

¹Racial Theory and Atavism in Pardo Bazán's Short Fiction

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RESUMEN: Emilia Pardo fue una cuentista excepcional en el estilo moderno debido a que incorporó en su ficción todo tipo de cientifismo que circulara en el momento. De esta forma no solo exhibía su considerable erudición, sino que invitaba a su público lector a contemplar modos alternativos y a veces contradictorios de pensar en la identidad racial en la sociedad moderna en la que el tema se debatía calurosamente. Este ensayo explora su pensamiento sobre raza, atavismo, herencia y evolución ejemplificado en su ficción breve en que a veces contradecía lo que escribía en sus ensayos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Darwinismo, atavismo, Gumplowicz, raza, herencia identidad, estereotipo.

ABSTRACT: Emilia Pardo Bazán was an exceptional storyteller in the modern mold, capturing whatever scientism was circulating in popular culture at the moment. In this way she not only showcased her considerable erudition, she challenged her readers to contemplate alternate and sometimes contradictory ways of thinking about racial identity in a modern world in which the subject was widely debated. This essay explores her thinking on race, atavism, heredity and evolution as exemplified in her short fiction that sometimes contradicted what she expressed in her essays.

KEY WORDS: Darwinism, atavism, Gumplowicz, race, heredity, identity, stereotype.

The theory of organic memory is that memory and heredity are indivisible; we “remember” our ancestors in our bodies, and may even inherit their mental and emotional proclivities in addition to their phenotype: “The theory of organic memory placed the past in the individual, in the body, in the nervous system; it pulled memory

¹ Pardo Bazán's and Clarín's reactions to the Dreyfus affair reflected popular ideas about racial struggle circulating at the beginning of the Twentieth century. While Clarín scorned the “superficial” ethnologists who argued that Europeans descended from Jafet and “por ley de raza” feel natural antipathy for the “descendientes de Sem” (Quoted in Jareño López 18), Pardo Bazán saw the animosity of the French against Dreyfus as evidence of the natural interracial antipathy and struggle. Agreeing with sociologist Ludwig Gumplowicz, she argued that the reason for the antipathy in the case of Jews was that the Jewish “race” had not adequately assimilated “a las diversas naciones en que viven mezclados” (Quoted in Jareño López 24).

from the domain of the metaphysical into the domain of the physical with the intention of making it knowable" (Otis 3). This notion became especially influential in the nineteenth century when defining the relation between national identity, religion and race was a source of public debate in evolving European nation states including Spain. In the course of tracing the phenomenon of organic memory through the various thinkers who gave rise to it in the fields of philosophy, psychology, political science, and literature, Laura Otis examined several longer works of Emilia Pardo Bazán in which she found clear evidence of the author's belief in atavism and race as determining factors in human behavior. Her conclusion in Pardo Bazán's case, however, was that whatever the body remembered was haphazard, and basically unrecoverable for conscious memory. "Haphazard" may also be the operative term in defining Pardo Bazán's thinking on atavism and race in her short fiction as well as her novels. Pardo Bazán was a great storyteller in the modern mold, and capturing whatever scientism was circulating in popular culture at the moment was her way not just of showcasing her considerable book knowledge (which critics are fond of asserting), but of challenging readers to contemplate alternate (sometimes contradictory) ways of thinking in a modern world or, conversely, describing with a modern twist conventional ways of thinking about the forces of nature and the role of forbears woven into common superstitions of rural Galicia.

Pardo Bazán's foray into the topic of heredity and race began early in her career. In *Reflexiones científicas contra el darwinismo*, she outlined her basic stance on evolution (or *transformismo* as she variously calls it) and heredity that remained substantially unchanged during her long trajectory as a writer. In *Reflexiones* she accepts the notion of atavism, but soundly rejects that of natural selection as an explanation for the common origins of all living things. It is not religious belief, she asks readers to believe, that leads her to reject Darwin's theory of evolution, rather she faults the shoddy *scientific* hypotheses of Darwin, Haeckel and others that she refutes at length in this essay. She acknowledges humans' innate "struggle for life" (545), and ability to adapt to environmental pressures in explaining variations in humans, but insists that no new species is possible by way of natural selection since no fossil evidence exists to prove it. If natural selection perfected existing species or produced new ones, she reasoned, there would be no low creatures that had not yet evolved into higher forms. Any individual aberration in a family is owing solely to an atavistic inheritance from a distant relative rather than a regression to a previous moment on the evolutionary scale. Embedded in her scientific ruminations are comments that reveal another reason for her resistance to evolution. An eloquent precursor of the notion of Intelligent Design, she insisted that the Divine Artist "coronó su obra con la más noble de las criaturas," endowing man simultaneously with language and reason (564). She was, then, like some traditional anthropologists, a believer in monogenesis.

Her faith in the permanence of nature accords with the idea that all men descended from the same pair of sinners, and the new scientific arguments about polygenesis and species evolution were anathema to this belief. Evidence of the glories of ancient civilizations also convinced her of the basic immutability of human reason and from that she concluded that any physiological or psychological variations in race could only be the result of successful or inadequate environmental adaptation. It is the innate "struggle for life" and not inherent differences that places some groups above others, an ascendancy that can evolve with time and circumstance. In short, "El darwinismo es una novela" (567) and "las esterilidades y fantasmagorías del transformismo, resaltan la fuerza y claridad de la concepción filosófico-cristiana del Universo" (569).

While rejecting Darwinian evolution, the notion of atavism was especially appealing to Pardo Bazán the storyteller because it functioned as a shortcut for defining a person's worth, personality traits or physical attributes. However, one should not take the many instances when her narrators employ the term to conclude Pardo Bazán's wholesale promotion of the theory. When she mentions in passing the intellectual or emotional tendencies or physical aspects of a character attributable to atavism, she sometimes qualified it with a "perhaps" or "according to," as in the case of the beggar girl Finafrol ("Finafrol") whose delicateness and gentility are owing "quizá" to atavism: "la sangre del caballero que, según la leyenda, daba azul a sus venas menudas" (I 1,053)². As in "Finafrol", atavism is sometimes attributable to legend or gossip, for example the narrator of "La ventana cerrada" speculates that his neighbor's white skin might be an atavistic reversion to the purest, white-race Circassian. In her stories about Galician peasants, atavism is sometimes just a shorthand way to describe a community with entrenched superstitions as in the story "Atavismo", or an opportunity to reinforce the impressive physical capacity of Galician men and women on display in "Lumbarada" and many other stories imbued with the author's regionalistic pride. Finally, in a few stories the idea is refuted altogether through examples demonstrating that education cancels any presumed atavism. In "Los padres del santo", an elderly doctor asks his interlocutor "¿No le parecen mozigangas esas pretendidas leyes de la herencia, del atavismo y demás?" (II 1,315). He then goes on to demonstrate that men's souls are not subject to physiological laws by comparing an educated and saintly priest to his brutish parents: "el tío Juan del Aguardiente" with his "rostro de mico maligno, en que se pintaban a las claras la desconfianza, la truhanería y los instintos viciosos" and his mother "la Bocarrachada", "una vieja de cara bestial, de recias formas de saliente mandíbula y

² All references to Pardo Bazán's stories are taken from the three-volume Aguilar edition of her *Obras completas* and will be briefly cited by title in the text.

juanetudos pómulos" (II 1,315)³. If there is a constant in Pardo Bazán's thinking to be derived from the instances when atavism becomes an issue, it is the conviction that education can overcome atavistic predispositions even in spectacular cases such as in "Los padres del santo"⁴.

Even less consistent is the idea of race circulating with some frequency in Pardo Bazán's short fiction. As Joshua Goode asserts in *Impurity of Blood: Defining Race in Spain, 1870-1930*, "even when many Spanish thinkers opposed scientific theories of race, they also comfortably and actively advanced many of the common themes of late-nineteenth-century nationalism and Romanticism that contributed to and imbued racial thinking elsewhere in Europe" (28). Some forty years ago Brian Dendle suggested that Emilia Pardo Bazán held entrenched racist views that she expressed with frequency in her fiction. Dendle examined especially her anti-Semitism, noting that three characters in *Una cristiana* and especially its sequel *La prueba* possessed "unpleasant traits of character" because of their Jewishness (25). The most interesting of the three is Salustio, since his dual origin presents a quandary for a believer in organic memory such as Pardo Bazán. According to Dendle, the author resolved the issue by combining instinctive traits that she associated with both Christians and Jews in a single character. Because Salustio is part Christian, he feels a "natural" antipathy towards Jews and for the most part conducts himself as if he were a model Christian. But owing to his Jewishness, he embraces heterodox beliefs (notably republicanism and atheism) that Pardo Bazán elsewhere found especially distasteful or un-Hispanic. Dendle's argument is that Salustio and the two other Jewish characters of the novel, Felipe and Salustio's aunt, prove that in Pardo Bazán's view education is unable to overcome the instincts of race, a view she held stubbornly throughout her career as a writer because, he argued, she accepted "without question the unverifiable speculations which contemporary biologists and ethnologists passed off as scientific laws" (30).

One of the reasons it is easy to arrive at this conclusion is that like her contemporaries Pardo Bazán frequently relied on commonplace stereotypes and biases that were widespread in nineteenth-century discourse. The anti-Semitic "El

³ Pardo Bazán's novels are filled with the term as well. See *El tesoro de Gastón* where atavism refers to the political sympathies of the Francophile Martín de Landrey (OC II 535) or *El saludo de las brujas* where it refers to a royal energy and determination (OC II 669). *La piedra angular* is especially attentive to the theory of atavism as related to criminality. The lawyer Febrero does not believe in a "criminal type" predisposed to evil. If a man is a criminal, it doesn't follow that there was a criminal in his family or group. The modern criminal is a simple case of atavism, a residue of the primitive horde from which all humans derive (OC II 316). In *La Quimera* the narrator uses the term casually to describe the inheritance of a plebeian physiognomy (OC I 801), and a daughter's spiritual resemblance to her mother (OC I 795).

⁴ Pardo Bazán was clearly a believer in regeneration in the field of literature as well. Her many articles on European literature reflect her belief that Spain was ripe for a regeneration that would return Spain to a position of literary glory once again. Also, her views on the perfectability of women through improved education are well known.

judío bueno" is just one of dozens of stories in which groups are imputed to have negative racial characteristics that determine their actions. Her stories, novels and essays are sprinkled with passing reference to cruel or subservient Asians, egotistical and robust Anglo-Saxons, artistic, anarchical Latins, and jealous and fatalistic Arabs. "No hay remedio—she insisted in 1901—sino confesar la obra misteriosa de las afinidades étnicas. No vale decir que el suelo, el clima, el ambiente, lo hacen todo" (*De Siglo a siglo* 205). However much a Brit may adjust to a new climate in Australia, Java or the Klondike, she claims, he remains fatally "desinglesizable" (205). Despite having lived abroad his whole life under the tutelage of a sober and prudish Irishman, Pedro Guzmán, protagonist of the novella *El niño de Guzmán*, displays "el temperamento de la raza que bullía bajo la superficie helada y serena de la educación" (599). Pardo Bazán also sought validation for racial traits in the physiognomy of some of her characters, an equivalence that she recognized as scientific fact. But my conclusion is that these characterizations were not wholesale or consistent. Even in "El buen judío," perhaps her most racist tale, she produced a "buen judío" as an exception to the rule, and Pardo Bazán's stories are nothing if not filled with "exceptional" characters. Thus, while Pardo Bazán's racist rhetoric is undeniable, a more nuanced view of her use of race reveals the ambiguity expressed by many intellectuals of her generation who were grappling with notions of atavism, evolution and racial determinism during an era of scientific challenges to Catholic doctrines of free will and monogenesis. Dendle's argument that her fiction shows that Pardo Bazán believed that Jewish character was irrepressible and would surface even in a character who is only one-fourth Jewish would seem to validate her belief in racial destiny. But his statement that Pardo Bazán did not believe that education could ever overcome negative traits attributable to race bears scrutiny since Pardo Bazán's is not consistent on issues of perfectability, environmental adaptation and racial stigmata. A strong believer in the power of education and the possibility of national regeneration, Pardo Bazán dotted her works with characters that belied or overcame racial predispositions under favorable conditions. While she might suggest in one work that race is irrepressible (as in the case of the Spaniard whose Spanishness resurfaces despite his "helada y serena" education) in others she dismantles such assertions by championing the power of education to overcome all racial dispositions (like the example of the highly educated priest whose parents are brutes).

When assessing Pardo Bazán's ideological stances on race, her long and evolving trajectory as a writer (and reader) also needs to be taken into account as well as the strength of her religious convictions. As Asunción Doménech Montagut points out, Pardo Bazán's theories on medicine and anthropology evolved in stages, gradually edging away from the naturalism that influenced her early work towards "plantamientos más espiritualistas" and a conviction that modern science was not

up to the task of dealing with “los problemas del alma humana” (30). The fact that modern science proved incapable of fully explaining the conditions of modern man is a constant thread in many of her works after 1890, even as ethnicity and environment continued to act as powerful social determinants, possibly because of the influence of her ongoing readings of sociologist Ludwig Gumplowicz or criminologists like Cesar Lombroso. In describing Telmo, the son of the hangman in *La piedra angular* (1891), one can appreciate the complications of Pardo Bazán’s thinking on racial destiny. Telmo’s character and demeanor resemble those of an African, reports the narrator, with the same candor and comic pride tempered with “ráfagas de tristeza y receloso encogimiento” (282). But the narrator ends this statement by implying an environmental factor to account for the demeanor of Africans who still labor under the “estigma de la esclavitud” (282), and Telmo, once he comes under the influence of his benefactor, Dr. Moragas, ceases to resemble a temperamental African. It is a given that Dr. Moragas will be able to transform the urchin into a respectable adult through education and individual attention to his welfare.

There is often a similar mismatch between Pardo Bazán’s statements and the reality on display in her short fictions when it was a question of national pride that led her to disguise or temper her racialized rhetoric. Dendle remarks that Pardo Bazán despised people of African descent, using them only to demonstrate that all races are equal before God (23). But if we look at the story “Entre razas”, it is clear that national identity trumps racial identity when the two become a moral issue. “Entre razas” appeared shortly after the 1898 defeat of the Spanish American war. Prior to the war, racist anti-insurgent images and diatribes flourished in the press, especially in satirical magazines like *Campana de Gracia* in Barcelona, or Madrid’s *Gedeón* and *Don Quijote*. High-end illustrated magazines like the ones in which Pardo Bazán published her essays avoided extremist racist images, but the subtle debasement of blacks appeared in many forms in these magazines as well. Images and descriptions of non-white subjects were a stand-in for national debates about the oppression of (or the dangers of) the working class, the commercial and industrial interests of the ruling oligarchy, the future of the Spanish nation facing the prospect of losing its last colonies and even conflicting regional interests.

After the 1898 cease-fire, it was no longer necessary to project images of poor black American soldiers or Indians and treacherous Afro-Cuban insurgents for the purpose of sparking the patriotism and support of the Spanish public or denigrating Yankees, but race was still an issue that could be used to make political hay. In June of 1898 *Blanco y Negro* published Pardo Bazán’s “Entre Razas” (“Between Races”) that promoted the humanitarian attitude of Spaniards towards peoples of African descent compared with American racist attitudes. The narrator is a gentlemanly Spanish count who has taken upon himself to show a Yankee around Madrid shortly after the

war. The two men find themselves in a disreputable bar one night when a “negrazo” passes by the table where they are seated⁵. When the Spanish count comments admiringly that the Black man is a great “specimen” (scarcely a compliment to be sure, but probably understood in an anthropological sense by Pardo Bazán’s readers), the gross American makes an off-handed comment that such a Negro would make a “great slave.” The American is later found stabbed to death in a dark alley of Madrid. The unspoken message of the story, however, is not about the exaggeration of the African-American’s vengeance, but the contrast between Spanish humanitarianism and American barbarity and racism, the same message that *Blanco y Negro* and other magazines had so faithfully been communicating to their readers for nearly five years leading up to the war.

Given Pardo Bazán’s class status, it is not surprising that status and prestige also come into play in racialized assessments. The drunk African servant in the story “Benito de Palermo” is truly despicable, with what the narrator describes as the characteristic “olorcillo de la raza de Cam” (although it should be noted that like the Africans alluded to in *La piedra angular*, Benito is laboring under the legacy of slavery and his white master is in no way morally superior to him). In contrast to Benito, the Ethiopian king Melchor of “La visión de los reyes Magos,” although the humblest of the three wise men, is portrayed positively in the sense that he is the only one of the three capable of seeing the star of David and hearing the celestial music guiding the trio to the nativity scene. Pardo Bazán uses Melchor to establish a point of Christian doctrine regarding the equality of the “raza de Cam” with other races. The self-debasing Melchor rejoices in the idea that the “niño” recognizes the equality of all races: “Mi progenie, la oscura raza de Cam, ya no se diferencia de los blancos hijos de Jafet. Las antiguas maldiciones las ha borrado el sacro dedo del Niño” (I 1,505)⁶.

The author’s use of the term “children of Ham” signals the popular division of races according to a biblical genealogical tree; the belief that all men descended from one of Noah’s three sons, Japheth, Shem or Ham, as outlined in the book of Genesis. The notion was considered quaint by many modern social scientists by Pardo Bazán’s time, but she makes reference to it in a number of stories where it

⁵ *Blanco y Negro* 8, 11 June, 1898, n.p.

⁶ Despite her complaint that Jews had not been proficient at incorporating themselves into the nations where they settled (Jareño López 24), in her essays Pardo Bazán praised individual Jews like the Rothschilds who used their wealth for supporting the arts and other charities. She heaped praise on Gustavo Bauer, one of the Rothschild’s representatives in Spain, for conserving and reforming the Alameda estate of the Dukes of Osuna instead of allowing it become a medical clinic or industrial enterprise. Of course, she points out, the wealthy have the resources to do these things, “pero no todos los que disponen de una gran fortuna están tan prontos a la caridad.” (*Ilustración Artística*, 1,824 [11 Dec., 1916]: 794). Speaking of the way the Rothschilds spend their millions wisely and generously, she exclaimed in another article “¡Gracias, oh inteligentes e ilustrados judíos” (*Ilustración Artística* 1,080 [8 Sept., 1902]: 586).

serves to mark off Africans from the white races. Collectively, however, the meaning of the term “raza” in Pardo Bazán’s fiction is so diverse that it loses any specificity and comes to signify something closer to the word “group” as it was coming to be used by some sociologists, rather than a genetic category. This vagueness does not reflect some unusual imprecision in Pardo Bazán’s lexicon usage, rather it points to the general vagueness of the term even among social scientists. Ludwig Gumplowicz, a sociologist that Pardo Bazán read with some care, complained in his study *Der Rassenkampf* (1883) that no one understood with precision “was unter Volk zu verstehen sei, was Rasse zu bedeuten habe, was man sich unter Stamm denken solle, was Völkerschaft, was Völkerfamilie, was Nation una nationalität heisse . . . Hier ist alles Willkühr und subjectives Scheinen und Meinen: nirgends ein fester Boden, nirgends ein fisherer Anhaltspunkt und auch nirgends ein positives Resultat” (187)⁷. For Gumplowicz, and it seems for Pardo Bazán, a race was not a stable concept and did not necessarily imply consanguinity or ethnicity. Rather it was used to designate a group that shared one or several features or interests that drew it together.

In the broadest sense, Pardo Bazán uses race in her stories to mean all humans (as in “Los años rojos”, “El conde llora”) where it bears neither negative nor positive connotations. She occasionally used it to categorize races according to perceived skin color as white (in their purest form “arianos” in the story “Drago”), yellow (in “Deber”) and black (in “La Noche Buena en Limbo”), often characterized in terms of purity and conformity to type. Only when she breaks down these categories to make comparisons between groups does the term take on familiar pejorative connotations as when she characterizes the “Slavic races” as crude and irrational (in “La turquesa”), or Arabs as prone to extreme jealousy and violence (in “Apólogo”). Numerous stories use race as a marker of national temperament: the Russians’ caprice as a “signo de raza” in “El cerdo-hombre”, Spaniards’ innate religiosity in “La risa”, Malaysians’ ferocity in “Página suelta”, or British ambition and determination in “Dos cenas”. Even a region of a country can be classified as a race with defining characteristics, as Galicia is in some stories (“La lumbarada”, “La capitana” or “el voto”). The vaguest use of the term designates a quality that is shared by others of the same talent or profession, or simply a group with the same personality trait unrelated to national or ethnic identity, as in the suggestion that historian Pedro Hojeda de las Lanzas’ stoicism demonstrates the “paciencia, el estoicismo resignado de la raza” (“El frac”)

⁷ Pardo Bazán could have read *Der Rassenkampf* either in the original German or the Spanish translation that appeared in Madrid, published by La España Moderna in 1882. I use here the Spanish translation since no English translation exists: “...lo que se debe comprender por pueblo, lo que significa raza, lo que hay que representar por tribu, lo que es una población, lo que es una familia de pueblos, lo que es una nación y un nacionalidad... Aquí todo es arbitrario, todo es opiniones y apariencias subjectivas: en ninguna parte se encuentra terreno sólido, en ninguna parte puntos fijos, en ninguna parte un resultado positivo” (204-205). Pardo Bazán’s close collaboration with the Editorial España Moderna no doubt put her in contact with Gumplowicz’ work that she mentions in various articles.

where "raza" refers to dogged researchers rather than Spaniards as a whole. Finally, another use of the word helps Pardo Bazán distinguish the remote past from the present, or civilized groups as opposed to uncivilized groups: the "razas inferiores" are those which have not yet been civilized, that is, non-Western groups as in the story "El sino."

Although her notion of race in some cases implied racial destiny, at select moments Pardo Bazán seems to have understood the constructedness of the notion of race and its lack of permanency. In the story "La adopción" the narrator looks critically at the tendency of British colonizers to produce and foster the notion of superior and inferior races and castes. The result is predictable: "cuando se condena a una raza o a un ser a la ignominia, involuntariamente se teme que esa raza o ese ser desarrollen una especie de fuerza maléfica, dañando en la sombra por ocultas artes. Así se ha supuesto de las brujas y aun de los judíos" (III 132). When a child is removed from his upper-caste family and raised by a mother of the untouchables, the narrator describes him as having changed races, not just families: "Aquella criatura había dejado de pertenecer a la raza superior" (III 133). This idea that environment and education trumps race and atavism is reinforced in various of Pardo Bazán's essays in which she frames her opposition to evolution. In *De siglo a siglo* she puts the idea to the service of the claim that there is a chain that connects all men past and present, as well as a way for them to overcome instinctual drives: "Los instintos del hombre son los mismos, de seguro, en todas partes; eran probablemente en las épocas más oscuras de la prehistoria muy poco diferentes de lo actual: lo que modifica, diversifica y reprime esos instintos, son las circunstancias, la educación (en el sentido social de la palabra), el ambiente, etc." (234).

It is clear that the notion of adaptation is one of the core issues of Pardo Bazán's fiction, as well as a frequent topic of her essays. Across the four decades of her literary career she returned again and again to the question of what determines the way men are, both physically and psychologically, and what can be done to change the way they are for the better. Racial history and destiny surfaces in dozens of comments about her characters' features and traits, but as Otis suggests, in Pardo Bazán's fiction nature records the past haphazardly and the pull of race is partial and arbitrary. Characters "do represent their races and absorb their environments, but . . . appearances can be deceiving." (157). That "deception of appearances" is something that time and again informs Pardo Bazán's short fiction. Her ambiguity was a product both of her voracious reading and the social matrices of the time, and questions of nationalism and the future of her nation are never far from her mind. In the bourgeois press in which she was a prominent player, Spain's past was venerated, celebrated, eulogized, and thrown up as a model against a paltry and diminished present. The admixture of races, African and Latin, in Spain made for what anthropologists were claiming was

an overly erotomaniac people with a tendency to degeneration, their racial makeup impeding them from progress and morality they are examples of civilization gone awry. On the other hand, the modern, civilized world was also heralded as an age of fantastic advances, of a radical break with an outdated past, a door to a modernity that was full of possibility and wonder. All the ambiguity and contradictions of Spanish thought on perfectability, progress, degeneration and race found shelter in Pardo Bazán's inquisitive and probing brain. And despite her moralizing, like Honoré Balzac before her or her friend Benito Pérez Galdós, she let issues emerge in her work that challenged her own, and her readers' belief systems and logic.

The year 1910 finds Pardo Bazán still engrossed in the problem of race and atavism, planting the question squarely in the center of the story "Fraternidad." A paleontologist obsessed with the notion of "razas humanas" has come to Tangiers, in search of cranial evidence of the similarity of Spaniards and Africans in a pre-historic past. The mission stems from his love of all humanity, his conviction that all humans are brothers, a common argument of what Gumpłowicz termed "monofiletism" (88) and which Pardo Bazán ascribed to. Having descended from a single man, all humans belong to the same race: "Me sublevaba la idea de que existiesen razas llamadas inferiores no son sino diferencias debidas a las condiciones de la vida y del ambiente" (III 149). The book the anthropologist is planning to write, entitled "La cadena humana," also puts him in the camp of anti-evolutionists: for believers in the chain of being, there is faith in the permanence of human nature and rejection of any notion that there are "saltos" of perfection in nature. But his plan to locate proof of "la ley de fraternidad universal y omnimoda" (III 149) through the study of teeth and skulls fails miserably. His "efusiones de fraternidad" with the locals in Tangiers are rejected and his camp is robbed. The paleontologist describes the robber who is later apprehended for the crime as a perfect specimen of a primitive cave man (that suggests that cave men could have had brains similar to those today which would debunk Darwinian evolution). On the other hand, the paleontologist describes the robber as a barely perfected gorilla (suggesting conversely man's possible evolution from animal species). When the robber is killed and his skull presented to the paleontologist as a gift, he weeps for his lost "ensueño fraternal" (throwing into question the theory of a single race). Earlier, in an aside, he says that his conclusions intended for "La cadena humana" were "precipitadas", (suggesting that no such chain links Africans and Spaniards and that the notion of universal brotherhood is a dream). Modern readers will understandably be baffled by the ambiguity of "Fraternidad." On the one hand, it seems to be showing that harmony cannot exist between races, a theory that Pardo Bazán probably borrowed from Ludwig Gumpłowicz *Rassenkampf*. Yet the idea that the Moroccan robber is little more than a gorilla means that some men resemble the animal kingdom closer than homo sapiens, suggesting the figure of

an evolutionary tree that was the metaphorical representation of evolution supported by positivist scientists. The narrator doesn't recount whether or not the skull of the gorilla-man resembles that of Spaniards, or what it would mean if it did, but we can imagine that the inquisitive Pardo Bazán, truly a woman of her times, ruminated in her study about the paleontologist's dilemma.

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