

THE IMAGE OF OPIUM AND MORPHINE IN HISPANIC *MODERNISTA* LITERATURE,
1876-1949

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Romances Languages (Spanish).

Chapel Hill
2015

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ABSTRACT

Philip Clark Hollingsworth: *The Image of Opium and Morphine in Hispanic Modernista Literature, 1876-1949.*

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The Image of Opium and Morphine in Hispanic Modernista Literature, 1876-1949

explores the images of opium and morphine in Hispanic prose and poetry of the turn of the twentieth century. This study examines the use of opiates in Hispanic literature in relation to society, the artist and the artistic process in four different manifestations: opium as parallel to the literary process, opiates' role in the modernista aesthetic agenda, the role of morphine in anti-dandy/anti-European literature and opium smoke as a symbol of national illness and degeneration in sinophobic literature. The dissertation concludes that the use of opiates in Hispanic prose and poetry is fundamental to the relationship of the artist to their country's role in the modernization process. The corpus of the dissertation includes the works of canonical authors such as José Asunción Silva, Rubén Darío, and Emilia Pardo Bazán but also incorporates writers on the margins of canonical study such as José María Vargas Vila, Santiago Rusiñol and Francisco Villaespesa. By viewing these works through the lens of opiate consumption, this dissertation will open a new field in Hispanic literary studies and will provide a new perspective on the Modernisms of Spain and Spanish America in relation to nation building, national identity and discourses of illness.

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INTRODUCTION

On July 26th, 1919 the Mexico City daily newspaper *El Demócrata* reported the discovery by police of an opium den run by Carlos Ching, a Mexican citizen of Chinese descent. Agents were forced to break into the domicile discovering, “figuras humanas, en medio de una pesada atmósfera de humo, no daban señales de vida [...] recostados sobre camastros y cojines, se encontraban tres orientales, [...] parecían muertos, y sólo se notaba que tenían vida por extrañas sonrisas y funambulescos gestos que contraían sus rostros, debido, quizás, a las visiones que entreveían bajo el influjo del opio” (8). Connected to this opium den was a storage facility stocked with processed balls of opium, ready for consumption with a pipe. In the weeks that followed, investigators uncovered a vast drug ring involving several foot soldiers, border-crossing smugglers, former chemistry professor Donaciano Morales, the ex-undersecretary of Mexico’s Internal Revenue Service (el Departamento de Hacienda) and gubernatorial candidate of the Estado de San Luís Potosí Don Rafael Nieto; all led by a Jewish, German immigrant named Walter E. Herrmann. Herrmann’s enterprise included several storage houses, customized automobiles and business connections in New York and San Francisco.¹ In total, over 15,000 canisters of opium were seized while it was estimated that Herrmann’s operation had already shipped between 30,000 and 40,000 canisters throughout Mexico and the US during the years of

¹ One such storage facility was found behind a functioning cinema in which the opium was received and shipped in film canisters (“Descubre” 1).

the Mexican revolution (“Por obra” 1).² According to *El Demócrata*, Mexican officials had uncovered a multi-million peso clandestine operation.

Despite the obvious, sensational nature of the discovery of such a large criminal enterprise in Mexico City, the coverage of this event by *El Demócrata* reveals much more about the 20th century’s increasingly negative stance on the “*nefasta droga*” opium. Essential to this historical event is opium’s connection to the national illness discourse and the perceived threat of foreign influences on Mexican society. The journalists chose to focus on the perceived dangers of the opium-smoking Chinese people within their borders as well as the danger of a European immigrant, former banker, and Jew such as Walter E. Herrmann that masterminded the whole endeavor. Opium was seen as a drug that “ha retardado en dos siglos la civilización del pueblo chino” and now the Chinese population had infected Mexican society with this “brutalizing” alkaloid.³ Herrmann became another example of the European exploiting the nation and draining its vital energy. Neither the poor, opium-smoking Chinese nor the wealthy, enterprising German depicted in *El Demócrata* conformed to the mestizo national identity of Mexico, a national/racial construct barely one-hundred years in development. Opium did not function within the positivist ideal of progress and nation either. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries it was believed that substance abuse led to a genealogical poisoning, an illness that would continue through innumerable generations, not only infecting individuals but entire societies (Stepan 84). Under this belief, if opium use had already degenerated Chinese society, there was a fear of similar

² Each canister weighed approximately eighty pounds and was valued at around 80 pesos (“Por obra” 1). This means that the operation could have moved more than two tons of opium.

³ In the corpus of Hispanic opiate literature the verb *embrutecer* is often employed, suggesting the degenerative, de-humanizing effects of opium. More often than not, this verb is used to refer to the act opium smoking, the method of consumption most commonly associated with China and other countries of East Asia.

degeneration within the newly formed nations of Spanish America as well as Spain who, upon losing the last remaining vestiges of its former empire, was in a process of rediscovering its national identity. This perspective of opium is essential to the understanding of the regions' culture and its representations in written form.

The fear of the degenerative effects of opiate consumption in the Spanish-speaking world at the turn of the century may help to explain the scarcity of opiate references in the literary canon, as well as the lack of criticism regarding the use of opium as an image in Spanish and Spanish American literature. The image of opium and the opiate experience has been explored by many canonical authors of the period including José Asunción Silva, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Pío Baroja, Rubén Darío, Manuel Díaz Rodríguez, Horacio Quiroga, and Santiago Rusiñol. This dissertation aims at opening this field of study to Hispanic texts of the late 19th century and early 20th century, previously relegated to the study of opiated literatures of England, France, and the United States. It will provide an assessment that debunks the assumption that the opium image was a simple imitation of European models and will demonstrate that the use of opiates and its derivatives were an integral part of Spanish and Spanish American *modernista* literature. This study will also explore the use of opium in the social and historical context of turn-of-the-century concepts of modernity, nation building, national identity, and national illness through foreign social "contaminants." The dissertation will also reveal the diversity of the Spanish and Spanish American appropriation of the opium image as well as the importance of this image within the regions' social/historical context and its literary tradition.

In her book "*The Hour of Eugenics*," Nancy Leys Stepan argues that the historical study of eugenics at the turn of the 20th century had primarily been focused on Northern Europe and the United States, ignoring the major impact on society, science and politics of eugenics in

“third-world” regions such as Latin America. In the introduction, Stepan makes the following critique regarding the historical study, or lack thereof, of Latin American eugenics:

What historians often fail to appreciate is the contribution a region such as Latin America can make to our knowledge of how ideas become part of the complex fabric of social and political life; historians give too little weight to the construction of intellectual and scientific traditions within the region or to the way these traditions shape the meaning given to ideas, as subjects of interest in their own right (3).

Likewise, the literary study of opiates in Spanish and Spanish American literature has been largely ignored or dismissed as an inferior copy of former European models. This dissertation aims to fill the void of scholarly research of opiate literature in Spain and Spanish America.

It is difficult to pinpoint what exactly facilitated the emergence of opiates as a literary device in Spanish-speaking countries, but it is clear that the connotations of the drug and its use never really left the Western consciousness through literature or popular culture. Opium’s first major work, Thomas De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, was published in 1821. However, canonical Spanish American writers did not deal with the drug in their literature until the mid-1870s and the drug really was not explored literarily until the writers began to employ the image in the 1880s. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Charles Baudelaire would publish some of the most influential works on drug consumption, including his translation/commentary on De Quincey’s seminal *Confessions*. At the same time, hypodermic needle technologies allowed for the easy administration of morphine, which resulted in the widespread prescription of the alkaloid for a myriad of ailments. This scientific/technological advancement, developed by North European scientists, spread quickly throughout the rest of the West, including the Americas. Meanwhile, due to a dire economic situation in China—ironically

caused in part by England's forced opium trade—, thousands of poor immigrants were shipped to the United States for cheap labor. These Chinese immigrants, known pejoratively as “coolies,” also entered Spanish America in countries such as Mexico and Peru through open-door labor policies coupled with the anti-immigration policies of the US after 1882 (Chou 13). A portion of these immigrants were opium smokers and an underground subculture of clandestine gambling houses, bordellos, and opium dens quickly sprouted in cities such as Mexico City, Lima and Havana. With an increasing opium-smoking population from the East and increased medical legitimate use in Europe—where opiates were esteemed as analgesic and palliative substances—, North and South America thus became a crossroads between the opiate consumption of the Far East and the West.

It is therefore not surprising that Spanish America's literature began to reflect on the opiate experience just as medicinal practices caught up to Europe while Asian immigrants brought their culture and their particular practice of opiate consumption within this region. I argue that, while not ignoring that the depictions of opiate consumption are echoes of previous European works, Spanish and Spanish American writers appropriated the aesthetics of opium to create an image reflective of their own region and cultural/literary traditions during the turn of the twentieth century.

The erroneous assumption of opium in Hispanic literature as mere mimicking of European templates serves as a synecdoche of the flawed critical assumption of Hispanic *modernismos* up until the past couple of decades that viewed *modernistas* as simply imitating their French Symbolist heroes. In this interpretation, scholars claimed that the prose and poetry of these authors had little to do with politics and contemporary society. Furthermore, this antiquated thinking necessitated the term *La generación del 98* in an effort to distance Spain's

literary field from Spanish American *Modernismo*. My study not only explores the nature of the literary opiate experience, and how it relates to Hispanic *modernismos* and modernity, but also the nature of the critical understanding of these movements and modernity itself. To achieve this, the dissertation will rely on the concept of Hispanic modernity as defined by Alejandro Mejías-López's *The Inverted Conquest* (2009). Mejías's book provides a framework, which challenges previous assumptions about *modernismo* and Spanish and Spanish American modernity. According to the author, the concept of modernity "became associated almost exclusively with (northern) European material, technological, and, to a lesser degree, political changes, understood as the necessary result of 'modern' (i.e. Enlightened) reason" (18). This line of thought has pervaded popular culture and scholarship in the West since then and has not been challenged until recently. Therefore, the fact that Spanish America's—and one could also include Spain's—"many and far-reaching achievements remain understudied today and entirely absent from discussions of *modernismo* and postcoloniality beyond Hispanic studies speaks to the lasting influence of the exclusionary discourses they faced" (Mejías-López 13). *Mutatis mutandis*, the literary exploration of opium and morphine by turn-of-the-century writers must be rediscovered in order to understand more profoundly the literature of the time as well as the social and political atmosphere in which it was created.

The genesis of this project began with my erroneous assumption that José Asunción Silva's depiction of the two-day opium binge of José Fernández in *De sobremesa* was a unique, provocative scene of late 19th century literature. After further investigation, it was apparent that opium use had been a popular literary theme in Western literature, especially in Europe and the United States from about the time, and perhaps because of, the publication of Thomas De Quincey's work. Through my initial reading, I also realized that the majority of the criticism and

analysis that had been written concerning the literary function of opiates concentrated on the works of Western European writers. Opium may not have been as prevalent in Spanish American countries as in Europe and the United States, but its presence was significant enough to appear in newspapers, medical journals, poetry and prose.

I noticed how relatively recent writers such as Pablo Neruda, or earlier ones such as Horacio Quiroga, José Asunción Silva, and José María Vargas Vila appropriated and explored the Western opiate experience through a Spanish American lens. Many of these writers spent time in Europe and this theme became part of their understanding and commentary on the European experience. Furthermore, Spanish American countries such as Mexico, Cuba, Peru, and Argentina experienced increased immigration from East Asian countries during this time and the realities of the opium trade entered into some of Spanish America's major cities such as Lima and Mexico City. I started to see that for some writers, the drug functions as a symbol for the anxiety and uncertainty of the modern age in Spanish America as well as an the uneasiness regarding the future of their respective burgeoning homelands. Opiates also become a symbol for the *modernista* search for the ideal through art and through extracorporeal spiritual experiences. For other writers, opiate abuse and addiction functioned to complement social commentary created in order to critique the excesses and perceived illness of their contemporary culture. With the rise of Chinese immigration in countries such as Peru and Mexico, opium becomes a platform to criticize the outsider within the national body.

Previous scholarly publications have mentioned the presence of opiates in Hispanic literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but have more times than not failed to explore the image of opium with much depth or nuanced analysis. Héctor Orjuela's book "*De sobremesa*" y otros estudios sobre José Asunción Silva (1976) only provides a passing

commentary on the use of drugs that pervades the text (55). In Esperanza Figueroa's commentary on Julián del Casal's "Canción de la morfina," the poem's subject matter is described as simply something that was very popular to write about, especially in French literature, failing to provide further interpretations about the motives for which Casal chose the topic, the type of images, or what is the meaning of its intertextual ramifications.⁴

In the past decade, however, there have been more studies on drugs in Spanish and Spanish American modernist literature. Marta Herrero Gil explores this subject in her book *El paraíso de los escritores ebrios: la literatura drogada española e hispanoamericana desde el modernismo hasta la posmodernidad* (2007). David F. Richter, in 2004, also explored the symbolic use of drugs in the modernist novel *Sangre patricia*.⁵ Margaret Persin's essay "Valle-Inclán, Modernity, and 'High' Culture" (2007) studies the Spanish writer Ramón María del Valle-Inclán's literary works as well as his non-fiction prose with relation to the poet's philosophy on drug use and modern society. These works do not, however, examine the use of opiates specifically within the Hispanic context. Herrero Gil's book as well as Richter's essay look at the use of drugs in a very general context which include alcohol, cocaine, marijuana, hashish, as well as opium and morphine. Furthermore, Herrero Gil's book lacks a close reading of the works studied, serving more as a bibliography of Hispanic drug references in literature. Works on Valle-Inclán's drug use, in the vein of Persin's approach, typically focus on marijuana and hashish since these are the drugs he most often wrote about. Though the aforementioned works open avenues to the analysis of opiates in Spanish and Spanish American literature, there

⁴ From Figueroa's edited edition of *Poesías completas y pequeños poemas en prosa* (1993).

⁵ In "Drugs, Decadence, and *The Doors of Perception* in Manuel Díaz Rodríguez's *Sangre patricia*."

still is a need for a substantial work on the literary opiate experience in the Hispanic world: this dissertation will fill this lacuna.

Before delving into the Spanish and Spanish American literature on opiates, it is important to have a basic background in how opiates function in the human body as well as the ever-changing societal view of opiates during the 19th century leading up to the first decades of the 20th century. Opium derives from the pod of opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*). For the alkaloid to develop from the sap of the poppy pod, it must be exposed to the open air. To harvest the drug, the pod is cut and the milky white sap oozes out and turns to a sticky brown substance and it dries in the open air (Booth 5). Major global civilizations have known of opium for at least a millennia, and human consumption of opium as a soporific and painkiller dates back to the Stone Age (Dormandy 7). Opium works in both short-term and long-term pain relief while it courses through the user's body along with a sense of calm and euphoria (Latimer and Goldberg 10). With regards to hallucinations or lucid dreaming, opium affects the brain differently from person to person, contributing to the Romantic assumption that their genius minds facilitated their fantastic opiated visions in difference to the common man.

Opium reemerged as a popular drug throughout Europe, Asia and the United States during the nineteenth century and became increasingly present in other parts of the world at the turn of the century. In the first half of the century in England, it was considered a panacea and would be prescribed by doctors or sold by druggists to cure a variety of ailments such as toothache, cholera, and insomnia (Berridge 32). Originally cultivated in Turkey and other parts of Asia, this alkaloid derived from the pod of the poppy flower entered its height of popularity in Western society in part by England's involvement in the Indian opium trade with China (Berridge 3). Despite the negative side effects, many considered opium a miracle drug because of

its effectiveness as a pain reliever. The positive associations of the drug definitely preceded the negative views that led to its heavy regulation by the turn of the twentieth century in many European countries.

The cultural views surrounding opium and its derivatives during the nineteenth century in Europe differ from the current view of such substances. Many of the opinions on opiates in the past were cultivated through misinformation and at times disastrous trial-and-error experimentation. However, the alkaloid proved to be a reliable sedative and a cure for fever that saved thousands of lives from dysentery and cholera (Booth 58). As mentioned before, opium was given for almost any ailment during the first half of the nineteenth century. Paregoric, for example, was a tincture of opium given to children to cure diarrhea and also rubbed on the discomforted gums of teething babies (Wigal 12). In England, there were popular national brands of opiates including Dover's Powder, a powdered form of opium for curing the gout, and Godfrey's Cordial, which was an elixir for children to cure a variety of ailments that ranged from "fretfulness to colic" (Berridge 24). One of the more popular forms of opium, a tincture of opium and alcohol called laudanum, was widely available, inexpensive and easy to acquire. Although some concern about the dangers of opium began to arise in England during the 1830s, limited legislation restricting the selling and distribution of opium would not be passed until 1868 (Booth 65). Despite the effort to limit public consumption, opium remained an ingredient in many over-the-counter drugs.

Opium's pain-relieving qualities became of interest for many scientists and doctors. Morphine was discovered in the 1820s in part because of the efforts of European scientists to extract the pure pain-relieving quality found in the poppy flower pod without the addictive quality of tinctures such as laudanum (Booth 70). Other forms of opium such as codeine and

heroin were also developed by these scientists in their quest to find a non-addictive, yet potent pain reliever. During the nineteenth century the term appetite was used more regularly than the more modern “addiction” since people during this time thought that habitué’s predilection for the excess of a particular substance was directly related to consumption. Therefore scientists wanted to circumvent the dosing of opium orally to avoid acquiring an “appetite” for the drug (Booth 72). It was believed that if the patient did not digest the drug through the stomach, there would not be the possibility of addiction. Through this logic, the hypodermic needle was developed in the early 1850s and used for the administration of morphine since doctors believed addiction could be avoided by applying the medicine by way of injection. Unfortunately their theories proved to be dangerously incorrect. In the United States, for example, morphine consumption spiked in the 1860s during the American Civil War with several soldiers and surgeons returning home addicts. The demand for morphine for both armies reached to a point in which poppies were cultivated domestically and medics dispensed the drug liberally to the wounded (Dormandy 163). The frenetic atmosphere of army hospitals combined with the colossal prescription of morphine for pain relief left one Connecticut-born surgeon, Nathan Mayer, desperate and hurried enough to “not bother to dismount to dispense the liquid: he poured out the ‘required dose’ into his palm and let the wounded slurp it up. Or he dished out the tablets when available by the fistful. Exhausted, he kept the last ones for himself” (Dormandy 163).⁶ It was in the middle of the American Civil War that the International Red Cross was formed to aid in the delivery of painkillers –primarily morphine– in warzones (Dormandy 164). Tight regulation of opiates, and drugs in general, in Western countries did not really begin until the 1970s (Booth 151). In

⁶ In his book *Opium: Reality’s Dark Dream*, Thomas Dormandy notes that the Union army alone used 10 million morphine pills and 2 million ounces of opiated tinctures or powders over the course of the war (163).

France, no drugs were banned from public consumption until 1889 and even then anti-drug laws were rarely enforced (Dormandy 167). Despite issues of addiction and abuse, government response to opiate use did not begin to reflect the “War on Drugs” era until after World War II. David Courtwright argues that the strict criminalization of opiates –especially heroin– in the United States was a result of two essential factors: the low price and availability of heroin and the demographic change of users from doctors and white housewives to the urban, African-American populations (144). This dissertation concentrates on the time of transition between total de-regulation to the demonization and subsequent criminalization of opiates. In the first half of the 20th century, the United States pressured countries such as Mexico and Honduras to mimic drug policies being passed in Washington. Foreign governmental pressure along with the Hispanic literary traditions form the perception of opiates presented in this dissertation, especially the Spanish American works written between 1920 and 1949, the decades in which the United States was increasing the criminalization of opiate addiction.

Little has been written regarding the socio-historical presence of opium in Spain and Spanish America during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the drug was definitely present during this epoch both in its medicinal and recreational forms. The drug arrived later to the Spanish colonies than Europe, but made no less an impact on medicine and society.⁷ In fact, the economic landscape of the opium trade was dependent on Spanish American natural resources. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, Mexico’s *peso* became the official currency of the opium trade between China and the British colonies due to the purity of the silver (McMaster 376). Before the Spanish-American war, Spain regulated the opium trade in the

⁷ Opium did not reach countries such as Peru until the late 19th century, mostly due to the cheap labor provided by Chinese immigrants that brought over the practice of smoking opium after the Opium Wars between England and China (Dormandy 155).

Philippines raising large sums of money for the crown each year. Spain restricted opium use to the approximate 700,000 Chinese immigrants, prohibiting the sale to the Filipinos while allowing the establishment of elite smoking clubs for the wealthiest of the Chinese population (Dormandy 201). During the turn of the century, opiates were ever-present and eventually became a cause of great concern in the Iberian Peninsula. At the end of the 1920s, Dr. César Juarros wrote an essay warning against the dangers of morphine.⁸ He blames foreign and domestic literature for creating an intriguing mystique around the drug and thus tempting Spaniards into a life of vice and degradation (10). Dr. Juarros concludes that the only path to a cure is the establishment of private hospitals solely devoted to curing morphine addiction.⁹ Dr. Juarros goes on to add, reflecting the realities of Spanish opiate addiction, that morphine addiction is essentially incurable for the poor due to a lack of affordable rehab clinics: “Como no existen Sanatorios de beneficencia, ni siquiera modestos, la desmorfinización viene a resultar, prácticamente, inabordable para las clases pobres” (Juarros 56). Dr. Juarros concludes that “ser morfinómano equivale a situarse al borde de un precipicio en cuyo fondo aguardan los lodos de todas las miserias humanas” and to avoid these miseries the intoxication of love is the only high that can trump that of morphine (62). Meanwhile, in Spanish American countries including Mexico, Honduras, Bolivia, and Peru drug subcultures were becoming serious social issues (Walker 57). Combined with emerging Chinese populations and subsequent opium dens, these countries worked towards refurbishing their image as countries that were tougher on the illicit use of drugs such as opium and morphine. In Mexico, drug trafficking through Ciudad Juarez became such an issue that by 1940 the United

⁸ *Los engaños de la morfina* (1929)

⁹ These Spanish morphine clinics were depicted in a critical scene of José Más’s *Los sueños de un morfinómano* (1921), a novel discussed in Chapter 3.

States had pressured the Mexican government into similar drug policies as those in Washington (Walker 72). Nearly a century after the Herrmann opium case, drug smuggling and violence are still serious issues in Mexico's border town.¹⁰ Honduras had also become a hotbed of drug trafficking by the 1930s. Narcotics were being smuggled into metropolitan areas of the United States through boats owned by the United Fruit Company (Walker 81). Stories like the Herrmann case were cropping up more and more in news stories across the region. Around the same time, social novels and pop culture works, fueled by the intrigue and danger of drug addiction and its growing subculture, dealt with opiates as a primary thematic element. Already a popular genre in France, the morphine novel by the 1920s had cultural relevance in countries such as Spain and Argentina and were employed as commentaries on national identity while reflecting (and projecting) the authors' fears regarding the destinies of Hispanic society and culture.

This dissertation will analyze the Hispanic opiate experience in four iterations. These four categories are by no means exhaustive, but attempt to initiate a sub-field of Hispanic literary scholarship that explores the use of opium and morphine in narrative and poetry and how the literary opiate experience functions within the tradition of Spanish-language literary production. The first chapter of the dissertation will tackle the *modernista* writer's literary use of opiates as a metaphor for the process of reading and writing. In other words, the literary components of escapism, creativity, and consumption are symbolized by the artist-protagonist's exploration of self and aesthetics through opium and morphine. These narratives function for their authors as a means of self-exploration and a commentary on the role of the career artist in a positivistic society that denigrates the decadent and romantic aesthetic project as degenerate and lacking purpose. The novels discussed in Chapter 1 include the Spanish American works *Sangre patricia*

¹⁰ See *The Fight to Save Juárez: Life in the Heart of Mexico's Drug War* by Ricardo C. Ainslie.

(1902) by Manuel Díaz Rodríguez, *De sobremesa* (written around 1898 but not published until 1925) by José Asunción Silva, *Misérias de México* (1916) by Heriberto Frías, *Lirio negro* (1920) by José María Vargas Vila, and Catalanian Santiago Rusiñol's "El morfiníac" (1906). The artist-protagonists of the aforementioned works all experience the paradox of creating meaningful art: great joy and suffering in creation, reflecting natural truth through an artificial medium, a profession of mental expression in a physical world. These paradoxes mirror the duality of the common opiate experience detailed above as well as the depiction within these five narratives. While not all of the novels use opiate consumption as a central theme, as is the case in Rusiñol's short story, the consumption of opium or morphine in these works occurs at critical points in the narrative and serves as either a catalyst of creation, destruction, or, in some cases, both.

Chapter 2 will focus on the ways in which the image of opium and its derivatives are employed by prose writers as well as poets that serve the political and aesthetic aims of the Spanish and Spanish American *modernista* movements. While many scholars dismiss the presence of opium in *modernista* prose or poetry as an *en vogue* trope, this chapter will contend that opium is a viable and rich symbol in the aesthetic arsenal of *modernismo* imagery. Furthermore, I will show how the assumption that this image is simply an appropriation of Romantic and French Decadent literature ignores the fact that the *modernistas* chose to draw inspiration from art itself, unlike the Romantics, for example, that looked towards their natural surrounding or inner emotions. This chapter will look at several works from canonical authors such as Rubén Darío, Horacio Quiroga, and Julián del Casal. This chapter will also look at poets and authors on the margins of the canon such as Spaniards Francisco Villaespesa and Ricardo Gil and how their use of the opium image also functions seamlessly into the *modernista* aesthetic. Opium is a combination of the ancient/orientalist conception of the Far East as well as

a prominent factor in the development of medicine and progress of medical practices and technologies. The embracing of the paradox of ancient/modern was common for many of the *modernista* writers. In this chapter, I intend to establish the opiate image as essential to the scholarly understanding and definition of *modernismo* as a Hispanic literary movement, aesthetically as well as politically.

The third chapter of this dissertation focuses on novels that use opiates in conjunction with warnings against the adoption of dandy culture in Spain and Spanish America. These works function as messages to their audience against the decadent behavior that was seen as being perpetrated by Northern European countries by showcasing native Spaniards or Spanish Americans that leave their homelands and become corrupted by outside influences. In novels such as *El Marqués de la Quimera* (1919) or *El morfinómano y la divorciada* (1938), dandy characters return to their hometowns addicted to morphine. In two of the Spanish novels studied, the characters' morphine addiction serves as a personal manifestation of Ángel Ganivet's diagnosis of national *abulia*, a national spiritual epidemic theorized in his book *Idearium español* (1897). Ganivet uses this theory of national illness to explain the loss of national identity and the economic and cultural decadence that, according to him, plagues Spain. Morphine addiction, as described in these novels, functions as both symptom and cause of the national illness of *abulia*. Novels covered in this chapter include Emilia Pardo Bazán's *La Quimera* (1905), *El Marqués de la Quimera* (1919) by Luis Antón del Olmet, *Los sueños de un morfinómano* (1921) by José Más, *Duque* (1934) by José Díez-Canseco, *El morfinómano y la divorciada* (1938) by Francisco Gicca, and the short story "Ganimedes" (1928) by Félix M. Pelayo.

Chapter 4 will conclude the opiate analysis by exploring works that connect smoking opium to the perceived societal threat of Asian immigration. In these narratives, Asian opiate

consumption is always recreational, poisonous, and the foundation of racial and societal degeneration. The primary concern for these works is this negative influence on the adolescent Spanish American nations. The writers discussed in this chapter portray the Asian body, usually represented by the Chinese male, as a source of illness and corruption to Western identity. Symbolically the Chinese male functions as an infection of the national body: a corrupting outside influence preying frequently on the susceptible female population. The opium pipe serves as the symbolic means from which the Chinese male transmits his disease of anti-modernity, vice, and societal and racial degeneration. This chapter will rely in part on Edward Said's *Orientalism* as a theoretical model for the depiction of the Chinese culture within these works. The authors of Chapters 3 and 4 both warn their respective nations on the dangers of foreign influence. Fears of racial miscegenation, *afancesamiento*/Euro-centrism, re-colonization, and loss of national fervor and identity fuel these narratives. While the works of Chapter 3 focus on the negative influence of the West, the works of Chapter 4 look towards Eastern threats. What is striking regarding the poetry and narratives of these two chapters is the way in which opiates are employed in an attempt to strengthen the arguments made by the authors. Whereas the works of the first two chapters explore the joys and dangers of opiates for the individual, or use the image for more aesthetic purposes, these final chapters focus on the social implications of opiate use and abuse. The social anxieties represented through morphine addiction and opium smoking concern the development and social well being of the writers' nations. The works studied in the following chapters are essential to the broadening understanding of the literature of the Spanish-speaking world and, by extension, world literature and the communities that created them. This literature on the opiate experience gives us the insight on the exploration of the individual and society of a diverse group of writers during a

critical turning point in the development of Spain, Spanish America, and the Western world as a whole.

CHAPTER 1

Reading, Writing, and the Artificial Paradise: The *Modernista* Literary Experience

Beginning in the early stages of the *modernista* movement, writers focused heavily on the formal aspect of their poetry and prose. They sought new means of expression within traditional forms and looked for new inspiration from the Classics as well as the contemporary literatures of other countries, especially France. With their underlying focus on form, language, and former literary works, many *modernista* writers created self-reflexive works that focus on the role of the artist within contemporary society. For example, Rubén Darío's (1867-1916) poem "La página blanca" from *Prosas profanas* (1896) opens: "Mis ojos miraban en hora de ensueños la página blanca" (113). The poem proceeds to imagine the literary possibilities of the blank page violating space and time. It presents the reader with the freedom and anxiety of the artist creating something from a seemingly formless, empty universe. What is important to keep in mind here is that part of the *modernista* movement is centered on the artist's role in society and the development of the concept of art as a profession within the context of a utilitarian, positivist worldview, or, as Alejandro Mejías-López states, "Spanish American *modernismo* was to become the first instance in which the anxiety of European influence was not only overcome, but its directionality actually reversed, as *modernismo* imposed itself in Spain and, removing its literary authority, left its former European metropolis coming to terms with the unprecedented anxiety of (Latin) American influence" (9). It can be argued that the crisis and uneasiness presented in *modernismo* literature does reflect the political situation of the Hispanic world or humanity as a whole. But despite the universality of these themes, the individual's raw relation

with the world permeates these works; and as writers and poets are wont to do, instances like Darío's "La página blanca" reflect the (pre)occupation of the writer facing the overwhelming task of artistic production. *Modernista* writers, feeling alone due to the solitary nature of creating or consuming literature in addition to the notion of the artist being universally misunderstood, employed a wide array of techniques to reflect their solitude and the paradoxical feelings of this solitude in their writings. Julián del Casal's poetic voice often yearned for access to the wonders of the world while remaining confined to the four walls of the poet's room. José Martí created the figure of the *Homagno*, a Christ-like artist that is immolating himself for his humanistic art despite universal ignorance or misunderstanding of his sacrificial mission. Famously, many writers, such as Rubén Darío, Charles Baudelaire or Edgar Allan Poe, struggled with substance abuse in their daily lives, often done in order to quell anxieties, fears, or the crushing solitude of the process of literary production. Many writers employed the image of drugs in their writings to reflect their personal experiences with the mind-altering substances, yet other writers found that drugs also provided a rich landscape as a purely literary entity. The consumption of drugs, an intimately personal and often solitary experience, therefore, functions as an exploration of the individual in contrast to his or her society. Taken one step further in a purely aesthetic sense, the literary image of drugs provides an avenue for exploration of the literary experience itself.

To different degrees, all five works I touch on this chapter —*De sobremesa* (1925) by José Asunción Silva (1865-1896), *Lirio negro* (1920) by José María Vargas Vila (1860-1933), *Sangre patricia* (1902) by Manuel Díaz Rodríguez (1871-1927), Heriberto Frías's (1870-1925) novella *Miserias de México* (1916), and "El morfiníac" by Catalanian *modernista* Santiago Rusiñol (1861-1931)—, explore the literary process through the artist-protagonists' exploration of opiates. The opiate image is essential to understanding the meta-fictional aspects of these

works. It is an image that simultaneously gives the writer freedom to not only explore the solitary, escapist mystical experience that is reading or writing but it also allows the writer to navigate descriptive language, complex imagery, as well as discourse on self, society, and dogmatic epistemologies and ontologies of their contemporary societies. This chapter will study the opiates in these works through the lens of opiate experience as metaphor for the literary experience. The protagonists in these novels are all artists in some capacity. The opiate experiences of these works of prose examine phenomena ranging from the origin of artistic inspiration, hypergraphia,¹¹ writer's block, and even the consumption of art (reading). The image of opium also functions to highlight the unique cerebral capacity of the enlightened artist, something Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859) highlighted decades before in *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821).¹² The Spanish and Spanish American *modernistas* writing on the opiate experience take De Quincey's privileged stance as a superior consumer of opium and appropriate it, in part, as a means to promote and individualize the uniquely Hispanic voice within the literary community. As the literatures of these regions were perceived to lie on the margins of Western society, *modernismo* functioned in Spanish America as a way to break free of the literary shackles of their former colonial past. For Spain, it became an exercise in reclaiming the greatness and reflecting the anxieties of a former world power that had recently lost the last vestiges of its empire.

With its experimental style and structure, poetic prose, and puzzling poet-protagonist, *De sobremesa* is considered an essential *modernista* novel. José Asunción Silva's enigmatic

¹¹ Neurologist Alice F. Flaherty defines hypergraphia as "the medical term for an overpowering desire to write" (2).

¹² De Quincey contrasts his own fantastical opium visions with that of a common person stating "if a man 'whose talk is oxen,' should become an opium-eater, the probability is, that (if he is not too dull to dream at all) —he will dream about oxen" (54).

masterpiece is a work of legend; originally destroyed in a shipwreck, reluctantly rewritten from memory in 1896, and not published until 1925 —almost 30 years after the author's suicide. Since then, it has become one of the major works of Colombian literature and of Spanish American *modernismo*. The novel's recognition as an essential work of world literature is yet to be realized, but scholars of Spanish American literature have long studied the depth and idiosyncratic nature of José Asunción Silva's only novel.

Despite the wealth of book-length studies and scholarly articles on the work, many scholars have dismissed the presence of opium in *De sobremesa* as a trifling matter of style over substance, especially in the opening and closing scenes of the novel in which Silva provides his reader with a detailed description of the furnishings of José Fernández's home. Héctor Orjuela's book on *De sobremesa* only provides a passing commentary on the use of drugs that pervades the text: "José Fernández utiliza las drogas como un estimulante o como un soporífico en los momentos de crisis" (55). Aníbal González viewed the opiate use as part of the consumption that critiques decadent materialism through a parody of Plato's *Symposium*.¹³ Benigno Trigo argues that aberrant behavior and the counter-culture elements in the novel contribute to the alienist discourse and that Silva attempts to demystify medical discourses intended on diagnosing society with an addiction to the consumption of literature (144). In "The Modern Self as Subject," Nicolás Fernández-Medina categorizes the copious amounts of drugs taken by Fernández as a part of the decadent aesthetic as described and criticized by the highly influential work *Degeneration* by Max Nordau (1849-1923) (67). While acknowledging opium's presence in the work, the majority of scholarship has yet to explore opium as a crucial literary image of Silva's posthumous novel.

¹³ From "'Estómago y Cerebro:' *De sobremesa*, El *Simposio* de Platón y la ingestión cultural."

In general, the opiate consumption in the novel has been coupled with other self-destructive or anti-social behavior or dismissed as a facile appropriation of decadent works by French authors. I contend, however, that opium plays a pivotal role to the narrative of Fernández's diary as well as the intra-diegetic reading of said diary. In fact, the structure of the novel itself is dependent on the opiate experience: the novel begins and ends with the smoke of opiated cigarettes permeating the room in which the protagonist and his friends have their literary experience. Furthermore, the primary focus of the novel, the search for the idyllic beauty Helena, is only made possible by Fernández's two-day opium binge in Switzerland.

Before presenting the reader with the figure of the protagonist, Silva caps off the opening paragraphs with the detail of the opiate cigarette smoke enveloping the room:

El humo de dos cigarillos, cuyas puntas de fuego ardían en la penumbra, ondeaba en sutiles espirales azulosas en el círculo de luz de la lámpara, y el olor enervante y dulce del tabaco opiado de Oriente se fundía con el del cuero de Rusia en que estaba forrado el mobiliario (31).

The closing paragraph of the novel ends in much the same way it begins, once again describing the lamp-lit spirals of "el humo tenue de los cigarillos de Oriente" (228). In essence, *De sobremesa* as well as Fernández's diary reading are bookmarked and framed by opium smoke.

This bookmarked opiate experience serves a two-fold purpose. First, within the narrative, the opiate smoke parallels the temporary healing effects of the reading of the diary. Juan Rovira describes the darkness and ambience of the room as a narcotic, also noting that the group has been sitting in utter silence for half an hour. Rovira also blames their silence on Oscar Sáenz's disease, contaminating the others around the room. Sáenz proceeds to convince Fernández to read from his journal in an attempt to assuage his pain due to his illness. The narcotic effects of

the cigarettes, silence and Sáenz's medical remedies serve to parallel the tranquilizing and soothing effect of the reading.

This narrative structure is closely related to Plato's *Phaedrus*. Both Sáenz and Socrates find the literary process a metaphysical painkiller. They both recline as Fernández and Phaedrus respectively read to them. As he is led from the city to the countryside, Socrates declares to Phaedrus:

I am devoted to learning; landscapes and trees have nothing to teach me —only the people in the city can do that. But you, I think, have found a potion (*pharmakon*) to charm me into leaving. For just as people lead hungry animals forward by shaking branches of fruit before them, you can lead me all over Attica or anywhere else you like simply by waving in front of me leaves of a book containing a speech (92-93).

In a similar fashion, Sáenz flees the hospital in the city in order to escape his reality in the secluded, exotic interior of his friend's home. The escape for Sáenz and Socrates is due partially to their surroundings —which cannot be any more different— yet it is intensified by reading that takes the listener outside of reality even further. Sáenz even suggests to Fernández that he should escape to the countryside in order to resume his poetic pursuits.

After listening to Phaedrus's speech, Socrates claims to be mesmerized by the narrative. Interestingly, he finds himself mesmerized primarily by the structure of the speech, and not the content itself. This will allow Socrates to refine the structure of speech-making as he creates his own, cautioning his audience regarding the false memory of writing. We do not get such a response from the listeners of *De sobremesa*, but both works rely heavily on a meditation on the literary process.

For the purposes of this chapter, I will condense the literary process into three entities: the writer/artist, the reader/audience, and the text. *De sobremesa* and *Phaedrus* both consciously highlight the structure of the text and the importance of the literary process for both writer and reader. In their own way, both Socrates and Fernández become highly critical of the text consumed by readers both fictional and real. As mentioned before, Socrates criticizes writing for creating the illusion of true memory. He states that writing is simply an image of the idea, which according to platonic theory is the only reality. Fernández holds a similar opinion of art and its creation when he is criticized by his peers for not publishing. He retorts by claiming that “Es que yo no quiero *decir* sino sugerir y para que la sugestión se produzca es preciso que el lector sea un artista” (42-43). In this context, he suggests the power of the idea over the final product, a concept antithetical to the Western notion of the absolute authority of the written word and the ever-emerging Western capitalist marketplace. His main concern here, which is a hallmark of many *modernista* works, is the frustration of the misunderstanding by the mass audience that publications are meant to reach out to. The use of the opiate experience within the novel provides a literary exploration into the artistic mind and the process of creation providing an insight into the *modernista* take on the platonic ideal of art, including the idea that the poem composed in the mind of the artist has already been written. Opium in *De sobremesa* functions as an image of decadence and degeneration and additionally it serves the *modernista* aesthetic initiated by Spanish American authors. The claim that this image serves as a simple appropriation of French literary influence is true to an extent, but it is important to remember that the modernist appropriation of literary themes and works functions just as the Romantics took inspiration from nature and their idealization of their lovers. Mejías-López affirms that “if Spain used to mine the ‘riches’ of America in colonial times, it is now America that is taking the raw materials of the

Spanish linguistic treasure and transforming it into something new, into a value added manufactured good, as it were, with which to participate in the world cultural market” (79). The Spanish American *modernista* use of literary “raw material” applies also to other European countries. In *De sobremesa*, specifically, Silva borrows stylistically and structurally from Marie Bashkirtseff’s (1858-1884) diary (1890) and philosophically from Max Nordau’s *Degeneration*. Silva explicitly draws from these works by having his protagonist, José Fernández, write about them in his diary. Nicolás Fernández-Medina writes, “the significance of Bashkirtseff’s journal cannot be understated, since José repeatedly extols it as an integral text capturing the emerging sensibility of his age” (65). Fernández-Medina also notes that Silva references Nordau’s *Degeneration* as a positivist counterpoint to Marie Bashkirtseff, therefore showcasing two works of conflicting philosophical viewpoints that reflect the struggle of the modern artist in an age of scientism.

De sobremesa is a novel that presents José Fernández’s constant struggle with the dichotomies of his own modern existence. His stints in various European cities are interspersed with convalescent stays in the countryside; he vacillates between prolific artistic production and complete stagnation; even his relationships with women are either completely physical in nature or, in the case of Helena, overly idealistic. A critical scene in the novel for this study, which occurs roughly in the middle of the novel, involves a 48-hour opium binge. Fernández writes the following to open his August 9th journal entry from Geneva:

Acabo de levantarme, después de pasar cuarenta y ocho horas bajo la influencia letárgica del opio, del opio divino, omnipotente, justo y sutil, como lo llama Quincey, que pagó con la vida su amor por la droga funesta, bajo cuya influencia se embrutece diariamente

millones de hombres en el Extremo Oriente. Ha sido un absurdo pero no podía hacer otra cosa después de la escena horrible. Quería huir de la vida por una horas, no sentirla” (95).

This passage occurs between two dichotomous female encounters; the first between Fernández and starlet Nini Rousset and then with the heavenly Helena (which Fernández writes about in the journal entry two days after describing his major opium dosage). Fernández’s relationships with these two women are on opposite ends of the binary world that the young dandy has created for himself. Rousset’s relationship with Fernández is comprised of dueling feelings of loathing and lust. One morning after days of a torrid love affair, the poet feels a sudden surge of violent ire and disgust:

la Rousset comenzaba a adormecerse con la hermosa cabeza sobre los almohadones blandos, una furia inverosímil, una ira de Sansón mutilado por Dalila me crispó de pies a cabeza al pensar [...] en los insultos groseros que nos habíamos prodigado en la hora anterior [...] Un impulso loco surgió en las profundidades de mi ser, irrazonado y rápido como una descarga eléctrica, y como un tigre que se abalanza sobre la presa cerqué con las manos crispadas, sujetándola como con dos garras de fierro, la garganta blanca y redonda de la *divetta* (95).

After almost two months of celibacy, Fernández indulges in his physical desires leading to his complete brutalization. Detached from his civilized self, he attacks Roussett as a predator attacks his prey. Silva employs the belief of the time that the excessive expenditure of sexual energy led to animalistic behavior, loss of reason, and a propensity for violence. The repression of sexuality was related to what doctors thought about sex. They believed that sex resulted in a great discharged of energy, as well as vital fluid. Excessive exertions of this energy would leave the individual depleted physically and mentally. It was thought that unbound sex led to anemia,

malnutrition, asthenia of the muscles and nerves, and mental exhaustion (Aronna 50). In summation, an excess of physical —or animalistic— behavior was thought to result in the brutalization, or the loss of civility, of an otherwise civilized individual.

José Fernández's complicated, paradoxical relationship with women mirrors the contradictory description of his opiate experience. In fact, opium, an image that frames Fernández's diary reading and likewise serves as the fulcrum of the protagonist's European adventure, represents the protagonist's struggle for meaning and clarity within the binary forces in which he constantly vacillates. His relationship with Nini Rousset takes on a carnal, even animalistic tone. Fernández even describes himself as a tiger ready to pounce on his prey. Days before, Silva's protagonist uses the same metaphor of predator and prey with regards to their first sexual encounter. Rousset tiptoes behind Fernández and covers his eyes in a playful game of "Guess Who?" With the trap set, Fernández snares his prey: "la levanté del suelo con los brazos al desprenderme de su abrazo lascivo, y la provocación comenzada con su chanza infantil acabó, unos minutos después, en un doble *maullido salvaje* de voluptuosidad, sobre el diván de la alcoba" (94, emphasis mine). Physicality, demonstrated through both sex and violence, defines the relationship between Fernández and Rousset. Contrariwise, the connection between the artist and Helena is purely spiritual and ideal, complete with mystical qualities. This is another example of the dualities embedded throughout Silva's work. Various aspects of Fernández's existence are fraught with opposition, highlighting the anxiety of the modern age: his readings of Bashkirtseff and Nordau, his internal sexual/spiritual battles, and his drastic changes in mood. Even his political inclinations swing drastically. Upon reading an excerpt in which Fernández plans the modernization of Colombia through force and despotic machinations, he immediately refutes this long passage by claiming, "Yo estaba loco cuando escribí esto" (88). Yet,

Fernández's greatest turn of events comes between his relationship with Rousset and the first appearance of Helena. The image that encapsulates these two relationships as well as the conflicting turmoil with Fernández's psyche is opium. In fact, the transitional scene between Fernández's carnal relationship and the search for Helena centers on his attempts to atone for his previous affairs via his indulgence of opium in Geneva, a process in which Fernández holds the hope of erasing his transgressions: "Quería huir de la vida por unas horas, no sentirla" (95).

Whereas many scholars have viewed the drug use of this novel as part of the turn-of-the-century zeitgeist, this scene is critical to the driving force behind the second half of the novel and, intradiegetically, the impetus for Fernández's journal reading before his friends and colleagues.¹⁴ Opium is in fact the conduit for Fernández's mystical encounter with Helena. He holds the belief that it will serve as a spiritual cleansing agent with regards to the affair and attempted murder of Nini Rousset. At this moment of crisis he calls out to God: "¡Dios de mi infancia, si existes, sálvame! ...¿Dónde están la señal de la cruz y el ramo de rosas blancas que caerán en mi noche como símbolo de salvación?...". (96). This existential uncertainty ends the entry of August 9th. His next entry, dated the 11th of August, details his encounter with Helena. This meeting is fraught with uncertainty: it is unclear if this apparition of divine beauty even exists. In the description of their first encounter, Silva obscures reality with the use of oneiric language forcing the reader to question whether or not Helena is a figment of Fernández's overactive, drug-addled imagination. Fernández writes, "Ante mi imaginación, sobreexcitada y que había perdido la noción de la realidad, el oro de los cabellos sueltos, heridos por la luz de las bujías, revistió el brillo de una aureola que irradiaba sobre el fondo oscuro del comedor" (101).

¹⁴ Writers such as Esperanza Figueroa often note that morphine was a popular theme in turn of the century literature (149). Scholars Susan Zeiger and Thomas Dormandy have gone more in depth with the popularity of opiates in fiction, but have primarily concentrated on the literatures of England, the United States, or France.

He goes on to describe her as an apparition but later finds a broach that she supposedly left behind. In further contrast to Nini Rousset, Helena touches Fernández in a spiritual sense, invading his soul and thoughts. The poet feels shame upon making eye contact with Helena, quickly looking away feeling that “en los segundos que sostuve la suya [la mirada], había leído en mí, como en un libro abierto, la orgía de la víspera, la borrachera de opio y, penetrando más lejos, la puñalada a la Orloff, las crápulas de París, todas las debilidades, todas las miserias, todas las vergüenzas de mi vida” (98-99). In this sense, Fernández perceives Helena to have powers of omniscience; she is a god-like artistic creation. Perhaps she has the ability to see Fernández’s thoughts and transgressions given that she is a projection of his—still dazed with opium—mind.

The fears associated with the human gaze and the consumption of opium is a common theme in the literary opiate experience. For example, Rubén Darío’s short story “La pesadilla de Honorio” (1894) depicts the titular character haunted by the “tiranía del rostro humano” (273). A series of grotesque faces flood the consciousness of Honorio, an echo of Thomas De Quincey’s nightmares involving the Malaysian man in *Confessions*.¹⁵ However unlike the faces that haunt Honorio and De Quincey, Fernández’s specter is that of eternal, aesthetic beauty—an allusion to the artist’s perpetual search for artistic truth.

The structure of *De sobremesa* is essential to the understanding of the novel. Most notable is the mixing of genres that takes place within Silva’s work. There is a narrative structure akin to the typical Western novel. The descriptive language—in the opening and closing scenes, for example—gives the work a poetic feel. José Fernández’s journal presents the reader with a

¹⁵ In fact, Darío directly references De Quincey in the short story:

Cerca de un mandarín amarillo de ojos circunflejos y bigotes ojivales, un inflado fraile, cuya cara cucurbitácea tenía incrustadas dos judías negras por pupilas; largas narices francesas, potentes mandíbulas alemanas, bigotazos de Italia, ceños españoles; rostros exóticos: el del negro rey Baltasar, *el del malayo de Quincey*, el de un persa, el de un gaucho, el de un torero, el de un inquisidor... (273, emphasis mine).

pseudo-autobiographic account that contains various genres within its structure. The journal reading (comprising the pseudo-orality to the work) begins with literary criticism of the two of the work's major influences, Marie Bashkirtseff's own diary and Max Nordau's *Degeneration*. Furthermore, the famous political diatribe functions as a parody of the nation-building essays popular to the region at the time. With the generous inclusion of the genre and this hybridity of the narrative, one can read *De sobremesa* as a study on the nature of the creative process. Add the fact that the version we have now is actually a re-writing of the original work and once again we see the over-arching influence of the work becomes a self-referential guide to Silva's artistic endeavors. Opium is the representation of the isolation-inducing, introspective, mystical experience that is creating art or even experiencing art. Fernandez's journal is a place of solace and pain relief, as reflected by the soothing reading given for Sáenz's benefit. Like opium, the reading also provides its listener with a jolt of brain activity, exciting the mind while the body lies in repose. Fernández's friends beg for this escape, cajoling their poet friend to divulge his sexual exploits while in Europe. After breaking the intoxicating silence amongst the smoke of the Egyptian opium cigarettes, Juan Rovira comments on the poet's "aventuras amorosas, que todos te envidiamos en secreto" (33). Later Luis Cordovez remarks, "te había suplicado que nos leyeras unas notas escritas en Suiza, pero resulta que Rovira desea conocer unas páginas que según dice tienen relación con Villa Helena; Pérez otras que dizque describen una enfermedad que sufriste en París y el doctor Sáenz no opina, está callado como un mudo desde que entramos...; Habla Sáenz!" (46). To this Sáenz adds, "José, ¿no tienes tú un cuento, o cosa así, que pasa en París una noche de año nuevo? [...] ¿Por qué no nos lees?" (46). In this exchange we see the friends' need to escape, to be transported to an exotic European local, filled with material and sexual excesses.

Parallel to this description of escape and exoticism is a common trope of the opiate experience in literature. In “El humo de la pipa” (1888), Rubén Darío’s narrator’s first words upon his first puff from the opium pipe are “¡Oh, mi Oriente deseado, por quien sufro la nostalgia de lo desconocido!” (160). The narrator’s first puff on the opium pipe immediately sends him to an idealized Eastern landscape, linking opium to an exotic experience, symbolized by the Far East. Spanish poet Francisco Villaespesa (1877-1936) describes opium as an Oriental dream.¹⁶ Thomas De Quincey’s opium dreams were often haunted by Malasian men, dragons, and other imagery of the exotic Far East. In these descriptions of the opiate experience the subject is transported mentally to the farthest reaches of the globe—from a Western point of view—while the body remains couched in the comforts of home. The introduction of *De sobremesa* explores the same themes, yet inverts the source of the exotic. Europe, rather than the East or the New World, becomes the subject of the exotic. There are two sources of the opium consumed in this novel: Egypt (Orient) and Switzerland. Switzerland, geographically located roughly in the middle of the European continent, is the site of Fernández’s two-day opium binge. This region, where wealthy Europeans vacationed and invigorated their lungs with fresh mountain air, is the epicenter of José Fernández’s exotic European adventure, the turning point of the voyeuristic escape that leads to the vision of Helena, an amalgam of reality and art that is essentially the nature of *De sobremesa* as a piece of literature, and for that matter, literature/art in general.

The reading of the diary for Fernández’s audience—and to a certain extent, José Fernández himself—is an exercise in a special kind of exoticism in Spanish America describing traditionally non-exotic locales (Western Europe) as exotic from the point of view of the creole

¹⁶ See “Ensueño de opio” (1900).

perspective native to nations considered exotic (González Espitia 128). Places such as Paris, Geneva and London are treated as fantastic spaces with a mythical, almost other-worldly aura. Villanueva-Collado remarks that *De sobremesa* “es una novela hermética” (51). The various locations depicted in the novel are not travelled to by any of the characters within the novel. They are imagined or, in Fernández’s case, relived. The diary, just like the collected items of the poet’s home, provides a mental escape for the listener as well as the reader. Fernández’s opiate consumption thus parallels the escapism/endoticism of the reading of Fernández’s European travels. The opiate high is a foreign substance that creates exotic visions within the non-exotic corporeal body. In this sense, the opiate consumption in *De sobremesa* embodies the structure, symbolism and meta-fictitious nature of the novel. Parallel to the opium that infects its consumer, Fernández’s diary invades the imaginations of its audience with images of dangerous women, cosmopolitan European cities, pastoral Swiss farmlands, luxurious hotels, and ultimately a brief encounter with humanistic perfection. The diary not only invades the minds of those at the *sobremesa* (and the actual reader for that matter) but also structurally dominates the novel itself, couched within the opening and closing third-person narrative. The opiate high symbolized in the novel is a three-part process that includes stasis, the dynamic drug-induced cerebral voyage, followed by the return to mental stasis (reality). *De sobremesa* is structured in the exact same way which parallels the reading/writing process of existing within reality, entering into a narrative and escaping reality, and lastly ending the reading that ultimately brings the reader back to his or her original state.

In Silva’s text, opium serves as a gateway between debasement and a spiritual/mystical experience that parallels the protagonist’s, and by extension the author’s, literary process. The discovery of Beauty is frustrated, but the search does provide Fernández with a momentary

glimpse of artistic/aesthetic perfection. In contrast, José María Vargas Vila's *Lirio negro* (1920), protagonist Flavio Durán's morphine addiction fuels the flame of his complete debasement and his ultimate personal and genealogical demise. At first, the morphine serves as a means of pain relief for various ailments, including the attack of a jealous lover, who in a fit of rage attacks Flavio's mistress by splashing vitriol in her face. Through his efforts to save the woman's beauty from the attack by putting his hands before the acid, Flavio Durán loses both of them, essentially destroying his career as an artist. The first mention of his drug use comes after lamenting the existence of his son, Manio: "pensando en eso me toque el bolsillo del traje, con angustia, para ver si había olvidado la jeringuilla y, la morfina, cuyas inyecciones, es lo único que calma mis agudas cefalalgias" (16). The oceanic journey also serves as an excuse for morphine injection as well:

para evitar el mareo, me aplico una inyección de morfina;
doy orden de no ser molestado...
oigo el ruido del mar que se aleja como en un ritmo lento... que muere...
y veo el horizonte, a través de los cristales del ventanal, como desde el fondo de una
cripta;
las cosas se hacen diáfanas, leteas...
dejan de ser (18).

Through the journey across the Atlantic, the alkaloid fuels his violent behavior and his voracious and at times incestuous sexual appetite.

The image of morphine in *Lirio negro* becomes an extension of the narrative exploration of the spaces in between the turn-of-the-century binary ontologies. The form of the novel itself betrays the conventions of narrative prose. Vargas Vila does not conform to rules of

capitalization. Punctuation is elective: semi-colons appear often and in traditionally illogical locations, unrestricted by the tropes of traditional Spanish syntax and paragraph construction. Thus the Spanish employed by Vargas Vila *Lirio negro* seeks to break away from the paradigm set by its former colonizer. The text is presented in short bursts, as if it were a film utilizing an experimental, staccato editing technique. The narrative structure of the novel conveys the essence of poetic experimentation; a novel in an analogous free verse. In terms of space, the novel takes place in three primary locations: Europe, South America, and the Atlantic. The space crucial to this study is the Atlantic. In *Lirio negro*, the ocean is the pathway between two fetid continents delivering the protagonist from one site of degenerative behavior to another.

This aquatic, intermediary space, neither Europe nor the New World, is essential to the opiate image in this novel as well as the major thematic elements. Morphine, like the currents of the Atlantic flows through the veins of Flavio Durán, guiding him in the downward spiral that ultimately leads to the death of his son and an incestuous relationship with his daughter. At the same time, the ship flows downward to South America, conforming to the North/South dichotomy common at the turn of the 20th century. North European philosophers such as Hegel split the earth into these binary factions. According to Michael Aronna, “In this way, a hegemonic, European modernity was personified in the terminology of morality and maturation, while a subaltern European and African, Asian and Latin American pre-modernity was associated with immorality and childhood” (12). In essence, Vargas Vila works within the common perception that the northern part of the world (namely Europe and the United States) was somehow superior to the southern regions. This thinking went as far as the human body, considering the head/brain (spiritual) far superior to the genitalia (physical). However, Vargas Vila pushes this degenerative theory to parody. Given, he is critiquing the Spanish American

society of which he ultimately is a part, yet parallel to this critique are the philosophies that have pushed the Spanish-speaking world to the periphery of Western modernity in the first place.

Flavio Durán embarks for South America from France, the former European empire that marks the spatial initiation of Durán's decline into degradation and depravity. His son Manlio, who dies without producing a child, is the result of Durán raping an Italian peasant which functions as a critique of the idea that miscegenation with European races will lead to the flourishing progression of Spanish America. To exacerbate this pessimistic worldview, Europe is the site of the end of Durán's artistic career: the loss of his hands through the acid attack is in part due to his own degenerative behavior, but also reveals the madness of European society.

Durán has no means of escape; throughout the ocean journey he is attacked with feelings of violence and hate, substance abuse and withdrawal, and the lust and loathing towards the vampiric femme fatale Lidia Brecklin. In this sense, the ocean becomes an image of the spiritual mental state of Vargas Vila's protagonist, caught between his homeland and Europe, unable to escape the excess, debauchery and decadence of both societies. Durán has no other recourse than to reflect his emotions and thoughts onto paper, his suffering and loathing becomes writing/art. But unlike the artist-protagonists of *De sobremesa* and *Sangre patricia*,¹⁷ the artistic visions under the influence of opiates fuel Durán's fear, hatred, and decline.

In his book, *On the Dark Side of the Archive* (2010), Juan Carlos González Espitia writes that "*Lirio negro* was considered a scathing affront whose only purpose was a subversive destruction of landowning and colonial traditions. As a result, the text had to be erased from memory, while more palatable works, epigones of *María*, sparkled with their discourse of desired harmony" (103). Durán uses morphine to erase his memory of the recent past (Europe):

¹⁷ This novel, in which artist Tulio Arcos uses morphine to access the spirit of his recently deceased fiancé, will be discussed later in this chapter.

“el uso inmoderado de la morfina para calmar los agudos Dolores...y, ¿por qué no decirlo? ...para olvidar...este hábito hecho un vicio” (*Lirio* 70). And this act of intentional amnesia is not only reserved for his European experience as a means to access a redemptive Spanish American experience. His homeland is equally dire, equally disastrous: “me instalo en el pequeño buque, sucio y lúgubre; me extendo en el lecho, como para no alzarme de él durante la travesía; me hago un *piqûre*; y, entro en el Divino Paraíso; de él no saldré sino para entrar en la más cruel de todas las prisiones: la PATRIA” (94). Durán travels from one prison (the ocean-liner *Britania*) to another. His home, the house upheld by generations of his kin, is an inescapable cell of his homeland’s colonial past. Flavio and his son Manlio rarely leave this dwelling, unable to escape physically, so they decide to escape mentally through morphine and alcohol. This is an act that breaks down the body, a symbolic destruction of the physical form suggesting the erasure of national identity to make way for a new creation.

At the conclusion of the novel, Durán is committing incest with his daughter while staring at the dead body of his son. The end of *Lirio negro* becomes a parody of the foundational fictions of the 19th century that stressed the importance of procreation through sanctioned matrimony as a means of progress and a formation of the national identity. *Lirio negro*, as González Espitia affirms in the aforementioned quote, provides nothing redemptive from the foundational fiction point of view. His European experience is disastrous, losing his hands —and his livelihood— in the process. Flavio Durán rejects ideas of generational progress: “vencidos por el Destino, moríamos en silencio” (160). He effectively destroys the “illustrious” patrician line that had spent generations building the empire of the New World.

The essential role of morphine in this novel is the poisoning of Durán’s bloodline, a symbolic eradication of despised traditions left behind by the Spanish colonies. Morphine serves

as a genetic erasure, infecting the blood as well as the mind in an attempt to start anew. In true decadent fashion, Vargas Vila employs the image of morphine with expertise; the alkaloid is considered a poison in the context of recreational use, yet the initial dose of morphine is prescribed by his doctor to alleviate the pain resulting from the amputation of his hands. Flavio Durán infects his son with the alkaloid as well, representing the rejection of progress through *mestizaje*.¹⁸ The lack of genealogical/political progress symbolized by morphine is depicted through the physical torpor of Durán and his son. At their home, father and son stop eating and lie around the house most of the day, waiting for death: “como por una especie de envenenamiento de la célula cerebral, nuestros insomnios eran completos, y sólo la absorción diaria de los narcóticos, nos proporcionaba un sueño débil, intermitente, exaltado, lleno de alucinaciones y de demencias” (155).

The decadence of *Lirio negro* reaches a point in which Flavio Durán inverts his role as an artist/creator. His destruction of family, estate, inheritance, self, and career become an alternative form of creation: a form of destruction that paves the way for a new creation, or in the words of González Espitia, “The roots of decadentism underlying [*Lirio negro*] interweave to create a new proposition for nation building, one that is far removed from both the romantic perspective and realist ideals, yet is also particularly autonomous in its interpretation of European decadentism” (77). Within this context, morphine functions as a destructive/re-creative flushing of the European colonial bloodline, which is a poison to the political future of his

¹⁸ Popular eugenic ideas of miscegenation asserted that it would be possible to create racially superior human beings through the right mix of American indigenous and European races. According to Nancy Leys Stepan, this theory was primarily developed in order for Spanish American countries to consider themselves healthy, progressive nations (138). Manlio was the offspring of Durán’s rape of an Italian woman: “este niño, fruto de mi brutalidad, concebido en el vientre de una pastora del *Agro Romano*, que violada por mí, se negó a lactarlo y con un rencor de loba lo dejó un día abandonado en mi estudio de pintor en Roma, y vacilé largo tiempo, en matarlo o conservarlo” (Vargas Vila 10-11).

homeland. The loss of Durán's hands, the symbolic death of the protagonist as artist necessitates the self-destruction through morphine consumption: "después de la operación que mutiló mis manos, y los días de sopor que la siguieron, el uso necesario de la morfina, en perlas, me había hecho perderle toda aversión, y yo me había convertido en un tributario de ella, un amante de su imperio de Olvido y de Apaciguamiento" (117). By the end of the novel, Durán has, almost gleefully, accepted his life as a definition of Nordau's degenerate: "la sangre de su padre, la sangre degenerada y enferma, le había intoxicado con los gérmenes del mal, los gérmenes impulsivos y de debilidad cerebral bastantes para hacer de él, un criminal irresponsable" (195). Nordau defines degeneracy as a "morbid deviation from the original type" (16). In scientific terms, it meant that the degenerate is not a progression in evolution, but a sterile, useless irregularity doomed to eventually die out. *Lirio negro* ends with an inversion of the sexual act; one that brings not life and progress but death and stagnation: "y, nos amamos así, frenéticos, delirantes, ante los ojos del muerto, que se cerraron lentamente sobre nosotros..." (207). The complete degeneration of the Durán family — the murder of Manlio and the incestuous act of Flavio and his daughter Germania— marks the final image provided by Vargas Vila in *Lirio negro*, an image punctuated with an ellipsis awaiting the reconstruction of the Spanish American identity. For Vargas Vila, the space between the final ellipsis and "*FIN*" that marks the end of the text, like the Atlantic, is a vast chasm that contains the infinite possibility once society has been erased and the possibility of a true Spanish American rebirth is made possible.

Flavio Durán suffers in part from his own genealogical roots and his desires to simultaneously separate himself from his past and to destroy the possibility of future progeny. Tulio Arcos, the protagonist of the novel *Sangre Patricia* by Manuel Díaz Rodríguez, likewise fails to come to terms with his hereditary stock and the expectations of the current generation to

continue the legacies of those that came before. Arcos is at odds with the modern world and his “elite” genealogical heritage. Descended from an illustrious line of soldiers and the wealthy elite, Arcos reluctantly abandons his genealogical destiny as a warrior for the life of an artist, given that he has a genetic predisposition to dream: “quizá le tocara ser un miserable héroe del sueño” (21). This perceived weakness is what initiates Tulio’s downfall that ultimately leads to his suicide. Before his self-destruction, Tulio Arcos decides to escape his tragic reality through morphine. Like José Fernández, Díaz Rodríguez’s protagonist uses opiates to open his mind to an internal aesthetic reality in search of his ideal beauty, Belén Montenegro. He yearns to escape the pain of the loss of his fiancé to the ocean and the expectations of his military past. He creates art, not in a marketable way or a way that can be shared by others, but through an internal exploration made possible by copious amounts of morphine and other drugs.

In line with Nordau’s *Degeneration* Tulio Arcos at first blames the sea for the loss of Belén, then he presumes that the death is somehow a cosmic punishment for forsaking the utilitarian path of his ancestors:

¿Qué había hecho sino entregarse en alma y cuerpo a una estéril cultura del yo, afeminada y egoísta? Apenas trabajó al principio en sus proyectos de gloria. Después pensó en ellos y habló de ellos con tibieza. Por último, pudiendo volver a su país, prefirió quedarse lejos de él, acogiéndose cobardemente al reposo del olvido, cuando a lo lejos, llamándole, se oía la algazara de la lucha. ¿No había él puesto cada vez más bajo su ideal, hasta hacerlo accesible a toda alma plebeya? Calor de familia, y un seno amoroso, y una blanda quietud interminable: ideal de mercader para cuando realice una fortuna, o de funcionario poltrón para cuando el Estado lo jubile. ¿Qué había hecho sino reducir su alto ideal orgulloso a ese ideal de plebeyo? (55)

Arcos is the quintessential degenerate dandy. He is effeminate and self-centered, pursuing self-fulfilling artistic endeavors. Max Nordau affirmed that the degenerate was often sterile, assuming some lack of masculinity, as well as egoists possessing abnormal nervous systems, trapped in a child-like state (254). Nordau also defines the 19th century rise of the occult and mysticism as degenerate behavior, claiming that individuals involved in these alternative spiritual practices invent visions seeking meaning in the meaningless without the will and discipline of a healthy mind (57).¹⁹ For Tulio Arcos, his own “degenerate” mystical visions — initiated by morphine and fueled by the grief following the death of his fiancé — become the narrative crux of the novel and lead to his ultimate demise by the end of the narrative. Nordau may have predicted the death of Arcos as well since he states in that the “poisoned” degenerate is part of a “race which is regularly addicted, even without excess, to narcotics and stimulants of any form... which partakes of tainted foods, which absorbs organic poisons (marsh fever, syphilis, tuberculosis, goiter), begets degenerate defendants who, if they remain exposed to the same influences, rapidly descend to the lowest degrees of degeneracy, to idiocy, to dwarfishness, etc.” (Nordau 34).

Essential to this degenerative behavior, like *Lirio negro*, is the journey across the Atlantic. But inverse to Vargas Vila’s novel, Belén and Arcos travel from America to Europe. Europe becomes the site of Tulio Arcos’s full loss of identity and his connection to reality. The journey across the Atlantic is the locus of Belén’s death, which becomes the unrelenting crisis for Tulio Arcos. His only recourse is to return to that site, and then to plunge himself into the abyss in search of his aesthetic ideal.

¹⁹ On mysticism, see *Sensible Ecstasy* (2002) by Amy Hollywood. For more on Spanish American mysticism, see Juan Carlos Ubilluz’s *Sacred Eroticism* (2006), *Rubén Darío and the Romantic Search for Unity* (1983) by Cathy Jade.

Tulio Arcos notes that, using the metaphor of the family tree, some branches are poisoned and must be lopped off in order to guarantee the survival of the living organism:

Es cierto que el círculo de miseria y de ruina iba estrechándose cada vez más alrededor de los nombre aún puros, como el implacable círculo de una invasión de parásitos que amenazaran ceñir con sus abrazos mortales a los pocos árboles todavía enteros de una selva antiguamente lozana y gloriosa. Es cierto que en esos mismos árboles había ramas colaterales marchitas, ramas completamente secas, o pobres de hojas, lánguidas, inútiles, porque hasta ellas no subía la fuerza del tronco, y si alguna vez florecieron, sus flores no cuajaron. Así, en el linaje de los Arcos había de esas ramas muertas o enfermizas (18-19).

The use of the sick tree metaphor insinuates the inability to rehabilitate the societally sick of the family line. This is aligned with Díaz Rodríguez's epoch which regarded degenerate behavior as a genetic fate that could be generationally passed on and for which there was no cure; the positivist humans would simply have to wait out the self-destruction of the degenerates (Nordau 551). This idea of a generational societal illness is also reflected in Ángel Ganivet's *Idearium español* in which the diagnosis of turn-of-the-century *abulia*, or extreme weakening of the will, is traced back to Spain's exploration of the Americas and its imperial expansion into other parts of the world during the 15th century which caused an over-exertion of national energies, leading to national torpor and lethargy. *Sangre patricia*, in some ways like *Lirio negro*, takes a conflicted accepting yet critical stance of this ideology regarding the artist, nation and degeneration at the turn of the century.

Both Tulio Arcos and *De sobremesa*'s José Fernández create through the use of opiates. Their art comes in the form of an idealized woman. Their paintbrush, their quill becomes the opium or the morphine injection. This artistic experience is analogous to the opiate high. This is

an experience of contradictory extremes. The sensation can be both incredibly pleasurable, or a terrifying nightmare. The opiate high suspends reality and thrusts the individual into alternate dimensions, forming a distinct, personal reality. This experience seems almost mystically unifying, yet the individual experiences his/her visions and sensations completely separated from others. Rick Strassman's research done on DMT, a potent, endogenous hallucinogen, revealed the ways in which the user experienced not only visual hallucinations but also a "separation of consciousness from the physical body. And, most curiously, there was a feeling of 'the other' somewhere within the hallucinatory world to which this remarkable psychedelic allowed them entrance" (2). In Tulio Arcos's morphine visions, he is constantly visited by Belén in different forms; as her human form, as a mermaid, or as a lily. Like endogenous DMT or morphine coursing through the veins of its user, literary creation and even consumption is isolating and unifying, taking place completely within the mind. Tulio Arcos is a tragic figure, an artist torn between the meta-physical and the practical demands of the modern world. His visions completely separate him from the physical world, and his creative form, completely mental, is never seen outside anyone but the artist himself. Díaz Rodríguez provides a vision of the metaphysical artist becoming a victim of his own creation, fueled by the recreational use of a medical innovation, as prescribed by his doctor friend.

In a similar fashion to Díaz Rodríguez, Heriberto Frías documents the suffering and the failures of an artist in his novella *Misérias de México*. *Sangre patricia* is heavily symbolic, putting emphasis on the metaphysical process of the literary/opiate experience. *Misérias de México*, while working within a similar thematic framework, explores the realities of a frustrated search for understanding and relevance in society through writing. Frías's semi-autobiographical work explores the complications of artistic creation within the economic climate of the turn of

the twentieth century. Miguel Mercado moves from his journalistic career and at the end of the novel, set out creating a purely artistic endeavor: a play. Unfortunately, the commerce of the endeavor including clashes with producers, actors and directors turns his artistic creation into a farce, so much so that the audience thinks that the work is ironically horrendous, laughing at his work for all the wrong reasons. The crux of the novel hinges on a semi-autobiographical episode of heavy substance abuse that halts his artistic production.²⁰ At first his failed business and lack of production is a result of his heavy drinking. Later Mercado is introduced to morphine by a friend who is a former doctor and opiate addict. At first the morphine provides him with great inspiration for his literary work, but eventually, as the doses increase, his literary production all but ceases completely. Similar to Fernández in *De sobremesa*, it is after this binge (though for Mercado it lasts years rather than days) that he meets the love of his life, Fina, who saves him from his excesses and gives him a new focus and direction to his life. After finding work in journalism again, Mercado overhears his colleagues discussing the political and social maladies of Mexico as if they had no bearing on their own personal lives. In this moment he is inspired to write on issues pertinent to the lives of all of Mexico, and not of the Francophile elite. His work is misunderstood and rejected by his editors as well as the masses he intends to politically awaken through his art. Exasperated and defeated, Miguel Mercado exiles himself from the capital city headed for the Pacific coast.

Like the other works studied in this chapter, the opiate experience is inexorably linked to the literary process. For Mercado it is a double-edged sword that allows him at first to escape the physical world and to enter into a highly personal, prolific phase of literary production:

²⁰ In his book length study of Heriberto Frías, James W. Brown notes that Frías did indeed curb his alcohol consumption with doses of morphine that led to addiction (24). Around this time, Frías became infatuated with a woman who would not marry him until he agreed to end his morphine habit (Brown 24).

“Sustituyó el alcohol por la morfina, lo cual fue por lo pronto un bien relative, pues pudo trabajar en menos malas condiciones, adquirió cierto método en sus labores y hasta aseo en su persona” (19). Nevertheless, eventually morphine addiction leads to the ultimate literary crisis: writer’s block. In order to attempt a return to normalcy, he doubles his morphine intake and ends up destitute: “érale preciso redoblar las dosis de morfina o apelar al café con catalán para procurarse aliento y poder escribir el artículo cotidiano, sin cuya publicación no había derecho a recibir un centavo” (21). His second literary career is ultimately frustrated, but it is initiated and sustained in part to the focus and direction given by his love, Fina. At the moment his literary inspiration turns sour due to the misunderstanding of his compatriots, his wife becomes deathly ill.

In *Miserias*, Frías personifies morphine as the literary femme fatale. Both morphine and the femme fatale are described with contradictory language. They are both extremely alluring yet at the same time frightening and repulsive. Morphine offers an intense pain-relieving experience but also can lead to addiction and physical and mental degeneration. The femme fatale is a hyper-sexual woman that offers physical pleasure yet often usurps the masculine power of the male individual. In her book *Inventing the Addict: Drugs, Race, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-century British and American Literature*, Susan Zieger writes that doctors of the mid-nineteenth century in England and the US prescribed morphine injections to cure various ailments such as hysteria for mostly high-class female patients resulting in a high percentage of female morphine addicts (133). This cultural phenomena coupled with the established literary “trope of feminine lack of self-control and mendacity” provided a facile connection between woman, deceit and morphinomania for many writers (Zieger 130). Zieger also notes a growing preoccupation in the nineteenth century with women’s use of morphine and its connection to illicit and secretive sexual pleasure (143). They are both a source of inspiration as well as a soul-crushing force.

Both entities promise some manner of spiritual awakening but lead to inactivity, languor and suffering.

Likewise, the relationship between the male subject and morphine or the *femme fatale* inverts the normative male/female sexual relationship established in Western culture. The *femme fatale* is an androgynous being, both attracting and repulsing the male.²¹ She takes charge of the relationship, imposing her will onto the male subject, manipulating and ultimately inverting the male/female power dynamic. The male has no control over his emotions and subjects himself to the will of the *femme fatale*. In the same way, Frías describes Mercado's morphine addiction; the narrator describes Miguel Mercado as a man giving into the power of morphine in contradictory terms:

Sustituyó el alcohol con morfina, lo cual fue por lo pronto un bien relativo, pues pudo trabajar en menos malas condiciones, adquirió cierto método en sus labores y hasta aseo en su persona; se pudo confiarle secciones más delicadas, por lo que, radiante, consideraba al *dulce veneno* cual eficaz redención (19, emphasis mine).

Despite the perceived advantages provided by morphine, the narrator notes, and foreshadows, the contradictory dangers to the pain-relieving, anxiety erasing alkaloid. Mercado himself describes the morphine as his “Sirena Morfina” (20). Morphine is not only personified, but feminized. It is a source of literary inspiration, a muse, and ultimately with increased exposure, a — paradoxically— source of his literary demise. But despite being feminized, like the *femme fatale*, morphine exhibits masculine characteristics: it penetrates the male subject and injects itself into the bloodstream. Morphine takes control of its subject, relieving bodily pain and affecting brain activity. With increased exposure, the male subject becomes dependent on the drug, leaving

²¹ See the other example in the novels studied in this chapter: Nini Roussett (*De sobremesa*) and Lidia Brecklin (*Lirio negro*).

himself powerless and helpless, conditions antithetical to the idea of the masculine protagonist. The image of morphine and the femme fatale reflect the anxieties of the change in the male/female power structure during the turn of the century. More and more, women were gaining power and influence. At the same time, cosmopolitan males felt the doubts and insecurities that were viewed as characteristically feminine.

In order to escape the power of his morphine addiction, Miguel Mercado seeks salvation from another feminine figure; the Marian figure of Fina. In essence, morphine (*Sirena Morfina*) and Fina conform to the binary view of women still prevalent in modern western thinking that insists that women are either virgin saints or unredeemable prostitutes. Mercado searches for personal and literary salvation through both entities. *Sirena Morfina* gives the illusion of this salvation.

Upon exiting rehab, Mercado shifts his need for meaning through external forces from morphine to Fina.²² At this point, Mercado is able to refocus his life, get a job and ultimately come to the realization that he must find a new literary avenue in order to reach out to the Mexican masses; to speak of their plight and work towards the resolution of these political and social issues affecting his compatriots. However, this source of inspiration (Fina) is flawed and Mercado sees her as an ultimate source of salvation that he cannot live without. She encourages him to have a couple drinks during social gatherings leading to a relapse into alcoholism. She becomes deathly ill to which Mercado fears that “la muerte de Fina sería el ultimo desastre de su existencia, la catastrofe final, —alcoholismo, miseria, hospital manicomio, —;de la que solo

²² It is important to note that Miguel Mercado’s primary sources of literary inspiration, morphine (*morfina* in Spanish) and Fina, are very close etymologically. The two are essentially two sides of the same coin. Additionally, Fina is short for Josefina, the feminine form of the Hebrew name José (Joseph) meaning increase or addition. In Spanish, the adjective *fino/a* has various English translations including fine, thin, skilled, refined, courteous, and attentive.

restarían dos huérfanas por el camino de la prostitución y de la muerte!...” (55). While his wife is away in the hospital, Mercado embarks on the failed production of his play, resulting in his self-exile from the Mexican capital. Once Mercado’s sources of inspiration, Sirena Morfina/Fina ultimately lead to sickness and death.

After conquering his morphine habit and initiating his romantic relationship with Fina, Mercado reminds himself of the connection to the condition of the individual and his country:

No olvidaba que muchas veces se había convencido de que todo el problema nacional no era sino cuestión de salud; que la regeneración era imposible, lo mismo al individuo que a la raza mientras fuera débil y enferma; que atender a síntomas y manifestaciones, cambiando sólo de formas, regímenes y gobierno no es curar... Pensaba que un individuo es lo mismo que un pueblo raquítico, porque sus hombres son débiles, prontos al yugo, si se humilla causa lástima, y es ridículo si protesta (23).

Miguel Mercado’s failure, according to Heriberto Frías’s narrator, is essentially the weakness of the protagonist as well as the Mexican male in general. Mercado becomes dependent on various treatments to his weaknesses without attending to the illness itself. He relies on the assistance of either substances such as alcohol and morphine or the emotional support of a woman. He is unable to succeed without an external means of support, and this leads to his failure and self-exile. Likewise, the people of Mexico depicted in the novel are ignorant of their own desires to liberate themselves from their oppressive political environment, being too dependent on the apathetic crutch of Porfirio Díaz’s dictatorship. This is represented in the novel by the corruption of Mercado’s theater production and the audience’s negative reception of the work. Mercado, though, is afflicted by the same illness

he hopes to expose as depicted through his alcoholism, morphinism, and romantic dependence on Fina. These repercussions are entirely centered on himself. He thinks to himself that Fina's death would be the end of him and of his family, not showing empathy towards the impending death of another person. Her pain becomes his loss.

The writer is dependent on his capricious muse (Fina/morphine) for his literary production. *Miserias de México* is not solely concerned with the miseries of Mexico as the title suggests, but rather it is an exploration of the fickle nature of inspiration, the writing process, public reception of literature, and the issues concerning the commoditization of the art of writing. Scientifically, it has recently been proven that endogenous opiates, those naturally released in one's own body, have a neurological role in creative motivation (Flaherty 189). The release of these opiates is what gives humans the reward for creativity. This phenomenon is related to the drive to communicate by which writing becomes a version of communication. Forms of communication release endogenous opiates, but the use of opium or morphine reduces the desire to communicate (write) thus decreasing motivation and communicative (literary) production (Flaherty 210). In this sense, Frías parallels the paradoxical nature of literary inspiration and the creative process in a capitalistic marketplace with the equally paradoxical biological consequences of morphine on the human mind.

Whereas Heriberto Frías parallels the morphine and his protagonist's love interest as representations of artistic inspiration, Catalanian *modernista* Santiago Rusiñol fuses the images of morphine and women, personifying the alkaloid as pernicious lover in the short story "El morfiníac" (1905). In this work, Rusiñol likewise fuses the struggles of the literary process with the ecstasy and agony of morphine addiction, much like the other Spanish American novels described in this chapter. However, the brevity of the short story allows for Rusiñol's singular

focus on the image of morphine as a metaphor for the process of creating and consuming art. In the story, an unnamed poet struggles alone, isolated in his home, with both his addiction to morphine and —like Miguel Mercado of *Miserias de México*— writer’s block. The narrative vacillates between a 3rd person omniscient narrator and the inner thoughts of the protagonist reflected in interior monologues or from the readings of his own diary. Tormented by his craving for morphine, the protagonist fights droughts of creativity and artistic production due to his progressive decline into addiction and decadence. The story ends with the protagonist overdosing on the secret stash of morphine he has hidden in a hollowed-out book. Rusiñol takes the literary/drug image even further with the last sentence of the work: “Ja dormia, morint-se de dormir; ja no tenia voluntat només que per a no tenir-ne; i mentres ell s’anava acabant poc a poc, a poc a poc, l’obra, la seva obra, servia allí sobre la taula per a embolicar morfina” (206).²³ Using the image of the morphine stash in a book, Rusiñol suggests a parallel, or a replacement, of literary consumption.

Throughout this work, there are further connections with literary production and the protagonist’s drug use. The poet personifies the source of his malady, converting his addiction into a literary device: the muse. He calls to her while battling his urges:

Però tu me donaràs, morfina, la força! No hi fa res que després me matis. Avui mateix treballaré! Jo hi posaré el pensament, i tu em sostindràs la mà, si em vol caure, que tu tens el coratge que em falta. I quina obra que farem, morfina! Quin fill tendrim tots dos!

²³ He was already asleep, in fact dying from sleep; he had no will left; and as he lay there dying little by little, the work, his work, was lying over there on that table enveloping the morphine.

Quina hermosura! Serà l'obra de trenta anys d'esperar, de voler-te i de no poder-te tenir"
(204).²⁴

Here is another example of the artist with the paradox of writing, the simultaneous pleasure and pain of creation. Rusiñol's protagonist's battle for inspiration and literary production are influenced by and simultaneously thwarted by morphine. As in *Miserias de México*, morphine functions within the femme fatale trope; an alluring temptress that inspires the emotional response of the protagonist yet will eventually lead to his demise. And despite a short time of actual production, his muse turns on him: "Va arribar un moment en què ella estava cansada d'ell; que ja era seu; que els besos que li donava eren freds; i que ell volia més metzines, i que ella ja apartava els llavis" (205).²⁵ Like José Martí's writings regarding the *homagno*, the protagonist and artist morphine addict confronts a dichotomy by which he lives and dies by his art. Unlike the novels studied in this chapter, the short story format allows Rusiñol to completely immerse his narrative in the fusion of illness and literary creation. And like the morphine injection, the illness of creativity and literary production is relegated to those that have the economic opportunities to choose this self-inflicted illness.

Like the short story itself, the life of the protagonist ends at the story's final words. As the story ceases to exist in the mind of the reader, the protagonist dreams his final opiated dream. The artist's whole reason for being centers on his life's work as well as the substance that gives

²⁴ But you will give me strength, Morphine! It doesn't matter that you will eventually kill me. This very day I will work. I will put down my thoughts and you will support my hand, if you want, since you have the bravery I lack. And what beautiful poetry we will make, Morphine! What a child the two of us will have! What beauty! It will be the work thirty years in the making, of desiring you and not being able to have you.

²⁵ The moment came in which she got tired of him; in which the kisses she gave were cold; in which he wanted more poison, and she had already parted her lips from his.

him the will and the imagination to complete said work. This source is not only his impetus for action but also his downfall. In the minds of the Romantics, inspiration came from an outside source and in the minds of some: the tree of inspiration would eventually cease to bear fruit.²⁶ This indicates a lack of control over the artistic process. The protagonist of “El morfiníac” is weak, lacking any hope for the completion of his poetic *tour de force* without the aid of his beloved morphine. Described as an unrequited lover, the morphine becomes a literary figure itself, transcending the contemporary fears of actual drug abuse and serving the author’s aesthetic purpose. This process also includes *la lectura*, reading. The protagonist reflects on his relationship with morphine by going back to his journal writing, re-reading past entries in which he addresses his source of inspiration and simultaneously his demise. In this sense, *modernista* writers such as Rusiñol, Silva, and Frías have works on the literary process that include the essential role of the reader. Silva and Frías concentrate more on misinterpretation and ignorance of mass culture when confronted with high art. Rusiñol’s protagonist is an artist as well as his own critic. He views his work from the same ivory tower in which he writes. His reading influences his actions —whether or not to continue his morphine habit— and gives his poetic career direction.

The work passes over four stages of the writer’s process for creation: Contemplation, reading, creation, and destruction. Enveloped in all of these steps is morphine. The story opens with the protagonist lying motionless in the middle of the day, strung out on morphine. The readings of his diary all center on the alkaloid. He believes the creation of his poetry needs the support of morphine and as he slips away into death; his life’s work becomes nothing but wrapping paper for his final, lethal dose.

²⁶ F. Scott Fitzgerald, for example, believed that inspiration was finite and could end at any moment (Flaherty 85).

What all of these works have in common is that the opiate experience becomes analogous to the literary process, whether it be the creation or consumption of literature. The protagonists of these works are artists, poets, and journalists attempting to mark their territory within a society that hasn't quite reconciled the idea of the artist or writer as a profession. The written word is seen as a non-nutritive emotional salve, a remedy that can only temporarily alleviate the pain of existence. The artist sees his art as essential to his being, yet this art is preventing them from the progressive path set out by a Western, positivistic society.

Working within the binary mentality of turn-of-the-century Western culture, *modernista* writers often pitted their art against positivism and the scientific process. These writers often problematized science by pointing out the fallacies of the assumed omniscience of the burgeoning field of study. The conflict between science and art occurs in several Hispanic narratives of the turn of the century, including Pío Baroja's (1872-1956) *El árbol de la ciencia* (1911). Protagonist Andrés Hurtado avoids his medical studies by reading novels. Hurtado's vain search for truth and meaning through various philosophies is, as his uncle Iturrioz claims, intoxicating yet lacking in nourishment. His doomed relationship with Lulú, who runs a candy shop, gives birth to a stillborn child, a tragic event which later results in the death of the would-be mother. Upon hearing of his wife's death, Andrés locks himself in his room and takes a large dose of morphine. Like the candy sold in Lulú's shop, the diverting novels, and the alluring German philosophies, morphine represents the non-positivistic consumption that Baroja views as a representation of the inferiority of the Spanish (non-Basque) race (Sosa-Velasco 66). Baroja's view of Spanish society is not unique. Spain was often disregarded as a member of modern European society, a culture that had been relevant in the past but no longer contributed to the cultural and intellectual production of the Western world. Furthermore, Spanish America, as

former colonies of a former world power also found themselves on the wrong end of the north/south, superior/inferior dichotomy created by Northern European philosophies.

But whereas Baroja writes from outside and inside the so-called degenerate culture as an outside critic, the authors studied in this chapter write completely within this supposed doomed Hispanic culture. The narratives become a wrestling match of reluctant acceptance of a supposed degenerative condition and an effort to move beyond the definition. These writers see themselves as outsiders taking part in the Western literary tradition, pushing their way through a crowded theater towards the main stage. Both Spanish and Spanish American narratives embody the great confidence of their respective literary abilities; yet at the same time betray their post-colonial and post-Spanish Empire inferiority complexes with regards to their status among the hegemonic forces of Northern Europe. Opium, like art, functions as an escape from the existential crisis of the protagonists of these novels. Writing, reading, and recreational drug use are solitary endeavors that focus on introspection and disconnect the individual from other human beings and from their environment. The creation, inspiration, and visions produced from these activities produce a secular mystical experience that only leads the individual back to a self-reflection of the experience itself. Fernández's opium binge leads him to a mental manifestation of ideal beauty; Tulio Arcos likewise idealizes his deceased fiancé through his morphine visions; Flavio Durán unleashes the id, forsaking all social constructs in favor of full realization his innate desires and impulses; Miguel Mercado fails to manifest his art, thus rendering his journalistic endeavors unproductive; and Rusiñol's protagonist's addiction only allows his poetry to become a self-reflective abyss of his addiction, devoid of any substance or merit.

These five works rely heavily on the role of opiates to explore the mental activity of the literary process. The artist-protagonists struggle with the anxieties of the modern world: art as

profession, trans-Atlantic travel, new technologies, and new medicines. Fundamental to these experiences, is the use of either opium or morphine, both in and of themselves (especially morphine) products of the advances in 19th century technologies. In addition to contributing to the decadent aesthetics popularized originally by French writers such as Charles Baudelaire, the opiate experiences of the novel contribute to the reflexive writing of the *modernista* artists employed commonly in order to reconcile their conflicting emotions regarding modernity within their countries' context as well as, personally, their role in said society as an artist. These novels simultaneously reject, and to a certain extent accept, the degeneration concept that puts their culture on the outskirts of the discourse of modernity and cultural progress. At the same time, these narratives seek to highlight the artist's unique role in modern society while also attempting to ally their homeland with the metropolitan exemplars of Northern Europe. Opiate use, abuse and addiction are considered deviant behavior, but it is an issue that arises from modern nations, just as the professional artist.

The consumption of opiates, especially the hypodermic injection of morphine can be considered as a byproduct of modernity in three facets: economically, technologically, and temporally. Likewise, the artist-as-profession can be viewed in a similar fashion: both require the resources to subsist without resorting to physical labor, both involve the implication of modern technologies not only the application of art or drugs but also in the distribution, and the artist or drug user must have the time —most likely available to non-agricultural, urban individuals—, to dedicate themselves to their “addiction.” Therefore, the presence of the artist and/or drug addict in Spain and Spanish America, for better or for worse, is inherently modern. These narratives rely not only on the artist-protagonist to achieve the promotion of their respective countries as participants in the modern Western discourse but also on the opiates that explore the ecstasies

and agonies of the individual/nation in the process of self-realization. The “artificial paradises” as described through the opiate experience likewise reflect the arbitrary and artificial nature in which national identities (especially in the case of Spanish America) are created. With the reflection of the negative and detrimental aspects of opium/morphine use (especially in *Lirio negro* and “El morfiníac”), these works depict the decadence and degeneration of society within modern context. These nations could not fall without having been a part of the progressive dialogue in the first place. As for works such as *Lirio negro* and *Sangre patricia*, opiates provide the artistic vision of their protagonists despite the crisis inducing aftermath of consuming the alkaloid. The paradox of the opiate experience thus mirrors the experience of the modernizing Spanish American nation unwilling to accept its standing as not part of the progressive, Western world meanwhile steeped in its traditions and influencing the world culture and literature. It is perhaps with this mindset that Consuelo, José Fernández’s compatriot, remarks while living in Paris: “¿Qué tienen aquí que sea tan bueno como lo que tenemos nosotros allá? Mira el café, el chocolate, las piñas, la vainilla, las esmeraldas, el oro, todo eso, que es lo mejor, viene de nuestra tierra” (Silva 216). In this sense, Silva proposes the eradication of the concept of Spanish American inferiority, a region of bountiful resource and potential. José Martí (1853-1895) develops the same concept in the poem “Si ves un monte de espumas...” ending the poem with the hopeful affirmation that “todo, como el diamante, antes que luz es carbon.” Similar arguments can be made on behalf of Rusiñol’s works, written in Catalanian, a language with a long history of marginalization from the Castilian majority. Rusiñol’s *modernista* writings in conjunction with Castilian hegemony will be further explored in Chapter 2, focusing on the short story “La casa de silenci.” Nevertheless, these five writers take a modern image and apply it to their modern reality.

Whereas some scholars previously viewed this appropriation of the opiate image as a cheap imitation of Northern European works, I argue that these narratives apply a modern image to their own personal artistic vision. The fact that opium is culled from a previous literary movement does not suggest a facile repetition of previous iterations, on the contrary, it lends itself to serve the self-reflective nature of the *modernista* movement. As the Romantics sought inspiration through the beauty of the physical world, *Modernismo* searched for beauty and truth in the ephemeral, ideal, and in art (literature) itself.

The following chapter of this dissertation, while further developing the role of the opium image in the context of the *modernista* literary process, will analyze, in a broader sense, the ways in which opium and morphine function within the Spanish and Spanish American *Modernismos*. The image of opium and its derivatives function as an artistic, exploratory experience that operates to subvert the binary, logical and positivistic dogmas that these Hispanic writers problematized. The paradoxical nature of the opiate experience not only serves to explore the hypocrisies and contradictions of modern Western society but also functioned as an investigation in the dueling binary forces with the artistic self in conjunction (and in opposition) to the outside world.

CHAPTER 2

La dulzura del Leteo: Opium, Morphine and the Path Towards Modernity

In Chapter 1, I explored the opiate experience in relation to the *modernista* writers' take on their artistic process and the involvement of the reader in the literary landscape. This chapter will expand on the previous by asserting that opium and morphine are salient images in the classification of Spanish and Spanish American *modernismos*. The role of the writer became a problematic enterprise for many during the turn of the century. With the boom of technological advancements, the zeal of industrialization and positivism in Northern Europe, and the commentaries of *fin de siècle* critics such as Max Nordau, artistic expression found itself under the scientist's critical gaze. In the final decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, Spanish American *modernismo* reacted against positivist dogma in order to reinvigorate personal artistic expression initiated earlier by the Romantics. Meanwhile, secularization resulted in a new search for a universal truth, despite the search's frustrated results. Many found this truth in science. Since the *modernista* writers did find a final authoritative voice in scientific and technological advancements, they were in search for something more, something less tangible, more spiritual. Their search for this universal truth began within themselves, within their own art as well as the art that inspired them. In many cases, the vehicle for this modernist mysticism was the pen and paper, hence the famous expression associated with the literary movement, *el arte por el arte*. In several works, the writing process and the mystical experience of the journey through the poet's mind are

symbolized through the consumption of drugs, particularly opium since it was one of the more popular and most effective pain relieving substances at the time. The image of opium becomes an essential *modernista* symbol primarily for its contradictory essence that invokes simultaneously the ancient and the modern, the East and the West, the medical and the mystical. However, the consumption of drugs as well as the *modernista* author were considered decadent and degenerative by the culture of power. These Spanish American authors, however, chose to appropriate the designation of the decadent in order to aesthetically lash out against the utilitarian, industrial mentality that dominated the West. These opiated narratives combine the frustrated search for the ideal with the act of creating art. *Modernista* writers convert opiates, which became a cornerstone of medicine at the turn of the century, into an artistic pathway to personal and universal understanding of the paradox of the human experience and existence. The consumption of the drug and its derivatives result in a secular, mystical experience that not only reflected the creative process, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also the political and social experience of Spanish-speaking countries at the dawn of the new century and the Western movement towards “progress” and modernization.

This chapter will explore the ways in which opiates are employed as a pure *modernista* image. It shows how this image conforms to the aesthetics and literary/political goals of the movement in general, while at the same time providing nuanced variation within each writer’s style. This section will focus on the following *modernista* poems and short stories published within a thirty-two year period, 1888-1920: Rubén Darío’s short story “El humo de la pipa” (1888), “La canción de la morfina” (1890) by Julián del Casal, Ricardo Gil’s poem “Morfina” (1898), “La casa del silencio” (1901) by Santiago Rusiñol, and three sonnets by Spanish poet Francisco Villaespesa: “Ensueño de opio”(1900), “La musa verde” (1906), and “Morfina”

(1920). In addition to incorporating opiates as a primary image/theme, these works problematize the paradox of Hispanic modern existence through the tension between aesthetics and positivism.

The connection between opiates and religion was nothing new to the *modernista* aesthetic. In his defining opium narrative *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, Thomas De Quincey proclaims himself to be the pope of the true church of opium and informs readers of his opiate consumption with “religious zeal” (52). Baudelaire describes the opiate and hashish experience as an artificial paradise. However, this connection is not to suggest the Spanish and Spanish American writers simply copied a European aesthetic, but rather highlights their search for truth within the literature of the recent past. Instead of scripture or scientific journals as gospel, the *modernista* writers found their truth within literary creation itself. Their prophets became their literary forefathers such as Baudelaire, Poe, and, in the realm of opiate narratives, Thomas De Quincey. It is important to highlight that these influences transcend geographical, political and linguistic boundaries, another example of *Modernismo*’s cosmopolitan and international desires to move beyond categorization based on rigid nationalistic standards.

As in Platonic theory, the ideal was found outside of the physical world, whereas in science truth could only be found within the physical realm. Therefore, through the positivist lens, exploration outside of nature, through drugs or pure aesthetics, was deemed unproductive and degenerative. Jacques Derrida explores this idea through his philosophy of the *pharmakon* and the role of drugs in society in his work “The Rhetoric of Drugs.”²⁷ Despite being written in 1990, Derrida’s essay provides a deft analysis of modernity beginning at the turn of the twentieth

²⁷ “The Rhetoric of Drugs” is a continuation of Derrida’s “Plato’s Pharmacy” from *Dissemination* (1972) in which he argues that medicine function in a similar repetitive, non-truth fashion as Plato’s musings on writing versus reality: “The truth of writing, that is, as we shall see, (the) non truth, cannot be discovered in ourselves by ourselves. And it is not the object of a science, only of a history that is recited, a fable that is repeated” (74).

century and the connections between modernization and the rise of drug addiction. The *pharmakon* represents the remedy to forgetfulness through writing (24). However, Derrida states that writing is problematic since it does not represent true memory in the Platonic sense, but recollection. Thus the *pharmakon* dulls the spirit and wastes memory (24). Derrida proceeds to connect the concept of the *pharmakon* to the role of drugs in modern society in that both are “understood both as antidote and poison” (25). Memory is relieved through the process of writing and reading, but it is necessary to repeat this process in order to remember, thus true memory is not achieved. The same thing applies to drugs with regards to the pursuit of pleasure, or a lack of pain. In his connection of drugs and writing, he describes writing as an inspired trance and drugs as the religion of atheist poets (Derrida 29).

Peruvian author Clemente Palma combines the memories of a defunct yet haunting romantic relationship with the hallucinogenic effects of drugs in the short story “Leyendas de haschischs” (1904). In a work such as Silva’s *De sobremesa*, opium opens his protagonist’s mind to the experience of true beauty and artistic expression. However, Palma’s protagonist’s dreams are inspired/haunted by his corruption of ideal image of femininity. In the story the protagonist, a writer of love stories, is haunted by the death of his lover Leticia. He blames her illness on the corruptive nature of their sexual exploits, “su cuerpo anémico había nacido para el amor burgués, metódico, sereno, higiénico, y no para el amor loco, inquieto y extenuante exigido por nuestros cerebros llenos de curiosidades malsanas, por nuestras fantasías bullentes y atrevidas, por nuestros nervios siempre anhelantes de sensaciones fuertes y nuevas...” (153). During a night of insomnia, the writer finds an oriental box containing opiated hashish cigarettes, or as the protagonist describes it, “el haschischs divino” (154), connecting the drug to a mystical, religious experience. The unnamed protagonist of Palma’s “Leyendas” experiences a series of dreams

interrupted by a period of lucidity. Time and space are violated in these dreams as well. But much like Silva's José Fernández, the writer is haunted by his authored version of his dead lover, Leticia. This is not only a metaphor for the corruption or inaccessible aesthetic ideal, but it is also an echo of Thomas De Quincey's nightmares described in *Confessions*. At the end of De Quincey's book, he describes a reoccurring dream involving the haunting face of a Malaysian man that visited De Quincey's home. De Quincey writes that the man comes to his door, and not knowing what to do, he hands the Malaysian man a large amount of opium, enough for three men. The Malay consumes the entire dose, stupefying the writer. Over the next few nights De Quincey's opium dreams are haunted by the Asiatic face of his Malaysian visitor, partly due to De Quincey's guilt for possibly killing the man, and partly due to his fear of the Far East and its people.

Palma appropriates this nightmare in his exploration of the writing process. According to the story, it is the writer that has access to the ideal, but through repetition and human nature, corrupts beauty, despite his attempt to capture its essence. In his dreams, Leticia arises from fetid marshes or from a sea of dead girlfriends in search of their unfaithful lovers. When the protagonist wakes from his dream turned nightmare, he finds himself mysteriously holding a lock of Leticia's hair. According to Nancy M. Kason in her study of Palma's short stories *Breaking Traditions*, the fantastic end of "Leyendas" forces the reader to doubt his or her own reality (119). Palma ties the drug experience to the writing process, and at the same time involves the reader in this dialogue. He invades the reader's reality with the fantastic. I would even venture to read the lock of hair as a symbol of the product of artistic creation, whether it be a painting, a novel, or a poem. Yet, once again the product of artistic creation is not whole.

Although Palma's protagonist was able to manifest his dream into reality, it still remained incomplete.

While Palma's narrative seeks the mystical experience through drugs and writing, Horacio Quiroga combines a third element: science. "El haschich" combines the mystical drug experience, short story writing, as well as incorporating scientific documentation and experimentation. In the story, another unnamed protagonist reports, with the help of his friend Alberto Brignole, the experience of taking a seemingly lethal dose of hashish. The protagonist documents with precision the time, place, and sensations experienced with the drug. He categorizes the intoxication into five distinct phases, and the duration of each phase. Like the drug experience of the previous two short stories, the high degenerates from a pleasurable experience to "sensaciones de malestar. Angustia. Palidez del rostro... Sensaciones de acabamiento y muerte próxima" (104).

The structure of Quiroga's story as a scientific experiment highlights the essence of it being a work of fiction, a written expression and therefore artificial in nature. But through Quiroga's exploration of the narrative through the scientific lens he, like Palma, throws elements of the fantastic into reality: for the narrator notes that he and his friend later realized that he had taken a large enough dose to kill him, yet he mysteriously evades death. Quiroga uses intradiegetic intertext —the transcription of Brignole's notes from that night— to connect the narcotic experience to artistic creation. Quiroga's story does not highlight the search for the aesthetic ideal as *De sobremesa* and "Leyendas del haschisch" do. "El haschich" focuses on the limitations of science as a universal and unifying answer. Structurally, the work is fragmented between narration and documentation, between the mental exploration of an individual and the measurements of the physical world.

As defined in Derrida's "The Rhetoric of Drugs," Palma and Quiroga create modernist fiction that uses the opiate/hashish experience as a metaphor for their concept of the modern mystical experience: artistic creation. Art, like drugs, is unnatural, outside of scientific explanation. For the *modernistas* it becomes a vehicle towards perfection, towards the ideal. But, like the modern experience, it is a frustrated journey, since it is impossible to reach the ultimate destination. Thus, repetition and addiction follow, as in Darío's unquenchable thirst for the infinite. Ultimately what awaits mankind is death. Art is an escape from "reality", yet it is an exploration of the truth of mankind's essence. This is one of the many goals of the *modernista* project, and opiates and other narcotics became a useful symbol for the vehicle of their search: the pen. However, writers such as Palma and Quiroga constantly reminded themselves and the reader of the futility and frustration of modernity because of its inaccessible nature. The repetition of the writing process is that unquenchable thirst for perfection, or as Darío writes in "El humo de la pipa" as his protagonist searches for salvation in his opiated dream from persecution, "Y yo gritaba: — ¡Tengo sed! Y el mundo era sordo" (164).

For Charles Baudelaire, hashish was often code for opium and as a result the descriptions of the drugs' effects on the human body were often intermingled (Dormandy 177). Baudelaire even notes in the essay "On Wine and Hashish" (1851) that technically the hashish he often consumed was laced with opiates: "Hashish is composed of a decoction of Indian hemp, butter, and a small quantity of opium" (Baudelaire 17). In a literary sense, these two drugs were linked to a similar experience and linked to primarily, but not exclusively, two literary antecedents: Thomas De Quincey and Charles Baudelaire. This artistic license between the individual's experiences with either of the two drugs often occurred with other writers, such as the two studied in this chapter writing on hashish, Clemente Palma and Horacio Quiroga. Palma's work,

“Leyendas del haschisch” is more reminiscent of Thomas De Quincey’s opium-induced nightmares than Baudelaire’s descriptions of the effects of hashish on the human body. Likewise, Quiroga’s protagonist has the hallucinations, torpor and contrasting emotions typically associated with opium, though the protagonist claims his previous experiences with opium yielding very little psychotropic experiences compared to that of hashish. It is for this reason, despite hashish not biologically deriving from the opiates extracted from the pod of the poppy, that the short stories of Palma and Quiroga are included in this study on the Hispanic literary opiate experience.

The fact that opium is an image culled from the Romantic literary tradition contributes to its status as a quintessential *modernista* image for its appropriation from former literary models and expert application in the writers’ modern context. In a similar fashion in which pop art would achieve decades later, *modernista* writers took inspiration from art and literature itself. For this reason, as I mentioned before, the implementation of opium in Hispanic prose and poetry is often viewed as an imitative literary process. However, like the Classical references and the traditional poetic and novelistic structures, Hispanic *modernistas* took a look back in the history of aesthetics and literature to assist the exploration of their present. The image of opium becomes an exemplary image of *modernismo*, for this drug contains within the paradox of human existence and society, as deeply explored by such writers as Julián del Casal, Rubén Darío, Francisco Villaespesa and Santiago Rusiñol. Opium also served as an image of escapism and exoticism, two themes common in the *modernista* aesthetic or, as Ana Suárez Miramón states:

La otra vertiente escapista, el *exotismo*, representaba otra forma de alejarse de la realidad, en el espacio, y para ello lo mismo servían los caminos interiores de la conciencia como los lugares más desconocidos (Oriente). Permitía forjar, mediante viejos mitos o la

creación de nuevos, un mundo armónico, justo, inexistente en realidad, pero al mismo tiempo permitía también una crítica social del presente (160).

Additionally, opium and especially morphine enter into the modern age as emblems of the advances of medical science. New medicines, treatments and technologies were developed alongside opium and morphine's increased implementation in medicine. The recreational use of and the dependence on opiates resulted in what developed into the modern understanding of addiction as well as the regulation of narcotics by governments and the rise of the illicit drug culture and the market associated with that particular culture. At the same time, opium was a drug as old as history itself, referenced in the classical literature from which many *modernistas* sought inspiration. Therefore, opiates were a bountiful image for *Modernismo*: rife with contradiction, simultaneously ancient and modern, relevant to the writers' reality, and on the line between the acceptable and the profane.

Opiates become symbolic of the modernist search within the ether of the binary restrictions of Enlightenment and Positivist philosophies. They searched for existential meaning between the definitions and taxonomies created by the elites of the dominant intellectual culture. Likewise, opium is a drug on the border of science and barbarity, that which is legitimate and illicit. While morphine and opiated tinctures were viewed as medical breakthroughs of the nineteenth century, consumption of the drug via the opium pipe was considered a barbaric practice, largely due to its association with Chinese culture. The physical and mental effects put the body in a similar purgatorial space. The body and the mind seem to separate; the individual loses control of his body and mind. Opium dreams came to represent the uncontrollable artistic creation of the modernist mind that suffered because and for their work. Like the writers of the first chapter connecting opiates with literary creation and consumption, others employed the

Romantic suffering of opiates into their own works, reflecting their own paradoxical relationship with the (un)modern definitions that were placed upon them by outsiders.

Two non-canonical poems, “Biombo chnesco” (1920) by José Isaac de Diego Padró and “Plenilunio” (1918) by Ignacio Fontecilla Riquelme embody the characteristics of modernism while exploring the opiate experience. “Biombo chnesco” makes reference to opium within an orientalist context. The inspiration of the poem is from nature itself, but from a scene painted on to a Chinese folding screen, thus highlighting the artificiality of de Diego Padró’s poetic inspiration. De Diego Padró chooses as his poetic muse a piece of art. Yet this piece of art also serves a utilitarian purpose, the act of concealing. “Biombo chnesco” likewise employs the fetishization of foreign material goods. This does not simply reflect escapism, but a commentary on the prevailing positivist thought of the time that all things must serve a logical purpose propelling societal and scientific progress. The first stanza of the poem begins with the description of the Chinese countryside juxtaposed with dragons that enter before the second stanza: “Fieros monstruos que imponen la leyenda de China” (321). De Diego Padró invokes, through the description of the artwork on the folding screen, the simultaneously truth and artificiality of the written word and art in general. For the poet, the *biombo chnesco* has the power to mentally affect its audience by transporting the “reader” in both space and time despite the artificiality of the voyage’s vehicle. The poet employs the opium image to highlight the cohabitation of dualistic forces that dominated turn-of-the-century intellectual discourses: “Pavos-reales abriendo sus imperios, de suerte / que ojuela una viva pedrería en acopio; / jardineros que hilvanan lo que es vida y es muerte, mientras riega la pipa carnavales de opio” (321). This stanza is indicative of the *modernista* pursuit to escape the binary restriction of positivism by emphasizing the magical, mystical nature of artistic creation. Fontecilla Riquelme’s “Plenilunio”

simultaneously references Romanticism and eroticism while critiquing modern science. The poetic voice vaguely complains of a pain that neither opium nor morphine can alleviate, highlighting the limits of observation as absolute truth. The poet exclaims “¡Oh qué absurda la ciencia! ¡fatal la medicina! / ¡Que nada pueda el opio ni pueda la morfina / para aplacar las llamas de ese mortal ardor” (23) This poem touches on the frustrated *modernista* search outside the positivist agenda while including themes of eroticism, drug use, decadence, and a possible reference to a sexually transmitted disease (“¡Logró hincarle su garra la pérfida maldita, / logró la traicionera inyectar su dolor!”) (23).

By combining science and literature, the *modernista* writers were problematizing the separation of the two fields as antithetical to one another. Indeed, they argued that these two fields of human exploration of self and Nature are codependent. The ideal symbol for this union is opium and its derivatives: substances that function within both realms of science/medicine and aesthetic experimentalism. This is the major difference between the *modernista* appropriation of the opiate image in comparison to their Romantic and post-Romantic (Decadent) predecessors. Just as *Modernismo* as a movement revitalized characteristics of past literary movements, the *modernista* opiate experience builds upon previous literary tradition to conform to the aims of *Modernismo* as a reflection and commentary on the modern individual and the society in which he or she found himself or herself. Therefore, it is imperative to view the opiate image in turn-of-the-century Hispanic texts as not simply a fad to connote exotic themes or, as Emmanuel Mickel states, “Hence the words opium, hashish, and tea are frequently introduced into [Romantic] writings merely to add an exotic atmosphere” (67). The *modernistas* employ the exotic instead as a commentary on the exoticism of their own nations of origin as well as an effort to create a literature that is both domestic to their nation’s sensibilities as well as international in an effort to

reach out and become a member of great significance in the wide-reaching community of world literature. This functioned as an effort to legitimize art meanwhile pushing for the legitimization of their nation as a culturally relevant force.

“La canción de la morfina” (1890) and “Nostalgias” (1891), two poems by Julián del Casal, are exemplary *modernista* poems but are also exemplary of the Spanish American depiction of opiates at the turn of the 20th century. “Nostalgias” presents opium as connected to China, a passing reference that helps to create the exotic, orientalist ambience that the poem possesses. However, upon further analysis, the poet’s escapism in no way mentions the Western world. “Nostalgias” can be read as a commentary to escape the dogma of European civilization within the poet’s Cuban context: it is not the same imagining an exotic space in Paris or London and imagining an exotic space in a place like Cuba or Tahiti, that itself is considered exotic, a phenomenon González Espitia terms “endoticism” (128). Furthermore, “Nostalgias” embodies a defining feature of *modernismo*, the frustration due to the inability to attain the ideal.

“Canción de la morfina” deals with opiate use as a primary theme and within said theme explores ideals of modernity. This poem is often cited as an echo of Baudelaire’s “*Le Poison*” primarily due to Casal echoing one line from the French work. This limited interpretation stems from two lines in Casal’s poem which read, “¿Qué otra embriaguez hallará / superior a mi embriaguez” (147). After describing the inebriate effects of wine and opium, the poetic voice of “*Le Poison*” claims they pale in comparison to the “le poison qui découle / De tes yeux, de tes yeux verts, / Lacs où mon âme tremble et se voit à l’envers... / Mes songes viennent en foule / Pour se désaltérer à ces gouffres amers” (100).²⁸ Rather than plagiarism, I see Casal’s

²⁸ “But that is nothing to the poison flow / Out of your eyes, those round / Green lakes in which my soul turns upside down... / To these my dreams all go / At these most bitter gulfs to drink or drown”.

Baudelarian echo as a literary technique of taking inspiration from the sublimity of the artificial (that is, literature itself) opposed to the Romantic concept of inspiration from nature. Despite similar characteristics between the Romantics and the *Modernistas*, turn-of-the-century writers such as Julián del Casal explored the role of the writer in society through the self-referentiality of their work. With the rise of industrialization and the global marketplace, literature became a widely distributed and easily reproducible form of art for the masses, as seen by the popular serialization of novels and the printing of poems in daily newspapers. With greater access to world literatures, writers such as Julián del Casal had the ability, despite being grounded in the Western Hemisphere, to become more worldly and current regarding the events and aesthetic developments of other countries. Casal's travels become exercises of the mind, purely literary, a celebration of the power of the art(ificial). This key difference is one of the hallmarks of the *modernista* literary movement. The opiate experience is an image that parallel's the literary pursuits of the *modernistas* and should be considered a defining characteristic of Spanish and Spanish American *modernismos* as an aesthetic representation of literary referentiality and subjective exploration and discovery.

In "Nostalgias" and "La canción de la morfina," Casal writes about the alienation associated with modernity. Relationships verge on the superficial and pass into the artificial. In "La canción de la morfina," morphine is personified as the femme fatale, seducing its user to engage in an extremely pleasurable yet deadly experience. In this sense, Casal combines two images of previous literary movements, appropriating them and adapting them into his turn-of-the-century Cuban context. The poetic voice converses with his beloved morphine, a relationship that mirrors that of two star-crossed lovers of the Romantic age. Despite his undying devotion to the drug, the poet is fully aware that his addiction will lead to his death. The poem functions as a

commentary on the rise of capitalism and proto-globalization at the turn of the century transforming the love interest from a human being into a drug, presenting the unrelenting consumptive culture of the late nineteenth century. In this sense, commodities replace personal relationships and addiction dominates reason, as morphine self-describes, “Yo venzo a la realidad, / ilumino el negro arcano / y hago del dolor humano / dulce voluptuosidad” (148). Casal exposes the vapid pleasure derived from materialism without denouncing the practice completely. The personified, medical commodity morphine becomes the truth for Casal, despite being an artificial happiness: “soy la dicha artificial, / que es la dicha verdadera” (147). The poem represents the complicated relationship of an individual of a still colonized, repressed society that at the same time has access (with the proper economic means and education) to all the luxuries of the West and the decadent material indulgences of the Far East.

In “La canción de la morfina,” Casal combines images of science and medicine with magic and mythology. Morphine is personified as Isis, the Egyptian goddess representing the ideal mother or wife. The opiate is also described as a siren or mermaid, the Greek temptresses of the sea. Morphine claims to hold dominion over reality and compares herself to the guiding light that led Moses and the Israelites out of the wilderness (“roja columna de fuego / que guía al mortal perdido, / hasta el país prometido / del que no retorna luego”) (147-48). These mythological and biblical references are employed by Casal to refer to a relatively new medical innovation, paradoxically combining the ancient with the modern. Morphine was developed largely in part to the development of organic chemistry at the turn of the 19th century and the overall popularity of opium as an analgesic medicine (Dormandy 115). In 1841, almost 50 years before “La canción de la morfina,” the hypodermic needle was invented to facilitate the administration of morphine (Dormandy 120). From that development the prescription of

morphine, as well as its recreational use, skyrocketed and became ubiquitous in Western culture by the end of the nineteenth century. The isolation of the morphine compound itself was based on the erroneous assumption that it was possible to separate the pain relieving qualities of opium from the addictive qualities (Booth 72).²⁹ Morphine, therefore, is a purely scientific creation, despite Casal's mythical description of the alkaloid. Through the aesthetic representation in the form of a poem, the drug occupies for Casal an intermediary space that combines modern science with the ancient age of Egyptian and Classical mythologies. The personified morphine claims, "Ante los bardos sensuales / de loca imaginación, / abro la regia mansión / de los goces orientales" (148). In essence, a major scientific development becomes the avenue for imaginative and spiritual inspiration for poets. Morphine deconstructs the physical laws of time and space for the individual that inserts the needle into his/her vein. Casal suggests through the personification of morphine as a mythical figure that the advancement of the sciences has the ability to unleash the sensual mysteries of human existence and, rather than exhaustively explaining the natural world, open up new revelations on the presence of the magical and fantastic in the modern age: "Yo soy el único bien / que nunca engendró el hastío. / ¡Nada iguala el poder mío! / ¡Dentro de mí hay un Edén!" (148).

"El humo de la pipa" (1888) by Rubén Darío is an early example of the Spanish American opiate experience connected to the act of writing as a mystical/religious exercise. In addition to this short story connecting to the themes presented in Chapter 1, I will demonstrate how Darío employs opium in order to present other salient themes of the Spanish American

²⁹ The same scientific misstep led to the development of the hypodermic needle. It was believed that addiction was synonymous with appetite; therefore if morphine bypassed the digestive system it could not be habit forming (Booth 72). Further attempts to rid opiates of their addictive qualities led to the discovery of heroin by C.R. Adler in 1874 (Booth 77). This ignorance had disastrous consequences, such as English and German missionaries in China attempting to cure opium habit with morphine and heroin (Dormandy 153).

modernista aesthetic. The story begins at the end of a dinner amongst friends. The unnamed protagonist is in a state of half-drunkenness, “El champaña dorado me había puesto alegría en la lengua y luz en la cabeza” and sleepiness, “Era un desvanecimiento auroral, y yo era feliz, con mis ojos entrecerrados” (160). He is then curiously attracted to an opium pipe hanging on the wall. His friend loads and lights the pipe and the protagonist takes the first drawl and is immediately transported to another world. The protagonist exclaims, “¡Oh mi Oriente deseado, por quien sufro la nostalgia de lo desconocido!” The desired Orient is a pure creation of the protagonist’s mind. A spiritual world that paradoxically he knows yet has never seen. In this imagined world, an idealized woman manifests from the ephemeral atmosphere. They make love and suddenly the vision is blown away by the wind, like the smoke from the pipe.

From the first drawl of the protagonist, Darío has made a connection with the opiate experience and artistic creation. Like Derrida’s writer in the inspired trance, Darío’s smoker is transported immediately after contact with the pipe. His vision is not given to him from some higher power, but is manifested from within, from his ideal of the Orient and feminine beauty. Momentarily he reaches a state of ecstasy, but he is quickly transported back to reality, as the writer losing concentration after a furious period of inspiration. The protagonist has the ability to transcend both space and time in a matter of seconds, just as the artist can create impossible and imagined worlds in a matter of minutes. As in Derrida’s philosophy on the connection of writing and drugs, Darío highlights the repetition of artistic creation through the subsequent drawls from the opium pipe. The story includes seven drawls, seven creations, seven attempts to achieve mystical ecstasy.³⁰ Like the opiate experience, artistic creation can never be satisfied. There is always the return to reality, the return to the imperfection of mankind. Darío depicts this

³⁰ In numerology, the number seven represents the search for absolute truth.

problematic relationship between the temporality of artistic and the inevitable return to reality by the degeneration of the opium dream into nightmare. By the third opium dream, the protagonist's ideal visions of woodland nymphs and fairies capture him and put him on trial. The pipe/pen transitions from antidote to poison in this instance.

But why continue? Why does the protagonist take the 4th through 7th drawls of the pipe? Darío provides the answer through intertext. During the protagonist's punishment (being lashed with a golden whip), the fairy queen Mab eases his suffering by giving him an amulet that reads "*Esperanza*." This text inspires the protagonist, despite his suffering, to continue his journey through the opium pipe just as the writer addictively creates work after work in a search for aesthetic perfection.³¹ Ambition and desire are the driving forces of the artist, or as Darío repeats in "El humo de la pipa," the idea of an unquenchable thirst. As in Derrida's *pharmakon*, writing is both therapeutic yet the thirst can never be satisfied.

By the seventh drawl of the opium pipe, the protagonist only sees one vision: his own open grave. The 7th vision is but one written line, and then the protagonist's nightmare is interrupted by the distant laugh of a woman, and the story abruptly ends: "Una risa perlada y lejana de mujer me hizo abrir los ojos. La pipa se había apagado" (164). Here Darío emphasizes the frustration of the literary/artistic process by not only ripping his protagonist from his oneiric space, but by ripping the audience from their imaginary world as well. The reader becomes a participant in the artist's frustrated mystical experience; one that begins –like that of Santa Teresa de Jesús –with the union of artist and ideal (symbolized by the female) and ending with

³¹ Mab is a textual reference from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* that is said to enter through a sleeping person's nose and give birth to dreams. The literary reference is another example of the *modernista* tendency to create art from art itself. In Darío's short story "El velo de la reina Mab," the Shakespearean fairy inspires four men to develop sculpture, painting, music, and poetry. This story—which unlike "El humo de la pipa" appears in the first edition of *Azul...* (1888)—links the creation process to mythology within an oneiric, otherworldly context.

abrupt return to reality. In a parallel manner, the reader unites with the author—through the text itself—and participates in the artist’s creative process. This union, like the opiate/mystical experience, is ultimately cut short every time since the author’s spell is broken upon the reading of the last line of the text. Like Darío’s protagonist and the seven drawls from the opium pipe, the reader repeats the process of consuming narratives in search of the ultimate work of art. The frustrated search of the reader and the artist works within the political situation of Hispanic nations as well, referencing Western nations’ unidirectional concept of progress towards modernity.

Rubén Darío’s “El humo de la Pipa” fuses the opiate experience with a quasi-mystical journey. Like the works studied in the previous chapter, the mental/creative process is aided by the intake of opium. The pipe functions as a metaphor for the pen, weaving seven narratives within the drug-addled mind of the short story’s protagonist. But whereas Casal and Quiroga’s work fuses science with the fantastic, Darío’s short story focuses more on the literary process, of which opium serves as an image. However, the seven drawls of the opium pipe can be read as experimentation in two distinct realms of academic study: literary innovation and the scientific process. Writers of the *Modernismo* movement focused on literary innovations and new means of expression within traditional and non-traditional literary forms. In response to the revolutionary advancements in Western science, writers went to task to innovate the literary field through their own means of experimentation. With the short story, each puff of the opium pipe provides the protagonist with a unique vision yet each vision is loosely connected. Like the opium dreams of Thomas De Quincey, the pleasures of the alkaloid soon devolve into nightmares, ending with the protagonist staring into the abysmal darkness of the grave. He is only saved from his nightmare by the laugh of a woman.

This narrative connection is coupled with a series of drawls from an opium pipe that also mirror the scientific method. The protagonist repeats, observes, and records his experimentation with opium. Yet at the same time, his opiated dreams transcend the laws of physics; fusing the past (visions of the Orient), present (the protagonist's physical form occupying reality) and future (the protagonist's death). These dreams are a balance between fantasy and reality as well, confusing the reader (as well as the protagonist) regarding the difference between life and dream. The first *bocanada* brings forth stereotypical visions of the Far East or, according to the protagonist, "mi Oriente deseado," complete with erotic women, servants, and luxurious commodities (160). Likewise the second drawl takes the protagonist to an enchanted forest along the Rhine. Other opium dreams are filled with castigating nymphs and mythological creatures, but the fifth is interrupted by natural phenomena: "La quinta bocanada se la había deshecho el viento" (164). This fifth inhalation is an inversion of the other six in which reality (Nature) interrupts the oneiric state before it can even begin.

"El humo de la pipa" represents the never-ending desire for knowledge and self-discovery, tenants of the *modernista* literary pursuit. The same drive inspires the scientific community that the *modernista* poets and prose-writers took issue with at the turn of the century. Often, Darío connects this insatiable desire to a battle with physical dependency.³² Like the fruitless attempts to quench his addiction, the opiate experience, along with the pursuit of all things knowable, leads to the final and common experience of all human beings: the experience of one's own death. In his short story, Darío presents this death as the final *bocanada* inhaled, before the protagonist is interrupted back into reality by the distant laugh of an unknown woman. Essentially, the protagonist experiences a metaphoric death, the death of the narrative. The death

³² In "Canción de otoño en primavera" (1905), for example, Darío describes an insatiable need for love: "mi sed de amor no tiene fin" (128).

of the narrative (which coincides with the vision of the protagonist's own death) is an interrupted experiment, which functions as an artistic parallel to scientific experimentation. Instead of observing and hypothesizing on the phenomena of the natural world, Darío's protagonist observes and explores the inner recesses of his own consciousness which, ironically, are only made possible through the chemical makeup of the man's brain coupled with the chemical composition of opium.

In 1898, when Gil's "Morfina" was written, morphine addiction was still viewed as an affliction of the upper-middle class, typically initiated through doctor's prescriptions (Aurin 423). In fact, morphine was administered for almost any type of affliction in the late 19th century including general pain, gynecological issues in women, as well as the so called "nymphomania," masturbation, and violent hiccups (Courtwright 48). It was also believed for a time that opiates could be used as a contraceptive device for women, leading to a growing number of prostitutes addicted to morphine among the other addicts that included war veterans and bored housewives (Courtwright 60).³³ The ubiquitous nature of morphine was in part due to the inadequacy of other pain medications known to the Western medical field of the 19th century, as Victorian scholar Barry Milligan explains, "An injection of 'morphia solution' became the doctor's silver bullet, and its unprecedented efficacy in cases of severe pain became even more evident as the new technology swept through military theaters in Europe and the United States during the 1860s" (542). By the time Ricardo Gil writes his poem "Morfina," the drug was a well-established cultural symbol of both the advances of Western technologies and the dangers of *fin-de-siècle* decadence. Much like Quiroga, Gil combines science with literary fantasy with the opiate as the poem's thematic center. Specifically the Spanish poet takes the biblical character Job and

³³ The belief that opiates functioned as a prophylactic for women stemmed from the fact that excessive consumption of opiates could cause cessation of menstruation (Courtwright 60).

converts him into a sage critic of the modern age all through the morphine-induced hallucination of the poetic voice taking place in a doctor's office.

Gil's "Morfina" opens with a doctor reluctantly giving the poetic voice—a presumed morphine addict—his last injection: "Será la vez postrera...dije al doctor" (40). In typical paradoxical fashion, the experience of the drug is described with the following consecutive, contradictory statements by the poetic voice: "¡Con qué alegría / sentí correr el bienhechor torrente / por mis arterias que el dolor rompía! / Sé que con este bálsamo se acorta / mi vida; mas ¿qué importa, / doctor, cuando la vida es tormento?" (40). Despite his knowledge of the dangers of the drug, the poet values the momentary pleasure of morphine over a long, and according to him, arduous human existence. The poem continues with a description of the drug experience reminiscent of the tropes associated with the opiate experience: extreme rush of pleasure, pain vanishes, vanishing of anxieties and mental fatigue ("La nerviosa tensión, la calentura / huyeron: lentamente mis pestañas / se entornaron con dulce somnolencia..." [40]) and the individual in a state between wakefulness and sleep fraught with fantastic hallucinations. Like other opiated narratives under the influential shadow of De Quincey's *Confessions*, the visions turn nightmarish for Gil's protagonist. While studying the face of the doctor, "De repente / vi arrugarse su frente, / encanecer la barba prolongada, / de su cráneo desnudo y oscilante / caer hasta rozar el pecho hundido / largas hebras de plata fulgurante, / y en su boca sumida y desdentada / irse trocando, la sonrisa en mueca" (41).³⁴ But from here the poem takes its own direction: the doctor transforms into Job, the Biblical figure characterized for his endurance and indefatigable faith in God. The vision serves as a counterpoint to the poet's desired escape from

³⁴ In Rubén Darío's "La pesadilla de Honorio" (1894) also depicts a protagonist haunted by grotesque faces ("La tiranía del rostro humano") while in a drug-induced fever dream (273).

his anxious modern reality. Within his morphine-induced dream he is forced to confront a figure that endured the most trying hardships yet remained firm with regards to his faith.

The remainder of the poem functions as a critique of the modern man, unwilling to face the challenges and hardships of life, resigned to escapism rather than activism. Job is disgusted by state of mankind at the turn of the century: “¿Sabes lo que sufrí?... No, no lo ignoras. / Pero más sufro al verte...”(42). He proceeds to expose modern man’s weakness in front of hardship and the erroneous attempt to escape the *ennui* of the cosmopolitan lifestyle: “¡Suprimir el dolor!...¡Necia quimera!... / La existencia sin él fuera mezquina. / ¿Suprimiréis la rosa por la espina? Sin el dolor el hombre, ¿qué supiera / de su extirpe divina, / ni cómo pensaría en el mañana?... / Lucha es la vida humana, / lucha siempre será” (43). One facet of Spanish and Spanish American *modernismos* is to challenge the tenants of positivism that placed Spain and its former colonies on the wrong side of progressive societies. Gil presents morphine as a symbol of the dark side of modernity that the hallucinogenic Job exposes to the protagonist: “¡No ha cambiado aún la humana suerte! / ¿De qué ha servido el curso de las horas?” (42). With this statement, he challenges the Western notion of progress, a philosophy pivotal in turn-of-the-century notions of culture and society.

As with the paradoxical nature of the opiate experience itself, the poetic voice’s warnings of the dangers of morphine addiction and the decadent modern lifestyle is only made possible through participation in the same activities that Job warns against. Through this final morphine dose, the poet, as though through divine intervention, is visited by a Biblical hero and given the answer to his decadent search for truth and spirituality: “¿Buscas grandeza?... Búscala en tí mismo” (42). Furthermore, Gil’s Job critiques the materialism and artificiality of the modern age: “Y tú cobarde gimes y en el tedio / que te domina quebrantar tu yugo / intentas sin buscar

otro remedio / que de esas hierbas el amargo jugo / que ha de ser, bien lo sabes, tu verdugo. / Después de tantos siglos ¿eso es todo lo que habéis descubierto?” (42). To conclude, Job combines consumerism and science with the false remedy of morphine. Oddly, the opiate experience of this poem offers a meta-critique bringing the poetic voice to the conclusion that morphine is not the answer to his existential crisis but suggests a return to a more traditional Christian response to life’s meaning.

In line with works such as *La Quimera* (1905) by Emilia Pardo Bazán – which will be discussed in the third chapter of this study – Ricardo Gil’s “Morfina” offers a Christian response to the rising secularism of the turn of the century, attempting to fuse the morality of the Judeo-Christian tradition with the poet’s modern reality. In difference to most canonical *modernista* poetry, the mythical figure employed does not derive from Greece or Rome, but the Old Testament. Like the examples set forth by the figures of the Old and New Testaments, life is described as impossible without a Christ-like (or Job-like in Gil’s “Morfina) suffering and sacrifice, two things that are being avoided by the metropolitan decadents and thus the cause of cultural dissipation or, to use the term preferred by Spanish essayist Ángel Ganivet, *abulia*.³⁵ In another sense, however, the use of the biblical figure of Job may not necessarily be suggesting a traditional view of Judeo-Christian morality. Gil makes no direct mention of God or Christian salvation. Job may simply represent the ideological antithesis of the pleasure-seeking turn-of-the-century culture. And given this culture’s Judeo-Christian background, the reference may inhabit a secular, as well as religious, referential space.

The protagonist of Gil’s “Morfina” ultimately, by seemingly divine guidance, intra-onirically takes control of his morphine habit: “Por un impulso superior movido / con vergüenza

³⁵ The concept of *abulia* and its connection to the literary opiate experience in Spanish narratives will be further explored in Chapter 3.

y con asco / el cristalino frasco / estrellé contra el suelo...” (44). Despite the didactic nature of the work, Gil employs the aesthetics of *Modernismo*. Yet Gil employs this aesthetic to offer his commentary against modern society, lyrically residing within the decadent modernist aesthetic: an affected and indulgent protagonist, paradoxical imagery, critique of positivism, and existential ambiguity, especially in the fantastical final image of the poem.

After returning to reality, the poem ends with the uncertainty of reality, much like the ending of Quiroga’s “El haschich.” Palma’s “Leyendas del haschisch” likewise blurs dream and reality by the protagonist waking and finding himself mindlessly caressing a lock of hair of his deceased lover Leticia’s hair, the woman haunting his drug-induced dreams. Gil’s “Morfina” ends with a perplexing observation from the poem’s protagonist as he bids farewell to his doctor: “Sonriente / su mano me tendió, que estreché ufano, / el doctor; pero no, no fue su mano / sonrosada y caliente / la que oprimí con gratitud vehemente / (Tal vez duraba aún la pesadilla) / Fue la de Job, helada y amarilla” (44). The final image of Gil’s “Morphine” is an ambiguous fusion of the doctor and the biblical figure that haunts the poet’s dream and challenges his concept of reality, morality, and the so-called “progress” brought upon by modernity. Gil blurs the distinction between dream and reality, much like other modernist stories involving opiates. However, Gil’s implementation of the fantastic serves more than to create a suspenseful, ambiguous ending to his poem. The fusion of the doctor and the morphine-induced Job combine and problematize science and literature, knowledge and faith, secularism and religion. Furthermore, the personification of suffering is manifested through a drug that intends to eradicate the experience that Job embodies. The poet’s opiated dream, a vision made possible by science, serves to critique the very science that made the vision possible: it is a morphine

dream that bites the hand that feeds. Conversely, there is still doubt left in the mind of the reader whether the vision of Job was indeed a hallucination caused by morphine.

Opiates, then, become an exemplary image for the *modernista* artist to explore the unknown within the Western scientific community. It is a medical treatment that provides a mystical experience for its user, an experience unique to the individual and, in their estimation, impossible to scientifically control or explain.

Opium is a contradictory physical object that creates abnormal mental states, hallucination, and alternate realities. As in Casal's combination of the modern with the classic and literary morphine with the femme fatale in "La canción de la morfina," Spanish *modernista* Francisco Villaespesa explores similar territories in the following three sonnets on opiates written over a twenty-year period: "Ensueño de opio" (1900), "La musa verde" (1906), and "Morfina" (1920).

Both the experience of opium or morphine and the femme fatale combine pleasure and pain. The images function as a metaphor for the struggles of the *modernista* artist in the face of understanding the modern world beyond the layperson's understanding. "Ensueño de opio" was published in *La copa del rey de Thule* (1900), Villaespesa's first collection of *modernista* poetry. As José María Naharro-Calderón affirms, "Ensueño de opio" serves as a modernist, intertextual poem that at a cursory glance appears to be a mere imitation of previous works on opium but goes beyond its predecessors (2-3). Villaespesa receives inspiration from literature itself — whereas Romantic or Realist works culled material from Nature or society. Villaespesa

immediately connects opium to the literary femme fatale within a reference to a novel by French writer Théophile Gautier in the first stanza: ³⁶

Es otra mujer de Maupín. Es viciosa
y frágil como aquella imagen del placer,
que en la elegancia rítmica de su sonora prosa
nos dibujó la pluma de Teófilo Gautier (130).

Villaespesa mixes the image of an androgynous, possibly bisexual woman as the initial image of the poetic voice's opiated dream, obscuring the subject of the descriptive language. In essence Villaespesa's femme fatale is another literary creation, or rather a co-creation with the help of mind-altering drugs. Additionally, as I will explain later in the chapter, the drug references of "Ensueño de opio" function to mirror the author's experience of the literary process, creating a self-referential *modernista* image.

Essentially the intertextuality of the poem connotes a *modernista* interpretation of the literary process as well as the fuel of literary creativity, similar themes to those discussed in Chapter 1. Additionally, "Ensueño de opio" features other hallmarks of *modernista* poetry: eroticism, ambiguity, paradox, and mythological creatures ("los faunos antiguos") all within a traditional poetic structure: the sonnet. "Ensueño de opio" becomes then a self-reflective poem, an inward gaze on the creative process. Crucial to understanding Villaespesa's poem is the title, which encapsulates his musing on his erotic, artistic process which he likens to an ephemeral, decadent lover. The title of the poem —a work that encapsulates the benchmarks of *modernista*

³⁶ In the novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), the androgynous eponymous character, posing as a man, seduces both Chevalier d'Albert and his mistress, Rosette. Gautier's preface to the novel contains the anti-utilitarian manifesto that helped shape one of the aesthetic/philosophical pillars of Hispanic *Modernismo*: "The only things that are really beautiful are those which have no use; everything that is useful is ugly [...] I belong to those for whom the superfluous is necessary" (23).

poetry of the turn of the century— implies that according to Villaespesa the modern experience, art, love, and perhaps life itself, are versions of an opium dream: extremely pleasurable, simultaneously painful and ultimately fleeting. For Villaespesa the opiate experience is essential in his development of the *modernista* aesthetic through the repetition of the image in his poetic works. Similar themes and images reappear in several of his other poetic works including the two other poems studied in this chapter, as well as in “El poema del opio” (1909), “Espirales de kif” (1910), and “Los sonetos del kif” (1911).

“La musa verde” also connects the opium consumption and eroticism with artistic inspiration. The poem assumes a completely decadent point of view, resigned to an oneiric life of repose and self exploration: “sentimos deseos de quedarnos dormidos / sobre un lecho fragante de flores venenosas” (407). The poet’s god is his literary influence and the door to the beauty and mystery of the world is not prayer and religious meditation, like that of the mystics, but inebriation:

Es tu hora sombría, ¡oh Baudelaire! Fumamos
opio, se bebe ajeno, y, embriagados, soñamos
con tus artificiales paraísos perdidos... (407)

In the new mysticism suggested by *modernista* writers such as Villaespesa or José Asunción Silva, the pathway to enlightenment involved consumption of drugs, primarily opium. In “La musa verde” Villaespesa directs religious zeal, in true *modernista* fashion, to the art itself, as embodied by the work of French decadent poet Charles Baudelaire. This poem is not to be read, with its references to Baudelaire’s *Les paradis artificiels* (1860), as a facile homage to the work

of a decadent predecessor of Francisco Villaespesa.³⁷ The literary references in this poem, as well as other *modernista* poems, function in fact as a transgression and reinvention of literary source materials. Whereas previous movements may have sought inspiration in religious texts or the natural world, “La musa verde” along with the other texts of this chapter look to the literary mark as viable source material for artistic inspiration and creation. These commodities, with the help of proto-globalizing factors of the turn of the twentieth century, were disseminated more easily than ever before. Specifically in Spain, key literary texts from other countries were increasingly translated and made more accessible to a wider audience (Suárez Miramón 106). The same is true for opiates and other medical treatments. Both books (commodities) and opium (medicine) became so readily available that more and more people could buy these items in mass quantities.

To illustrate my point regarding the proliferation of opiates in mass culture during the end of the nineteenth century, I will briefly examine two ads found in Mexican periodicals that reflect the presence of opiates in Spanish American popular culture. The first advertisement is for hypodermic needles for morphine injection from 1877 in the newspaper *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*. This ad, which takes up two thirds of the page, gives detailed instructions and diagrams (Figure 1) on the self-administration of doctor-prescribed morphine. Casa de Carlos Leiter, the company offering the morphine paraphernalia, offers both English and French-style syringes, silver-plated and presented in individual tubes for hygienic purposes (Figure 2). The advertisement also touts the quality of the materials used for the needles and syringe as well as

³⁷ In *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973), Harold Bloom posits that poetic history “is held to be indistinguishable from poetic influence, since strong poets make that history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves” (5). He states that the modern poet is essentially an “inheritor of a melancholy engendered in the mind of Enlightenment by its skepticism of its own double heritage of imaginative wealth, from the ancients and from the Renaissance masters” (8).

the precision doses that can be applied through these particular products. At the time of this ad, the hypodermic technology was barely thirty years in development and the perception of morphine as a major health risk was in its infancy. Considering the amount of ad space taken and the specificity within the ad regarding the correct application of morphine, it can be assumed that use of the alkaloid was prevalent in Mexico during the 1870s.

An ad from 1890 for a cough syrup, Jarabe-Zed, guarantees to alleviate illnesses such as bronchitis, pneumonia, or “insomnios tenaces” (Figure 3). Under the image of a child sleeping peacefully in her folded arms, the ad boasts that “la acción de Codeína pura se encuentra completada por las del Tolú y del Agua de laurel cereza, que hacen del Jarabe del Dr. Zed, el pectoral más enérgico.” Codeine is the second-most abundant alkaloid found in opium, the first being morphine. The term “Codeína pura” is reflective of the idea that the purer forms of the alkaloids were in some way more powerful yet less harmful in terms of addictive qualities. The ad also claims the cough syrup has garnered worldwide acclaim, winning awards in Paris, Vienna and even as far as Calcutta. What’s fascinating about this particular newspaper page is that one column over is a more subtle advertisement (Figure 4) for a Parisian cough syrup that highlights the absence of any opiate, making it safe for children: “Como no se encuentran en estos Pectorales ni opio, ni saleo [*sic*] de opio, así como *Morfina* o *Codeína* se puede recetar sin miedo ninguno a los Niños que padean [*sic*] de Tos o de Pertusis” (4). The presence or non-presence of opium is a very important factor for both of these products as well as their internationality. Opium at this time was steeped in the world marketplace, taking part in the international materialism of the modern West.

This materialism is also unfolded in Villaespesa’s opiated sonnets in relation to critiquing Judeo-Christian spirituality, the transgression of replacing God with art in “La musa verde”

serves two functions: firstly it reflects the increasing reactive secularization of the modern West combined with the *modernista* search for the “God replacement.” Secondly, the inspirational transgression serves to reflect the increasing capitalistic marketplace of the West. If materialism is on the rise, then it is natural for its art to reflect the nature of the market place. Inspiration comes from things that appear in this new marketplace, specifically for Villaespesa commoditized art and medicine. The poet then proceeds to combine these images: opium is the pathway to the art. In an inversion of the positivist assumption that all knowledge derives from reason and the scientific process, Villaespesa responds that scientific advancements (opiates and distilled liquors) serve the mystical needs of the artist.³⁸ “La musa verde” searches for alternate pathways for progress or other truths through removing the morality and negative value of poisoning, inebriation and decadent behavior. *Modernista* writers such as Francisco Villaespesa use the terminologies, taxonomies and judgments of the status quo and invert their meaning in order to challenge established authoritative structures. “La musa verde” operates within the negative space —the “hora sombría”— in order find the modernity that Alejandro Mejías-López describes as always being “somewhere else” (24). This search to redefine art, morality, and existence takes on an important political dimension in Spain as well as Spanish America during the turn of the twentieth century. Finding themselves on the periphery of the modern West, these nations struggled with their identities within the rapidly industrializing nations that once respected and imitated Hispanic culture and art two and a half centuries before (Payne 87). Villapesa’s Spain found itself at the end of its colonial era, losing the last vestiges of the West’s

³⁸ In *Proof: The Science of Booze* (2014) Adam Rogers notes that the discovery of the distillation process eventually led to the modern study of chemistry that eventually led to a wealth of other scientific advancements (6). Likewise, human interest in pain relief and the euphoria provided by opium led to scientific advancements in medicine as well as new technologies such as the hypodermic needle.

first modern empire. Opium then serves as an adept image to explore the social *ennui* or *abulia* perceived by the Spanish cultural elite of the turn of the twentieth century. At the same time of “*el Desastre*,” new developments in art, science, and philosophy in the West created an atmosphere of creative possibilities running concurrent to fears of turn-of-the-century European decadence and the apocalyptic end of modern culture.³⁹ Combined with the rising Spanish American influence in literature —Villaespesa in fact felt a strong connection to the works of Darío, Vargas Vila, and other Spanish American *modernistas*—, Spain found itself in a precarious status culturally, both as a participant and as an outsider with regards to Europe and the West. Opiates, then, function as a transgressive image: a utilitarian medicine repurposed for decadent pleasures and aesthetic pursuits. The experience of taking the drug itself, rife with contradictory physical and mental effects, became a reflection of a transitional, paradoxical cultural period in Spain as well as Spanish America.

Villaespesa further explores the paradoxical nature of morphine within the context of modernity, eroticism, and literary process itself in the poem “Morfina.” The Andalusian poet evokes the femme fatale as the personification of the drug “que adormece el dolor, pero nos mata!” (1529). Villaespesa takes a more traditional point of view in “Morfina” as opposed to Casal’s “La canción de la morfina,” choosing a male poetic voice reflecting on the dualistic nature of an alluring, yet dangerous female. In the first stanza, the poetic voice speaks to morphine directly, echoing the Romantic poet addressing a lover: “¡Con tu belleza lánguida y felina, / tu voz de miel y tu reír de plata, / has sido, para mí, cual la morfina, / que adormece el dolor, pero nos mata!” (1529). The establishment of morphine as a dangerous lover, or femme

³⁹ “*El Desastre*” is a term used in Spain that refers to the Spanish-American War of 1898 in which Spain lost the last remaining vestiges of its former colonial empire: Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.

fatale, allows Villaespesa to explore the pleasure/pain dichotomy of the drug through the rest of the sonnet. The poetic voice continuously describes morphine as a lover that brings him both pleasure and pain: “¡Voló tu aroma , mas quedó tu espina, y aun sangra el corazón, rosa escarlata!;” “Cuanto quedaba en mí de noble y puro / se fue desvaneciendo a tu conjuro!;” “En todo se respira tu veneno” (1529). According to Villaespesa’s poem, morphine’s venom has encapsulated his entire body, corrupting him beyond salvation. Key to this degradation is the benevolence of the protagonist’s impending demise. Despite the drug’s negative effects on his body, the poetic voice sees the aesthetic need for the drugs pain-relieving qualities: “¡Cuando el sopor de la embriaguez termina / nuestra vida es más gris y más ingrata!”(1529). The depression that occurs post-opiate high echoes that of Charles Baudelaire’s prose poem “The Double Room” (1861) in which the protagonist describes returning from his laudanum-induced reverie: “Yes indeed! Time has reappeared; Time reigns as sovereign now. And with that hideous old man the whole diabolical procession has returned, Memories, Regrets, Spasms, Fears, Anguishes, Nightmares, Rages, and Neuroses” (8).⁴⁰ What is prevalent in both poems is a desire to escape the *ennui* of daily existence. In Villaespesa’s “Morphine,” the eponymous lover provides the venue to enlightenment and pleasure despite its morbid side effects. According to Suárez Miramón in her book-length study on Spanish *Modernismo*, “Modernismo y modernistas se aplicaron a otras disciplinas científicas y artísticas, y después a la actitud vital de quienes manifestaban sentimientos de rebeldía y oposición a las normas y dogmas” (156). In this context, the ambivalence to the dangers of drug addiction and the dissatisfaction with reality conform to the Spanish *modernista* movement. Considering this attitude, it is therefore essential that

⁴⁰ Baudelaire also compares the pains and pleasures of opium to that of a relationship with the opposite sex: “Here in this world, narrow but so filled with disgust, only one familiar object cheers me: the vial of laudanum, an old and terrifying friend, and like all woman friends, alas! Fertile in caresses and betrayals” (7-8).

scholarship recognize the role of opium and morphine within the Spanish and Spanish American *modernismos* as essential components in the development of the movements' aesthetic.

Recreational use of drugs in literature hence is a iconoclastic means of repurposing representations of "Progress" and turn-of-the-century status quo politics. In a similar fashion to Gil's "Morphine," Villaespesa's poem transforms a discovery of modern medicine into a literary trope, repurposing the advances of the positivist philosophy by inverting scientific advance as an aesthetic paradox.

Writers such as Villaespesa and Julián del Casal take a medical breakthrough and convert it into something completely literary. For these writers, morphine is the femme fatale, a mythological harbinger of both extreme pleasure, unimaginable pain and certain death. For other writers like Quiroga and Gil, opiates are viewed as a virtual crossroads where science and aesthetics meet. Both styles explore the fantastic and esoteric nature of a medical breakthrough.

In its setting and general mood, Santiago Rusiñol's "La casa del silenci" echoes the apocalyptic decadence of Edgar Allan Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher" (1839). In both short stories, the horrors of decay and death on the part of the reader are met with an eerie ambivalence on the part of the residents of their respective decrepit domiciles. Both narratives also employ the image of opiates to highlight the decadence of their characters. Poe's protagonist references his debilitating opium habit as he approaches the House of Usher, foreshadowing the malaise and ambivalence to death discovered within the walls of the mansion of the once powerful family. In difference to Poe's addicted protagonist, the patients of Rusiñol's sanitarium, known as the "*casa de silenci*" [house of silence], are institutionally administered morphine, indifferent to the decay and death that surrounds them as well as the same process that is taking place within their own bodies. Rusiñol employs the opiated patients of the "*casa de silenci*" to

critique the social landscape of Catalanian and Spanish society within the *modernista*, decadent aesthetic. Morphine becomes a metaphor for the general malaise and lack of will perceived by many intellectuals as a societal illness afflicting Spain, a disease termed *abulia* by Ángel Ganivet in the essay *Idearium español* (1897). The result is an expertly crafted fusion of *modernista* aesthetic with a commentary on the decadent culture of Spain during the turn of the century. Ambiguous in its critique yet replete with dark, decadent imagery of a heavily medicated society, Rusiñol's "La casa del silenci" paints a portrait of a society living with a singular purpose: waiting for the arrival of their own death.

Rusiñol's patients of the "casa del silenci" live a life of unquenchable desire and constant want: "els malalts de la morfina sosegats pel desespero d'un afany que no han pogut satisfer, d'una sed que no s'apaga, d'una platge que no arriba, I patint á totes hores l'anyorament del repós, I les ansies d'una calma somniada" (Rusiñol 103).⁴¹ In this sense, a society of morphine addicts, representing the Spaniards of the modern age, paradoxically alleviate themselves by the very source of their misery, spinning in a stationary wheel of pleasure and pain. Suárez Miramón defines Spanish modernism in part by an intense pessimism, linked to the "*Desastre*" of 1898 (17-18). Apart from the Romantic tendency to glorify the opiate experience in the artistic/creative context, Rusiñol employs the image of morphine as a source of public malaise, a symbol of Spain's frustrated march towards modernity. Important to this concept of national lack of will (*abulia*) is for Rusiñol the acknowledgement of the problem without seeking the solution. In "Casa de silenci," the patients are fully aware of their plight yet have resigned to live only to continue with the artificial calm of the morphine injection: "Comprenien els malats, qu'aquelles

⁴¹ "the morphine addicts soothed by despair and a desire that they have not been able to satisfy, a thirst unquenched, a respite that never comes and suffering at all hours the longing for rest, and the want of a dreamed calm."

hores de calma pero de calma enganyadora de la casa del silenci, les donaba la Morfina...que era Ella, la que apagave la vida” (Rusiñol 106).⁴² However, the existential search in Rusiñol’s narrative is passive, resulting in the decay of the individual and the sanitarium itself, symbolizing the decadence of the national body.

Spaniards received the military defeat in the Spanish American War with a general sense of ambivalence and pessimism regarding the future of the nation. This pessimism —primarily shared by Spanish intellectuals— was rooted in Spain’s lack of progress and the maintenance of the status quo (Suárez Miramón 40). However, this pessimism, in the Catalanian and Basque context, also served as a critique of the culture of power, thus elevating these minority communities above their southern neighbors. For example, in Pío Baroja’s *El árbol de la ciencia* (1911), Andrés Hurtado remarks that the war effort against the US and Cuba feels like a waste of energy and Hurtado along with his other friends react to the defeat with indifference (254). Along with the general Spanish sentiments at the time, Alfredo Sosa-Velasco also attributes Baroja’s negative view of Spanish society to his opinions of Basque superiority over Castilian culture (66). According to Suárez Miramón, “Además de la prensa nacional, la catalanista y la vasca, aunque con reducida tirada, tuvo también influencia en la formación de la conciencia nacionalista que se fue desarrollando paralelamente al sentido del patriotismo y se manifestó con más fuerza tras el 98” (32). Considering that “La casa de silenci” was originally written in Catalanian, for a Catalanian literary magazine and for a Catalanian audience, Rusiñol appears to have a similar pessimism regarding Castilian indifference and acceptance of defeat and the espousal of the status quo. Constant pleasure-seeking is presented as self-destructiveness, yet is it

⁴² “The patients knew, that those times of calm, albeit the deceptive calm of the silent house, was given to them by Morphine...that it was Her, the one that was ending their lives.”

met with a vague acceptance, a general resignation to the pleasurable, yet destructive qualities of opiate addiction:

El balsém suicida, el nectar del bé i del mal, l'ensopiment de la vida am les ansies del no viure, ia sabiem els malalts que sols hi había un esperit que tingues aquell poder; l'esperit de la Morfina; aquell esperit aïmat com la sombra del repós, i crudel com un torment que fá somniar en l'agonía; qu'apaga la sed del cor i malaheix consolant-lo; qu'adorm les fibres del cós i desperta les de l'ánima; d'aquella hermosa Morfina, Sirena de veu melosa, Fada del amor al somni, Vetlladora de la pau, i dolça visió del repós; d'aquella infame Morfina, cortesana de la mort, Guardadora del torment, Font de sed, i falsa i traidora amiga am llavis de tentació i boca am bava de vípera, i cor am sang de pantera” (Rusiñol 106).⁴³

Politically, the implementation of this paradox simultaneously critiques the status quo while opening the possibilities for minority discourses within the monolith of Castilian hegemony. With the fusion of binary forces such as pleasure and pain, life and death, the individual and the national body, Rusiñol simultaneously critiques the status quo while fusing the modern experience across cultural boundaries. Morphine, the treacherous friend, like the experience of modernity, is a combination of the benefactors of progress (the colonizers) as well as the victims of said progress (the colonized). “La casa de silenci” utilizes the image of morphine to

⁴³ “The suicide balsam, the nectar of good and evil, the sleepiness of life with the desire to not live, the sick already knew that there is only one spirit beloved like the shadow of repose and cruel like the storm that makes one dream in agony; that quenches the heart’s thirst and damns it while comforting it; that puts to sleep the sinew of the body and wakens that of the soul; the spirit of that beautiful Morphine, Siren with the gentle voice, fairy of the dreamy love, guard of peace and the sweet vision of repose; of that infamous Morphine, courtesan of death, Guard of torment, Fountain of thirst, false and treacherous friend with tempting lips, and a mouth with the drool of a viper, and a heart with the blood of the panther.”

concurrently problematize an outdated binary ontology through paradox, and reinforced by his Catalanian heritage: Spanish though not Castilian, as modern as it is un-modern.

Spain and Spanish America experienced a similar dual role with regards to the West at the turn of the century and the modernization process. Despite being steeped in the Western tradition, participation in the Western concept of modernity and progress for these countries became elusive with regards to nations such as England, Germany, and later the United States. In part to economic and political conditions at the time, combined with a division among traditional Catholic states and Protestant nations, Spain and Spanish America were on the margins of what was considered progressive and modern. Scholars have recently argued for the reexamination of the Spanish American countries as modern nations, apparent through the rise of democratic governments, European migration en masse to countries such as Argentina, and the exceptional literature developed in the region. Spain, on the other hand, is still viewed through a disparaging lens as a pathetic former empire running on its last legs in a race no longer relevant.

Nevertheless, the Hispanic *modernistas* created works reflecting regional as well as global concerns regarding self, society and the role of the artist. The exploration of the liminal spaces of human consciousness, spurred on by a rejection of dogmatic positivist philosophy created works that not only challenged author and reader as individuals to question the binary forces that defined their world but it also reflected the Spanish-speaking world position at the frontier regions of modernity: neither completely participatory or completely excluded from the Western concept of progress. With this in mind, the implementation of opium and morphine as a literary image serves the goals of the Hispanic *modernistas*, a paradoxical “artificial paradise” that serves the self-reflexive purposes of the artist while exploring other forms of reality. The opiate experience functions outside of the binary categories such as asleep/awake or alive/dead. As

Cathy Jrade affirms in her book *Modernismo Modernity and the Development of Spanish American Literature* (1998), “as alienation and existential dread block access to the desired transcendental vision of universal perfection, *modernism* moves away from formal beauty to a more experimental conception of art” (90). Opiates, as employed by Spanish American as well as Spanish *modernistas*, operate on Jrade’s description of the Spanish American *modernista* project. The literary opiate high serves as a means to travel unexplored avenues of existence and artistic creation as well as presenting a decadent, and at times, shocking representation of beauty. Opiates represent how true alienist experience produces in the individual a frustrating experience that combines the transcendence of escaping the body and the inability to describe or share the experience with others. This concept relates to the general *modernista* trope of being misunderstood despite the secret knowledge that explains the mysteries of human existence. In this manner, opium and morphine serve as an essential image of the Spanish and Spanish American *modernista* aesthetic encapsulating the hope, frustration and vision of the process towards modernity and the artists’ search for a transcendent, artistic reality that encapsulates all that is beautiful and true.

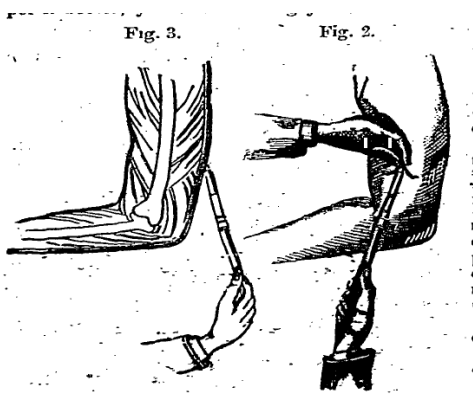


Figure 1: Advertisement for hypodermic needles. *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* (1877).

ESTAS JERINGAS SE ENCUENTRAN DE VENTA	
EN LA CASA DE CARLOS LEITER.	
— MEXICO. —	
CALLEJON DE SANTA CLARA NUMERO 7.	
La primera en	\$ 12 00
La segunda en	7 50
HAY TAMBIEN:	
Jeringas de Pravaz inglesas, con dos agujas, todo montado en plata	8 00
Idem francesas, con tres agujas, todo montado en plata, en cajitas	9 00
Las mismas, idem idem, en tubos metálicos para estúches...	10 00

Figure 2: Pricing for morphine syringes. *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* (1877).

PARIS
20 et 22, rue Drouot, y en las Farmacias de esta

★ Medallas de ORO en Paris en Niza ★



★ Medallas de ORO en Viena en Calcuta ★

JARABE - ZED
(Codeína, Tolú, etc.)

La acción de la Codeína pura se encuentra completada por las del Tolú y del Agua de laurel cereza, que hacen del JARABE del Dr ZED, el pectoral mas enérgico en todos los casos de:

BRONQUITIS, TOS NERVIOSA, RESFRIADOS, PULMONIAS, COQUELUCES
CATARROS, INSOMNIOS TENACES, etc.

Depósito en Mexico: Drogueria de FARINA y SAUNDERS; Drogueria de JULIO LABADIE.

Figure 3: Advertisement for “Jarabe-Zed.” *La Patria de México* (1890).

RESFRIADOS, BRONQUITIS

Irritación del Pecho y de la Garganta

Contra estas afecciones, la PASTA Pectoral y el JARABE de HAFÉ de DELANGRENIER, de PARIS, disfrutan de una eficacia cierta comprobada por los miembros de la Academia de Medicina de Francia. Como no se encuentran en estos Pectorales ni opio, ni saeco de opio, así como Morfina o Codeína se pueden recetar sin miedo ninguno á los Niños que padecen de Tos ó de Pertusis.

Depósitos en todas las Farmacias del Mundo entero.

Figure 4: Advertisement for a non-opiated cough syrup. *La Patria de México* (1890)

CHAPTER 3

Opiates in the Hispanic Anti-Dandy Narrative

“Ser morfinómano equivale a situarse al borde de un precipicio en cuyo fondo aguardan los lodos de todas las miserias humanas” –Dr. César Juarros

In the book chapter “A Brief Syphilography of Nineteenth-Century Latin America,” Juan Carlos González Espitia remarks that syphilis was a disease of the cosmopolitan, coexisting with and in some way defining the Latin American experience of modernization (265). The disease is presumed to make its first appearance in Europe upon the return of Columbus during his first voyage, an early negative by-product during what Alejandro Mejías-López terms the first stage of modernity, immediately abolishing the realization of utopian societies in the “New World”. A little over three centuries later, as González Espitia affirms, “the unavoidable presence of syphilis during the nineteenth century acted as a reminder of the unproductive materials that were also part of the national makeup” (266). Morphinism, like syphilis, was directly linked to cosmopolitan culture. Ironically, smoking opium would, by the beginning of the twentieth century, conversely be associated with all things non-modern despite coming from the same poppy pod as morphine. The difference between morphinism and syphilis, however, was the ability of Spanish and Spanish American intellectuals to distance their culture from the disease’s geographic origin. Even for Spaniards, it was possible to blame morphine addicts on Northern European culture. The literatures of *morfínomanía*, therefore, have protagonists or ancillary

characters that either are foreign to the author's homeland or travel to the sites of degeneration and morphinism. These sites are almost exclusively Northern European, typically located in England or France. In the Spanish context, there may be an additional voyage or genealogical connection to the New World that makes the writers' characters susceptible to deviant behavior and addiction.

This chapter will analyze Spanish and Spanish American texts that critique either the *modernista* mission or the *afrancesamiento* of the bourgeois metropolitan society. These works were contemporary to the *modernista* movement but are often ignored by academia since they operate outside of sanctioned literary concepts. The Spanish texts follow Nordau's concept of degeneration as well as the concept of *abulia* and how these discourses are employed in the critique of metropolitan and Northern European culture whereas the Latin American texts serve as a cautionary narrative against —using Doris Sommer's terminology— because of their non-foundational behavior. Mariano Siskind writes that with regards to Spanish American *modernismo*, “the goal is to be, not original, but modern, and by any means necessary, and this means acknowledging the productive role that creative imitations, translations, appropriations, and resignifications have for marginal cultures” (213).⁴⁴ According to the Spanish American texts of this chapter, these “resignifications” serve as a dangerous component to their respective countries' modernizing culture. Siskind also states that for some contemporary scholars of late nineteenth century, “Latin American culture was inherently hybrid and thus could never host the genius of an original modern because that cultural particularity would always already be ‘inoculated’ and corrupted by the presence of ‘elementos extraños’ —and indeed ‘raros’” (210). The authors studied in this chapter seem to be highly aware of this perception, thus creating

⁴⁴ For more on the issue of modernity and individuality in the metropolitan space, see “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903) by George Simmel.

narratives that lash out against a perceived over-abundance of foreign influence somehow interfering with the nations march toward modernization and a true national identity. Similarly in the Spanish context, French influence plays a large role in the depictions of decadent Spanish behavior. In the three Spanish novels broached in this chapter, Spanish America serves as another problematic site of cultural infection, another cause of delay regarding Spanish progress.

As a reaction to the *modernista* embrace of the literature deemed degenerate, there are several works that critique the decadent/dandy culture made popular in Northern Europe during the end of the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ More socially-conservative writers, usually confined outside of the literary canon and ignored or reviled by modern scholars, chose to align their narratives with the writings of social critics such as Max Nordau (1849-1923) and Ángel Ganivet (1865-1898) in writing their own critiques of Hispanic decadent and dandy literary types. These works sought to steer society away from the decadent male dandy in favor of a more traditional, masculine archetype. Furthermore, this dandy figure has a heritage or a negative influence from foreign nations. At the fulcrum of all the narratives studied in this chapter is the use or abuse of opiates. Drug use is directly linked to social ills and the dangerous consequences of addiction for the individual were seen to have a ripple effect on society as a whole. In a Uruguayan radio broadcast on the dangers of various drugs aired in 1935, Argente Peragini concludes:

Si realmente queremos una patria grande, fecunda, poderosa y rica; si anhelamos la libertad del ciudadano en su faz espiritual y moral, la libertad bien entendida, libertad dentro del orden y del respeto a las leyes y sobre todo la libertad económica, ya es difícil en realidad obtener la completa libertad del espíritu si no se acompaña de la libertad material; luchemos por el bien de la salud pública, evitando al ciudadano, a la sociedad,

⁴⁵ For more on the image of the French dandy, see *Dandyism in the Age of Revolution* by Elizabeth Amann (2015).

al estado cuantiosas erogaciones, elevando el nivel intelectual y moral de la nación, inculcando en la juventud el amor a las sanas alegrías, a los placeres naturales, a los deportes en sus diferentes manifestaciones, logrando desviarlas de las tabernas, de los centros de corrupción, de los antros del vicio, de la nefasta influencia de las toxicomanías y si la propaganda no diera los resultados que anhelamos y si las leyes fueran burladas, deberá establecerse una nueva legislación, aun cuando lleguen a herirse ciertos principios de libertad, considerados intangibles por teorías doctrinarias, por muy respetables que sean (98-99).

The poisoned individual becomes a reflection of a poisoned society. Likewise, the addict is viewed as a symptom of a larger, perceived national problem that suggests an unbridled acceptance of the novelty of modernity and cosmopolitan world culture. The works of this chapter reveal an overwhelming uneasiness with the rapid changes occurring at the turn of the twentieth century. The scapegoat, which is often the case, is signaled upon outside factors, specifically foreign cultures that have negatively affected the harmonious —and imagined— identities of these nations. These outside influences are contagions coursing through the veins of the national body. Addicted to consumerism (a trait linked to Northern Europe and the US), some Spanish and Spanish American writers reacted against the international market beating down the doors of the modernizing Hispanic metropolis.

I will analyze the departure from the *modernista* aesthetic as evinced in writers during the first few decades of the 20th century. These works will provide a counterpoint to the *modernista* discourse as well as demonstrate the limitations of defining literary movements to particular countries and finite time periods. However, it will be important to study the critique of these novels with regards to the decadent dandy stereotypes and the fears of foreign influence in Spain

and Spanish America. These concerns will be further explored in Chapter 4 with a different foreign influence, namely East Asia, primarily China. In both of these chapters, the opiate image transitions from a more personal, aesthetic experience to a concern regarding the threat to the well-being of the national body. The most developed and nuanced novel of this chapter is *La Quimera* by Emilia Pardo Bazán (1851-1921). Whereas the author does critique modern/decadent society, her work serves as not simply a rejection of the *modernista* project, but as reconciliation between what she saw as positive/progressive aspects of the movement and her opinions on the importance of faith in lifestyle and literature.

This chapter will look at five novels and one short story. The narratives of this chapter use opium as a metaphor for national illness. In Spanish novels such as already mentioned Pardo Bazán's *La Quimera* (1905) and José Más's (1885-1941) *Los sueños de un morfinómano* (1921), the individual morphine addiction is connected to Ángel Ganivet's concept of national *abulia*, or the extreme weakening of the will (123). This concept is connected to an excessive dependence on foreign philosophical and cultural influence. Both Pardo Bazán and Más use morphine as a metaphor of poisonous foreign influence. Morphine addiction at the time was associated with the upper crust of French society, especially among women. The third Spanish novel studied in this chapter is *El marqués de la Quimera* (1919) by Luis Antón del Olmet (1866-1923); a novel that, like *La Quimera*, attempts to bring honor and prestige back to society through a renaissance of traditional Spanish values.

The Peruvian novel *Duque* (1934) by José Diez-Canseco (1904-1949) is a harsh criticism of the European/dandy influence in South American culture. The protagonist Teddy Crownchield Soto Menor has recently returned from studying in London and has been "infected" by a biracial/Northern European heritage as well as the dandy lifestyle; never working, trotting from

one social even to the other, and engaging in sexually deviant behavior.⁴⁶ The crux of the novel centers on a homosexual experience between Teddy and his soon-to-be father-in-law.⁴⁷ At this moment of crisis, Teddy seeks solace in an opium den in the dark alleyways of Lima. This novel will provide a clear description of a dandy, a stereotype to be analyzed through contrast with its European counterpart within the Spanish American context. Central to the crisis of the novel is the opiate experience; Teddy does not use opium in order to explore his conscious but rather to forget committing a social taboo. His fiancé finds out about the encounter resulting in Teddy's self-exile to Argentina. A companion to this story is "Ganimedes" (1928) by Félix M. Pelayo (1902-1992). Echoing the introduction of *De sobremesa*, the reader enters an ornate room, filled with luxuries of both Europe and the Orient. Permeating the room is the smoke of the opiated cigarette of one of the two men that proceed to have a conversation. One of the men (the one smoking opium) professes his love to the other while his fiancé is in earshot of the confession. Horrified, she runs out of the house, with her soon-to-be husband chasing after her. The Argentine novel *El morfinómano y la divorciada* (1938) by Francisco Gicca (1872-19XX) is also concerned with the outside influence of dandyism affecting the traditional social structure of the country. These three narratives warn their readers against the poisonous influence of the European metropolis; leading the creole protagonists towards substance abuse, unproductive professional lifestyles, and sexual perversion. These works serve the conservative foundational

⁴⁶ It is worth noting that Teddy's maternal last name is a parody of the last name Sotomayor, a name often associated with upper class individuals partially since it originated as a surname of land-owning individuals. The Spanish word *soto* refers to a grove of trees. The last name Soto Menor, therefore, suggests the inferiority of Teddy's genealogy.

⁴⁷ For more on homosexual representations in nineteenth century literature see *Between Men* (1985) by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. In 2010, Ana Peluffo and Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado compiled essays on masculinities in nineteenth century Latin American Literature titled *Entre hombres*.

fiction project. Fundamental to the anti-foundational, degenerative behavior of these protagonists is the use of opiates.

In addition to the literary primary works, Ángel Ganivet's *Idearium español* provides a contemporary theoretical basis of the Spanish works with its notion of *abulia* and the perceived danger of foreign influence. It also will be necessary to explore these literary works through twentieth-century medical publications in order to understand the contemporary medical opinion of opiates for the writers studied in this chapter. One of these viewpoints is Perigini's aforementioned broadcast transcript *Estupefacientes y toxicomanías* (1935),⁴⁸ as well as medical essays on the treatment and cause of morphine addiction by Spanish psychiatrist Dr. César Juarros y Ortega (1879-1942).

Before delving into the Hispanic novel in question, it is important to define the cultural figure of the dandy during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The dandy was a sexually androgynous character, its origin attributed to Englishman Beau Brummell, viewed by mainstream society as lacking or intentionally subverting masculinity associated with traditional male social/sexual roles (Feldman 1-2). According to Laura Spagnoli, in French morphine narratives of the late nineteenth century, morphine was thought to invert gendered behavioral characteristics: men would become impotent and women turned into nymphomaniacs (Spagnoli 62). In Dr. Peragini's broadcast on addictions, he makes a similar claim regarding the lascivious nature of the female morphine addict: "La mujer morfinómana pierde toda su dignidad y el pudor; cuando necesita el alcaloide no razona más y su inmoralidad se manifiesta hasta el extremo de entregarse a cualquier hombre por un poco de morfina" (90). Peragini also notes that for men and women morphine addiction will eventually lead to sexual ineffectiveness:

⁴⁸ This broadcast was a production by "La Comisión de Defensa Contra las Toxicomanías y Control del Tráfico de los Estupefacientes" of Uruguay.

el deseo sensual desaparece y la impotencia es absoluta. Según Levinstein, después de un cierto tiempo, se hace definitiva por la atrofia testicular, y el mismo autor ha constatado en las mujeres la atrofia de los senos, del útero y de los ovarios, lo cual trae como consecuencia la esterilidad. Sin embargo las mujeres, en los primeros períodos, pueden tener hijos, pero nacen débiles y generalmente mueren muy pequeños y son congenitalmente morfinómanos; muchas veces, para calmarlos, hay necesidad de inyectarles morfina" (92).

It is no surprise that discourses on morphine addiction in relation to concerns of masculine identities and personal and national progress highlight the effeminate nature of taking the drug and the possibilities of impotence and sterility due to the illness. What makes morphinism and opiate addiction unique to other discourses on disease is that the infection or contraction of the disease is self-administered or self-inflicted, connoting further assumptions of the inherent moral weakness of the diseased individual. Morphinism in Hispanic texts were not only a representation of the dangers of drug addiction to society but also a representation of the dangers of interest in decadent French popular culture that had been infiltrating Spanish and Spanish American culture and reached its zenith with the advent of the Symbolist and Parnassian-inspired *modernista* literary movement.

In the French morphine novels, the drug was a representation of *fin de siècle* fears of social upheaval. Narcotics had the power to turn the rich into haggard, destitute beggars devoid of morality or restraint (Spagnoli 63). Laura Spagnoli concludes that these French morphine narratives represent a general ambivalence to morphine addiction when restricted to the cultural elite and when under control and not accessible to the lower classes poses no threat to French society:

In exploiting the multiple meaning of fashion as a term that evokes decadent elitism as much as the imagined erosion of difference in mass culture, the morphine narrative recounts a dual tale of degeneration and democratization. The latter proves the more menacing idea subtending the representation of morphine addiction implicitly—and strangely—calls for the preservation of the very differences cherished by the pathologized decadent subject, whose oppositional self-definition depends on them. True to its chemistry, fictional morphine transforms from a miracle drug to a fatal poison only in excess—that is, only in so far as it exceeds the realm of high fashion. Restricted to the elite, it might cure the *fin de siècle*'s ills (68-69).

Like the French examples of the late nineteenth century, Hispanic morphine narratives link the drug to the leisure class of Spain's northern neighbor. In contrast to Spagnoli's conclusions, however, the Spanish and Spanish American narratives suggest their higher classes have no capacity for elite *fin de siècle* decadent behavior. The imitation of the French ruling class results in the fall of the elite Spanish class as well as the decadence of the Spanish American *criollo*. The relative ambivalence of the French morphine narrative is not found in these Hispanic narratives since the primary concern of the Hispanic texts is the definition or reevaluation of national identity separate from the Northern European influence. Furthermore, as noted in the essays on Spanish American and Spanish rejuvenation—José Enrique Rodo's *Ariel* and Ganivet's *Idearium español*—success in the Hispanic world is dependent on a spiritual awakening, moving away from the materialism of Europe and the United States. Substance abuse is a symptom of materialism as well as the fact that materialism and other decadent behavior is a result of substance abuse, or as Ganivet put it in *Idearium*, “no luchan realmente porque la idea triunfe; luchan porque la idea exige una forma exterior en que hacerse visible, y a falta de formas

positivas o creadoras aceptan las negativas o destructoras” (133). This connection between the ideas of Spanish decadence, lack of progress and substance abuse—a symbol of extreme consumerism—becomes prevalent in the opiate narratives of this chapter, especially those from the Iberian Peninsula.

In *La Quimera*, Spanish author Emilia Pardo Bazán developed her concept of the revision of the modernist artist through her pseudo-dandy protagonist Silvio Lago. Silvio Lago’s odyssey through the artistic world of Spain and France serve to define Pardo Bazán’s vision of her ideal fusion of modern aesthetics with the traditions and morals of Catholicism. Central to Lago’s artistic/philosophical search are the various romantic encounters with three types of women: the overly Romantic female, the successful moderate artist, and the decadent femme fatale. Espina Porcel, a secret morphine addict, seduces Silvio to live with her and her husband in France, initiating Silvio’s ultimate demise. The three women represent different lifestyle paths for the protagonist. Clara is the romantic archetype, a beautiful woman with anxiety issues that suffers from inexplicable longing. After a fraught love affair with Silvio, she enters a convent. Pardo Bazán suggests through Clara that the archetypal romantic, chaste relationship is ultimately futile between Silvio and Clara. Minia, representing an idealized artistic trajectory of the author herself, represents a unique balance of beauty, intelligence and artistic success often unseen in a woman in literature. She is a successful composer, and advises and consults with Silvio regarding his own artistic path, vision and personal life throughout the novel. Espina Porcel is the other counter-exemplar representing the degenerative, cosmopolitan behavior often associated with French Decadents. Silvio’s involvement with Espina leads him away from Spain, spending a period of time in France, living with her and Valdivia. Eventually Silvio discovers

Minia's increasing addiction to morphine, a discovery that is heavily foreshadowed and sends the protagonist fleeing from the decadent French aesthetic back to his roots in Spain.

Pardo Bazán employs a secondary character to serve as a warning to her protagonist Silvio Lago, who spends the breadth of the novel in search of reconciliation between the modernizing world and his Spanish nature. From Espina Porcel's example, foreign blood, interest in French culture and decadent behavior leads to inactivity and degenerative behavior, culminating in the track-marked arm discovered by Lago before fleeing from France to return home. Despite avoiding the temptation offered by morphine, Silvio Lago succumbs to the artist's disease: tuberculosis. Despite his illness, he ultimately recommits himself to the Catholic Church before his death, fusing the modern life of the artist with Spanish tradition or as Mayoral claims, *La Quimera* functions as Pardo Bazán's vindication of the freedom of the artist (15).

As is commonly known, Emilia Pardo Bazán is a fundamental Spanish literary figure in part due to her introducing of Naturalism and the Russian novelistic aesthetic to the Iberian Peninsula. Daniel S. Whitaker also distinguishes Pardo Bazán for her literary innovations as well. She is the first Spanish writer to problematize incest and drug use through fiction (Whitaker 13). In the novel, the figure of the mythic Chimera serves as a symbol of Silvio's ambition as an artist and his desires to be historically and culturally relevant. The artist declares, "Triunfar o morir! Mi Quimera es esa, y excepto mi Quimera... ¿Qué me importa el mundo?" (172). According to Daniel S. Whitaker, through the novel, Pardo Bazán "criticaba lo que ella consideraba las implicaciones sociales negativas de la decadencia, mientras que aceptaba las nuevas direcciones artísticas del movimiento; en cierta medida, *La Quimera* representa los ángulos negativos y positivos de la decadencia. Para corregir los aspectos sociales negativos en una sociedad, Doña Emilia propone una solución espiritual al problema de la decadencia en el *fin*

de siècle” (30). Silvio’s passion and ambition are directionless, and he relies on inspiration and advice from the women that he comes in contact with along the way. His true inspiration isn’t discovered until he is already dying from tuberculosis: the Catholic faith. As affirmed by Whitaker and other critics, Pardo Bazán’s *La Quimera* is both an embracing and a critique of turn-of-the-century Spanish modernism. The novel takes part in the *modernista* agenda while simultaneously incorporating a wealth of other genres and literary styles, including Pardo Bazán’s naturalistic foundation. For this study, the most important facet of the novel is Silvio’s relationship with Espina Porcel and his discovery of her morphine addiction.

Silvio’s vision for his artistic career reflects a naïve vision, more informed by aphorisms and fiction than by reality. Throughout the novel, there are several allusions to the *modernista* “art for art’s sake” aesthetic agenda. Early in the novel Silvio claims “no busco la riqueza por la riqueza” (153) and then later criticizes Valdivia’s art and book collecting by remarking, “A mí esto me parece recoger por recoger. No veo valor artístico” (342). His lack of humility aids in his demise. Even near the end of the novel, he has grandiose a rags-to-riches plan for his entrée in the European artistic community: “Quiero empezar por esclavo y acabar por rey” (460). The voice of tempered reality in the novel is that of Minia. She guides Silvio through his various crises regarding his career as well as his relationships with Clara and Espina. Silvio continuously turns to her for advice and she functions as a sounding board for his ever-evolving philosophies on the direction of his art career. Minia challenges Silvio’s relationship with Clara, noting that he is less enamored by the individual but more by her ability to somehow save him from his own transgressions: “La idea de Clara no representa para usted solamente la libertad económica; representaba algo superior: el arreglo de su conducta, su moralidad” (257). Ultimately, Clara proves to be empty of substance, only a gorgeous face, only a romantic ideal. Espina represents

the other end of the spectrum, the decadent ideal, being the anti exemplar woman touted by generations of Western literature. Ultimately, neither of these women serves the Galician/Spanish artistic agenda, as Silvio's relationships with both characters disintegrate. Minia, a literary representation of Pardo Bazán, seems to be the feminine representation of the ideal artist: successful, intelligent, uncompromising, and devoted to Spanish cultural and religious traditions (Mayoral 16). She is the constant in Silvio's tumultuous journey for artistic authenticity.

Minia and Silvio's friendship is strained through the artist's involvement with Espina Porcel, the femme fatale of Mexican and Andalusian descent. She is an embodiment of decadent illness, as well as her constant companion Valdivia, who on several occasions is described as a sickly individual. Espina's geographic origins, both being south of the "civilized" Western world, indicate to the turn-of-the-century reader her susceptibility to destructive behavior. Likewise, Silvio confesses his own illness to Minia, although his is more metaphysical, representing the anxious, tortured artist common in the *modernista* movement: "Mi enfermedad es la duda. Dudo de lo que siempre creí. Reniego, a pesar mío, de mi ideal estético" (351). Through his doubt, he displays a willing openness to experimentation and existential meandering, similarly depicted half a decade later through Andrés Hurtado's philosophical crises in Pío Baroja's *El árbol de la ciencia* (1911). But Silvio Lago's experimentation does lead him down a dark path. He discusses with Minia his interest in Espina's nihilistic tendencies: "me deleito en la amoralidad de Espina" (359), but Minia is wary of Espina's character. Silvio becomes obsessed with this decadent character, leading him to follow her and Valdivia to Paris, the locus of European decadentism and Silvio's realization of the true nature of that lifestyle. Minia, in a conversation with Silvio, calls Espina a vampire, a contemporary symbol of

decadence and the representation of the fears of outsiders, an image immortalized in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).⁴⁹ In Espina, Pardo Bazán creates an argument against the extreme assimilation of French culture by the Spanish national body. Silvio Lago moves in with Espina and her partner in Paris and this is the moment in which it is revealed that Espina—whose name in Spanish can translate to spine, thorn or colloquially as a suspicion or doubt and most likely is a reference to the hypodermic needle—is a secret morphine addict.

Pardo Bazán hints at something more to Espina's *Laissez-faire* philosophy and her “actitud demasiado serena” (396). The author slowly reveals that Espina's lax nature is thanks to opiates: “Lanzando un ah! gracioso, se tendía en el diván a fumar sus cigarrillos saturados de opio, que la calmaban y la sumían en adormilado bienestar” (396). The big reveal comes near the end of Silvio's first stay in France. With Valdivia out of the picture due to another illness, Silvio can no longer control his desires and throws himself upon Espina, but quickly recoils in abject horror:

Sobre el nítido torso, donde la línea de la espalda se inflexiona tan graciosamente destacándose encima de nacaradas tersuras y morbideces de raso, había divisado Silvio algo horrendo...que causaba estremecimiento y asco. ¡Allí estaba la fatalidad a que se refería Valdivia, el estigma del vicio maniático, la señal de las picaduras de la morfina! (423).

His discovery of the numerous track marks on Espina Porcel's body sends the narrator into a litany of epithets for morphine addiction: “la insaciabilidad, el tedio, tal vez el ensueño nunca

⁴⁹ For deeper analysis on the connection between degeneration, immigration and the image of the vampire in *Dracula*, see Susan Ziegers Chapter “Un-death and Bare Life: Addiction and Eugenics in *Dracula* and *The Blood of the Vampire*” in her book *Inventing the Addict: Drugs, Race, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century British and American Literature*. I will further explore the connection between opiates and vampirism in Chapter 4, as it relates to the turn-of-the-century fears of immigrants and their threat to national identity and social cohesion.

realizado, la enfermedad de toda una generación, el lento suicidio... droga de muerte” (424). It is in this moment, according to the narrator, that Silvio sees her true, nefarious nature, represented by a “negra hinchazón,” the infected track mark. The narrator continues to describe the enslavement of addiction meanwhile pointing out Lago’s ignorance regarding the dangers of the alkaloid: “No había leído Silvio palotada de los efectos de la morfina; no sabía que los médicos califican el estado de alma de los morfinómanos de *moral insanity*” (425). In this way, Pardo Bazán attempts to discount the romanticizing of morphine addiction in popular literature and culture. Likewise, she critiques the superficial nature of the artistic movement and lifestyle that Espina represents. Silvio, upon seeing the truth, rejects the nihilistic, decadent lifestyle and eventually returns to Spain.

In addition to her moralistic and lifestyle choices, the narrator problematizes Espina’s origins as well. She is the child of one Andalusian and one Mexican parent. The narrator also claims that she is a Parisian in attitude, alluding to a decadent aesthetic. Being of Mexican heritage, she is not considered purely Spanish, an outsider from a genealogical perspective, indicating a poisoning of the Spanish blood. In a parallel manner, Espina is discovered by Silvio poisoning her blood with the injection of morphine. In this moment, Espina (in France) is laid out in a seductive manner, recently having injected herself. Silvio has a moment of horror, discovering her arm filled with track marks due to the drug that offers the “felicidad satánica” (424). After witnessing this event, Silvio eventually leaves the French capital and returns to his homeland where his spiritual/artistic revelation is finally realized.

Silvio Lago represents the vindication of the Iberian *modernista*; unencumbered by a sense of obligation to repeat the debased behaviors of French Decadents, he maintains a “genuine” Spanish identity without sacrificing the religious fervor of his forbearers. Pardo Bazán

suggests an artistic philosophy aligned with Ángel Ganivet in which Spain must remain true to its “national spirit” within the aesthetic context. Minia maintains the ability to be economically secure while staying true to her national identity. As an artist she is relevant without sacrificing her nature or her personal integrity. She is the ultimate example of the Spanish artist for Silvio Lago, a fact that the protagonist realizes all too late. After squandering his upper class connections, wasting his energies on futile and dangerous relationships with different women, his tuberculosis causes him to reflect on the errors of his past and to merge his faith, nationality and art before his death.

In the Spanish novel *El Marqués de la Quimera* (1919) by Luis Antón del Olmet a young dandy, Pepe Airón, returns to Spain after making and squandering a fortune in Mexico and Paris. In the process he becomes a morphine addict. His addiction leads him to abhorrent behavior including pursuing another man’s wife. Like Silvio Lago, Pepe corrects the error of his ways and recommits himself to the Spanish tradition, but not before it is too late. In a climactic duel, Pepe swordfights Finestrat, a man whom he has recently cuckolded. To restore the honor of his nemesis and Rocío, the wife of Finestrat (a scene thematically reminiscent of Golden Age theater), Pepe falls upon his opponent’s sword, coming to terms with his past transgressions while ridding his country of unwanted foreign and degenerate influence.

Like Espina Porcel, the protagonist of *El Marqués de la Quimera* is negatively influenced by both France and the New World, aligning both novels with Ganivet’s critique of Spain’s history of foreign policy as well as Nordau’s condemnation of *fin de siècle* culture. Pepe moves to Mexico and becomes addicted to marijuana. Then he moves to France where he gets addicted to morphine. What’s also a little troubling is the fact that Pepe and others also note that women were more likely to become addicted to drugs, indicating that consumption of opiates is linked to

feminine weakness. This weakness is contracted and develops within Pepe after spending time abroad. He spends money freely, often losing large sums to gambling. He has degenerated into a taker rather than someone who will continue the legacy of his forbearers. Pardo Bazán likewise reproaches an entire generation to the torpor and unproductivity of the morphine high (“la enfermedad de toda una generación”). At the time of the novel, the idea of morphine addiction was closely related to the decadence and national/personal degeneration as described by Max Nordau’s *Degeneration*. Furthermore, morphine addiction was also related primarily to women and the French. Before our contemporary image of the typical drug addict, primarily the destitute, urban single male, morphine addicts up were often stereotyped as upper-middle class, bored housewives (Aurin 423).⁵⁰ Furthermore, the characteristics of the addict also became blurred with the negative characteristics then associated with women, like lying and doing whatever it takes in order to get what one desires (Zieger 129). Therefore, susceptibility to addiction was viewed as a feminine characteristic, since the addict was perceived as lacking will and self-control over the consumption of opiates and otherwise. These “feminine” attributes associated with addiction and morphine directly affected the drug’s economics and branding as well as its social conceptualization. Paraphernalia of the narcotic was marketed exclusively to women, including compact, designer syringes meant for discrete injections during social events (Dormandy 122). In the Spanish context one can look to a pair of paintings by Santiago Rusiñol: *Abans de prendre l'alcaloide* (1894) [Figure 1] and its thematic sequel, *La morfina* (1894) [Figure 2]. The paintings depict the same young, dark-haired female in bed before (*Abans*) and

⁵⁰ Middle-class women in Europe and North America were also at risk of morphine addiction due to the over-prescription of the narcotic for a wide variety of gynecological issues (Courtwright 48). It was also believed that morphine could be used as a prophylactic, resulting in many prostitutes becoming addicts (Courtwright 60).

after (*La morfina*) an injection. If one considers the feminine subject of both paintings and especially the connection of the title of *La morfina*, a direct association is made aesthetically between the drug in question and the feminine form. Likewise, the illustration in a 1908 edition of Mexico City's *El Diario*, that accompanies an article warning its readers on the dangers of morphine injection, depicts an elegantly dressed young woman pricking her arm with a hypodermic needle (Figure 3). These images, culled from both sides of the Atlantic and representing both high and popular culture, employ the feminine figure in direct connection to morphine and the subculture associated with it. Morphinism from a male perspective not only constitutes anti-social behavior but also a practice deemed anti-masculine. In the Spanish national context, the association with the feminine was an affront to the higher order thinking of the nation. According to Michael Aronna, "For Ganivet and the male imagination of the turn-of-the-century, the feminine is the low, the other, the mass, the corporal, the sexually degenerative threat to the masculine self of high culture" (52).



Figure 1: *Abans de prendre l'alcaloide* (1894) by Santaigo Rusiñol



Figure 2: *La morfina* (1894) by Santiago Rusiñol

Pardo Bazán's protagonist is relatively sexually chaste. Compared to a novel like *De sobremesa*, the Countess's depiction of the dandy steers away from the unbridled sexual experiences of a character such as José Fernández.⁵¹ The eventual Catholic conversion of Silvio Lago also coincides with Pardo Bazán's revision of the Spanish *modernismo*, a aesthetic aligned with Ganivet's notions of chaste Spanish spirit, as symbolized in *Idearium español* by the fig leaf covering Seneca, or as Michael Aronna affirms, "the concrete factors of the exterior world, material scarcity, biological limitation and cultural coercion coincide to restrict the free expression of the sexuality of the individual, an internalized and individualized interpellation that is subsequently returned to the collective forum in the form of sexually charged socio-political ideology which equates chastity with national purity" (Aronna 39). Espina, nationally impure, is consequently sexually promiscuous. In contrast, Minia presents the reader with the ideal Spanish female citizen/artist: chaste, intelligent, hard working and successful. Silvio Lago fails to

⁵¹ The modern reader must keep in mind that this de-sexualized protagonist is largely due to Pardo Bazán's status as a female author writing at the turn of the century, lacking the freedom to freely express sexuality in her works.

recognize this ideal path before contracting his fatal illness: tuberculosis, the disease, according to Susan Sontag, that is the “vehicle of excess feeling” (45).

The aforementioned Spanish writer José Más explored the crisis of modernist Spain and morphine addiction in *Los sueños de un morfinómano*. This work, more than any other, follows the tenants of Ganivet’s *Idearium Español* and the concept of national *abulia*. These works are important to the shift in the mentality of the opiate experience as a dangerous foreign contagion. Notably, these addicts —either to drugs, deviant behavior, or both— contract this behavior from an outside, often Northern European influence. These novels present a different viewpoint of national identity and the well being of the body politic than the works of the previous two chapters.

Los sueños de un morfinómano is a novel that explores the degradation and death of Ernesto Figueroa, a *criollo* dandy born in Cuba, whose morphine addiction stems from his obsession over the loss of his long-time girlfriend Alicia. Like other novels studied in this chapter, José Más’s protagonist is a dandy and represents the abulic origins of Spanish society’s turn-of-the-century malady, according to Ángel Ganivet’s philosophy. Figueroa shirks his responsibility as an honorable man, refusing for over five years to marry Alicia, eventually leading to her rejection of him and her departure. His weakened constitution and his nervous, obsessive personality consume him upon being newly single. While Pardo Bazán’s *La Quimera* is credited as the first major Spanish novel to treat morphine as a main thematic component (Whitaker), José Más treats morphine addiction as its primary theme and uses it as a metaphor for the state of Spain in the wake of “*el Desastre*” of 1898.

A reading of *La Quimera* and *Los sueños de un morfinómano* follows the *abulia* presented in *Idearium español* (1897) by Ángel Ganivet. He states that the Spanish, beginning in

the colonial period, had ventured geographically and spiritually too far away from their national “spirit.” Ganivet believes in a common link of the Spanish people regarding their personality, strengths, and weaknesses. After over-exerting themselves in the expansion of the nation, losing themselves in countless wars, material pursuits and overreaching the energies of the nation, “el origen de nuestra decadencia y actual postración se halla en nuestro exceso de acción, en haber acometido empresas enormemente desproporcionadas con nuestro poder” (144). This overexertion leads to the national illness Ganivet names *abulia*. The Spanish philosopher officially diagnoses his homeland in the climax of his theoretical essay:

Si yo fuese consultado como médico espiritual para formular el diagnóstico del padecimiento que los españoles sufrimos (porque padecimiento hay y de difícil curación), diría que la enfermedad se designa con el nombre de ‘no querer’, o en términos más científicos por la palabra griega ‘aboulía’, que significa eso mismo, ‘extinción o debilitación grave de la voluntad’ (Ganivet 138).

This notion of *abulia* is also connected to Max Nordau’s views on degenerative behavior mentioned in previous chapters. We see the same sentiments in these Spanish works. All of the characters in the works of Pardo Bazán, Más, and del Olmet spend time abroad in the “New World,” while in the cases of Pepe and Silvio Lago, France is a site of contracting morphinism. In Ernesto Figueroa’s case, he is actually born in Cuba, which is, if one is to follow Ganivet’s envisioning of his country at the time, the last remaining site of Spain’s energy-depleting activities. He loses all his inheritance, received after the recent death of his father, on prostitutes, gambling and, after the loss of his lover, drugs. Unlike the characters in *La Quimera* and *El Marqués de la Quimera*, Ernesto Figueroa is born with the illness, technically Spanish, but born and raised outside of the mainland. His illness manifests itself once arriving to the Iberian

Peninsula and then is heightened once he loses his love, thus preventing him from achieving his duties as a male.

Through the negative experiences outside of Spain for their decadent protagonists and decadent secondary characters, these authors problematize the rise of international markets that confuse the boundaries and cultures between countries. In the early twentieth century, transportation innovations and the rise of mercantile capitalism began the erasure of fixed national, racial, and cultural boundaries, allowing greater access to foreign influence in a variety of aspects of daily life. The narratives I explore in this chapter employ the opiate image as a metaphor for the danger of increasing foreign influence, a by-product of the proto-globalized market forming at the dawn of the twentieth century. In Spain, this preoccupation was exacerbated through Ganivet's *Idearium español*, which essentially blamed Spanish decadence during the past century to over-involvement in foreign affairs. It is suggested that time spent in foreign lands facilitates an erasure of the Spanish "national spirit" causing the Spaniard to stray from their essence thus leading to the will-weakening social disease *abulia*, rendering the individual useless in the progressive march towards modernization. Ironically the success of Spain is rooted in the rediscovery of the country historical roots, its genealogical essence. In the works of Pardo Bazán and José Más, morphine serves as the personification of the agent of *abulia*, infecting the national body, infecting the blood and causing inaction and lack of will as well as an over-dependence on consumer culture and superficiality in order to have an artificial spiritual experience. As Ganivet states in *Idearium español*, "La fábrica española ha estado parada durante largos años por falta de motor" (127). These Spanish novelists take this concept of inaction and filter it through morphinism, a growing problem associated with the upper classes of their northern neighbor, France. Morphine becomes a critical symbol for Spain's concept of

abulia by combining foreign influence (the drug was developed originally in Northern Europe), consumerism (ideals deemed antithetical to Spain's national spirit), and torpor.

With regards to *Los sueños de un morfinómano*, José Más takes Ernesto Figueroa deep within the depths of obsession, addiction and degenerative behavior, ultimately leading to the horrific, absurd suicide of his protagonist: "En la boca, desgarrada por las comisuras, tenía embutida la mano derecha hasta la muñeca, y una espuma sanguinolenta le cubría parte del rostro. Mostraba los ojos abultados y empavorecidos y los pómulos fuera de su sitio, a causa de la dislocación producida por el terrible desquijaramiento" (246). His death stems in large part to his morphine addiction, but the addiction is a symptom of his Cuban birth and his inability to commit to Alicia. Following Ganivet's philosophy on Spain's colonization of the Americas, José Más's protagonist's symbolic suicide represents the destruction of self that Spain must turn away from in order to regain its "national spirit."

Ernesto Figueroa is of the land-owning *criollo* class in Cuba at the turn of the twentieth century. Losing his mother as a child, Figueroa was raised by the Afro-Cuban servants of his distant father. José Más problematizes the origins of his protagonist, displaying an over-reaching globalized experience that does not enrich his personality, but in fact fosters in Figueroa's angst and proclivity for excess of emotion and his susceptibility for addiction. After the departure of Alicia, Ernesto is paralyzed by sorrow and cannot function as a normal human being. His doctor friend, and pseudo-father figure, don Aníbal, suggests that he try morphine as a sleep agent. An addict himself, don Aníbal simultaneously warns him against using the potent narcotic: "Es como el que juega por primera vez y tiene la desgracia de ganar. Por muy bueno que sea se convierte en jugador empedernido. No, no sea morfinómano, amigo mío; esto solo pueden permitírselo los que tenemos por cuerpo un pingajo y en el alma un abismo de ilusiones

deshechas” (24). Later one evening Figueroa finds himself “entre las sábanas como un endemoniado. Una neuralgia intensa, terrible, le apretaba las sienes. La excitación de sus nervios por las noches sin descanso, habían producido aquella debilidad en su cerebro y aquel decaimiento en su organismo” (26). Unable to sleep, he injects himself with morphine immediately experiencing “una gran laxitud como si la sangre que corría en sus venas se convirtiese en plomo”(27). Like the De Quinceyan descriptions of the pleasures of opium use before the nightmares of addiction, Ernesto Figueroa’s first injections completely eradicate his fears and worries. Soon enough he becomes a terrible addict and the only thing that consumes his thought other than his next morphine injection is finding Alicia. Ernesto knows that if Alicia were to return somehow, he would be able to stop his morphine injections cold turkey. However:

Pero aquella nueva fase del veneno le encantó. El sueño con la ciudad de cristal lo había tenido la misma noche en que aumentó la dosis. ¿Qué nuevas y misteriosas sorpresas le reservaba el alcaloide? ¿Era una terrible celada que tendíale el líquido diabólico? ... Don Aníbal no le habló nunca de sueños parecidos. ¿Sería producto de su exaltada imaginación? ¿Cansancio, debilidad, nervios flojos por la abulia? No era esa la causa. Se encontraba perfectamente, sin la menor fatiga, hasta contento, esperando la noche para ver qué nuevo prodigio le traía (50).

Ernesto Figueroa’s degenerative behavior is not only limited to his addiction to morphine. He continuously squanders his inheritance, even before his addiction takes hold of his life. One evening Ernesto wanders into a dance hall while stumbling through the streets of Madrid high on morphine. The narrator describes the ideal woman for the protagonist, the typical blonde, fair skin, and bright-eyed feminine figure: “Ninguna de aquellas mujeres se parecía al amante infiel e inolvidable. Había algunas muy bellas con cabellos rubios y pupilas azules; pero ninguna tenía la

expresión infantil e ingenua de su querida” (68). However, Ernesto spends the night with a dark-haired, *criollo* prostitute.⁵² As she attempts to leave the room they are in, Ernesto desperately invites her to live with him and take care of him, as a surrogate mother figure. She rejects the proposal, pointing out that she is indebted to her pimp who would kill her if she were to escape.

This scene reemphasizes the Ganivetian notion of the Spanish nation misappropriating its energies in foreign affairs, leading to the loss of power and the loss of the colonies in Spanish America. Michael Aronna, in his book *Pueblos Enfermos*, comments on the way Ganivet sexualizes the notion of *abulia* as a national illness. Aronna states that *Idearium español* views Spanish history and the “national spirit” through the lens of the national body and that the success of the nation is equivalent to male virility. The scholar also states that according to Ganivet, “non-Spanish economic colonization constituted a failure of national-spiritual insemination” (Aronna 65).

The crux of the novel is the second part, in which Ernesto attempts to convalesce in a sanitarium exclusively for morphine addicts. Ernesto’s doctor, Rosales, serves as the philosophical fulcrum of the novel, placing Figueroa’s addiction in the Spanish social context. The tone of the novel radically changes during the second part, shifting from a frenetic, violent pace to a feeling of tranquil serenity: “Esta paz y este silencio eran un sedante para los nervios de Ernesto Figueroa. Estaba muy cerca y muy lejos de Madrid. Cerca, por la distancia; lejos, por el cambio radical de la vida” (100). The grounds of the sanitarium are immaculate, with well-furnished rooms and ample space to stroll, play billiards or enjoy the great library. The pharmacy of Dr. Rosales’s hospital is stocked with the most modern and effective drugs and the hospital

⁵² “una mujer de ojos negros y cutis de criolla acercó una silla a su mesa y pidió una copa de coñac. Una rápida ojeada le bastó para comprender que aquella hembra era una vendedora de caricias” (69).

administration is well organized and facilitates the success the patients' recovery. As Ernesto approaches the end of his rehabilitation period, Dr. Rosales suggests that he avoid situations that will make him think of his past. He is asked by his doctor to only have happy thoughts and read comical and light works of writers such as Mark Twain. Avoidance of caffeine and other stimulants is essential. Before leaving, Rosales suggests to Figueroa that he avoid intoxicants and to moderate "los placeres sexuales" (129). He also informs his patient that his case of morphine addiction is all too common in Spain, linking morphinism to a national epidemic:

El abuso de la morfina aquí en España data de pocos años... Esa lacra, esa droga infernal que ha matado en flor tantas esperanzas y tantos entusiasmos, se va extendiendo de tal forma que hoy empiezan ya a intoxicarse hasta las mujeres. Y todo por ese afán inexplicable y absurdo de querer parecerse a las damas extranjeras. A la mujer de país frío tal vez en ciertas ocasiones puedan convenirle los excitantes; pero a una hembra española de sangre hirviente, en esta tierra cálida y bajo este sol, si llega a sentir el espolazo del opio... es casi seguro que en pocos días se convirtiera en una mujer sin pudor, en una miserable prostituta (130-31).

Doctor Rosales and Ernesto Figueroa go on to complain about the lack of education in Spanish society, and the lay person's lack of intellectual curiosity. What is noticeable regarding Dr. Rosales's views on Spanish women's susceptibility to addiction is the notion that not only are women more likely to become addicts, but somehow the Spanish, due to their environmental factors are in greater danger regarding opiate consumption. The advice Rosales imparts to his patient is all too common in the medical field of the beginning of the twentieth century. In the second part of *Los sueños de un morfinómano*, José Más uses the psychologist as an anchor of the realities of morphine addiction in Spain and the medical field's understanding of and

response to opiate addiction during this time. The novel, thus, moves beyond a sensational novel on the horrors of addiction and madness into the territory of social commentary and didactic prose warning its audience to the extreme danger of “querer parecer a las damas extranjeras.” Just as Rosales notes, morphine addiction is a recent phenomena in Spain, but spreading like wildfire. The cause is external and only exacerbated by the pains and losses of Spain’s past. He essentially blames Spanish morphinism on an inferiority complex regarding the cultural capital of their northern neighbors like France. Imitating the French has erased the national spirit of Spain, leaving behind an empty pursuit of the superficial and the material. The imitation has gone so far that Spaniards have unwisely adopted French decadent behavior, such as recreational opiate use, leading to the epidemic of morphinism, and necessitating hospitals that specialize in the treatment of addiction. José Más affixes his critical gaze on the extent to which Spaniards have corrupted themselves through the shame of being Spanish and looking to outside models of culture and society.

Dr. Rosales serves as a representation of the opinions expressed in *Idearium español* on Spanish society. Más employs Ganivet’s theories on *abulia* to psychologically dissect his protagonist, who, being born in the problem site, according to Ganivet, of Spain’s cultural development over the past few centuries, cannot cope with the loss of his mother, then father, and finally his lover. Left alone, all he can do is despair and obsessively ruminate on Alicia’s departure. His deeply obsessive behavior becomes a cycle of inaction and aimless wandering in the streets of Madrid. He squanders the riches acquired from the previous generations’ hard work and sacrifice. In *Degeneration*, Max Nordau, like Ganivet, claims that the degenerate lacks the will to act and also has no capacity for concentrated attention, acting capriciously and without purpose (56). Ernesto Figueroa obsesses over the loss of Alicia, and wastes vast amounts of time

and energy on searching for her without any promising clues to where she might be, similar to José Fernández's futile search for Helena in Silva's *De sobremesa*. All the while his increasing morphine habit makes him much less productive or able to carry out such a search. After a short period of convalescence, Ernesto's life spirals out of control resulting in his horrific and absurd death. José Más paints a bleak picture of Spain's future if the nation is to the *abulic* path of cultural and racial miscegenation, leading to complete loss of national identity and individual decrepitude.

Both in the same and a different dynamic, the novel *Duque*, by Peruvian José Diez-Canseco critiques cosmopolitanism through the Europeanized protagonist, Teddy Crownchild Soto Menor, upon his return to Peru from his economic studies in England. He displays a feeling of superiority to his old friends, family and citizens of Lima. His newfound bombastic and affected personality manifests itself through his use of English in his language. In fact, Teddy's first speaks with English interjections, first admonishing his dog, Duque ("¡Oh, shut up!") and then subsequently becoming extremely annoyed by a ringing telephone as he agonizes over which necktie to wear ("¡God dam!") (11). His time spent in England also poisons his mind, infecting him with a decadent, metropolitan worldliness and an imperialistic attitude towards his fellow compatriots. On a whim, he renames his servant from Paulino to Toribio, a pretention later repeated during an encounter with a prostitute. From the introductory first chapter, the narrator informs the reader on the extent of Teddy's debauchery abroad: "Practicó en Oxford la sodomía, usó cocaína, y su falta de conciencia le llevó hasta admirar a las mujeres" (12). This predilection for drug use and deviant behavior ultimately leads to his expulsion from Peru.

What's notable about Teddy's status upon returning to Lima is that he no longer belongs in his home country, straying so far from his Peruvian identity that he is no longer recognizable

to his friends and family. While in Paris, Teddy and his friends are ashamed to admit where they are from: “Encontrados al azar en un cabaret, en un teatro, cuando confesaban, avergonzados, a la compañera de una noche “je suis peruvien” (25). His attempts to become worldly thus alienate him further from his fiancé, Beatriz. This alienation culminates in the revelation of the sexual relationship between Teddy and Carlos Astorga, the father of his fiancé. Once she discovers Teddy’s letter that confesses to the cultural transgression, Teddy must flee the country, and heads for Argentina. With regards to the illness metaphor, Teddy has contracted the decadentism of Northern Europe and has brought it back with him to South America. His behavior and treatment of other Peruvians threaten the well being of the heteronormative body politic, thus making his attempt to return to society futile. His marriage to Beatriz is thwarted by his openness to foreign culture and this debased behavior leads to his tragic flaw.⁵³

For this study, the critical scene in the novel occurs after Teddy rejects the relationship between him and his future father in law. His fear and shame stems from their final night together in which Astorga places a mirror in front of them while making love. In this moment, Teddy disassociates from his own body followed by a strong feeling of the abject: “No, no eran él y Astorga. Eran otros a quienes él no conocía y acaso por esto le pareció más asqueroso y peor” (89). Later one evening, his friend Carlos Suárez (who has been having his own affair with Teddy’s mother) confronts Teddy regarding his recent odd behavior. Wracked with guilt, Teddy confesses all, to which Carlos responds, “¡Bah! Qué tontería! Eso no tiene importancia... Cásese. Nada le impide realizar ese matrimonio” (91-92). The two friends meet with another friend, Lucho Molina, and the three enter an opium den at which Lucho and Carlos are frequent

⁵³ On the medical discourse and the Argentine body see *Médicos, maleantes y maricas* (1995) by Jorge Salessi and *Ficciones somáticas: Naturalismo, nacionalismo y políticas médicas del cuerpo (Argentina 1880-1910)* (2000) by Gabriela Nouzeilles.

customers. For Teddy, who is intent on forgetting the thirty-eight straight days he spent with his future father-in-law, the ingestion of opium serves as an amnesiac agent, capable of erasing the memory of a deed that will ruin his heteronormative future with Beatriz.

Teddy plans to continue with the wedding after visiting the opium den. In his mind, opium will facilitate the mental erasure of his homosexual act and his marriage to his fiancé will ultimately absolve him of his perceived degenerate behavior. Like the scene with Astorga and the mirror, Teddy's intends to separate himself from his behavior that brings him shame. Even his opiate experience is marked by complete dissociation from his body and his relationships with family and friends:

No hubo sueño. Sólo la beatitud inmensa de sentir lejos de sí, y para siempre, a Astorga, a Beatriz, a su madre, a Duque, a sus millones, a Carlos, a sus joyas, ¡toda su vida! Una abulia divina, un estado de conciencia superior y sutil. Desde el abismo de espíritu opiotizado, vio todo, pero lejos, sin ninguna conexión con él. No le importaba, en ese instante, nada ni nadie. Pidió más. Después, la noche absoluta (95).

Soon after this moment in the novel, Teddy returns to the Chinese opium den for a repeat narcotic experience: "Fumaba. Fue al opio con la ignorancia del neófito. El olvido de la droga le sorprendió. A ese olvido se aferró desesperadamente. Olvido de todo. Para siempre, solo él en la noche opiótica. Sombra y paz" (99). The disassociation occurs in an Orientalized, foreign space though residing within Lima. The opium den parallels the now-foreign body of Teddy Crownchild Soto Menor.

Carlos Suárez, after reading a draft of a letter he intends to send to Teddy and his mother, asks the embittered friend his opinion on all that has transpired since the discovery of Crownchild's illicit affair with Carlos Astorga. Rigoletto coldly responds: "Una marica menos

en la ciudad” (122). Teddy, a diseased individual, is eventually expelled from the Peruvian national body, as exemplified by his former friend Rigoletto’s parting words that end the novel. Teddy’s anti-foundational behavior and inability to fit in to his home country hints to the infection from foreign (English) influence, suggesting that worldliness and cosmopolitan behavior have no place in the Peruvian metropolis nor the country’s national project.⁵⁴

The short story “Ganimedes,” by Argentine Félix M. Pelayo, is a similar narrative to *Duque* that connects decadence and opium to homosexuality. Echoing the opening scene of *De sobremesa*, the narrator begins with a description of an opulent room replete with Orientalist decor (“un sabor oriental da una sensación de voluptuosidad y misterio”) and centered on artwork depicting Ganymede, the mythological figure that served as a model for the Greek custom of pederasty (85). The room in which the short story takes place is filled with imported furniture, art and decorations. There is nothing save the two Argentine men that is native of the Americas. Whether from the East or the West, the narrative space of “Ganimedes” is the epicenter of the foreign, the outside, and the non-Argentine. The two protagonists Ernesto and Federico, contemplating the painting, begin a conversation that eventually reveals a past love affair that Ernesto would like to reinitiate despite Federico’s reluctance. Federico is engaged to Ernesto’s niece, Delia, to which Ernesto remarks: “¡Pobre Delia! Si supiera todo el daño que me causa” (92). Ernesto represents a gendered inversion of the femme fatale. According to Susan Fillin-Yeh, “the femme fatale...carries with her the power of masquerade, a privileged, distanced, and disruptive anti-knowledge behind a cool façade” (128-29). He casually smokes an opiated cigarette and methodically intoxicates Federico and seduces him, despite Federico’s

⁵⁴ Novels such as Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) and Wilde’s play *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) are seminal English texts on the Aestheticism and narcissism associated with Victorian society that carries over into the first couple decades of the twentieth century.

initial resistance in reigniting their previous relationship. Like Teddy's dissociative moments in *Duque*, Federico also remarks being possessed by some foreign identity: "En estas horas crepusculares soy otro. ¡Las amo tanto! Porque en ellas me doy cuenta que mi vida pudo ser otra cosa que lo que hoy es... Hemos sido dos extraviados" (90). Ernesto, in contrast, knows who he is: a social outcast who cannot conform to the prescribed masculine role: "Ernesto: (*con ironía*) Lo único que nos diferencia ahora, es que tú has encontrado por fin el camino real... y yo (*con desconsuelo*) ¡No lo hallaré jamás!" (91).

The narration goes on to connote a physical likeness between Ernesto and the painting of Ganymede. Ernesto is the decadent character, attempting to reinitiate a homosexual relationship, meanwhile high on opium. Crucial to the critical commentary of decadent consumerism, drug use and homosexuality is Ernesto's characterization as a modern Ganymede, the cherubic boy taken to Mount Olympus by Zeus in eagle form and made the god's catamite.⁵⁵ Thus "Ganimedes" functions as a critique of the cosmopolitan, dandy lifestyle as positivistically unproductive and disastrous to the nations' progress towards modernization. The entire narrative is clouded by the smoke of Ernesto's opium cigarette. The inclusion of opium is a key narrative device, Ernesto offers the cigarette to Federico and the talk eventually leads to a conversation of their past romantic involvement, culminating with a kiss witnessed by Federico's fiancé Delia.

The description of the Ganimedes painting is a mix of oriental, European, and decadent imagery: "Sobre un fondo esfumado y sombrío, un fondo de ensueño, fantástico, absurdo, cuyas tonalidades sólo un pincel magistral es capaz de superponer, recorta su figura, en la ambigüedad de cuyas líneas hay morbideces femeninas, lánguidos abandonos lascivos.... Flora quimérica arrancada de un sueño de opio" (87). Likewise, Ernesto is depicted as a manifestation of the

⁵⁵ Catamite, a term deriving from the name Ganymede, refers to the young boy in the practice of pederasty that becomes the passive sexual partner to the elder pederast.

Greek myth, but made more pitiful by his aging body. One of the major themes of the short story is fear and disgust, two emotions that stem from Ernesto's lifestyle, not simply as a homosexual in the early twentieth century but also as an aging dandy, living a materialistic life of pleasure without substance. Next to the portrait of Ganymede, Ernesto functions as a grotesque reflection of the divine hero:

El rostro, al resplandor que brota de la llama, se recorta con tonalidades rojas, de cobre batido. Es semejante al Ganimedes del retrato. Un Ganimedes más viejo, con algunos hilos de plata en los cabellos, con largas arrugas en el rostro que tiene una expresión de dolor y de fatiga. En las pupilas marchitas flota un tristeza vaga, que contrasta con la luminosidad ardiente de los ojos del retrato. Los labios quieren sonreír pero no pueden (88-89).

Pelayo suggests that the dandy figure and the decadent/*modernista* aesthetic are of a bygone era, a trend that has no bearing in the third decade of the twentieth century. Federico is ready to symbolically move on from this era, planning to marry and forget his past discretions. However, Ernesto poisons him one last time with the aid of the opiated cigarette, leading to one final kiss witnessed by Delia, who faints from shock: "A pesar suyo Federico, seducido por el recuerdo de otros días, une sus labios a los de Ernesto en un largo beso. Delia ahoga un grito de asco y de espanto" (94). Federico calls for her and then Ernesto does the same but with a different tone, as the stage direction states, "en voz baja, en la cual palpita la ternura por el dolor de su amigo y una vaga esperanza de un futuro que renueve el pasado" (94).⁵⁶

⁵⁶ This work is a hybrid short story/theater format. After the description of the room and its inhabitants, the dialogue between Ernesto and Federico is presented in play format complete with asides and stage directions.

In *Duque* and “Ganimedes,” one socially deviant act follows another, until the individuals convert themselves into a cascade of vice and artificiality. While it is unclear in Pelayo’s short story if Ernesto has physically travelled to the infectious European metropolis, the room in which we find him is brimming with imported items from both the east and the west. Pelayo employs a parallel, yet heightening temptation for Federico to likewise become infected by the degenerative behavior of his friend and former lover. The entrance into Ernesto’s perceived depraved lifestyle is the ornately decorated home, followed by the opiated cigarette. Ernesto chides Federico for not partaking: “Tú no fumas?” (89). Federico eventually consents and at this critical moment of the narrative, Ernesto begins the conversation regarding their previous love affair. Federico, reluctant to have the conversation, is drawn in despite his reluctance. His contact with the decadent, Orientalized/Europeanized Ernesto ultimately leads to the ruination of his reputation. Opium smoke, as will be analyzed with greater detail in the fourth chapter, functions as an agent of infection, passing from one individual to another like an airborne illness, traveling through the social miasma into the life of a man on the verge of completing his nationalistic duties of marriage then procreation.⁵⁷ Delia’s repulsion represents the breaking of the social contract unwittingly signed upon birth.

Both “Ganimedes” and *Duque* combine opium with homosexuality and depict both as decadent behaviors. Unproductive, opium is consumption for consumption’s sake, not resulting in any positive societal outcomes. Homosexuality was viewed in a similar fashion during the turn of the twentieth century. Sex without the possibility of reproduction is viewed as antithetical to

⁵⁷ The narrator of “Ganimedes” suggests a connection between the East and sexual deviance. Ernesto and Federico’s dialogue circumnavigating their previous sexual relationship is interrupted by the description of an omniscient and menacing Buddha statue: “Crepitó una llama y desde allá lejos el Budha pareció reír cínicamente con la boca, con los ojos, con el vientre, sacudido en un espasmo perverso y afrodisíaco” (93).

the modernizing goals of society, as evidenced by Argentine Juan Bautista Alberdi's famous decree, "gobernar es poblar." Similarly, the opiate high is a fantastic sensation that is artificial and temporal with no bearing on the progressive reality pursued by these modernizing nations. Excesses, reveries and hedonistic pleasures are cast by the wayside to allow for the energies of a nation to concentrate on what is essential to propel nation and society towards the modern age and progress.

In *Los sueños de un morfinómano*, Ernesto Figueroa has a bizarre pseudo-sexual relationship with a boy who he believes looks exactly like his former lover. Ernesto finds Luisillo in the streets during his search for Alicia. The young boy has such a striking resemblance to her that he invites Luisillo to work as his servant. We can interpret this chapter as a man so sick with morphine, addicted to the point of pure decadence and debased behavior that he takes on a catamite relationship with Luisillo although no sexual act is described in the novel. The unnatural relationship is highlighted by the refusal of the boy's sick, working class father to allow Luisillo to sleep at Ernesto's house. Upon having to once again sleep alone, Ernesto increases his morphine dose. Similar to *Duque* and "Ganimedes," opiate abuse is connected to aberrant sexual behavior deemed counter-productive in the discourse of national identity. However, José Más employs his protagonist's deviant behavior as an extension to a misguided, obsessive search for identity from an outside source.

Both *Duque* and "Ganimedes" use opium as an agent of decadent infection as well as a parallel image of homosexuality as a threat to the body politic. The cigarette and the opium pipe, phallic symbols, are used as a means of entry and an attempt to escape homosexual encounters. Pelayo employs the opiated cigarette as an infection agent meant to seduce an unwilling Federico, ultimately leading to the destruction of his future heteronormative relationship. In

Duque, Teddy seeks the opium pipe as a means of cleansing himself of the homosexual act revealed to his fiancé. Despite his efforts, the cleansing has no affect, leading to his banishment to Argentina.

As Diez-Canseco banishes his dandy protagonist to Argentina to cleanse his native Peru of European influence, Francisco Gicca's protagonist discovers the Argentine Pampas as a site of convalescence and escape from the decadent European metropolis. *El morfinómano y la divorciada* by Francisco Gicca is a 1938 novel dealing with the role of women in the 20th century. In a similar fashion to Minia in *La Quimera*, the central female protagonist, Sofía, is charged with the care and guidance of a decadent male character, Carlos Álvarez. After spending years trouncing about in Europe, Álvarez is hopelessly addicted to morphine and other drugs. Carlos and Sofía were previously married during their stint in Europe. After an incident of domestic violence Sofía divorces Carlos and returns home to Argentina. The morphine addict reenters Sofía's life when he himself must return to his homeland in an effort to end his substance abuse. Sofía becomes his nurse and puts him under a regimen in order to rehabilitate him. After several relapses and arguments, Carlos is reformed with the dedicated effort of Sofía. His ultimate rehabilitation comes through her vigilance and Carlos leaving the decadent trappings of the city in order to embrace manual labor in the Argentine countryside and recommitting himself to Sofía through a second marriage.⁵⁸ Repeatedly in this novel, as the other novels studied in this chapter, addiction and deviant behavior stem from the Northern European metropolis and convalescence (if attained in the narrative) is only achieved through reintegration into Argentine society. Reconciliation is only found in commitment to nationalism and

⁵⁸ As an important biographical note, Gicca was the editor of an atheist/anarchist newspaper (*El Progreso*) and wrote many other novels on social issues such as feminism (*La esclava legal (la casada) novela costumbrista* [1919]) and critique of religion (*Las corrupciones del misticismo; o, Roma católica* [1909]).

adherence to prescribed traditions. In *El morfinómano y la divorciada*, dandyism, decadence and morphine addiction are synonymous with European culture. The only means of recovery from this deviation is through reconnection to one's (American) homeland.

Early in the novel, the narrator, much like that of *La Quimera*, subjectively comments on the nature of morphine addiction: "el vicio del terrible estupefaciente que anula voluntades, oscurece inteligencias, agota energías, hace impotentes a los jóvenes y los convierte en miserables carnes subyugadas al vicio." (26) One of the highlighted qualities of this depiction of morphinomania is the side effect of impotence. Being against the grain of the national projects of burgeoning Spanish American nations, the inability to perform sexually is an important social taboo, especially for males. In non-fiction essays on the dangers of morphine use, impotence is continuously cited as a reason for avoiding narcotic abuse. In Peragini's *Estupefacientes y toxicomanías*, addiction is claimed to lead to individual degeneration and a plethora of other negative consequences. Especially highlighted, however, is the loss of "el amor de la familia y el amor a la patria" (Peragini 10). Spanish doctor César Juarros also highlights the impotent nature of opiate addiction in *Los engaños de la morfina*.

The concluding interpretation of Juarros's opinions on the roots of morphine addiction, especially in *Los engaños de la morfina*, are analogous to Max Nordau's critique of *fin de siècle* culture in *Degeneration*. Dr. Juarros, an early practitioner of Freudian psychotherapy, spent much of his psychiatric career fighting for social-sexual reform in Spain, including the right to divorce. Additionally, he wrote three book-length studies on morphine addiction and its impact on Spanish society. César Juarros blames the rise of morphine addiction primarily on the glorification of the drug experience in literature and popular culture. In order to combat the temptation of drugs, the doctor proposes a regimen that is mirrored later by *El morfinómano y la*

divorciada. In the medical field as well as in the literary realm, the decadent aesthetic and morphinism go hand in hand, and, as a result, these two factors are integral in the perceived maladies of the portrayed Hispanic communities. Steps to avoid addiction or to recover from it mirror the hallmarks of nation building as well as, in the case of Spain, maintaining the “national spirit.” Dr. Juarros offers the following advice for rehabilitation: “Los remedios son tres: a) El amor. b) El trabajo. c) La lectura. El amor es antídoto por excelencia. Acaso porque la morfina constituye su más terrible enemigo” (*Los engaños* 59).⁵⁹ Sofía employs the same three remedies in Gicca’s novel, putting Carlos to work in the Argentine Pampas. Before this she orders that Carlos spend time reading to her as well as reviewing and reorganizing his finances. By the end of the novel, they remarry and it is revealed that Sofía is pregnant. His convalescence is complete, turning away from the frivolous dandy lifestyle acquired abroad in favor of manual labor and progeny. Dr. Juarros provides a very detailed process to curing morphine addicts in the book *Tratamiento de la morfinomanía* (1920). Treatment includes a very regimented daily schedule; bedtime must be consistent along with the eating schedule, even the temperature (37° C) and duration of baths —10 minutes followed by a full body massage— is regulated: “Esto, diariamente, sin excusa ni pretexto alguno” (*Tratamiento* 30). In *El morfinómano y la divorciada*, Sofía has Carlos sign a contract before starting treatment in which he promises to comply with her plan. With all of the best treatments in place and the gradual reduction of his morphine use, Carlos is still not quite able to kick his habit. The cure is ultimately possible through his rediscovery of his love for Sofía, the first remedy suggested by the Spanish doctor

⁵⁹ Regarding the management of reading as integral to the medical regimen, Juarros indicates that “se permitirá la lectura; pero de libros escogidos por el médico para que puedan constituir colaboradores eficaces a la acción psicoterápica” (*Tratamiento* 31).

César Juarros. He sets up a binary relationship between love and morphine in order to argue the replacement of the opiate with its now polar opposite.

Juarros notes that morphine and love both provide a similar inebriation. Morphinism negates the user's ability to love, providing a false substitute, just as Plato relates writing as a corrupted form of memory in *Phadrus*. In Dr. Juarros's text, there is a pervading connection between morphine addiction and a failure to uphold the traditional/religious/sexual duties of the ideal modern man. Juarros, in true positivist fashion, treats the contrast between sobriety and addiction analogously to the battle between good and evil. While *Tratamiento de la morfinomanía* is directed towards a medical audience, describing in detail the characteristics, treatment techniques and unique characteristics of morphine addiction, *Los engaños* serves as a public warning, appealing to the fears and moral compass of the general Spanish population. In this text, Juarros reduces the morphine addiction into the antithesis of virtue and manhood: "La morfina envenena; el amor depura...La morfina trueca a los hombres sanos, robustos, optimistas, en enfermos, enclenques, deprimidos...Inyectarse la morfina es alejarse de la vida... Amar es incorporarse a un cortejo inmortal. Es justificar el milagro de haber nacido" (*Los engaños* 59-60). *Los engaños de la morfina* works on a more literary basis than his other works that take a more measured, scientific approach to morphinism.

Gicca's novel, in addition to rejecting decadent European influence in Argentina ends the novel with what appears to be a proto-feminist message of gender equality. Sofía, who offers the final words of the novel in front of Carlos and the doctors in the same spot she and her husband were remarried a year before:

No es llorando, ni de rodillas que la mujer ocupará su puesto de igualdad en el mundo donde hay *varonas* y *varones*. Donde debe haber seres humanos iguales, masculinos y

femeninos. Brindo también para el que va a nacer, que es mi esperanza y mi dicha, mi premio y mi felicidad, y que lo debo al hombre que amo y que me llama con una dulzura infinita: '*Mano Blanca y Mano Fuerte*' (244).

While offering a vision of a even playing field between man and woman in the project of nation building, Gicca maintains a relatively traditionalist view with regards to the social milieu of Spanish America, shying away from outside influence and offering traditional heteronormative relationship and child-rearing as a means to eschew alternate lifestyles outside of the mainstream society.

Morphine, derived scientifically in Europe, is a Janus-like drug. Despite the addictive nature and the epidemic of habitués in several Western nations, it is still viewed as a medical necessity and miracle discovery. In *Estupefacientes y toxicomanías*, Argente Peragini writes, “La morfina es un medicamento precioso en manos del médico, pero el hombre abusando de sus beneficiosos efectos, ha hecho uso inmoderado y ha transformado este alcaloide en un agente intoxicante que origina un estado físico y mental particularmente grave, que constituye una variedad de toxicomanía que se conoce con el nombre de morfinomanía” (82). In cases of therapeutic addiction (result of doctor’s prescription leading to abuse) Peragini absolves any blame for habituation (83) . However, addicts that take the drug for no other reason than the experience of extreme pleasure are “desequilibrados, degenerados o afectados de una enfermedad nerviosa” (83). The Uruguayan doctor also blames narratives that praise the effects of morphine on the intoxication of susceptible youths. Dr. Rosales of *Los sueños* also refers to these classifications of addicts while explaining to Ernesto Figueroa in Más’s *Los sueños de un morfinómano* the progress of his rehabilitation:

Usted no es un toxicómano que acude al veneno de un modo impulsivo, ni un morfinómano por el procedimiento terapéutico, como Quincey y Coleridge [sic]. Es usted morfinómano por un dolor moral, y tengo la certeza de que con una psicoterapia acertada, hemos de obtener resultados admirables. Más desconfío de los morfinómanos por imitación, y de los arrastrados por lecturas pseudocientíficas (103-04).

Nine years after writing *Tratamiento de la morfina*, Dr. Juarros wrote *Los engaños de la morfina* (1929), a cautionary text for the non-medical community.⁶⁰ In both of these works, Juarros divides addicts into three categories: the therapeutic habitués, the imitators, and the “*trabajadores intelectuales*” (*Tratamiento* 13). One of the linking factors for Juarros regarding his classifications for morphine addicts are Romantic and Decadent writers and their influential works. In his first category, Dr. Juarros includes Thomas De Quincey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge as examples of the addict who comes in contact with opiates initially as a means of medically prescribed pain relief (*Tratamiento* 11). For the imitator addicts, the psychiatrist blames decadent artists such as Baudelaire who made drug use seem exotic and exciting, influencing the weak-minded to experiment. In *Los engaños de la morfina*, he emphasizes the unhappiness of the French decadent despite his description of the “artificial paradises” received from opiates: “Baudelaire, igual que Poe, era un alienado, un enfermo mental, cuya opinión no tiene nada de favorable a las pretendidas excelencias de los tóxicos, como instrumento de placer” (23). The authors like the aforementioned are included in his third category, which are the artists that because of their degenerative personalities and constitutions are easily susceptible to drug addiction. The real danger according to Dr. Juarros is that turn-of-the-century society has glorified these artists and everyday people are experimenting with morphine, later becoming

⁶⁰ *El hábito de la morfina* (1936) is another book-length study on the perils of morphine addiction.

addicts. The Hispanic authors of this chapter, in contrast, do not treat opiates simply as an “*instrument de placer*” but an element of caution, an image of cautionary tales of debauchery.

Nevertheless, at the same time, as mentioned in relation to Silva’s *De sobremesa* in Chapter 1, the opiate high parallels as a secular mystical experience, providing extra-sensory visions of alternate realities and manifestations of fears and desires. Ernesto Figueroa in *Los sueños de un morfinómano* experiences three allegorical dreams during the different stages of his morphine addiction. According to Max Nordau, the degenerate cannot concentrate yet wants to see beyond what is possible in the physical world. To achieve this vision, the degenerate invents, looks for more than what is actually out there, a dynamic that Nordau defines as Mysticism, a highly useless and degenerative practice according to the Austrian writer (57). Flights of mysticism allow people to give into their “dream-fancies,” resulting in an unproductive mental exercise, exhausting the vital energies of the mind on a fruitless exercise (59). As Michael Aronna states regarding Ganivet’s *Idearium*, “Aboulia is simultaneously the cause and symptom of the national dilemma” (81). The same applies to the depictions of opiate abuse in these novels. Opium and morphinism are byproducts of the decadent lifestyle as represented by Pardo Bazán’s Espina Porcel or Gicca’s Carlos Álvarez. Their addictions resulted after years of decadent behavior and contact outside of their homeland, making addiction symptomatic of national illness depicted in these works. Conversely, in a story such as “Ganimedes” the deviant behavior of Federico culminates after getting high from the opiated cigarette.

The ultimate symbol of the affected collector and materialist is the dandy. Therefore, *Los sueños de un morfinómano*, *Duque*, and “Ganimedes” serve as warnings to their Hispanic readership to the dangers of the influence of cosmopolitan cultures. Opium and morphine provide a deceptive and temporary euphoria that can only be reproduced through repeated

consumption. Eventually, the appetite for opiates, much like materialistic desires, becomes all-encompassing, leading the addict downward into obsessive, repetitive, and regressive behavior.

Morphine is a commodity that manifests the artificial paradise. In these anti-dandy Hispanic narratives, opiates represent the materialism that is counter-productive to the nationalistic projects of the Spanish-speaking nations. Drug addiction becomes analogous to the consumerism plaguing the heavily industrialized nations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Genuine spiritual awakening is the result of a reconnection and rededication to one's true national spirit. We see this in Silvio Lago's return to Catholicism in *La Quimera* ("Absuelto, Silvio experimentó una sensación de alivio, una sedación, refugiándose en bahía de tranquilas aguas, cerca de una cosa fértil") as well as the conclusion of *El morfinómano y la divorciada* in which Carlos Álvarez cures his addiction through marriage, fatherhood, and the literal and figurative reconnection with his native soil.

Furthermore in the novel *Duque*, Teddy Crownchield Soto Menor is not merely affected by the apparent degenerative culture of the English dandy. His hereditary decadence is also passed down from his mother's side. In the first descriptions of the protagonist, the narrator refers to another possible site of Teddy's inherited degeneration: "Ojos rasgados, con esa licuefacción [*sic*] criolla que atestiguaba cierta escandalosa leyenda, en que aparecía su bisabuela, marquesa de Soto Menor, acostándose con el mayordomo africano de la 'hacienda'" (12). The racial impurity of Teddy factors into his expulsion, constructing a national identity that now excludes Northern Europe as well as other nations of color. The Peruvian *criollo* thus becomes its own racial/national ideal. Teddy's ancestors deviate from the definition of the national body and Teddy's deviant behavior is in part due to his national/racial makeup. His rejection of his Peruvian heritage and the embracing of English culture both culminate in his

ejection from his mother's homeland into Argentina. His father is an economic fraud ("se había tomado ciertas libertades con fondos que no eran suyos") and his mother feigns wealth by decorating her house with a fake Rembrandt and drinking cheap wine (13). These descriptions of his heritage prefigure the downfall of the house of Crownchild and his erroneous attempts at redemption, one being the attempted mental cleansing through smoking opium. Teddy's biracial background and his experience in the Sino-Peruvian opium den bring us to the next chapter of another facet of the Hispanic literary opiate experience: the image of the immigrant opium smoker. Just as the decadent dandy is closely linked to morphine/opium in the works of this chapter, the Chinese immigrant is directly linked to the problem with opium addiction and potential social upheaval in Spanish America. The European decadent disease affecting the Spanish and Spanish American national body is often contracted from outside the nations' borders, including the concept of Spanish *abulia* that is a direct result of the Spanish wasting vital energies outside of the Iberian Peninsula.

Conversely, the fears of the Chinese presence in the Western Hemisphere represent a perceived invasion from within, a nefarious presence plotting to infect the nation, slowly increasing in number and eventually destroying all that the ruling class holds dear. In the fourth chapter of this dissertation I argue that the replication agent of the Chinese immigrant is the opium pipe: an object that infects the white citizen, who in turn fails to realize him or herself as a functioning member of Western society. The seduced opium smoker's virtues become vices, he is no longer able to procreate, and progress is halted: the white man has become Chinese. In the Uruguayan radio broadcast warning against the various intoxicating substances in the modern world, Peragini links opium directly to the East, declaring it as the "veneno nacional de la China, veneno de la raza amarilla... cruza las fronteras del Occidente y se infiltran todos los pueblos de

Europa y América” (48). The doctor also warns that partaking in an intoxicant traditionally “Oriental” will result in the consumer attributing the qualities (and in this case vices) of that foreign culture: “El ideal de la raza blanca es la actividad, el de la raza amarilla la pasividad. Uno busca en el alcohol la excitación, el otro busca en el opio la anulación de su personalidad, la voluptuosidad de la nada” (Peragini 48).⁶¹ One striking characteristic of Peragini’s *Estupefacientes y toxicomanías* is that the description of opium users does not mention usage practices of those in the Western Hemisphere. It presents a rogue’s alley of exotic locations such as China, India, Persia, and Turkey along with their preferred means of opium ingestion. The point of contact between the East’s ancient history with opium is England, a country that the Peragini blames for turning China into “un inmenso fumadero” (52). England and other imperial nations in Europe are blamed not only for creating the opium epidemic in China but also the harbinger of “uno de los más funestos y perniciosos tóxicos que azota a la humanidad” (48): “A mediados del siglo XIX el consumo del opio se extiende por toda Europa, debido a varios factores: el intercambio comercial en las factorías y las campañas militares del oriente que iniciaron a los soldados de los países europeos en las misteriosa pasión, que no pudieron abandonarla una vez regresados a su patria” (52). With works such as this radio broadcast and the texts in this chapter and the next, the abuse of specific substances was linked to defects of specific races and nationalities.

⁶¹ As will be seen in Chapter 4, the vices associated with opium abusers mirror those vices attributed to the Chinese. One of the more common verbs used to describe the effect of opium of the Western individual in Hispanic texts is the verb *embrutecer* (to brutalize, to lose the capacity to reason). By linking this side-effect to a drug associated so strongly with the Chinese, these writers in turn depict Asians as somehow less human. Regarding opium abuse, Peragini argues that “las nefastas consecuencias que origina el opio...son incalculables: *embrutecimiento* y vejez prematura, para el individuo; miseria y deshonra, para la familia; criminalidad y delincuencia, para la sociedad; hambre y ruina, para la nación” (79, emphasis mine).

Drug addiction is strongly connected to consumerism since it is a disease that depends on economic transactions, consumption and wanton repetition of the process of infection. Unlike most diseases, addiction requires that the infirmed individual continuously poison him or herself. In this particular case of use of opiates, there is no singular moment of infection like with the majority of diseases such as tuberculosis or syphilis. Dissected even further, the different permutations of the alkaloid reflect notions of race, nationality and class. Morphine, clear and pure, becomes associated with Europe, while black opium is linked to the Orient and the un-modern. Morphine is a liquid, most commonly administered through the hypodermic needle, an essential advancement in Western medicine, while the solid black ball of opium is converted into smoke, administered through a long pipe made of bamboo, a tree foreign to the European metropolises.

The final chapter of this dissertation will explore in detail the practice of smoking opium and its connection to Chinese immigration in Spanish America. This form of opiate consumption represents a different fear of foreign influence for Spanish American nations. In a similar fashion though, these writers on Chinese immigration fear the same infiltration of the national body through a foreign source. What makes the Chinese influence on Spanish America different from the decadent European is the depiction of the Asian, particularly male, body as a threat to national identity. The Chinese man, being of a lesser-known culture and racially dissimilar from the Spanish American *criollo*, was perceived as a nefarious threat to the well being of the burgeoning Spanish American nation. Conforming to the binary ontology of the turn of the century, the Chinese were thought to relish in all things Westerners considered barbaric or sinful. The limited Chinese presence in Spanish America for many was the beginnings of a full-on invasion of the East and subsequent eradication of Western virtue and culture. The writers

analyzed in Chapter 4, symbolize the spread of this *amenaza amarilla* with the smoke from the bamboo opium pipe, lulling the Spanish American *criollo* into a state of soporific submission.



Figure 3: “Los Tormentos de la Morfina” (1908)

CHAPTER 4

“De ámbar y de humo:” Opium and Chinese Immigration in early 20th Century Spanish and Spanish American Literature

In Chapter 3, I explored the medical essays that warned against European popular culture and literature that romanticized morphine use, portraying the drug as a *chic* past time for the upper class bourgeoisie. The narratives of Chapter 3 likewise used opiates as a warning to Hispanic nations on the dangers of decadent/dandy influence on their respective nations. Most of Spanish America, barely a century removed from their independence from Spain, struggled to shed their former identity as colonies and to define themselves as modern autonomous nations. In addition to the threat of Western European nations studied in the previous chapter, world events of the nineteenth century brought the cultures and people of East Asia to the Western shores of the “New World.” As a result, many from Spanish America felt that their national identity being threatened from not only the decadent West but also the recent immigration from the East.

In his 1919 travel log, the first image that Guatemalan writer Enrique Gómez Carrillo (1873-1927) offers of an Annam region opium den is that of darkness, followed by silence and sleep. He then proceeds to provide the reader with descriptions of a curious odor that he concludes, upon consulting with his travel mates, is both pleasant and repugnant. Once his eyes adjust to the darkness, Gómez Carrillo realizes that several opium smokers lie motionless on mats around him and his crew:

Eran chinos flacos, de rostros inteligentes. En sus trajes, ninguna indicación de castas. Todos vestían los amplios pantalones negros y los pijamas lustrosos, communes a los tenderos de Che-Long y de Saigón. Inmóviles, con los ojos cerrados y los brazos en cruz, parecían figuras de cera fabricadas en un mismo molde (244).

What is remarkable about this statement is the reiteration of the perceived uniformity of the Asian population in this opium den of French Indochina, which is present day Vietnam. These so-called “wax figures made from the same mold” are dressed alike, void of individuality or consciousness. Conforming to the orientalist theory of Edward Said, the descriptions of Asian cultures in a text such as “En una fumería de opio anamita” create a facile dichotomy of the East and the West. Orientalist texts such as Gómez Carrillo’s create an oriental image that is irrational, depraved and different, which, by contrast, defines the West as rational, moral and normal (Said 40).⁶² According to Francisco Morán in the article “Volutas del deseo: hacia una lectura del orientalismo en el modernismo hispanoamericano,” the Asian body in the Spanish American context during the *modernista* period remained strange and outside the Western epistemology (386). Furthermore, Asians were considered to be carriers of several diseases and it was also believed that their virtues were in fact Western vices. Another stereotype was that all Chinese people were addicted to opium, an idea both radically untrue and near impossible.

The rest of Gómez Carrillo’s essay attempts to be objective in describing the scene inside the opium den. However, he becomes fixated in particular on confirming the sex of an androgynous young person. He describes the individual with conflicting adjectives of sexual attraction and repulsion. His crew even convinces their guide to ask the individual of his or her

⁶² According to Edward Said in his seminal 1978 post-colonial text *Orientalism*, the West’s interactions with the East served only the progressive and expansive needs of the West itself (221). Any deviation from the Western paradigm (culture, religion, language) was considered counter-modern, ancient, and degenerative.

sexual identity, to which no answer is given. The chronicler describes the eyes of this individual as “pozos de infinito, con espanto y beatitud” (246). Gómez Carrillo refuses to experience the opium high first hand. Instead, he chooses to depict the experience through the Western gaze of the androgynous figure’s eyes. In the physical description of the eyes, the Guatemalan writer contrasts the figure before him as a lifeless vessel compared to its *criollo* counterpart: the eyelashes cast large shadows; the skin of the eyelid is described as “*mortecino*” (dying); and the pupil is depicted as a horrific abyss through which the author is able to see all the splendor and horror of the East. He goes on to negate the humanity of the person before him, questioning if he or she is indeed real or some kind of apparition: “Poco a poco la pregunta inicial sobre el sexo de la fumadora llegaba a transformarse en mi mente en otra interrogación más angustiosa relativa a la naturaleza misma de *aquel ser de ámbar y de humo*... lo que quería era saber si veía una realidad o un fantasma, una criatura humana o una sombra” (247, emphasis mine). These descriptions by Gómez Carrillo of the figure of the Asian body do more than parallel the paradox of the opiate experience. Smoking opium is connected to the perceived lifeless, ambiguous, uniform and depraved eastern culture, as often described by Western writers. A term such as “*aquel ser de ámbar y de humo*” is emblematic of the direct connection that has already formed by the turn of the twentieth century between opium smoke and the Chinese people. Gómez Carrillo’s Asian is completely stripped of its humanity: it has no gender, no life, and no corporeal form. Additionally, this figure operates outside of time and space. This person stands before the writer yet is a prisoner to his or her own opiated fever dreams of dragons, ancient palaces, and jade galleons. The description also functions to highlight the masculinity, vitality, and modernity of the text’s author and his audience. In a binary worldview, there is no space for ambiguity or difference, as can clearly be seen in “En una fumería de opio amanita.”

The description of the Asian body in Gómez Carrillo's chronicle is by no means unique, but the narrative of the Orient created by supposedly objective sources such as the aforementioned chronicle, newspapers and fiction that were present in Spanish and Spanish American culture during the turn of the 20th century. These descriptions of the Asian—in the words of Edward Said—as “irrational, depraved, childlike, different” became even more problematic as Asian immigrants, mostly from China, began to seek new social and economic opportunities in the Western Hemisphere including several Spanish American nations.

Like Gómez Carrillo's chronicle on Southeast Asia, there are other Spanish and Spanish American literary examples in the first decades of the twentieth century that focus their themes on Asia and its connection to the smoking of opium. However, unlike “En una fumería de opio anamita,” the works examined in this chapter deal with the infiltration of the East in the Western Hemisphere, especially in Spanish American nations. As a culture that is considered antithetical to one's own violates the abyss of both time and space created by generations of literature, a genuine fear of the emerging Chinese population in Spanish American countries intensified during the first few decades of the 20th century. In these works, the East is not viewed as a distant and romantic land, but as a threat to national identity and the body politic. Despite the relatively small number of the Asian population in these nations, the term *amenaza amarilla* referred to the physical presence and economic influence of Asian populations in Western nations. The works studied in this chapter reflect the anxieties of these newly formed nations, already ravaged with political and social instability and a never-ending attempt at self-definition through culture, politics and race.

The fear of corruption of culture and race through foreign influence is depicted through the Chinese male immigrant and his infectious opium smoke in the poem “Opio” (1920) by

Héctor Pedro Blomberg (1889-1955); the novella *La cortina del bambú* (1949) by Diego Barros Ortiz (1908-1990); “El café del chino” (1932), a short story by José Andrés Capece; “Historia amarilla” (1936) by Chilean writer Guillermo Koenenkampf Cisternas (1890-19XX); and Spanish writer Federico López Valencia’s (1876-19XX) “Los hijos del cielo” (1920). All of these works were written after the enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) in the United States and the end of World War I. These two events resulted in a second wave of Asian (primarily Chinese) immigration in Spanish American countries.⁶³ The Chinese are inexorably linked to the opium pipe. If immigration is viewed in these stories as infection leading to national illness, opium smoke is the vehicle for the transmission of such disease. Westerners that come in contact with opium smoke become Chinese and, thus, inherit the vices and anti-Western (non-progressive) qualities of the Asian race. This chapter will view the methods in which the aforementioned authors depict the threat of Asian immigration in relation to national identity through the metaphor of illness. Additionally, I will demonstrate at the end of the chapter the connection between the depiction of Chinese immigrants in the Western Hemisphere in relation to the 19th century concept of the undead and its relation to fears of cultural contamination from foreigners. For this connection, I will conclude the chapter by exploring the link between the Hispanic texts of this chapter and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897). These stories are important to the study of Hispanic literature since, until recently, there has been little scholarly attention given to the Asian immigrant experience in Spanish America. Furthermore, the literary opiate

⁶³ Another factor that sent more Chinese immigrants to countries such as Mexico, Peru, Chile and Argentina was the American occupation of Cuba following the Spanish-American War, in which the U.S. imposed exclusionary immigration laws on the recently “liberated” nation that mirrored legislation from Washington. In addition to many Chinese immigrants leaving the US for Spanish America, many of the Chinese in Cuba left for Mexico (López 149). Similar exclusionary legislation was popular in various states of Mexico (Schiavone Camacho 70). In Cuba, Chinese immigrants reentered the country following the post WWI need for labor in the sugar industry (López 155).

experience of Spanish America as related to Asian immigration and orientalism is a field with much more to explore.

Historically, the perception of China as an opium-smoking nation primarily stems from England's forced opium trade with China during the first half of the 19th century. The concept of smoking opium was viewed in the West as an anti-positivistic means of opiate consumption since it was primarily viewed as recreational as opposed to the medicinal opiates developed by Western science. Smoking opium, viewed as a degenerate practice by the West, was ironically employed in China because it was viewed as civilized to cook anything that was to be consumed, or as Zheng Yangwen writes, "it was not simply a process of turning the raw into edible. It was the mythical and cosmological difference between nature and culture, between barbarism and civilization" (38). On the other hand, to a Westerner, smoking opium was considered dirty and, unlike the cases of laudanum and morphine, scientists did not bother to perform studies on the Asian form of opiate consumption, therefore by exclusion deeming the method illegitimate in the academic/medical field (Courtwright 61). This practice was viewed as a purely recreational form of opiate consumption, and thus, a decadent vice. Furthermore, the opium pipe is depicted in the press and literature as if it were an appendage of the Chinese physiology, as if it were inherently present to the Asian corporeal composition.

The direct link between opium and Chinese culture is also reflected in the non-fiction works of the Hispanic community as well as the documented cases in other regions of the West. Spanish/Paraguayan writer Rafael Barrett (1876-1910) wrote the essay "La China y el opio" (1910) as an indictment on China that is, in his words, "prisionero de un espejo alto y frío, que

oculta todos los horizontes bajo la vana imagen del pasado” (19).⁶⁴ According to Barrett, the source of China’s illness and lack of progress is opium. He states that in contrast to the ancient Egyptians that embalmed their dead, “los chinos han embalsamado las almas, han enterrado en ellos mismos sus antepasados difuntos; se han convertido en momias vivas” (21). He creates a parallel between the opium addict and an entire culture, describing the Chinese as forever dreaming and fossilized in a time ancient to that of the modern West. According to Barrett, time has no meaning to the Chinese; clocks are but curious instruments beyond their understanding. He concludes that “para la China no hay ya destinos; necesitan detener el tic-tac formidable de la máquina inútil. La Emperatriz no debió estorbar a su raza la ilusión consoladora del reposo” (21). Barrett’s description of Chinese culture is defined by Edward Said as “latent orientalism” in which the orient is assumed to be frozen in time, ancient and oppositional to modernity (208). According to Said, this definition of the Orient is a means to depict the West as the complete opposite (modern) and therefore hold dominion over other parts of the world (3). For Barrett, the Chinese not only function outside of time but they have no means of conceptualizing time itself, depicting an entire race as intellectually inferior to his own. He fuses the lethargic and time-altering by-product of the opiate experience to Chinese society: to be Chinese is to be high on opium, and to be high on opium is to be Chinese. Despite the cultural differences between Europe and Spanish America, the commentaries of Barrett on Chinese culture mirror those of his Northern European and American counterparts. General conceptualizations of Asia and its residents in Hispanic nations closely resemble those depicted by Edward Said in *Orientalism*

⁶⁴ Despite living the majority of his short life in Spain, Barrett helped to form the Paraguayan literary group *La Colmena* in 1905 in Asunción, and subsequently cemented his career within the Paraguayan literary tradition until his death from tuberculosis in 1910.

since these nations, with limited first-hand experience with China and Japan, relied on the orientalist views that had been developed in the West centuries before.

It is important to note that the majority of the history research concerning the Asiatic experience in the Western Hemisphere concentrates on a handful of countries, namely the United States, Cuba, Peru, and Mexico. Each immigrant group had a unique experience according to its country of residence. The literature studied in this chapter —while drawing on some realities— rely heavily on stereotype and generalities to construct the image of the Chinese male, Chinese culture, and their connection to smoking opium. The image of the Chinese immigrant becomes a literary trope, universalized despite the non-Asian author's country of origin. Therefore the Argentine, Chilean, or Spanish authors' description of the Chinese immigrant becomes an amalgam of Asian stereotypes from Europe, the United States, and other Spanish American countries as well as their own nation of origin. It is with this understanding that I do not limit historical research regarding Chinese immigration in the Western Hemisphere to the countries of origin of the authors presented in this chapter. Furthermore, in a story such as "Los hijos del cielo," the author is twice removed culturally from his subject matter (a Spaniard writing on the Chinese immigrants of California).

In the mid to late nineteenth century, due to the dire economic situation in China —in part a result of England's forced opium trade and the proceeding wars—, thousands of poor immigrants were shipped to the United States, as well as other countries, for cheap labor. These Chinese immigrants, known pejoratively as "coolies," also entered Spanish America in countries such as Mexico, Chile, Argentina and Peru through open-door labor policies coupled with the anti-immigration policies of the US after 1882 (Chou 13). A portion of these immigrants were opium smokers and an underground culture of clandestine gambling houses, bordellos, and

opium dens quickly sprouted in burgeoning metropolitan areas such as San Francisco, Mexico City, and Havana. With an increasing opium-smoking population from the East and increased medical legitimate use in Europe —where opiates were esteemed as analgesic and palliative substances—, North and South America thus became a crossroads between the opiate consumption of the Far East and the West. Decades before the influx of the Chinese population in the West, many argued for the domestic cultivation of poppies in order meet increased demand for opiates. In 1861 in fact, Manuel Weiss wrote an op-ed piece for the Mexican newspaper *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* arguing for the domestic cultivation of poppy fields along with the welcoming of Asian immigrants to cultivate the crops: “Para asegurar un buen resultado y dar la mayor extension posible al proyecto, proponemos introducir cristianos del Asia Menor y de la Siria que están familiarizados con la producción del opio” (1). Twenty years later, newspaper articles in Mexico regarding the Asian population in Spanish America were more likely to focus on the plague of opium addiction and the threat of the Chinese immigrating to the Western Hemisphere. These newspaper articles described China and its people in many of the same derogatory ways as Gómez Carrillo wrote about Cambodians in his travel writings. The primary concern regarding Chinese immigrants for many in Spanish America at the turn of the century was the degeneration of their nation. One 1906 article titled “¿Por qué se casan blancos con chinos?” claimed that Chinese men essentially tricked white women into marrying them by getting them hooked on smoking opium: “Las esposas blancas de los chinos alegan razones variadas para dar la causa de sus casamientos, los motivos pueden clasificarse así: amor, dinero, opio, hogar, buen tratamiento” (3).⁶⁵ Intermarriage with a race of people viewed as inferior to the

⁶⁵ According to the article, the primary motivation for Chinese men’s interest in white women stems from seemingly misguided feelings of superiority over the white race after Japan’s unexpected defeat of Russia in 1905: “Desde la guerra ruso-japonesa, la derrota de la raza blanca

West was quite concerning for Mexicans, Chileans, Argentinians, and other nationalities experiencing an influx of immigration in the early decades of the 20th century. It is therefore not surprising that Spanish America's literature began to reflect these fears and concerns regarding the well being of the nation and the threats of opium and immigration.

The poem and the short stories described in this chapter reflect the anxieties of what was considered the domestic "infection" of the East in the Western Hemisphere. One of the primary concerns in the West regarding the Chinese population was the corruption and intermarriage of the Chinese men with white women. These fears are clearly reflected in the short story "El café del chino" (1932) by José Andrés Capece, a story that involves a beautiful white woman seduced and imprisoned by a Chinese man through marriage and his inability to provide for and protect her.

Whereas Spanish American writers in the previous chapter focused on the dangers of their nations becoming too similar to Northern Europe, the authors of this chapter focus their critical gaze on the Far East, primarily China. In fact the terms "China" and "chino" become all-encompassing terms for all East Asian nations and their inhabitants. Eastern customs, culture, and even the Asian body were viewed as starkly antithetical to their Western counterparts. The early *modernistas* primarily employed idealized, romantic orientalist imagery to contribute to the exotic and otherworldly nature of their work. For example, in the already studied short story "El humo de la pipa," Rubén Darío's protagonist declares upon taking his first puff of an opium pipe, "¡Oh, mi Oriente deseado...!" (160). In Casal's poem "Nostalgias" we saw that the poetic voice

ha influído en chinos y japoneses para aspirar a mayor igualdad de derechos. La guerra suprimió en realidad, el aborrecimiento tradicional de blancos con amarillos, además de haber puesto en primer línea a los chinos, reclamando la superioridad que sienten en su corazón los orientales en todas partes del mundo" (3).

dreams of escaping to exotic, eastern nations including China, “el imperio florido / en que el opio da olvido / del vivir” (204). In these two examples the narrative voices mentally travel to an idealized exotic land, an isolated Eden that gives the European escape from the hardships of their modern, Western life. For many writers such as Darío and Casal, the East’s contrast to the West functions more as a critique of Western modernity rather than Eastern backwardness, albeit still racially and culturally patronizing viewed through a contemporary lens.

In works such as “Nostalgias” and “El humo de la pipa,” there is a feeling of an unattainable distance between Western nations and the Orient. Peruvian writer Abraham Valdelomar (1888-1919) employed this notion of distance to his advantage in his political allegory “Cuentos chinos” (1918). The story takes place in the town of Siké in ancient China described by Valdelomar as “allí por los tiempos en que Confucio fumaba opio y dictaba lecciones de moral en la Universidad de Pekín” (463). The narrative centers on the political upheaval over several years in this region of China, but, as Ricardo Silva-Santisteban affirms, the story is a satire of Peruvian politics during the turn of the 20th century. Valdelomar creates a vast special, temporal, racial and cultural distance from his criticism of contemporary politics in order to obscure his attacks on the instability of Peru’s political landscape.

From this study’s point of view, Valdelomar’s depiction of China in “Cuentos chinos” is very telling regarding the general view of the East by the West. The title of Valdelomar’s work perpetuates the perceived inferiority of Asia with regards to Europe and other Western nations. The term *cuento chino* in Peruvian culture refers to an untrue or deceptive story (Silva-Santisteban 97).⁶⁶ Therefore, culturally Peruvian readers traditionally understood, whether

⁶⁶ In 2011, Argentine-born director Sebastián Borensztein directed the film *Un cuento chino* in which the protagonist Roberto unexpectedly befriends Chinese immigrant Jun.

consciously or not, that anything that was Chinese meant that it was antithetical to the Western counterpart. Valdelomar incorporates the double meaning of the story's title —since in fact this work is a series of connected vignettes that take place in China— to signal to his readership that the story itself likewise can be read two different ways. Despite the intended *double entendre* of “Cuentos chinos,” the allegorical link of Ancient China to Valdelomar's contemporary Peru also reinforces the orientalist view of China as anti-modern, as inherently backward.⁶⁷

Another important aspect of Valdelomar's “Cuentos chinos” is the repetition of the quote “allí por los tiempos en que Confucio fumaba opio y dictaba lecciones de moral.” Here we can follow a direct link, or perhaps causality, between Chinese philosophy, morality, and the act of smoking opium. In the first few decades of the twentieth century when smoking opium was considered a capital vice, Chinese culture, morality, and philosophies became interwoven with addiction, drug use and social degeneration. It could also be inferred by Valdelomar's quote that China's civilization in and of itself is due, at least in part, to getting high on opium.

What is most striking, with regards to this study, is that other works already mentioned in this chapter likewise make a direct connection with eastern culture and smoking opium. In Darío's short story, the protagonist immediately travels East (in his mind) through the consumption of opium smoke. Casal's narrative voice describes China as a region of forgetfulness thanks to the drug, and Valdelomar connects opium to the ancient space and philosophies in which he sets his narrative. These three works of fiction depict the East as a place of dreams, of a constant inebriated state and of deceit. Gómez Carrillo, supposedly writing an objective chronicle, paints the East with the same literary brush. By describing the East in this way, these works, according to Edward Said, present the West as rational, sober, and honest in

⁶⁷ For more on literature and the Chinese immigration experience in Peru, see Ignacio López Calvo's *Dragons in the Land of the Condor: Writing Tusán in Peru* (2014).

its ideal state. The primary difference from the works of Darío, Casal and Valdelomar and the works that comprise the focus of this study is that the former *modernista* stalwarts idealize the East as something far removed from their own reality. The latter authors are directly confronted with Chinese culture and its people and the misunderstandings of their past clash with the perceived realities of their present. The resulting narratives and poems reflect the anxiety of individuals confronted with the reconciliation of their modernizing nations being “invaded” by a group of people that history and popular culture have deemed locked in the annals of the past and removed from the Western concept of progress.

The first story explored in this chapter, is emblematic of this clash of the perceived ancient population residing in a modern Buenos Aires. Written in 1932, José Andrés Capece’s short story collection *Los soñadores del puerto* is an attempt to paint a realistic portrait of the errant lives along the ports of Buenos Aires. Within this collection, “El café del chino” centers on a small, grimy café owned by a Chinese immigrant named Chang. He spends the late night hours at the café behind the counter smoking opium and staring vaguely into the distance as drunken sailors order rounds of drinks into the wee hours of the morning. Three sailors in particular become obsessed with Chang’s beautiful, blonde wife and fantasize about professing their love for this woman. These men enter the café night after night having the same conversation regarding Chang’s European wife. The story ends with the assault of Chang’s wife by the hands of these three seamen. Her cries for help are futile; her unresponsive husband, with his pipe hanging out of his mouth, is hunched over the café counter in an opiate-induced reverie.

This story encapsulates the anxiety of the perceived threat described in the 1906 newspaper article “¿Por qué se casan blancos con chinos?” by demonstrating the inability of a Chinese man to protect a white woman from danger. Chang’s café represents the infection of

invasion. This Asian man has corrupted a fair-haired European who he cannot protect. Just as Said noted in *Orientalism*, if the Western man is virile and protective of women, the Eastern man is described as impotent and unable to care for his family.⁶⁸ But in “El café del chino” Chang’s impotence is caused by his opium addiction. This does not make this character any type of exception though, since China was a nation perceived to be plagued with opium addicts.

The blonde woman is essentially a victim of the Asian presence in Argentina in two ways; through the marriage to Chang and the assault at the end of the story by the three sailors, one of which is Japanese. José Andrés Capece’s narrative contains a two-fold commentary of Asian immigration as an invasion both passive and violent, represented by Chang and the Japanese sailor respectively. Chang’s wife is seduced passively through Chang’s second-hand opium smoke that fills the café in which they work and live, and then she is sexually assaulted by the unnamed sailor from Japan and his two accomplices of unknown origin. After the attack, the narration shift its focus back to Chang, who may have witnessed the attack on his wife, yet remained incapacitated as a result of his opium stupor. Of the five stories analyzed in this chapter, “El café del chino” is unique in that opium consumption within the narrative is limited to the Chinese character. Although it is culturally implied that the only way Chang could marry a white woman is through opium seduction, the narrator never mentions others smoking. The thematic focus is not simply the invasive physical presence of the Chinese, but the sexual and reproductive dangers of their presence in the Western Hemisphere. Yet, paradoxically, the fear of Chinese men seducing white women is coupled with the emasculation of the Chinese. Common descriptions during the 19th century of Asian men suggested a femininity unwanted by the ideal Western man. Chang’s inability to save his wife in this situation may have a connotation of

⁶⁸ According to Edward Said, "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (3).

sexual impotence. It was well known that frequent opium use decreased sexual desire. Therefore, when assumed to be constantly high on opium, the Chinese male was viewed as incapable of normative sexual behavior, rendering him unable to procreate, thus genealogically, and from a positivist viewpoint, stagnate.⁶⁹ As a whole the culture was viewed as encapsulated in time, thus the concept of the virile Chinese man seemed antithetical to the construct of the East in opposition to the West. For the Spanish American construct, normative masculinity in conjunction with nation building was essential in the view of turn-of-the-century erudite *criollos* such as José Enrique Rodó (1871-1917). In his essay *Ariel* (1900), according to Michael Aronna, Rodó sexualizes the concept of national identity through projecting the marriage of the nation (as a concept) with the future of Spanish American nations: the educated young man. Aronna concludes that according to the Uruguayan philosopher, “if Latin America’s youth believes in itself, [...] restricts itself to the chaste, exclusively male contemplation of the ideal, [...] then [the] conserved, fecund and sexually charged vital internal force of youth will act as a catalyst and accelerate the pace of evolution” (Aronna 130-31). It is essential, then, to depict the Chinese as unable to aid in the evolution of Spanish America to promote the male *criollo* as the heir apparent to the “New World.” In this sense, Chang’s wife in “El café del chino” represents the bleak future of nation (specifically, Capece’s Argentina) in the hands of the Chinese immigrant. This short story serves as a warning to fellow Argentinians to protect their women, as they must also protect the entire nation, against the overthrow of the East.

⁶⁹ Dr. César Juarros theorizes in *Engaños de la morfina* that “La borrachera sustituye al placer de la unión sexual” (37). Peragini’s radio broadcast warns its Uruguayan listeners on the sexual consequences of opiate abuse stating that the addict will suffer from “atrofía testicular” (92). In *Lirio negro*, protagonist Flavio Durán also comments on the affect of opiates on male libido: “la morfina que agota la potencia, pero, no el *deseo* del amor” (Vargas Vila 46).

The fear of invasion is also represented in Chilean writer Diego Barros Ortiz's novella *La cortina del bambú*, written in 1949. The distraught protagonist Ascanio, coming off a failed relationship, gets drunk and stumbles into the Chinese quarter and enters an opium den. Li, an elderly Chinese man, takes Ascanio by the hand, leads him into a private room, and drugs him. Soon after this initial contact, Ascanio befriends Li and they reunite to smoke opium and discuss Eastern philosophies. Li claims that the opium dreams are in fact an alternate reality and that it is possible to enter into that dimension. On his last night, Ascanio goes insane from his opiate consumption and murders Li with a letter opener.

This novella, like "El café del chino," uses opium as the gateway to Western decadence at the manipulative hands of the East. A broken-hearted and vulnerable Ascanio is lured into the inverted, underground world of Li. Ascanio's madness and murderous rampage once again represents the corruptive and virtue-lacking mentality of Chinese culture. More telling, however, is the way in which Barros Ortiz represents the spiritual and physical invasion of the East in this Spanish American country. Ascanio and Li discuss Confucian philosophies and Li convinces Ascanio that his opiate dreams are in fact reality. Li claims to provide access to another dimension in which one can enter and remain forever. The Chinese man's corrupting influence ultimately leads to Ascanio's demise, but the lasting influence of the East in *La cortina del bambú* goes beyond Li's murder and Ascanio's madness. In the final scene of the novella, two students, discussing Ascanio's crime, notice a book on Confucius in a bookstore display window. This final image is Barros Ortiz's warning on the dangerous influence of Eastern philosophies. More lasting than the physical presence of the scant Chinese population in Chile is the cultural influence this group may have on the *criollo* population of the Adecan nation. The students flippantly notice the Confucian book next to a soccer magazine, suggesting to the reader the

necessity for vigilance and wariness with regards to a seemingly innocuous Asian presence in Chile. As Ascanio as an example, the contact and acceptance of Eastern culture and ideals will ultimately lead to madness. In this sense, *La cortina del bambú* is not only a commentary on the physical illness of the national body —as represented by opium— but also the threat of national mental illness.

Another Chilean writer, Guillermo Koenenkampf Cisternas wrote “Historia amarilla” which became part of his 1936 short story collection *Geografía santa*. In the story, protagonist Simón González is a carpenter and casket maker for a funeral home located near the Chinese quarter of a non-descript city. One night, his Chinese employee Viracho —which in Southern Cone parlance means cross-eyed— poisons Simón with an opiated tea.⁷⁰ Simón González has several nightmarish opium-induced visions, mostly involving grotesque Asian men attacking him and his workspace.

The primary theme of this short story is that of invasion, both physical and mental. This double invasion functions as a process of national and personal infection. Simón González is the sole white *criollo* character, giving the reader a feeling of helplessness in facing the incoming Chinese immigrant, despite the very small population of Asian immigrants in Chile during the twentieth century.⁷¹ He is tricked into drinking an opiated tea and his opium dreams are haunted with the faces of his Asiatic neighbors, echoing Thomas De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English*

⁷⁰ In addition to meaning cross-eyed, *viracho*, originating from Guaraní, is also a term for a deer. Culturally, cross-eyed people are generally considered inferior given their physical abnormality. Additionally, the nickname Viracho strips the character of his humanity by depicting him as a term that either refers to a physical disability or a wild animal, essentially depicting him as a monstrous humanoid.

⁷¹ The Chinese population according to the 1925 *Censo de la República de Chile* was quite scarce, comprising less than two thousand Chinese immigrants in a country of almost 3.8 million inhabitants (22).

Opium Eater. The Chinese invade his place of business, an important economic commentary in the story because during the 1920s there was an increasing presence of Chinese owned businesses in major cities in countries such as Mexico, Cuba, Peru and Argentina. With this influx of immigrant owned business, there was a backlash in many countries due to angered citizens feeling the Chinese were taking away employment opportunities. Countries such as Mexico and Cuba passed 4/5 or 80% laws which mandated that 80% of employees of all businesses must be native-born citizens in an effort to stymie increasing economic and political power of the Chinese populations (Romero 173). The Sinophobic sentiments in Mexico, for example, rose to such a level that the Chinese were expelled by law from the state of Sonora in 1931 (Schiavone Camacho 67). A year before, the state had banned marriages between Chinese men and Mexican women (Schiavone Camacho 66).

Simón González's poisoning also reflects another stereotype of the Asian man as deceptive and dishonest. This depiction is explored in greater depth in "Cuatro libras de felicidad" by Cuban writer Alfonso Hernández Catá (1885-1940). In this short story, a Chinese opium smuggler successfully evades capture from Cuban authorities through an intricate plan of deceit and betrayal. Hernández Catá, however, focuses on the cunning ability of the Chinese man to thwart Cuban authority for financial gain.

These stories support the ideas of degeneration as described by European viewpoints such as that claimed by Max Nordau, but are unique in that they are also concerned with issues of national identity and nation building, themes that permeate Spanish American literature beginning in the mid 18th century, and more clearly through the 19th century. Defining one's nation as Western takes on more meaning in Spanish America than in Europe since these nations were many times not considered part of the progressive West. By the turn of the 20th century,

many of these nations were barely one hundred years old and had experienced a myriad of political issues that threatened their progress and self-definition. Immigrants from non-western countries threatened the cultural identity of countries that were already struggling to grapple with their seemingly heterogeneous European and indigenous cultures. Unwanted immigration became viewed as an infection of the national body and a threat to the social fabric of the young nations of Spanish America. The Chinese man is represented as another possible infection. The authors use opium as the vessel of the infection, which wreaks havoc on the Western mind, leading to madness and decadence.

The orientalist view and fears of the contamination of the national body are also presented in the poetry of the first decades of the twentieth century, epitomized by works such as “Opio” (1920) by Héctor Pedro Blomberg:⁷²

Wang Li, dame más opio, más opio todavía!

(Ya he fumado dos pipas; con esta serán tres;)

Para llenar de sueños mi vida muerta y fría:

El olvido primero, y la muerte después...

¡Wang Li, dame más opio! Una mujer dormía

En actitud convulsa y rígida, a mis pies...

¿Cuántas pipas le has dado, Wang? Yo la conocía

Cuando era bella y joven, en un puerto francés...

Wang Li, dame más opio, que mi nave mañana

⁷² Since this poem is relatively unknown, I include it here in order for the reader to have a better feel for the tone and form intended by Blomberg.

Se llevará mi vida miserable y lejana,
Con el dolor de siempre por las rutas del mar.

La dormida me mira con mirar fijo, extraño,
Con aquellos sus bellos ojos que yo amé antaño...

Pero Wang Li ya viene...Se oye su lento andar (14).

In the poem, Blomberg employs the trope of the oceanic journey as a metaphor for life and inevitable death. The poetic voice is a weary traveler located in what can be assumed as a Chinese-run opium den, repeatedly begging a Chinese man Wang Li for another opium pipe. Despite his pleas, the poet seems reluctant to smoke more opium, cognizant of the damaging effects of addiction. The representation of this destruction to the Spanish American *criollo* body lies at the poetic voice's feet: a once beautiful (possibly French) woman completely dehumanized and de-beautified by opiate addiction. It is unclear whether the woman is alive or dead (once again a common description of the physical nature of the opiate high). Despite the surrounding physical and moral destruction, more pipes are requested. The sonnet concludes with the image of the slow footsteps of Wang Li, bringing the poet his next pipe and thus, the poet's impending death.

The literary themes and structure of "Opio" do not provide its reader with the innovation of many canonical poets of the *modernista* movement. What is most intriguing regarding Blomberg's poem is the depiction of the Chinese figure. Wang Li functions as a personification of Death: an Asian Grim Reaper. Opium becomes an image of the decay of the physical body over the course of a lifetime, administered by a nefarious Asian man. Over the process of time Wang Li has destroyed the life and beauty of a European woman ("Yo la conocía / Cuando era

bella y joven, en un puerto francés...”) and the poetic voice itself has resigned to a life of cold stagnation, simply awaiting death (“dame más opio [...] Para llenar de sueños mi vida muerta y fría”). The two non-Asian figures of the poem remain stagnated, unproductive and near-death, awaiting the slow decay (via opium) that will lead to their ultimate demise. Just as the human is essentially a prisoner to the inevitability of death, the European man and woman become the undead slaves of Wang Li, their mind consumed by only one thought: “Dame más opio, más opio todavía.”

The user, however, is not to blame for their current state of degradation. Wang Li, a personification of death, infects others with the inverted medicine that brings “El olvido primero, y la muerte después” (14). While contemplating the ruined life of the woman at his feet, the traveler asks “¿Cuántas pipas le has dado, Wang?” This statement reflects one of the primary fears regarding the “amenaza amarilla:” the destruction of Western society via foreign invasion. These fears take on great meaning for the Western Hemisphere as countries such as Cuba, Peru and the United States formed national identities primarily based on their former European colonies. Some countries, such as Mexico, reluctantly included indigenous and/or *mestizo* races into their identity; Asian immigrants threatened the delicate balance of these nations barely a century old (in the case of Cuba, only decades old). The East was ideologically and racially excluded from ideas of Western development, even regarding ideas of Western Europe’s degeneration. Max Nordau states that for the degenerate, “the increase in the consumption of opium and hashish is still greater, but we need not concern ourselves about that, since the chief sufferers from them are Eastern people’s, *who play no part in the intellectual development of the white races*” (35, emphasis mine). Nordau’s statement affirms the relative lack of concern and interest in Asian culture in relation to the “contemporary” and “modern” Western civilizations.

Nordau assumes a lack of connectivity between cultures as well as any sort of common ground culturally between the East and West. Despite Nordau's erroneous assumption, from his point of view opium consumption of the Eastern races is emblematic of the hereditary degeneration of the East that now threatens the West. Nordau's East is essentially quarantined from the advancing and modern European nations. If the East were to cross the borders into the West, what are the implications on culture and national health?

Texts such as those studied in this chapter contemplate the questions above. In this line of thinking, Chinese are the disease and opium smoke becomes the means of infection. To illustrate this point further it is necessary to examine the cover of Alfonso Hernández Catá's collection of short stories *Cuatro libras de felicidad* (1939) (Figure 1). The image embodies the perception of the Chinese body in the first decades of the twentieth century. Below the author's name and the title of the collection is a disembodied head of a bald-headed Asian man. His eyes are sharply angular and narrow portraying a caricature of the non-Western physical features of Chinese people. His eyebrows are also angled downward and mouth turned down in a contemptuous scowl. From the Asian man's mouth escapes a single spiral of opium smoke along with two more spirals emanating from the left and the right of the man's head.



Figure 1: (Left) Cover of Hernández-Cata's 1933 short story collection *Cuatro libras de felicidad*. (Right) Image Detail.

What is most intriguing regarding this image is the blatant fusion of the Asian man with opium consumption. There is no pipe or any other paraphernalia that would provide its audience with any indication of two different entities: opium smoke appears to be an endogenous excretion of the Asian male body. Thus the opium pipe can be read as a phallic, infective apparatus that violates and destroys the Western body at the hands of the Asian body. And, like the figure of Wang Li in Blomberg's "Opio," the infection is malicious, violent and intentional. In the language of the sinophobic West, Chinese immigration was often synonymous with Chinese colonization (Bottoms 157). The poetic voice of "Opio" blames the figure of Wang Li for his and his former lover's impending death. The Asian disease is opium addiction, a malady that causes extreme torpor and decrepitude of the Western body. This interpretation of Asian people and culture was contemporaneous to the political climate of the time regarding Chinese immigration in the Western Hemisphere. At the turn of the twentieth century, Cuban Commissioner of Immigration F.E. Menocal argued in an official memorandum that the Chinese were a race of consumers, incapable of producing anything (López 152). This anti-productive consumerism of the Chinese race, according to the poem "Opio," can be transmitted, through opium smoke, to non-Chinese races. Just as degeneration could infect future generations, opium and Chinese culture were seen as a genealogical infection. For this reason, miscegenation with Asians was viewed as reprehensible. In Blomberg's poem, the victims of Wang Li's pipe have been violated by the Asian body whose mere presence infects those in his proximity, thus warning the reader of the danger lurking in the darkness of the Chinese quarters of towns and cities throughout the Western world.

Spanish writers also wrote about the Chinese immigrant experience from the Western perspective. However, these narratives usually did not take place in Iberian Peninsula. Spaniards such as José Montero y Vidal (1851-19XX) and Antonio Chápuli Navarro wrote short stories depicting the Chinese presence during the last decades of the Spanish colonization of the Philippines. Montero y Vidal's "El pirata Li-Mi-Hong" (1876) and Chápuli Navarro's "El chino" (1894) depict the Chinese presence in the Philippines as a nuisance and a competitive factor in Spain's successful colonization of the islands and the subjugation and assimilation of its non-Spanish inhabitants. These stories also rely heavily upon the common Western perception of Chinese people during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as colonizing and untrustworthy opium addicts, or, as Chápuli Navarro puts it, "enroscados como serpiente ahíta en los horrores de la digestión, sobre frágil banquetilla, recargados con las enervadoras somnolencias del opio" (276-77). It is important to note the emphasis of consumption once again with the image of the Chinese male. Chápuli Navarro employs two images of consumption with his short description of the Chinese, one in reference to the "horrific" consumption of a snake, the other, once again, the consumption of opium. The use of horror and the grotesque description of Chinese immigrant culture is employed to a greater degree in the short story "Los hijos del cielo" by fellow Spaniard Federico López Valencia.

In 1920, López Valencia wrote *Cuadros americanos: escenas de la vida en los Estados Unidos*, a collection of short stories all taking place in the United States intended for readers of his homeland. The tone of the collection presents the United States as an exotic pastiche of diverse peoples and strange, expanding geographies. Stories include those of recently freed slaves ("Hijo de esclavos") and "El lejano oeste," a narrative which focuses on the cowboy culture of the West and a title that connects this region of the U.S. with the highly exoticized

Asian nations lumped together as the “Far East.” The most intriguing story for this study (which immediately follows “El lejano oeste”) is “Los hijos del cielo:” a narrative which depicts the squalor and violence of the underground opium dens and gambling houses of San Francisco’s Chinatown. From the point of view of the author, Chinatown is an exotic area within an exotic locale; a Russian nesting doll of the strange and unknown for the average Spanish reader. The short story is written in the style of the *crónicas*, blurring the lines between reality and fiction. Like Gómez Carrillo’s non-fiction *crónica*, the superior Western male observes, in a supposed objective fashion, the strange, often grotesque characteristics and behaviors of a foreign culture.

The plot of “Los hijos del cielo” revolves around an unnamed narrator of European, assumedly Spanish origin, writing in the first person. A frequent visitor of the city, the narrator claims to know San Francisco extremely well. After describing the lush flora and fauna of the bay area, the narrator becomes disoriented due to the large crowd in Kearney Street as the night closes in on the city. Suddenly, he finds himself in San Francisco’s Chinatown, described as a “detalle típico que no se encuentra en toda América [...] situado en el centro de la ciudad, entre la Pacific Avenue, bordeada de lujosas residencias de millonarios, y Market Street, la gran vía comercial” (158). Immediately Chinatown (representative of the culture of its inhabitants) is depicted as a cultural and geographic anomaly, ironically situated in the middle of the upper echelon of Western capitalist culture, invading the space where the elite reside and work. López Valencia’s narrator contrasts the modernity of San Francisco’s skyscrapers with the filth of the Chinatown streets.

He follows the description of San Francisco’s wealthy business district with the following sketch of Chinatown: “Por las aceras, llenas de papeles viejos y de toda clase de detritus, circula una multitud de hombres pequeños, con largas trenzas negras” (159). The crowds of Chinese

men are coupled with the trash and filth lining the streets, invoking a superior position of the seemingly more civilized, European observer. Like a scientist observing wildlife, the narrator's interest is piqued and decides to infiltrate and experience “las costumbres de estos corrompidos orientales, de visitar los fumaderos de opio, las salas de té y de juego y otros antros del vicio, que se ocultan en los pisos subterráneos de las casas” (160). The narrator notes that is customary for the Chinese to build houses with one or two floors and then build underneath several basement floors, an inversion of Western architectural norms. López Valencia's narrator finds himself in several of these underground floors, observing and providing a scathing commentary of the night culture of the Chinese immigrants of the US. His adventure leads him to one of the oldest opium dens in the Americas —filled with grotesque opium addicts— and finally to a gambling room in which the narrator witnesses a senseless murder. He immediately flees, running until returning to the business district's Market Street (“donde me juzgué a salvo”) (168). Upon his escape, his terror subsides and returns safely to his hotel resolving to avoid further contact with Chinatown's underground culture: “respiré tranquilo, me enjugué el sudor y tomé el primer tranvía para el hotel, prometiéndome moderar mi curiosidad y no exponerse a aventuras peligrosas en los antros frecuentados por los corrompidos hijos del cielo” (168). The narrator narrowly escapes the vice-ridden, corrupting influence of the East, resolving to moderate his curiosity, which almost led to his moral demise. His site of refuge is Market Street, which at the time was a newly rebuilt section of San Francisco that eventually became one of the primary financial and cultural sites of the city. Journalist Walter J. Thompson for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, wrote a commentary in 1917 on the positive revitalization of the once ragged city street. In his article he concludes:

Looking on the Market street of today, the rejuvenated and rebuilt Market street [...]with its fine new buildings, its surge of business life, its path of gold and its scintillating

thousands of gleaming lights, it is far different from the old Market street, but the San Franciscan of old [...] cannot do otherwise than rejoice with the energetic later generation responsible for the metamorphosis and swell with pride over its abounding magnificence and glory, which give promise of being enhanced in the near future a thousandfold (Thompson 26).

This description is in stark contrast to the human “detritus” López Valencia depicts infesting the streets of Chinatown, mere blocks from the modern paradise of San Francisco’s Market Street.

In accordance to Said’s definition of orientalism, López Valencia describes San Francisco’s Chinatown as antithetical to an ideal Western metropolitan area. Its location in between the residential and business sections of the city’s elite functions as a bitter irony for the narrator. Streets are covered in filth, sidewalks are used more for small kiosk businesses than walking and even the food is inedible: “los chinos consumen en grandes cantidades, y de multitud de productos alimenticios, de aspecto repulsivo, y de los cuales se desprende un insoportable olor de podredumbre” (159). López Valencia’s narrator depicts Asian food, a basic necessity for sustaining life, as putrid, rotting and virtually inedible from the Westerner’s point of view. Everything is described as inverted; sidewalks are barely used for walking. The narrator’s description of the people on the street resembles observations of animal behavior: consuming large amounts of rotten food, nameless hordes of men (most dressed the same with identical ponytails) swarming the streets, and unresponsive opium addicts unable to recognize the squalor in which they live.

The most grotesque scene centers on the narrator witnessing the already high Chan-Saw-Lee preparing and smoking another opium pipe. What’s the effect of the supposedly objective narrator’s experience in the bowels of Chinatown witnessing Chan-Saw-Lee getting high and

passing out? Complete repulsion and disgust: “Me dirigí a la escalera para salir al exterior, pues el aire nauseabundo me ahogaba y aquel espectáculo me había revuelto el estómago” (165).

Witnessing the underground culture of Chinatown literally makes him ill. Furthermore, the narrator complains on various occasions on the inability to breathe in the rooms he meanders through. Upon going down another floor, interrupting a poker game, the narrator observes that “el calor era *asfixiante*” (165, emphasis mine). The interior spaces of Chinatown are equally inverted; the narrator enters a tea house which is in actuality a front for the debased activity that takes place in the various floors built beneath the building. Whereas western architecture builds up towards the sky (“rascacielos de 20 y 30 pisos” [158]) reaching towards the heavens, the buildings of Chinatown dig deep underground, constructing hellish locations of drug use, gambling, and horrifying living conditions. Contemporary Americans viewed Chinatown in a similar fashion. According to Michael D. Bottoms in his book *An Aristocracy of Color*, for Californians “the section [Chinatown] had quickly grown to mirror the hollowed-out moral shell they believed Chinese civilization had become” (157). The underground locations described in “Los hijos del cielo” also reinforce the concept that the Chinese were sneaky, conniving individuals. The murder witnessed by the narrator is the result of perceived shenanigans during a poker game deep within the underground floors of the Chinese teahouse. This combined with the grotesque physical description of the Chinese people and their connection to the mind-numbing effects of smoking opium results in a *de facto* horror story; a tantalizing, yet terrifying narrative that is attractive in its repugnance in relation to the Spanish reader of the 1920s. It is an exploration of a horrific and exotic locale, couched in the safety of the written word.

The underlying understanding of the Chinese body in the Western Hemisphere is linked to the paradox of conforming to and subverting the binary forces that dominated Western

ontology during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For many Westerners and, by extension, the *criollo* class of Spanish America, the ideal human form is the male and female of white, European origin. This is the race considered to be the torchbearers of modern progress. The Asian race functions outside of this idea of the modern race and is therefore considered ancient despite their crucial role in the economic and infrastructural development of the US and many Spanish American nations. For many, the Chinese empire had already experienced its golden age and was finished with regards to meaningful contributions to the advancement of humanity. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Rafael Barrett describes the Chinese with relation to the ancient Egyptians' consecration of their nobility: “los egipcios consagraban su existencia a embalsamar y empaquetar los cadáveres; los chinos han embalsamado las almas, han enterrado en ellos mismos sus antepasados difuntos; se han convertido en momias vivas” (21). In this comparison Barrett declares an entire race of people as living mummies, animated corpses. His conclusion comes from two assumptions: that China has been technologically and socially stagnate for centuries (“En China obrar es copiar, vivir es repetir”) and second, that the population of China is constantly high on opium (“los chinos sueñan y sueñan con el sueño y con la muerte. No quieren alcohol [...] sino el opio que embrutece en seguida”) (19, 21). This direct linkage between Chinese culture and opium was not uncommon. In her book *Chinese Cubans*, Kathleen López states that newspaper editorials on Chinese immigrant culture “denigrated Chinese customs and lifestyle, represented by opium, gambling, and ‘infernal music’ and fireworks on festival days” (192).

In a 1873 newspaper article on the issue of opium consumption in Peru, the author of the article defines the Chinese population as either coolies addicted to opium (“La posición miserable de la generalidad de los *coolies* hace que se entreguen de cuando en cuando, a la

embriaguez del opio para escapar a los cuidados de la existencia”) or as those that profit from others’ opiate addiction (“los que no son *coolies* son los que expenden la mercancía prohibida)

(3). A Mexican newspaper, *El País (Diario Católico)*, ran an op-ed piece in 1907 that dealt with the moral and social ramifications of allowing Chinese immigration to Mexico. The article argues that the poor, Mexican citizens who were frequently in contact with Mexico City’s Chinese population, “corren el riesgo de contaminarse del vicio del opio.” In this statement two assumptions are made that are also frequently made in the Spanish and Spanish American literature on Chinese immigrants: first, the Chinese are all opium smokers and second, that this issue is a disease that can be transmitted easily through close contact with Chinese culture. The same article mentions three vices already present in Mexico; alcohol, marijuana, and morphine. According to the editors of *El País (Diario Católico)* the Chinese are responsible for bringing yet another vice into the Mexican borders. The article employs medical language, speaking of these vices as contaminating society and the ease in which the poor are susceptible to “contamination” or “contracting” the illness of smoking opium that is directly linked to the Chinese.

Additionally, the link of opium to the Chinese functions in these texts to reemphasize the undead nature of the Chinese race. Like Barrett’s description of the Chinese race as “*momias vivas*,” the person high on opium functions outside the alive/dead dichotomy. The body and mind separate; consciousness is incredibly active while the physical body appears lifeless. The experience of smoking opium, linked to the Chinese male body, then becomes analogous to the entire civilization of the east, still in existence yet lacking in any signs of or hope for societal/cultural advancement. Through these texts, the image of smoking opium becomes fused with the image of the Asian body, suggesting a harmony of lethargy, stagnation, and disease between drug, individual, and society. General descriptions of immigrants often cited the

Chinese as a filthy, disease-ridden race. In the texts studied in this chapter, opium smoke becomes the means of transmission of this degenerative disease: being Chinese. As noted before, with the cultural link of China to the opium pipe, to be Chinese is equivalent to smoking opium and to smoke opium is to be Chinese. According to Western culture at the turn of the century thinking that guides the Hispanic texts of this chapter, the symptoms of the Chinese disease contain characteristics antithetical to Western virtue: predilection for vice such as gambling, substance abuse, aberrant sexual behavior, lack of productivity, untrustworthiness and, most importantly, the inability to produce, nurture and protect the ideal wife and children.

Another key characteristic of the theory of the undead at the turn of the century is its connection to ideas of androgyny and the unsexed. According to Adriana Craciun regarding the femme fatale in Romantic literature and beyond, there is a striking connection to the aforementioned literary figure and the undead due to the femme fatale's behavior that operates outside the prescribed attributes of the feminine (11). In the two-sex model, a woman whose behavior was considered un-feminine, therefore, was considered unsexed, operating outside of the binary system of sex. Unsexed individuals were associated with the undead, for they also operated outside the binary system of life and death. Chinese men in the Western hemisphere were often viewed as having feminine characteristic for doing work that was considered women's work such as careers in laundry service, food service, or the textile industry (López 46). This combined with the fact that the vast majority of Chinese immigrants in Spanish American countries were male, inferred the asexual nature of the Asian race. In line with Said's point of view, in order to present the *criollo* male as intelligent, virile, and modern the Asian man must be described in opposite terms. Failure to perform his duties as a man rendered the Asian

male image as an androgynous, otherworldly subhuman species beyond the binary forces (male/female, alive/dead) that dominated Western ontology.

The Hispanic texts of this chapter thus view the Chinese race in the Western Hemisphere in the same manner as horror narratives of the undead. Echoes of horror and the undead in relation to the Other draw the reader to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). The titular monster functions as a metaphor for fears of immigration, miscegenation and degeneration that were common in England as well as other nations in the West. The Transylvanian Count stealthily invades the British shores and then proceeds to prey on innocent victims, including virginal women. His immigrant status seen as an infection is paralleled by the vampire's literal poisoning of the blood of his victims, a metaphoric inversion of the assimilation of the immigrant to his new home. Dracula's Transylvania is described as though stepping into the Orient, stepping back in time, and despite being part of Europe the narrator Jonathan Harkness situates the region outside the logic and modernity of England. It is a land dominated by magic, superstition and evil in contrast to Northern Europe's civilization based on science and Christian virtue. Essentially, Bram Stoker "orientalizes" Romania.

Similarly to Stoker's Count Dracula, López Valencia's depicts Chan-Saw-Lee in "Los hijos del cielo" as an undead, decrepit, rotting corpse, constantly under the influence of the opium pipe:

El interpelado se movió lentamente, e inmediatamente un ejército de cucarachas corrió por la pared hacia arriba. Al volverse hacia nosotros, quedé aterrado al ver aquella cabeza que parecía completamente una calavera. No tenía un pelo en todo el cráneo, ni un diente en la horrible boca que le llegaba de oreja a oreja y de la cual manaba una baba verdosa; los ojos, profundamente hundidos en las órbitas casi cerradas por los pómulos

prominentes, miraban sin ver, sumergidos todavía en el éxtasis narcótico; todos los huesos de las mandíbulas y del cráneo se señalaban en la piel amarillenta y brillante como un marfil viejo” (163-64).

This grotesque description of Chan-Saw-Lee is given before the narrator witnesses him smoking from the opium pipe. However his physical description is interspersed with common descriptions of an individual high from smoking opium: slow movement, viscous saliva, and lifeless eyes. This description of opium-riddled Chan-Saw-Lee is combined with the image of a living, rotting corpse that “parecía esqueleto” (164). The Chinese figure is presented as an undead monster, lurking around the darkness of the metropolis. Chan-Saw-Lee does have components of humanity, but López Valencia highlights the deficiencies that strip him of his humanity: lack of teeth, completely bald, animalistic and uncontrollable drooling, and lifeless eyes.

Likewise, Blomberg’s poetic voice and the European woman in “Opio” become zombified slaves of Wang Li, who slowly administers the illness of torpor and inaction that will lead to their expiration. This image of the Chinese using opium to control the white population is quite ironic considering the history of opium smoking in the Western Hemisphere. During the years of the coolie trade in Cuba and Peru (1847-1874), opium consumption by the Chinese was permitted as a means of pacification and control of the labor force despite the decrease in agricultural production and the increase in premature death (López 41). Regardless, Wang Li’s imprisonment of Blomberg’s poet echoes Dracula’s imprisonment of Jonathan Harker in which the Count repeatedly feeds off the blood of the English solicitor. Dracula, like Wang Li, keeps his victims barely alive yet bedridden to ensure repeated attacks, suggesting not only the fear of Chinese infiltration and takeover in the Western Hemisphere but also an age of slavery for the Spanish American *criollo*.

Themes of vampiric poisoning and deception can be found in “Historia amarilla” and *La cortina del bambú*. Both works feature their will-weakend European protagonist being deceived by a Chinese male into smoking opium. Both protagonists’ minds are altered much like the nightmares plaguing Dracula’s victims as well. In *La cortina del bambú*, Ascanio —after repeated opium use— is driven to madness leading to a murderous outburst. Simón González, casket maker, has nightmarish visions of opium dens, foreign faces, all stemming from the drink of his Chinese employee, suggesting the nightmarish culture of China. “El café del chino” relies upon fears of Asian men preying upon the white women in Argentina, a theme that Bram Stoker applies to the vampire legend that persists even in present day vampire narratives. Like the vampire, the Chinese of these stories are creatures of the dark, active during the night or permanent fixtures in underground opium dens or gambling lairs. To create the antithesis of the living Western body, these literary Chinese men are brutalized, amoral, nocturnal, and their minds are constantly disconnected from modernity through the abuse of opiates.

The opiated Chinese immigrant narratives are integral to their time and place, but the general themes and the fears they reflect are still reflected in the horror narratives of the past and the present. These narratives are not about hating the immigrant because they are immigrants: it is more about a loss of identity. In Spanish America in particular, the countries were so young and often politically unstable that, in the midst of the path to modernization, they battled within themselves to be relevant and unique within the worldwide cultural marketplace. In a similar fashion, modern-day zombie narratives such as the graphic novel and television series *The Walking Dead* reflect a contemporary fear of loss of national/cultural identity in the context of increased globalization and fears of isolation and alienation within the burgeoning digital age. As Gerry Canvan argues, “remorselessly consuming everything in their path, zombies leave

nothing in their wake besides endless copies of themselves, making the zombie the perfect metaphor not only for how capitalism transforms its subjects but also for its relentless and devastating virologic march across the globe” (432). In vampire narratives, zombie tales, and the texts in this chapter on Chinese immigrants, the authors employ monstrous imagery and the threat of invasion/infection to reflect on the solidarity of a nation, thus defining their particular national identity. These works redefine what it means to be English (*Dracula*), American (*The Walking Dead*), Chilean (*La cortina del bambú*) or Spanish (“Los hijos del cielo”) by personifying the antithesis of national identity as an invading monster or monster-immigrant/foreign pathogen. Like the zombie’s singular goal of consuming flesh, the Chinese male is depicted in these works as relentlessly and mindlessly consuming opium and lusting after white women. Equal to the infectious bite of a vampire or zombie, the Chinese man has the ability to infect the healthy *criollo* male through opium smoke, and in turn transform the Hispanic body into an Eastern automaton. Unlike the vampire, the zombie, or any other fictitious incarnation of the undead, views of Chinese immigrants—despite being reductive and mostly untrue—were connected to actual human beings living amongst the readership of the sinophobic literature of the twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

One hindrance to the study of the narcotic in Spanish-speaking countries is its lack of visibility within the established canon. Even if these moments are present, as in *De sobremesa* or *El árbol de la ciencia*, the implementation of opium or morphine has been set aside within literary scholarship. A perfect analogy for this exclusionary process is the aforementioned short story “El humo de la pipa” by Rubén Darío. This text, which is perfectly in tune with Darío’s *modernista* aesthetic, became an outtake originally intended for inclusion in Darío’s movement-defining *Azul...* (1888). Like the subject of “El humo de la pipa” (and this dissertation), literary opium and morphine seems to have fallen just outside the analytical scope in Hispanic literary studies. It is unclear why the short story —while published in *La Libertad Electoral*, a literary magazine published in Santiago de Chile— was excluded from Darío’s major publications. The first appearance of “El humo de la pipa” in book form did not occur until 1934. Appropriately, in light of the aims of this dissertation, the compilation in which the short story was published was titled *Obras desconocidas*. These works have remained “unknown” in an effort to homogenize the cultural, historical, and political development of a region that is comprised by nineteen diverse Spanish American nations. Works such as *Lirio negro* employ an alternate reality —through the abuse of morphine— to criticize the nation-building objectives of the literary/cultural majority. Foundational texts that establish a national identity must represent similar ideals that promote the individuality and progress of a nation. Literary opiates contradict this normalizing project. It is my assertion that, in addition to further analysis of established representative texts, it is the duty of scholarship to unearth these unknown works —as well as unknown approaches to

canonical works— in order to establish a deeper and richer understanding of the cultural and artistic climate in which our fictions are created.

In this dissertation, I have described four integral facets of the Hispanic literary opiate experience. The early *modernistas* appropriated the image of opium and morphine from previous literary movements and employed the image as a conduit for expressing themes that define *Modernismo*. I have restricted my study to opium and morphine in order to draw strong connections to the social and literary aims of the works, avoiding the inclusion of other types of inebriation that medically affect the body differently. Just as important, alcohol and other intoxicants have vastly different representations in popular culture. This dissertation has demonstrated the way in which five Spanish and Spanish American *modernista* narratives employed the image of opium as a representation of the literary process, whether it is reading or writing. José Asunción Silva's *De sobremesa* provides the best representation of the opiate high in relation to artistic creation, directly connecting José Fernández's reading of his diary to the opiated state of his audience. The reader is transported immediately from the protagonist's smoke-filled Spanish American home to the decadent, self-absorbed European adventures of the past. Helena, Fernández's intra-diegetic creation, is a mental projection, fueled by a two-day opium binge. This drug-induced manifestation is the thematic impetus of Fernández's diary reading, and of the novel itself. The focus on the artist and the artistic process in *De sobremesa* and other narratives foretell the post-modern development of self-reflexive writing and the extreme self-consciousness of art from the second half of the twentieth century.

This study also places the opiate image within the canonical thematic and symbolic elements that define Spanish and Spanish American *Modernismos*. I prove the use of morphine and opium in *modernista* poetry and narrative to reflect the tenants of the movement:

ambivalence to positivist thought, cosmopolitanism and the anxiety associated with the urban experience, subjectivity, and the political position of *el arte por el arte*. The drug is used in Hispanic *modernista* literature in the search (or the replacement of) traditional spirituality, without disconnecting literary drug use from the proposed mystical experience of the enlightened artist. This approach has allowed me to widen the scope of the opiate image within Hispanic literature and promote its inclusion among the quintessential images and tropes that shaped the movement.

In addition to a clear literary and meta-literary assessment, this dissertation also broaches the use of morphine and opium in literature to reflect on the social milieu, in particular fears of Northern European influence on Spain and Spanish America. With regards to Spain, several works incorporate morphine as a representative of Ángel Ganivet's theory of *abulia* in their commentaries on Spanish society. In both Spain and Spanish America the primary representation of the European threat to Hispanic national identity is the English or French dandy, an established decadent figure from the first half of the nineteenth century. In the Spanish American context, fears of European cultural influence stemmed from the process of nation building and the search for a unique national identity separate from Spain, and separate from other Western nations. The use of opium and morphine in these works demonstrates the poisonous consequences of cultural miscegenation. The artificial paradise associated with the narcotic high symbolizes the artificiality of cultural imitation. The theme of cultural infection in Spanish America is further developed in this dissertation as well. Rather than focus on the threat of Northern Europe, other authors studied write in the dangerous presence of Asia in the "New World." In contrast to the dandy, the Chinese male is a monstrous representation, viewed as inhuman and undead. The vampiric Chinese male, like China's mythical dragon, breathes fire

(opium), and uses this supernatural power to sedate, pacify, and enslave the Spanish American *criollo*. The Eastern presence is a danger to men of a weak constitution who —through the trappings of the modern, cosmopolitan experience— lack the power to resist the temptation of the “Chinaman’s” opium, serving as counter-exemplary tales to promote the homogeny and virility of the Spanish American nation. The authors of these works use the image of the Chinese male and opium smoke to represent the disease of inaction and cultural stagnation, easily contracted through contact with outsiders.

This project is in part an introduction to the Hispanic literary corpus on opium and its derivatives. Instead of following the path marked by traditional critics and scholars of turn-of-the-century literature, who have elected for commentary solely on canonical or representative texts or for studying aesthetic trends in groups of texts within the prescribed rubric of literary movements, I have chosen a more nuanced, complex path that takes into account a more totalistic view of the literary opiate experience. In this regard, I have also incorporated primary historical documents that provide insight on the presence and popular opinion of opium and morphine in Spain and Spanish America during the turn of the century. I have connected fragments outside of what are considered representative texts, sorted and organized these texts in order to create a more cohesive and comprehensive understanding of *Modernismos* in Spain and Spanish America and its contemporary/contradictory literary trends.

I would like to return to the series of newspaper articles regarding Herrmann opium-trafficking scandal described in the introduction. After reading this dissertation, it is possible to have a better understanding of the cultural viewpoint of the culture of 1920s Mexico upon following this story. Furthermore through the analysis of the literature, one can read the reports on the Herrmann case and have a better understanding of the representations of the European,

Jewish immigrant Walter Herrmann, his Chinese employees and customers, his Mexican *criollo* politician associates, and the representation of smoking opium. Even news stories such as these factor into the construction of national identity and are essential to the interpretation of the Sinophobic literary production and its treatment of the intersection of immigration and opiates. Non-canonical authors and non-literary primary sources, such as the ones treated in this dissertation, can provide valuable cultural insight to past phenomena in spite of a perceived lack of literary merit. The challenge for a deeper understanding of the Hispanic literary opiate experience is unearthing the texts that unfortunately were relegated to single edition, limited printings. Thanks to an ever-increasing digitized literary corpus, access to rare, obscure texts is becoming more feasible.

Also lying just outside modern consciousness is the cultural impact and general understanding of opiates in Spanish American society. We know, thanks to news stories such as the Herrmann drug cartel, that opium in Mexico was big business and supplied addicts as far as New York City. However, this was not unique to Mexico City. In April of 1921, the Santiago newspaper, *El Mercurio*, reported the discovery of an underground opium den in the recesses of a Jewish-owned café in Valparaíso. The news wire blurb stated that, along with the discovery of opium balls, pipes and other paraphernalia, “veintitrés sujetos chinos fueron sorprendidos en los momentos en que fumaban, encontrándose algunos de ellos adormecidos por la acción del narcótico” (“Informaciones” 12). Despite the scant description of the *fumadero* and the individuals occupying the space, stereotypes regarding immigrants from China pervade in the news item: residents of darkness, idle, constantly high on opium, and participants of an illicit subculture.

News blurbs such as this Chilean example do much more than prove the existence of drug cultures in turn-of-the-century Southern Cone metropolitan areas. They provide the 21st-century reader with vital information on the cultural impact and the opinions of the narcotics as these Spanish American nations struggle with the colossal task of defining themselves as autonomous nations with a unique and rich history. The inclusion of these historical, yet everyday, events in this dissertation serves to amplify the analysis of their contemporary Chilean narratives such as *La cortina de bambú* by grounding them in their cultural context, proving the physical and cultural presence of Asia in Spanish America at the dawn of the twentieth century. My literary analysis of narratives such as Barros Ortiz's *La cortina* additionally reveals the historical, economic, political and social structures in which the works originate.

This dissertation demonstrates that viewing *Modernismo* from an underutilized lens can provide in future studies in this field an approach rife with exciting and academically relevant possibilities. Whereas this dissertation focused on the unifying elements of the relation of the narcotic to ideas of art and society, it will be important in future investigations to shift focus onto the particularities of opium and morphine within specific nations, cities and communities. For example, Cuba was a major participant in the coolie trade during the 1840s and there can be further investigation on the role of opium within the Chinese populations and within other Cuban racial or socioeconomic groups as well. Fortunately, there are an increasing number of historical and cultural studies on Asians in Spanish America such as *Chinese Cubans* (2013) by Kathleen López and *Chinese Mexicans: Transpacific Migration and the Search for a Homeland 1910-1960* (2012) by Julia María Schiavonne Camacho. Despite the increase of these publications in cultural and historical studies, scholarship analyzing the literature of the Asian immigrant in Spanish America has not yet come to a satisfying critical mass of depth and importance. In the

same way, the literary opiate experience of this region is a field of study waiting to be further revealed.

My intent from the study of the opium and morphine narratives and poetry of Spain and Spanish America is to attain a deeper understanding of the *modernista* movement—as well as a more comprehensive view regarding the works and movements concurrent to *Modernismo*—within its cultural and historical context. Further investigation reveals the fallacy in ignoring the complexity and richness of the Hispanic literary opiate image. This dissertation serves as a beginning of the rediscovery and reimagining of this subfield of the *modernista* movement in Spain and Spanish America. In doing so, modern readers can acquire a greater understanding of the literary movement and its time, thus informing the reading of the Hispanic literary field and its culture in its entirety.

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