saca todas sus conclusiones, y por ellos formula la ley, la regla media, general, que rige y gobierna las relaciones sociales", 1897; Azorín, i. 286). Pompeyo Gener uses the term in the latter sense. In what follows above I myself prefer to use the term "determinism" because of Taine's prime concern to demonstrate necessary causal relationships.

2 In La Lectura, June 1901, p. 112. 3 In Vida Nueva, 15 January 1899.
4 In Alma Española, 10 January 1904.
the imprint of his character and, thence also, the imprint of
the environment in which that character was formed. Man,
then, is seen at the centre of a vast network of causality (a partial
consolation, at least, for his ejection from the centre of creation):
he is formed by his physical environment—the grey skies and
green fields of England, it is suggested, will produce a character
very different from that formed amidst the bare, sun-scorched
uplands of Castile—and man in turn, unconsciously, imprints
that character on his works, indeed must do so if his works are
to be effective. This, of course, is a frankly over-simplified
account of Taine's view. ¹ It will nevertheless serve as an
adequate starting-point for the next stage of my study: a brief
comparative survey of Unamuno's *En torno al casticismo* (1895)
and Ganivet's *Idearium español* (1897). The dates are significant.
Both works were published before the Disaster of 1898. If it
can be shown that in these two works—and in Taine—one finds
a key to the understanding of immediately recognizable charac-
teristics of the so-called 98 Generation we shall have to view
rather critically the traditional emphasis on the impact of that
year.

The first point of similarity is obvious and has been much
emphasized: Unamuno and Ganivet are both concerned with
the problem of Spain: past greatness, present decline and
possible future revival. Other common characteristics have been
somewhat neglected and seem to me more important. The
basic one is this: that for both writers the problem of Spain
is primarily a psychological problem. Contemporary Spanish
society, it is claimed, is in a state of mental and spiritual crisis:
confused, disorientated, unable to find its direction amidst a
profusion of unintegrated and often irreconcilable elements.
Spain, it is alleged, lacks a basic guiding principle and the out-
come is *atonía* and *abulia*, a state of near paralysis of the will
and understanding that results in general apathy and inaction
disrupted by occasional outbursts of ill-directed energy as one

¹ For a fuller account I refer the reader to Taine's own two declared manifestos
of method: the 1863 Introduction to his *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* and the
1866 Preface to his *Essais de critique et d'histoire,*
element or another is seized upon, out of context, and made the unconsidered motive of action. Taine's approach to history is similar: "l'histoire au fond est un problème de psychologie"; France since the Revolution has lost its direction because of the absence of a firm guiding principle.

How does one fill the gap? How does one find an adequate guiding principle? All three writers give the same reply: through collective self-knowledge. Each nation has its own particular character, its own way of looking at reality and of reacting to it, its own special aptitudes, its own strengths and weaknesses; in short, its own "conciencia colectiva", its own "personalidad nacional". A nation that struggles against or is forced to act against its native character becomes inwardly confused and outwardly ineffectual; a country that lives at one with its character prospers. Consequently, whoever would claim to guide a nation's destinies must start by understanding the national character. In Taine's words, "plus nous saurons précisément ce que nous sommes, plus nous démèlerons sûrement ce qui nous convient". The aim, then, is collective self-knowledge, the "conócete colectivo" that Unamuno believed to characterize his age.

But national character is complex and diffuse. Is it possible to find within that complexity and diffuseness a firm basis for understanding? All three writers believe it is. There is a central, structuring "faculté maîtresse", says Taine; a "núcleo castizo", says Unamuno; a "fuerza dominante y céntrica", says Ganivet. It reveals itself in all the manifestations of a nation's culture but is most immediately revealed in the character of the ordinary, unchanging country people. It is there especially, in the countryside, that one recognizes the formative influence of physical environment. It is there especially that one finds the key to national character and, thence also, to the nation's history and culture. "Il semble que de tous côtés les sensations et les idées affluent pour vous expliquer ce que c'est

que le Français," writes Taine in an evocation of the countryside of Champagne¹; the country people of Castile, says Unamuno, "tienen un alma viva y en ella el alma de sus antepasados, adormecida tal vez, soterrada bajo capas sobrepuertas, pero viva siempre" (ETC, 813); it is by probing the earth, says Ganivet, that one finds the essential nucleus: in the "espíritu territorial" (IE, 175). All three thinkers, then, purport to find fundamental and persistent national traits causally linked to fundamental and persistent physical conditions.

But the causal relationships do not end there. For Unamuno and Ganivet, I have said,—as for Taine in his own studies—man is not only a product; he is also a producer who imprints his character on his various works: history, institutions, philosophy, literature, art. . . . Thus, having discovered what they take to be essential Spanish character, Unamuno and Ganivet both seek to confirm their findings by reference to different aspects of Spanish civilization, notably literature. This presents a problem that I can mention here only in passing: that though they each describe a different basic national psychology, Unamuno and Ganivet both seek—and claim to find—confirmation of their different interpretations in similar and often identical texts and authors: the Romancero, the Celestina, the mystics, Don Quixote, Lope de Vega, Calderón. One may perhaps be forgiven for feeling a slight unease about a method that allows such apparently ready confirmation of very different findings.

Having professedly discovered the essence of Spanish character and confirmed it in its various manifestations, Unamuno and Ganivet—still parallel to Taine—² proceed to sit in judgement

² "Personnellement, dans les Origines de la France contemporaine, j'ai toujours accolé la qualification morale à l'explication psychologique; dans le portrait des Jacobins, de Robespierre, de Bonaparte, mon analyse préalable est toujours rigoureusement déterministe, et ma conclusion terminale est rigoureusement judiciaire" (Vie et correspondance, iv [3rd ed., Paris, 1908], p. 292). The prime aim of the historian, he declares, is "de démêler les lois générales et de fournir un jour aux gouvernements et aux peuples des préceptes d'hygiène sociale, analogues aux prescriptions d'hygiène physique que les physiologistes et les médecins introduisent aujourd'hui dans les hôpitaux" (op. cit. [hereafter VC], iv. 306).
on the national past and present and to make recommendations for the future. Their basic criticism of the past and present is that there has been a deviation from fundamental, environment-formed national character; their basic recommendation for the future is that national action should be made consistent with national character. "Es deber de cada uno ayudar a la naturaleza," says Unamuno (ETC, 855); "caminar a ciegas," says Ganivet, "no puede conducir más que a triunfos azarosos y efímeros y a ciertos y definitivos desastres" (IE, 258). By means of action based on collective self-knowledge Spain can find again the greatness of former ages.

Can we find pointers in all this to a better understanding of the 98 Generation? I suggest that we can.

The obvious first point has been emphasized ad nauseam: in both works the authors are concerned with the problem of Spain and this, it is claimed, is the basic characteristic of the 98 Generation. Unfortunately, however basic this characteristic may be, it is not a distinguishing characteristic. Spanish intellectuals had been concerned with the problem of Spain for at least a century. What distinguishes the writers of 98 from their predecessors is not their concern with the problem but their response to it. En torno al casticismo and Idearium español offer an excellent guide.

In the first place, as we have seen, both authors are concerned to establish a central, time-resistant nucleus of national tradition, a firm basis from which to judge the past and present and from which to make recommendations for the future: a "núcleo castizo" (ETC, 856), "una fuerza dominante y céntrica" (IE, 211). Is this a distinguishing characteristic of the new generation? Certainly Maeztu believed that it was. Until the appearance of the 98 Generation, he claimed, men could not agree about what was wrong with Spain. At times they lamented simply the lack of glory, of strength, of material prosperity; at other times, the lack of merit, of natural wealth, of great men. At one moment it was tradition that was blamed: at another moment, the inheritors of that tradition. "Faltaba un criterio de discernimiento," he continued; "faltaba la pregunta de:
¿qué es lo central, qué es lo primero, qué es lo más importante?" (1913; i. 88). These, I suggest, are the basic questions underlying *En torno al casticismo* and *Idearium español*. They also underlie Baroja’s quest for “lo típico y lo característico” (1926; v. 575) and the search for “la continuidad nacional” that Azorín believed to be characteristic of the 98 Generation (1941; vi. 229).¹

But there is much more significance than this in the similarities that we have observed between *En torno al casticismo* and *Idearium español*. For it is not simply that Unamuno and Ganivet both look for a firm rock of national tradition. It is where they look for it, too, that is important: not in the actions or proclamations of kings or politicians or generals or bishops—though all these may reveal something of the national tradition—but in the lives and character of the humble, anonymous, unchanging Spanish people. Hitherto, it is claimed, there has been too much emphasis on the great figures and great events of history and not enough on the lives of ordinary people. And at this point, says Azorín, we come to what is really essential in the 1898 Generation:

¿Cómo entiende Unamuno la Historia? ¿De qué modo Baroja ha trazado el cuadro de la España contemporánea? Los grandes hechos son una cosa y los menudos hechos son otra. Se historian los primeros. Se desdenan los segundos. Y los segundos forman la sutil trama de la vida cotidiana. “Primores de lo vulgar”, ha dicho elegantemente Ortega y Gasset. En esto estriba todo. Ahí radica la diferencia estética del 98 con relación a lo anterior. Diferencia en la Historia y diferencia en la literatura imaginativa [...]. Lo que no se historiaba, ni novelaba, ni se cantaba en la poesía, es lo que la generación del 98 quiere historiar, novelar y cantar (1941; vi. 232).

Unamuno with his emphasis on “la vida de los millones de hombres sin historia” (ETC, 793); Ganivet with his view of the “clases proletarias” as “el archivo y el depósito de los

¹ In contrast, Azorín noted in Lucas Mallada’s *Los males de la patria* (1890) —“el libro más representativo del momento”— the absence of “el carácter peculiar de las cosas de España”, a failure to seize upon the “definida y fuerte personalidad” of the “desierto de España” (vi. 255–6). Like Maeztu in the passage quoted above, he is touching here on what I take to be a basic distinction between what, with reservations (for, as we have seen, the new approach is already present in *En torno al casticismo* and *Idearium español*), we can call the “pre-98” and “post-98” approach to Spain.
sentimientos inexplicables, profundos de un país" (IE, 203); Pío Baroja, "el enamorado de las vidas humildes"; Azorín himself, the lover of "vidas vulgares e ignoradas" (1904; ii. 83). . . . Quite suddenly, during the closing years of the nineteenth century, the notion becomes a commonplace. Indeed, the very suddenness with which the notion does become a commonplace obliges me to make a detour. For despite numerous roots in the past—the German Historical School, the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, the writings of men such as Joaquín Costa and Eduardo Pérez Pujol, the impact of Taine, the possible influence of Unamuno and Ganivet, the gradual rise of socialism—the emphasis on the merits of the anonymous Spanish people established itself so suddenly during 1898 and 1899 as a journalists' commonplace that one is encouraged to look also for a more immediate explanation. Nor is it difficult to find one.

During the summer of 1898 Spain's colonial wars were brought to a swift and decisive end by the intervention of the United States. Canovas's resolve to answer war with war if the United States did intervene, Admiral Beränger's assurance of victory, General Weyler's offer to invade the United States, the patriotic clamours of the Spanish press, the revival of enthusiasm in the Spanish people themselves when it seemed that their forces were at last to be in conflict with a recognizable enemy instead of with disease—all had come to nothing. Anger and lamentation followed. Conservatives blamed Liberals, Liberals blamed Conservatives, Republicans blamed both, and Pablo Iglesias, reminding readers of El Liberal that Spain had no Socialist member of Parliament, blamed all three. But it was not merely a question of this party or that party, Iglesias maintained; "fracasaron todos, políticos, militares, administradores" (4 October 1898). In these few words he epitomizes a characteristic response of the time. I am quite unable to do justice to the mass of available evidence. What it indicates—and very clearly—is a national crisis of confidence: a loss of faith in the nation's

1 Camilo Bargiela, Luciérnagas (Madrid, 1900), pp. xxii–xxiii.
2 I deal with the subject at greater length in The 1898 Movement in Spain (Manchester University Press, 1974), pp. 104–12.
ruling minorities, a loss of faith in the nation's traditional ideals and a threatening loss of faith in the nation itself. But my reservation on the final point is important. If the nation's leaders can be shown to have been incompetent or if traditional ideals are found to have been mistaken, if it can be believed that the real Spain lies elsewhere than in its leaders and historical traditions, one can perhaps still retain one's faith in the nation. During the years 1898-9 attacks on leading figures and traditional policies abound in the Spanish press; so do expressions of despair and clamours for new ideals; so also, increasingly, do declarations of faith in the hidden qualities of the hitherto neglected Spanish people. One must search for Spain not in the outer crust, wrote Zeda, but in the subsoil: in the workshops, the countryside, the mines, "en fin, en lo más íntimo de su ser".\(^1\) Spain has lost her colonies, declared Maeztu, "pero, rascando un poco en la agrietada superficie social, se encuentra siempre el pueblo sano y fuerte, fecundo y vigoroso" (1898; ii. 126).

The youth of Spain is weary, said Enrique Lluria; a national "examen de conciencia" is necessary to discover and cultivate the latent "condiciones de la raza".\(^2\) But where is the raza to be found? Enrique Madrazo epitomizes the response of his age: "la raza está abajo, en la masa, no arriba en la cabeza".\(^3\) "Lo mejor que puede hacer el Gobierno," adds Antonio Royo Villanova a few months later, "es no estorbar".\(^4\) Further illustration would be superfluous. We have touched on a fundamental characteristic of Spanish writing around 1900: the turning away from the nation's traditional leaders and from big-drum history with its "glorias castizas" and "venerandas tradiciones"—and its notable colonial defeat—in order to find the allegedly real Spain in the everyday lives of ordinary people.

"La psicología como ciencia data de este siglo," wrote Unamuno in 1887; "las ciencias naturales, absorbiéndola, la han hecho progresar" (iv. 154). Under the influence of these developments, I suggest, and, most immediately, of Taine's

1 In *Vida Nueva*, 3 July 1898.
2 Ibid. 14 August 1898.
3 *¿El pueblo español ha muerto?* (Santander, 1903), p. 201.
application of natural history to human institutions, Unamuno
and Ganivet had emphasized the ordinary Spanish people as the
bearers of fundamental tradition. Then came the Disaster of
1898 and the consequent "derrumbamiento moral de la patria"
(1916; MU, iii. 1173). Quite suddenly, a host of commentators
were encouraged to do what Unamuno and Ganivet had already
done: to turn their backs on traditional history and to look for
national salvation in the hidden qualities of the anonymous
Spanish people. Something similar had happened in Germany
after the defeat of Jena in 1806; something similar had happened
also in France after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870.\(^1\) Chrono-
logy prevents us from explaining *En torno al castiscismo* and
*Idealium español*, key works of the 98 Generation, as products
of the national Disaster of 1898. It does not, however, prevent
us from explaining their subsequent success as being, at least in
part, a product of that Disaster. Indeed, it invites us to do so.
The impact of the Disaster, I suggest, has been misunderstood.
Its principal relevance to the 98 Movement lies in the impetus
it gave to an already existing, Taine-like emphasis on the import-
ance of the unchanging (that is, principally rural) common
people.

Moreover, as in *En torno al castiscismo* and *Idealium español*,
the new emphasis was primarily psychological. *El alma castellana,*
*Psicología del pueblo español*, *El alma española*, *Constitución y
vida del pueblo español*—these are characteristic titles of the time.
"Después del desastre colonial," wrote Unamuno in 1902,
"ha entrado en España a no pocos escritores cierta comzón por
el estudio de la psicología de nuestro pueblo o de nuestros pueblos,
comenzón muy natural y muy de alabar, pues si el 'conócete a
ti mismo' es razón de la conducta del individuo, ha de serlo

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\(^1\) In the former case I am thinking, of course, of the Herder-influenced
German Historical School with its emphasis on the *Volksgeist* (Savigny, Eichhorn,
the brothers Grimm...); in the latter case, amidst the growing impact of
natural history (Beneke's *Lehrbuch der Psychologie als Naturwissenschaft* dates
from 1833, Lotze's *Medizinische Psychologie* from 1852), I am thinking especially
of Taine himself who, "en présence des ruines aponcelées par la guerre el la
Commune, et du désarroi des esprits devant l'œuvre de reconstitution nationale"
(VC, iii. 155–6), revised his research plans and began work on his *Origines de la
France contemporaine.*
también de la del pueblo" (iii. 715). I must leave aside the unfortunate consequences of this for Spanish historiography during the following half century. "Modern Spanish historians," wrote H. G. Koenigsberger in 1960, "have had a tendency to look for some special, distinguishing characteristic in the history of their country [...]. This preoccupation has led many historians to emphasize, and perhaps to overemphasize, the permanent characteristics of Spanish history."¹ One thinks immediately, of course, of Unamuno's "tradición eterna" and Ganivet's "espíritu territorial". One may think also of Altamira's "notas constantes";² of Menéndez Pidal's "permerrorrente identidad",³ of Castro's "actividades colectivas, a la larga estabilizadas como habituales",⁴ of Sánchez Albornoz's "constante histórica perdurable" [...].⁵ The explanation of this peculiarly Spanish emphasis, long after it had become unfashionable elsewhere, lies, I suggest, in the impact of Taine, in the literary success of the writers of 98 and in the fact that Spain was still basically a rural community.⁶

¹ In Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, xxxvii (1960), 245.
² Psicología del pueblo español (Madrid, 1902), p. 60.
³ Historia de España, i (Madrid, 1947), ix.
⁴ La realidad histórica de España (México, 1962), p. 263.
⁵ España, un enigma histórico, ii (Buenos Aires, 1956), 627.
⁶ In an article published in February 1972 Richard Herr surveyed five notable interpretations of Spanish history—by Menéndez Pelayo, Unamuno, Ortega, Castro and Sánchez-Albornoz—and observed a number of common features. He questioned the emphasis on national character and commented:

Todos estos cinco autores parecen creer (Menéndez Pelayo es una posible excepción) que por causa de unos sucesos que ocurrieron antes de que comenzase la historia, o en cierto momento de la Edad Media, o a más tardar en el siglo XVI, los españoles a partir de 1700 han sido condenados a perder el paso del resto de Europa. Es como si la España moderna sufriera de un tipo de pecado original del cual no tuviera escape. Resulta irónico que los dirigentes intelectuales de un país que Menéndez Pelayo llama católico por esencia, nieguen a sus compatriotas el beneficio del libre albedrío. ¿Se ha infiltrado la predestinación protestante donde el racionalismo es incompatible? (Revista de Occidente, 107, 294-5)

The observation, I find, is justified and could have been applied also to Altamira and Menéndez Pidal. But does the explanation really lie in "la predestinación protestante"? Is it not to be found rather in the continuing impact of the 98 Generation's Taine-like determinism? The admitted "posible excepción" of Menéndez Pelayo is surely significant.
But if the 98 Generation's emphasis on the unchanging character of the Spanish people—and especially the rural population—served to exert a retarding influence on Spanish historiography, the search for that character brought in its wake a notable broadening of Spanish experience: a new sensitivity to the landscapes that were believed to have formed national and regional character and a new delight in the various aspects of provincial life in which national and regional character was believed to reveal itself. The 98 Generation, perhaps inevitably, stands out as a generation of excursionistas. "La base del patriotismismo es la geografía," wrote Azorín; "No amaremos nuestro país, no le amaremos bien, si no lo conocemos" (1916; iii. 561). Their quest is for "lo eterno de la casta" (1912; MU, i. 370), for "lo típico y lo característico" (1926; PB, v. 575), for "la continuidad nacional" (1941; Azorín, vi. 229). They look for it in the character and lives of ordinary people, in the physical environment that has formed the people, and in the culture (cities, towns and villages; way of life; arts and literature) in which, across the centuries, the unchanging character of the people has come to reveal itself. My view, then, assumes in the writings of the 98 a basic harmony between landscape, character and culture, "la unión suprema e inexpressable de este paisaje [de España] con la raza, con la historia, con el arte, con la literatura de nuestra tierra [...] un paisaje concordado íntima y espiritualmente con una raza y una literatura" (1913; 1926; PB, v. 575).

1 "Repítase hoy aquí mucho que no en el suelo, sino en el subsuelo de España está su mayor riqueza. Y así sucede con la raza; no en el suelo de su alma, único casi que hasta hoy se ha cultivado, y con arado romano, sino en su subsuelo, en sus entrañas espirituales, está su mayor riqueza. Lo he dicho más de una vez; hay que buscar a Alonso el Bueno debajo de Don Quijote" (1900; MU, vii. 419).

2 "Decidme, ¿no es este el medio en que florecen las voluntades solitarias, libres, llenas de ideal—como la de Alonso Quijano el Bueno—; pero ensimismadas, soñadoras, incapaces, en definitiva, de concertarse en los prosaicos, vulgares, pacientes pactos que la marcha de los pueblos exige?" (1905; Azorín, ii. 262-3).

3 "El espíritu de la antigua España—y esto es el todo—se respira en estas callejas, en estos zaguancos sordidos, en estas tiendecillas de abaceros y regatones, en estos obradores de alfayates y boneteros, en este ir y venir durante toda la mañana de nobles y varoniles rostros castellanos, llenos, serenos, y de caras femeninas pálidas, con anchos y luminosos ojos que traducen ensueños" (1909; Azorín, ii. 459).
Azorín, ii. 1155–7). One notes, of course, the continuing three-tier system of Taine: landscape, character, culture. Ganivet’s concern to discover “el espíritu permanente, invariable, que el territorio crea, infunde, mantiene en nosotros” (1897; i. 176), Unamuno’s belief that “como en su retina vive en el alma del hombre el paisaje que le rodea” (1901; viii. 910), Azorín’s “El medio hace al hombre” (1903; i. 1136), Baroja’s “El hombre es producto del medio” (1904; v. 49)—they are all characteristic of the age. “Nunca como ahora, la flor de los ingenios castellanos se ha empeñado en descubrir esta conexión entre el alma y el paisaje.”¹ I find myself completely opposed to Lain Entralgo’s claim that, for the writers of 98, the Spanish countryman, “campesino o pastor”, is above all a disturbing, disruptive element amidst the purity of the landscape.²

But it is not only in their travels that the men of 98 look for Spain. Literature, too, is seen as a product of environment-formed character and is therefore seized upon as a means by which to understand that character. In these essays, says Azorín in the Prologue to Clásicos y modernos, as in my earlier Lecturas españolas, there is the same underlying preoccupation with the problem of Spain, the same “deseo de buscar nuestro espíritu a través de los clásicos” (1913; ii. 741). Don Quijote is seized upon by writer after writer as a key to national self-knowledge. But it is not only Don Quijote. The great writer, it is held, like the exceptional historian, holds up, as it were, a mirror to the collective consciousness. And as the collective consciousness is environment-formed, so also the great work of literature bears the imprint of that environment. Thus, reflections on literature prompt visions of the Spanish countryside, and visions of the Spanish countryside prompt reflections on literature. “¿En qué nos hace pensar este florecimiento de la lírica que hay ahora en Castilla?” asks Azorín, “Yo pienso en el paisaje castellano y en las viejas ciudades” (1909; ii. 485). And a few moments later:

¹ Miguel S. Oliver, Entre dos Españas (Barcelona, 1906), p. 191.
² La generación del noventa y ocho (2nd ed., Madrid, 1948), pp. 33–45. Lain Entralgo’s case, rooted perhaps in his belief that the 98 represents a reaction against evolutionism (op. cit., p. 69), remains unchanged in El problema de España (Madrid, 1956), ii. 68–83. For a fuller justification of my disagreement see The 1898 Movement in Spain, pp. 145–51.
"Cuando en estas llanuras, por las noches, se contemplen las estrellas, con su parpadear infinito, ¿no estará aquí el alma ardorosa y dúctil de nuestros místicos?" (ibid.). It is something one recognizes immediately as characteristic of the writings of the Generation and I shall illustrate it no further. What I should like to emphasize is that the key to this immediately recognizable characteristic of the 98 Generation lies, yet again, in the determinist system inherited from Hippolyte Taine. It is determinism, I suggest, that enables us to see the apparently disparate characteristics of the Generation as integrated elements in a system of thought peculiar to the age.

But it is not only a system of thought. During the latter stages of my argument I may appear to have been giving my support to Díaz-Plaja's view of a rigid separation between the 98 Generation and Modernism: on the one hand, the men of 98, "racional-activos", profoundly preoccupied with collective political and social problems; on the other hand, the Modernists, "pasividad-sensible", escapists, neo-romantically idealistic, concerned basically with the cultivation and expression of their own intimate yo. This is far from being my view. I should like, if I may, to return to a few lines from my earlier brief comparative survey of En torno al casticismo and Idearium español: "Contemporary Spanish society, it is claimed, is in a state of mental and spiritual crisis: confused, disorientated, unable to find its direction amidst a profusion of unintegrated and often irreconcilable elements. Spain, it is alleged, lacks a basic guiding principle and the outcome is atonía and abulia, a state of near paralysis of the will and understanding that results in general apathy and inaction disrupted by occasional outbursts of ill-directed energy as one element or another is seized upon, out of context, and made the unconsidered motive of action" (above, pp. 178-9). There is a significant resemblance, I suggest, between what Unamuno and Ganivet here diagnose as the malady of Spain and what they had earlier diagnosed as their own personal malady. And is it not the same malady that we found also in Martínez Ruiz's Azorín and in Pío Baroja's Fernando Ossorio? Underlying that malady, I suggest, is the tormenting absence of
an adequate guiding ideal, something firm around which to organize the confusing complexity of existence. The inherited ideals—religious, social and political—seem no longer to serve. There has been a “derrumbamiento moral”. But not only of the “patria”; also of individuals. I recall again Martínez Sierra’s observation: “Dícese, y con razón, que la juventud actual, si no es frívola, es triste; yo creo que su frivolidad o su tristeza son sencillamente desconcierto, por falta de finalidad.”

The main aim of Unamuno and Ganivet, in *En torno al castidismo* and *Idearium español*, was to fill the gap for Spain: to show that amidst all the complexity and confusion of Spanish history—and the resulting abulia and atonia—one could find a “roca viva” of national existence, a firm basis from which to judge national action and, thence also, from which to guide it. And their mentor, I have suggested, was Taine. But Taine’s system did not only offer the possibility of a firm basis for national existence. It offered also something far more intimate. Let us consider the evidence of his letters: “Tant que sur ta table tu n’auras pas ce breviare invincible, je veux dire la géométrie des choses, je ne réponds ni de toi, ni de moi, ni de personne! La science est une ancre qui fixe l’homme; qui ne l’a pas, peut-être poussé aux écueils qu’il redoute le moins” (*VC*, i. 82-3). He returns to the point again and again: “La seule chose qui puisse déprendre l’esprit de lui-même et l’absorber, c’est un système” (*VC*, ii. 250); “Et puis, mon cher ami, il n’y a que ces grandes généralités pour vous verser l’opium nécessaire; sans cela les malheurs domestiques, les prévisions politiques nous donneraient trop souvent l’envie de nous noyer” (*VC*, iv. 30). Determinism, then, was seen as a means of imposing structure and direction amidst the confusion and pointlessness of human existence.1 “Es preciso tener fe en la ciencia,” said Ganivet (1893; ii. 926), who was notably lacking in other forms of faith. “A medida que se pierde la fe cristiana en la realidad eterna,” declared Unamuno, “búscase un remedio de inmortalidad en la

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1 In this respect, perhaps, one may consider Ferrater Mora’s observation: “para [Unamuno] todo pensar, aun el más abstracto, es una manera de no dejar de existir o, si se quiere, una manera de ‘olvidar’ que tendremos que ‘dejar de existir’” (*Unamuno, bosquejo de una filosofía* (Buenos Aires, 1957), p. 39).
Historia” (1898; i. 946). National concerns, I suggest, were largely a consequence of underlying personal concerns. “¡Motivo de vivir!” declared Unamuno; “¡Motivo de vivir para el individuo y para el pueblo, y el motivo de vivir del pueblo, raíz y médula del patriotismo individual!” (1899; i. 765). In probing the historical destiny of Spain, Unamuno and Ganivet—like Taine in his probings of France—were seeking also to discover their own context and destiny. “Es mucho más difícil tener un espíritu de continuidad que un ímpetu pasajero,” commented Baroja; “El que no tiene ese espíritu de continuidad se estrella” (1934; v. 870). In looking for “la continuidad nacional”, I suggest, the men of 98 were looking also for a personal “espíritu de continuidad”. It is in this sense, surely, that we must interpret the words that I quoted earlier from Unamuno: “Cado uno de nosotros buscaba salvarse como hombre. Pero ¿hombre y sin patria? Por eso partimos a la conquista de una.” The method of study (determinism) had given a new relevance and a new urgency to the object of study (Spain). The prober of national destinies was no longer a mere observer; the subject and object of study had fused; knowledge henceforth was involvement, necessity, anguish. Evolutionary determinism is one of several nineteenth-century ideologies that sought to give sense and direction to a world from which God and the notion of special creation were increasingly banned.

I unfortunately lack the space, here, to illustrate two points that I have made at length elsewhere: first,—a point that I hinted at above—that in En torno al casticismo and Idearium español Unamuno and Ganivet project upon Spain their own intimate, personal concerns, interpreting national character in the light of their own self-probing, and secondly, that the very laxity of their determinist system allows this self-projection, as it did in Taine’s writings.¹ I must, however, offer a brief indication of the relevance of these two points to the literature of the 98 Generation in general. For the men of 98, I suggest, were

not merely—or even primarily—concerned with collective political and social problems. I have referred at length to their determinism-guided quest for Spain: in the ordinary country people, in the landscape that formed them, and in the culture through which the character of the people revealed itself. Ultimately, I have said, their search for "la continuidad nacional" was a search for a personal "espíritu de continuidad". But for the men of 98 travel was not only a quest; it was also an escape. The traveller, says Unamuno, is "topophobic"; "huye de todas partes" (1908; i. 229). And very especially, of course, the men of 98 flee from urban and urbane existence. The impact of Madrid upon them has been much emphasized and little explained. During the second half of the nineteenth century its population doubled. During the last decade of the century one finds a growing emphasis on the agitations and harassments of modern urban life and on the need to "ruralizar los organismos anémicos de los grandes centros de población".1 Nature—in a host of different forms—is looked to as the new panacea. Amidst the increasing complexity of modern life, said Baroja, there has been a regrettable neglect of "los mandatos de la Naturaleza"; men should return to "la ley natural" and reaffirm their yo (1904; v. 27). The juxtaposition, I believe, is significant: the quest for nature is also a quest for self.

In their travels across the Spanish countryside, then, the men of 98 are not only looking for Spain; they are also looking for themselves. "Lo mejor que se les ocurre a los hombres," says Unamuno, "es lo que se les ocurre a solas" (1905; i. 1263). "Para el cortesano," says Azorín, "para el hombre de las grandes ciudades, nada hay comparable a este silencio reparador, bienhechor, de los viejos y muertos pueblos; él envuelve toda nuestra personalidad y hace que salgan a luz y floten, posesionados de nosotros, dominándonos, los más íntimos estados de conciencia, sentimientos e ideas que creíamos muertos, que causaban angustias el ver cómo poco a poco iban desapareciendo de nosotros" (1912; ii. 614). But the process does not end with self-discovery. There is yet another stage: self-projection.

1 Urbano González Serrano, "El culto de la naturaleza", in Germinal, 24 May 1897.
And it is at this point, perhaps, that we touch on what is really valuable in their writings: the re-creation of Spain in terms of their own intimate preoccupations. "Los paisajes que describe [Unamuno]," writes Jerónimo de la Calzada, "no son en realidad otra cosa que traslados del paisaje de su alma atormentada, agónica, iluminada por su ‘yo’ personal e individual. Unamuno no sólo vive en sus paisajes, sino que tiene necesidad de verse en ellos."1 "La Castilla de Azorín," observed Ramón Pérez de Ayala, "en nada se parece a la de Galdós, Picavea, Unamuno, Machado, Mesa, etc. Es un estado de alma, una materialización de la personalidad de Azorín. Es, sin duda, una Castilla para todos, pero es de Azorín exclusivamente. A través de ella claro que comprendemos una buena parte del alma y la tierra castellana, pero entendemos mejor el alma y la personalidad de Azorín."2 But it is not only the landscape that they transform in this way. As Pérez de Ayala himself suggests, it is the soul of the people too. Their culture also. Even literature becomes a source of self-discovery and ultimately of self-projection. No one could confuse Unamuno’s Don Quixote with Azorín’s. In literature as in landscape each writer finds what he takes with him: his own private concerns.

In short, despite their proclaimed respect for science, despite their manifest determinism, despite their much emphasized desire to draw close to reality, the great writers of the 98 Generation ultimately convert Spain, its people and its landscape into exteriorizations of their own individual vos. In so far as they are intellectuals it is rationalization rather than reason that guides them. The underlying determinist schema places little restraint on emotive disposition. A disillusioned or embittered or anguished view at one point in the schema is causally consistent with a disillusioned or embittered or anguished view at all points, and amidst the vast panorama of Spanish life and civilization over which the men of 98 range there is evidence to support every view. But each seeks only to support his own view. The scientific process, says Sir Peter Medawer, involves the

1 "Unamuno paisajista", in Cuadernos de la Cátedra Miguel de Unamuno, iii (1952), 55–56.
interaction of “imaginative conjectures” and “ruthless criticism”. In the men of 98 the imaginative conjectures are evident. The ruthless criticism, however, is applied not to their own imaginative conjectures; it is reserved, in so far as it appears at all, for those elements of Spanish civilization that refuse to conform to their imaginative conjectures. Evidence is used to confirm rather than to test hypotheses. There is free interplay between “la realidad” and “la imagen de la realidad”, between “lo que [se] ha visto” and “lo que [se] ha soñado ver”. Azorín’s emphasis on the 98 Generation’s striving to “acercarse a la realidad” (1913; ii. 918) has to be balanced constantly, in the most notable writings of the Generation, against Pío Baroja’s equally valid finding, “La gente idealista se lanzó al intelec-

2 We are touching here at the heart of the anti-democratic standpoint of the men of 98. Unamuno’s attitude is characteristic. “Yo soy anti-demócrata,” he wrote in 1890 (MU-PM, 16 December), and ten years later: “No, libertad no. Nuestro pueblo ni la merece, ni la necesita, ni le conviene; cultura, cultura, cultura. Cultura impuesta, y tal como la entendemos nosotros, los europeos, los que nos debemos constituir en directores por santo derecho divino” (MU-JA, 12 December 1900). One must study and base one’s recommendations on “la vida silenciosa de los millones de hombres sin historia” (ETC, 793), on “las clases proletarias, que son el archivo y el depósito de los sentimientos inexplicables, profundos, de un país” (IE, 203). But it is the serious student(!) who must do this, not the people themselves:

Pedirle al pueblo que resuelva por el voto la orientación política que le conviene, es pretender que sepa fisiología de la digestión todo el que digiere (1898; MU, iii. 662).

Y el principio fundamental del arte político ha de ser la fijación exacta del punto a que ha llegado el espíritu nacional. Esto es lo que se pregunta de vez en cuando al pueblo en los comicios, sin que el pueblo conteste nunca, por la razón concluyente de que no lo sabe ni es posible que lo sepa. Quien lo debe saber es quien gobierna, quien por esto mismo conviene que sea más psicólogo que orador, más hábil para ahondar en el pueblo que para atraerlo con discursos sonoros (1898; AG, ii. 1062).

Taine’s views of “cette épaisse démocratie où nous étouffons”, with its “dictature des imbéciles” (VC, iv. 184), was not notably different.

3 “Hay un momento en la vida en que descubrimos que la imagen de la realidad es mejor que la realidad misma” (1916; Azorín, iii. 595).

4 “Andar y ver—se dice—. Y el que esto os dice ha publicado una colección de relatos de excursiones con el título de Andanzas y visiones españolas. Pero es más lo que ha soñado que lo que ha visto. Y sobre todo lo que ha soñado ver” (1936; MU, i. 712).
I conclude by recalling my earlier comparison between the men of 98 and the Modernists. Their starting-point, I suggested, was identical: intense idealism amidst an abhorrent world of fallen values. Their response, however, was very different: the Modernists sought escape by withdrawal into a hedonistic world of the senses; the men of 98, on the other hand, looked for salvation in the firm rock of an apparently scientifically justified intellectual structure of causality. But, as I have tried to suggest in the last part of my survey, the men of 98 finally draw close to the Modernists again, for the men of 98—pace Díaz-Plaja—are no less "neo-romantically idealistic" than the Modernists, no less subjective, no less given to the cult of the yo, and perhaps hardly less escapist. Spain, ultimately, for each great writer of the 98 Generation, becomes an ivory-tower world of self-contemplation. But they are ivory-tower worlds forged from the raw material of recognizable Spanish realities. The reader's own vision of Spain—its people, its landscapes, its culture—becomes richer through the experience of his reading. We are on the threshold of what I find important in the writings of the so-called 98 Generation: the magical transmutation of reality into personal experience and of personal experience into words. Doubtless there is still room, even here, for comparative study, but in the present state of our knowledge it would be premature. More work is needed on individual texts and individual authors; a far greater consideration, too, of literary merit as opposed to historical significance. I have aimed in this study to demonstrate the existence of a basic pattern of similarities and to show this as the result of certain notable intellectual and spiritual pressures of the age. But what really matters in literature is the way in which individual writers accept, exploit and, in part, reject basic patterns of similarity. And at this point, on the threshold, I repeat, of what is important, I bring my brief, tentative synthesis of the Spanish 1898 Movement to a close.