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In the Footsteps of the "Goldsmith of Magical Wonders"

Revisiting the Popular Poe in Pío Baroja's Early Tales

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Abstract

Pío Baroja (1872–1956), the most prolific novelist of the so-called Spanish Generation of '98, began his literary career as a storyteller. The publication of Vidas sombrías *(*Somber Lives*) in 1900, a volume of over thirty stories set in the Basque Country, Madrid and Valencia, earned him wide critical acclaim, despite its poor reception by Spanish readers. Baroja himself acknowledged that four or five of the stories were written in imitation of Edgar Allan Poe. This article explores traces of Poe in Baroja's early storytelling, although it sets out by considering a concept such as unity of sensation (unity of effect), which Baroja indeed borrowed from Poe, although he never acknowledged this. My central concern here is that Baroja's early admiration of the writer from Boston manifests itself in the adoption of bleak landscapes, Gothic interiors, and psychologically unstable characters. This trend was soon to be abandoned, although Baroja's concept of the novel, a development of Poe's poetics of the tale, would remain with the Basque writer for the rest of his life. The final part of this study analyzes Poe-like elements—literary devices, Gothic motifs, semantic structures—which can be found in "Médium," one of the stories in* Vidas sombrías.

Keywords

Spanish peninsular literature, Generation of '98, unity of effect, transatlantic literature

In *Poe Abroad*, Lois Davis Vines refers to Paul Valéry's remark that Poe "would today be completely forgotten if Baudelaire had not taken up the task of introducing him into European literature."[1] However, she also notes that Valéry's observation was "both an exaggeration and an understatement," and that, despite his fame in America at the time of his death, Poe was fortunate in being

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championed by Baudelaire, one of the greatest of France's poets. During the nineteenth century, translations of Poe's oeuvre, primarily from French, were made by many renowned European writers, translators, or Poe connoisseurs, as Emron Esplin and Margarida Vale de Gato have described in *Translated Poe*.[2] Be that as it may, Poe began to be read either in French or in other European languages as early as the mid-nineteenth century, thus making him quite possibly the most popular and most imitated American author on the continent.

In Spain, Poe began to enjoy great popularity when Baudelaire's *Histoires extraordinaires*, a translation of Poe's tales into French, began to circulate among the most exclusive literary circles of Madrid, as the writer Pedro Antonio de Alarcón indicated in a 1858 letter.[3] This French edition became the main source for a plethora of translations of Poe's tales into Spanish, thus making him "el autor fantástico más vertido al español en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX" (the fantasy author most widely translated into Spanish during the second half of the nineteenth century).[4] But Poe was also widely imitated by second-rate authors, among them Vicente Barrantes, José del Campo, Luis M. de Larra,[5] and José Fernández Bremón,[6] just to name a few.

Despite the widespread popularity of Poe's work during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century, the Spanish poet Pedro Salinas played down his legacy in a lecture delivered at the Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore on January 19, 1941. "The work of Poe has had scarcely any influence on the writers of Spain," he claimed, "or if it has had some influence, it is very superficial, and has been exercised on no writers of a high order, nor has it produced any work of importance."[7] Although Salinas acknowledged the importance of John E. Englekirk's *Edgar Allan Poe in Hispanic Literature*, one of the earliest studies exploring the importance of Poe both in Spain and South America, his assessment of the reception of the American writer in Spain seems to be far more intuitive than critical.[8]

For decades, the keen interest of critics in exploring traces of Poe in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Spanish literature seemed to take for granted Pedro Salinas's dictum. Nevertheless, over the last thirty years, the publication of numerous studies on the impact of Poe's work has shown that his reception in Spanish literature looms larger than anything Salinas could have expected. With regard to the writers of the so-called Generation of '98, one of the most renowned literary groups in Spanish contemporary literature, traces of Poe's influence have been found in Miguel de Unamuno,[9] Antonio Machado[10] and Pío Baroja,[11] although in the case of this latter author criticism has been limited to establishing connections, without developing these ideas in greater depth.

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Widely admired by Ernest Hemingway,[12] Pío Baroja (1872–1956), the most prolific novelist of this generation, began his literary career in 1890 with the publication of some articles dealing with Russian literature, in *La Unión Liberal*, a journal based in San Sebastian. Three years later, he began the publication of tales in periodicals, which he eventually collected in *Vidas sombrías* (*Somber Lives*), published in 1900. The tales included in this volume, mostly written in Cestona, a small village in the Basque Country where Baroja worked as a doctor, caught Miguel de Unamuno's attention, who praised their lyrical style while at the same time identifying traces of both Dostoevsky and Poe. A few years later, in the prologue to his novel *La dama errante* (*The Wandering Lady*) (1908), Baroja indicated that Poe was among his favorite authors: "Mis admiraciones en literatura no las he ocultado nunca. Han sido y son: Dickens, Balzac, Poe, Dostoievsky, y ahora, Stendhal" (I've never hidden my literary admirations. They have been and are: Dickens, Balzac, Poe, Dostoevsky, and now, Stendhal).[13] Baroja finally welcomed Unamuno's remark about Poe's legacy on his stories when, in *Páginas escogidas* (*Selected Pages*), he stated that "hay en *Vidas sombrías* cuatro o cinco cuentos imitados de Poe" (in *Vidas sombrías* there are four or five stories in imitation of Poe).[14] While these were not the only times that Baroja mentioned Poe during his lifetime, what is perhaps most noteworthy is that the Bostonian writer was in fact already a major reference in Baroja's literary beginnings.[15]

This article seeks to explore some aspects of Pío Baroja's storytelling that demand detailed attention. To be sure, although Baroja's early short fiction has been explored from numerous literary angles—its sketchy form and genesis, and its distancing from the classical nineteenth-century Spanish tale, for example—its foreign presence has been generally overlooked. Katharine Murphy has considered the transatlantic connections between Baroja and British and American authors, including Henry James, James Joyce, and Edgar Allan Poe, among others. However, while some critics[16] have noted the importance of *Vidas sombrías* in that some of the stories suggest a distancing from traditional nineteenth-century narrative patterns, perhaps as a direct influence of Baroja's acquaintance with the naturalism of Russian writers (chiefly Dostoevsky and Turgenev), what seems to me to be most significant here is that the Basque novelist followed in the footsteps of the most popular side of Edgar Allan Poe, both in the conception of the poetics of the short tale and in the psychological development of protagonists in stories such as "Médium," "El reloj" "Nihil," and "El trasgo." This literary trait, however, only emerged in his early storytelling, and disappeared from the novels and tales published after the turn of the century. In my analysis, I will look at thematic aspects, literary resources, images, and symbols that may directly or indirectly have a connection with Edgar Allan

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Poe. The final part of this article will examine the tale "Médium," which seems to have been written in close imitation of the patterns set by Poe.

The literary value of *Vidas sombrías* is unquestionable when we bear in mind its debut in the context of fin de siècle Spanish literature. The stories included in this volume feature the themes, the descriptive force, and the literary imagination of the novelist to come. Despite its lack of readership—it sold just 150 of the 500 copies printed—*Vidas sombrías* was greeted enthusiastically by Miguel de Unamuno and José Martínez Ruiz, who wrote newspaper articles praising its lyrical and symbolic elements. That notwithstanding, the volume did not garner any great public acclaim, due to the distancing from nineteenth-century realism evinced by many of the stories, which, according to Katharine Murphy, focused on "subjective experience and interior realities, fragmented impressions, and the merging of Symbolism and lyrical expression."[17] Murphy has also pointed out that a great many of the stories in *Vidas sombrías* are characterized by "their linguistic economy, pictorialism and impressionism, and the emphasis on the individual and their humanity as the overserving consciousness of a subjectively perceived external reality."[18] Indeed, the innovative and experimental character of this new kind of storytelling, with plotless narratives devoid of consistent denouements, fleeting glimpses resembling snapshots, and an emphasis on psychological exploration or personal introspection, was despised by the Spanish readership of the time, accustomed to the populist conception of the Romantic and realist stories of Emilia Pardo Bazán and Leopoldo Alas ("Clarín").

Jesús Rubio Jiménez considers Baroja to be one of the best examples of the renewal of the Spanish tale at the turn of the twentieth century.[19] In this regard, Baroja's acquaintance with Russian naturalism may have initially driven him to imitate Dostoevsky[20] and Turgenev, whose treatment of local color, Russian peasant life, ancient traditions, and rural landscape, as many tales in *Sportsman's Sketches* attest, may be traceable in *Vidas sombrías*.[21] However, I would like to argue that this innovative endeavor was accompanied by a popular strain that consisted of an exploration of the uncanny, plus the inclusion of esoteric themes that make an undoubted connection between Baroja and Poe. Although such an affiliation had already been established by Unamuno, it was the critic John E. Englekirk who identified those short stories that may have been inspired by Poe:

> The tales that seem to have been inspired by Poe are "Médium," "Parábola," "La sombra," "El reloj," and "De la fiebre." Their sources may be traced

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> to Poe's tales of madness and to his fantastic sketches "Shadows" and "Silence." . . . Other tales reminiscent of Poe because of their depiction of morose types and of states of fear and because of their interest in the pseudo-scientific and the psychic are "Marichu," "Águeda," "El trasgo," "La sima," "La vida de los átomos," "Grito en el mar," and "Nihil."[22]

In his 1960 prologue to *Cuentos*, Julio Caro Baroja, the writer's nephew, affirmed that in those first narratives one can find "todo Baroja" (Baroja entirely) while, at the same time, he pointedly added that there was something in them that his uncle "echó por la borda" (threw overboard) and would never take up again. Caro Baroja was thus acknowledging a statement made by Miguel de Unamuno, and went on to note:

> Cuando don Miguel de Unamuno leyó *Vidas sombrías,* escribió un artículo magnífico, poniendo de relieve las características de los relatos que contenía el pequeño volumen. Señaló también ciertas influencias de Poe y de Dostoievski, y algún exceso de intelectualismo y de abstracción en los que juzgaba inferiores. Pues bien, es este germen de simbolismo, de esoterismo y de abstracción, que marca también la influencia de Poe, el que después no se desarrolla mucho. (When Don Miguel de Unamuno read *Vidas sombrías*, he wrote an excellent article featuring the characteristics of the stories contained in the small volume. He also noted certain influences of Poe and Dostoevsky, and some excess of intellectualism and abstraction, which he found to be of a lesser level. Well, it is this germ of symbolism, esotericism, and abstraction that also establishes Poe's influence, which he later does not develop much.)[23]

Just like many other nineteenth-century writers, Baroja became acquainted with Poe's works through Baudelaire's translation. Miguel Ángel García Juan has confirmed that the 1857 edition of *Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires* can be found in Baroja's personal library at Itzea, the family estate.[24]

Baroja, who had used the words "cuento" (tale) or "historia" (story) arbitrarily to refer to the short story, was never interested in developing a poetics of the genre. As Jesús Rubio Jiménez argues, his conception of the short story is similar to the idea he had of the novel.[25] In this regard, it is surprising to see how Baroja dedicated a page of admiration to Edgar Allan Poe in *Juventud y egolatría* (*Youth and Egolatry*), in which he regarded "The Gold Bug" as an impenetrable enigma, and how he described the poem "The Raven" as an "obra literaria, a la que sigue un análisis de gestación, titulado *La génesis de un poema*" (a literary work

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followed by an analysis of its composition, titled *The Genesis of a Poem*).[26] From Poe, a writer whom he later defined as "la esfinge mysteriosa que hace temblar con sus ojos de lince; el orfebre de maravillas mágicas" (the mysterious sphinx that trembles with its lynx eyes; the goldsmith of magical wonders),[27] Baroja took the concept of unity of effect and made it his own: "Yo creo que no debe haber ni puede haber unidad en una obra literaria más que en un trabajo corto. Me refiero a la unidad natural, a la unidad de impresión y de efecto" (I believe that there should not and cannot be unity in a literary work other than in a short work. I am referring to common unity, to the unity of sensation and effect).[28] However, should one doubt his true intentions, Baroja unabashedly "borrowed" the following words, which could have been written by Poe himself:

> La unidad de sensación o unidad de efecto no se puede conseguir más que en narraciones cortas, por ejemplo las de Turguenef y las de Merimee, *que se pueden leer de una sentada*, en las que se puede abarcar en un lapso de tiempo corto, su comienzo, su génesis y su final. (The unity of sensation or unity of effect can only be achieved in short narratives, for example, those of Turguenef and Merimee, *which can be read in one sitting*, in which one can cover in a short period of time its beginning, its genesis, and its end.)[29]

What made Baroja prefer to look at Turguenev's and Mérimée's fiction as genuine examples of the unity of effect, and thus avoid Poe's name being at the root of such a statement? Although it is not easy to prove whether Pío Baroja knew of Poe's writings on the poetics of the story, it does seem logical to believe, judging by the terminological precision used in the previous quotation, that Baroja might have been at least aware of Poe's 1842 review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, in which the Bostonian addressed the unity of effect or impression in the following terms: "This unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal *cannot be completed at one sitting*."[30]

Similarly, it seems fitting to note that Baroja failed to take into account Poe's reservations about the length of a narrative and the question of whether the unity of effect could be maintained in longer pieces. Baroja, therefore, largely ignored Poe's dictum—or, perhaps, he was determined to adopt and adapt Poe's unity of effect to his own ends. In this regard, Baroja confirmed that he drafted his novels bearing in mind the unity of sensation (unity of effect), which he would associate with the idea of grabbing the interest of his readers: "Siguiendo esta tendencia, los libros que he escrito los he pensado, o para leerlos de un golpe, buscando la unidad del efecto, o para leerlos a ratos, haciendo los capítulos

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cortos y concentrando toda la atención en los accidentes" (Following this trend, I have thought about the books I have written, either to be read all at once, seeking in them the unity of effect, or to be read at various times, thus making the chapters short and concentrating all the attention on the accidents).[31] In short, a novel with excessively long chapters might interfere with the reader's pace of reading, to the detriment of his interest in the narrative. This idea confirms César Borja's analysis of Baroja's fiction, since in the latter's view, every novel written by the Basque writer became "una sucesión de pequeñas novelas, historietas, anécdotas, episodios o cuadros de novela. La misma distribución del libro en pequeños capítulos contribuye a acentuar dicha impresión" (a succession of short novels, sketches, anecdotes, episodes or portraits of novels. The very distribution of the book in small chapters contributes to accentuating this impression).[32]

Although set in the Basque Country, Baroja's short stories, prose poems as Unamuno would call them, are characterized by miniature portraits that recall the Romantic landscapes of the German painter Caspar David Friedrich. Tales such as "De la fiebre," "La sima," "Nihil," or "El reloj" take place in bleak sceneries in which their wandering protagonists roam over ragged mountains and deep valleys, aiming to find shelter in semi-ruined mansions or walled castles, thus providing the narration with a phantasmagorical imagery reminiscent of the English Gothic novel. In "De la fiebre," the unnamed narrator desperately searches for a way out, to break loose from bleak hallways and narrowing walls: "De repente, empecé a cruzar corredores sombríos, pasadizos angostos, cuyas paredes se estrechaban a mi paso, y me encontré en el campo" (Suddenly, I began to walk dark corridors, narrow passageways, whose walls narrowed as I passed, and I found myself in the countryside).[33] This description reminds us of the anguish experienced by the protagonist of "The Pit and the Pendulum," while the Gothic interior is reminiscent of "The Fall of the House of Usher." In "El reloj," a three-page plotless short story, the protagonist, stupefied with sorrow and alcohol, takes refuge in a semi-ruined castle whose main hall, chambers, and wall decorations evoke the interiors of "The Oval Portrait," while the clock motif seems to be inspired by the "gigantic clock of ebony" whose ominous chiming makes Prospero's guests stop talking and dancing in "The Masque of the Red Death." Similarly, the landscape of "Nihil" provides scenery that reminds us of the gloomy stories of Hoffmann and Poe:

> El paisaje es negro, desolado y estéril; un paisaje de pesadilla de noche calenturienta; el aire espeso, lleno de miasmas, vibra como un nervio

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> dolorido. Por entre las sombras de la noche se destaca sobre una colina la almenada fortaleza, llena de torreones sombríos. (The landscape is black, desolate, and barren; a nightmare landscape in a feverish night; the thick air, full of miasmas, vibrates like a painful nerve. Among the shadows of the night, the walled fortress, full of shady towers, stands out on a hill.) (79)

As noted above, Baroja acknowledged that he had written four or five stories in imitation of Poe. Of all the stories included in *Vidas sombrías*, "Médium" seems to be the tale that displays the strongest affinity to Poe's storytelling, in that it uses the technique and Gothic atmosphere of "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "William Wilson." Set in Valencia, where a young Baroja had moved with his family owing to the consumption of his brother Darío, the plot of this lyrical story recalls an unnamed narrator's schooldays and his frequent visits to the house of his schoolmate Román Hudson, which is described as "triste, muy triste, todo lo triste que puede ser una casa" (sad, very sad, as sad as a house can be) (20). In a flashback that covers almost the whole story, the narrator refers to how he met Román's mother and sister, the latter named Ángeles, and how both women instilled in him an unfounded fear. Indeed, the first time he entered the house, he found them in a large, sad room: "Junto a un balcón, estaban sentadas la madre y la hermana de mi amigo. La madre leía, la hija bordaba. No sé por qué, me dieron miedo" (Next to a balcony, my friend's mother and sister were sitting. The mother was reading, [while] the daughter was doing embroidery. I don't know why, they scared me) (20). For no apparent reason, the girl grinned in a very strange manner, which baffled Román. At the end of the school year, the narrator and Román stopped seeing each other for some time, until one day the former is told by Román's family that his friend is secluded at home, feeling sick and looking bad. When the narrator visits him, he finds Román bedridden, alone in his room, and weeping. Román then reveals an enormous bruise, which he confesses had been inflicted by Ángeles. Moreover, he leads the narrator to understand that his sister has esoteric powers, can move objects without touching them, and can even break glass with her fingers. Furthermore, he says that his sister's gifts are responsible for ringing the bell on the stairs at midnight, even when the bell has been removed. All these events keep Román feeling unwell. One day, Román's mother decides to buy him a camera, and she asks the narrator to take a couple of photographs of the family, which she intends to send to some relatives in England. When the plates are developed, the children remain speechless, looking at one another:

> Sobre la cabeza de Ángeles se veía una sombra blanca de mujer de facciones parecidas a la suya. En la segunda prueba se veía la misma sombra,

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> pero en distinta actitud: inclinándose sobre Ángeles, como hablándole al oído. Nuestro terror fue tan grande, que Román y yo nos quedamos mudos, paralizados. Ángeles miró las fotografías y sonrió, sonrió. Esto era lo grave. (Above the head of Ángeles there was a white shadow of a woman with features similar to hers. In the second plate, the same shadow was seen, but in a different attitude: it was bending over Ángeles, as if speaking into her ear. Our terror was so great that Román and I were speechless, paralyzed. Ángeles looked at the photographs and smiled, smiled. This was the serious thing.) (22–23)

The narrator relates how he ran home, pursued by the image of the girl's faint smile. As he entered his house, he claimed to see Ángeles, smirking, passing by a mirror. The story ends with the narrator's last reflection, which marks the end of the flashback: "¿Quién ha dicho que estoy loco? ¡Miente!, porque los locos no duermen, y yo duermo . . . ¡Ah! ¿Creíais que yo no sabía eso? Los locos no duermen, y yo duermo. Desde que nací, todavía no he despertado" (Who said I was crazy? He lies! Because crazy people don't sleep, and I sleep . . . Ah! Did you think I didn't know that? Crazy people don't sleep, but I sleep. Indeed, I have not yet awakened since I was born) (23).

The tale's circular structure, which Baroja had previously used in "Ángelus," may be reminiscent of Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" in that this narrative starts with Montresor's recollection of a crime perpetrated fifty years earlier, as a result of feelings of remorse that seem to be lingering within the murderer's soul. "Médium" begins with the narrator, who defends his own sanity but also acknowledges that no physician could determine the reason for his mental instability: "Soy un hombre intranquilo, nervioso, muy nervioso; pero no estoy loco, como dicen los médicos que me han reconocido. He analizado todo, he profundizado todo, y vivo intranquilo. ¿Por qué? No lo he sabido todavía" (I am a restless, nervous, very nervous man; but I am not insane, as the doctors have recognized. I have analyzed everything, I have delved into everything, and I live restlessly. Why? I have not known yet) (19). However, even though he claims not to know the reason for such uneasiness, he refers to the presence of a spirit within his soul: "Hay un espíritu que vibra dentro de mi alma" (A spirit vibrates within my soul) (19). Those words might well have been uttered by the psychotic narrator of "The Tell-Tale Heart," who had likewise defended his sanity despite the horrible murder he had committed: "True!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous, I have been and am; but why *will* you say that I am mad? . . . I heard all things in the heaven and the earth."[34] Or the narrator in "The Black Cat," who also declared that he was not insane while waited in jail the

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night before his execution: "Yet, mad am I not—and very surely do I not dream" (223). Yet this narrator, just like the one in "Médium," believes that he was the victim of an evil spirit, "the spirit of PERVERSENESS," which pushes humans to commit vile or stupid acts (225).

However, contrary to what happens in "Médium," the psychotic narrators in these stories written by Poe affirm that they know the reason for their nervousness. Thus, while in "The Tell-Tale Heart" such a state is produced by the cursed, veiled eye, resembling that of a vulture, in "The Black Cat" it is the narrator's impending death as a result of "a series of mere household events" (223) that forces his confession. In this regard, Miguel Ángel García de Juan contends that the narrators of "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "Médium" are protagonists who want to convince themselves of their sanity.[35] Furthermore, while in Poe's story the narrator defends his sanity in that he delicately proceeded to the murder of the old man, in "Médium" the narrator affirms that had he been insane he would not have been able to sleep, despite the fact that many years have elapsed since the esoteric incident in Román's house. Meanwhile, he tries to convince us that his experience is not a personal hallucination, since his own friend Román had also witnessed the uncanny experience of the white shadow of a lady taking shape and leaning to speak into the ear of her sister, the medium Ángeles.

David Roas suggests that the beginning of "Medium" greatly resembles that of "The Black Cat" and that the presence of narrators defending their own sanity was also a literary device used not only by Poe but also by Maupassant.[36] Katharine Murphy, however, establishes a close connection between "Medium" and "The Fall of the House of Usher," although she also notes a strong affinity with "The Turn of the Screw" in the treatment of both the uncanny and in the Gothic motif. "It is, in fact, closer to Henry James' story," she claims, "in the use of the governess and the seemingly angelic children of whom she is in charge is commonly understood to suggest sexual and psychological unease in late Victorian England."[37] Furthermore, in both stories—"Médium" and "The Fall of the House of Usher"—the source of unease is to be found in the protagonist's sister, Ángeles and Lady Madeline, respectively.

As in "The Fall of the House of Usher," Baroja's story features two siblings—the doppelgänger motif is also recalled here—of similar age, living in a huge mansion. The narrator's schoolmate, Román, could thus be a younger alter ego of Roderick Usher, while his ghostly sister Ángeles incarnates Lady Madeline Usher. Moreover, in both stories, the narrators are hastily summoned to visit their friends who are affected by strange maladies, and in both cases these produce evident signs of physical weakness and languor: in the case of the Ushers owing to a hereditary illness that consumes the lives of the siblings,

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while Román is probably under the spell of the esoteric powers of his sister. However, unlike "The Fall of the House of Usher," in which the collapse of the manor house buries the lineage of the Ushers, in "Médium" the narrator, dismayed, sneaks away, although he cannot avoid being chased by the supernatural presence of Ángeles, which ends up being reflected in the mirror in his house. Indeed, evil has haunted the narrator for years, thus having caused his emotional instability and nervousness since his schooldays.

As evidence of a link to Edgar Allan Poe, Katharine Murphy has also noted the existence of narratological devices such as the recurrent use of anaphoras or "ritornellos," phrases that are repeated as a means of reflecting the narrator's mental distress. Examples in "Médium" abound, and some of these are almost literal transfers into Spanish of expressions uttered by some of the most infamous of Poe's mentally unstable protagonists. Here I offer some remarkable examples from "Médium": "Soy un hombre intranquilo, nervioso, muy nervioso" (I am a restless, nervous, very nervous man) (19); "Era un buen chico; sí, seguramente era un buen chico" (He was a good boy; yes, he was surely a good boy) (20); meanwhile, he describes Ángeles's smile as being "tan rara, tan rara" (so strange, so strange) (21). All these phrases are reminiscent of examples in "The Tell-Tale Heart": "with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation °I went the work" (303); "very, very dreadfully nervous" (304); "So I opened it—you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily" (304); "It was open—wide, wide open" (304); or "it grew louder—louder—*louder!*" (306).[38] Such examples in both stories are numerous, due to the traumatizing experience that, although of a different nature, caused both narrators to see their nerves altered.

Vidas sombrías was the first literary work in the prolific career of Pío Baroja. It also marked the direction in which the future novelist's interest lay, although a popular nineteenth-century trait was inevitably lost in the process. As Katharine Murphy has argued, the publication of this volume anticipated the changing literary paradigms in Europe and in the United States, and thus suggests a transnational reading that involves addressing Baroja beyond his nineteenth-century sources and connecting him with authors such as Henry James and James Joyce.[39] What this article has sought to establish is that traces of Poe in Baroja go far beyond the readings of previous commentators. Although Baroja soon abandoned his trend toward Poe, he adopted the concept of unity of effect, which he would soon recast within his own ideas of what a novel should be. Thus, Baroja adapted Poe's dictum and determined that his long novels could be read as novellas, and the chapters therein as a concatenation of short narratives. As a closing remark, my reading of "Médium," in all probability the most Poesque tale in *Vidas sombrías*, does not exhaust the potential for

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future explorations of the legacy of Edgar Allan Poe in Pío Baroja. Indeed, other narratives, such as "De la fiebre," "Parábola," "Nihil," "La sima," or "El trasgo," which seem to exhibit traits of Poe in the choice of themes, literary devices, or formal structure, require greater literary exegesis, all the more so because Baroja managed to disguise such traces with the addition of local color from the Basque Country and Castile.

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Notes

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1. Lois Davis Vines, *Poe Abroad* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 1.

2. Emron Esplin and Margarida Vale de Gato, *Translated Poe* (Bethlehem, Pa.: Lehigh University Press, 2014).

3. Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan, *Presencia de Edgar Allan Poe en la literatura española del siglo XIX* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1999), 23.

4. David Roas, *La sombra del cuervo: Edgar Allan Poe y la literatura fantástica española del siglo XIX* (Madrid: Ensayo, 2011), 37.

5. Roas, 113–24.

6. José R. Ibáñez, "Poe's *Maison de Santé* Revisited: A Spanish Imitation of 'The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether,'" *Edgar Allan Poe Review* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 63–69.

7. Pedro Salinas, "Poe in Spain and Spanish America," in *Poe in Foreign Lands and Tongues*, ed. John C. French (Baltimore: Edgar Allan Poe Society, 1941), 26.

8. John E. Englekirk, *Edgar Allan Poe in Hispanic Literature* (New York: Instituto de las Españas en los Estados Unidos, 1934).

9. M. Thomas Inge and Gloria Downing, "Unamuno and Poe," *Poe Newsletter* 3, no. 2 (December 1970): 35–36; Thomas R. Franz, "Unamuno and the Poe/Valéry Legacy," *Revista Hispánica Moderna* 50 (1997): 48–56.

10. T. Labrador Gutiérrez, "Presencia de Edgar Allan Poe en Antonio Machado," *Archivo Hispalense* 57, no. 175 (1974): 87–119; Olivia Areti, "Antonio Machado e la poetica di E. A. Poe," *Studi Ispanici* (1979): 131–40; Eugene Del Vecchio, "E. A. Poe and Antonio Machado: An Undetected Affinity," *Discurso literario* 5, no. 2 (1988): 395–400; A. Gutiérrez García, "'El cuervo' de E. A. Poe en 'Nevermore' y 'Mai piú,' dos poemas de Antonio Machado," *Crítica Hispánica* 30, nos. 1–2 (2008): 56–68; Cristina Flores, "¡Ayer es nunca jamás!: Recepción e influencia de la poesía de Edgar Allan Poe en Machado," *Odisea* 10 (2009): 83–96.

11. Miguel Ángel García de Juan, *Los cuentos de Baroja: Creación, recepción y discurso* (Madrid: Pliegos, 1997); Katharine Murphy, "Experiments in Genre: Baroja's *Vidas sombrías* and the Short Story in English," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 88, nos. 7–8 (2011): 121–41.

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12. It is said that, while paying Pío Baroja a visit on his deathbed in October 1956, Ernest Hemingway affirmed that the Basque novelist should have received the Nobel Prize instead of himself. See Anthony Kerrigan, "The Night One Nobel Prize Threw Another Nobel Out of His House: A Participant's Memoir," *Antioch Review* 49, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 379.

13. Pío Baroja, *La dama errante*, in *Obras completas*, vol. 2 (Madrid: Biblioteca Nuevas, 1947), 230.

14. Pío Baroja, *Páginas escogidas* (Madrid: Ed. Calleja, 1918), 28.

15. In fact, the first time Baroja mentions Poe is in an article written in 1890. When he refers to Dostoevsky, he affirms that his work, "comparada con la de autores de genio más inquieto, como Poe y Baudelaire, es aún más terrible, pues el análisis de las sensaciones y pasiones de los personajes es más perfecto" (compared to that of more restless genius authors, such as Poe and Baudelaire, is even more terrible, because the analysis of sensations and passions of his characters is more perfect). Qtd. in Andreu Navarra Ordoño, "Pío Baroja y Rusia," *Sancho el Sabio: Revista de cultura e investigación vasca* 34 (2011): 13.

16. Jesús Rubio Jiménez, "Temas y formas de los primeros cuentos de Baroja," in *Formas breves del relato*, ed. Aurora Egido and Yves-René Fonquerne (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 1986), 192–94; Ascensión Rivas Hernández, "Análisis de variantes en los primeros cuentos de Pío Baroja," in *El lenguaje de la literatura (siglos XIX y XX)*, ed. Ricardo Senabre Sempere, Ascensión Rivas Hernández, and Iñaki Gabaráin Gaztelumendi (Salamanca: Ed. Ambos Mundos, 2004), 244.

17. Murphy, "Experiments in Genre," 121.

18. Murphy, 124.

19. Rubio Jiménez, "Temas y formas," 194.

20. Katharine Murphy notes the admiration Baroja had expressed "for Dostoevsky's 'genio inquieto' and his Naturalism, evident in *Poor Folk* (1986), a possible inspiration for stories such as 'La sombra,' 'Bondad oculta,' or 'Nihil'" ("Experiments in Genre," 121).

21. The influence of Dostoevsky and Turgenev in Baroja has been studied by García de Juan in *Los cuentos de Baroja*, 85–91.

22. Englekirk, *Edgar Allan Poe in Hispanic Literature*, 457–58.

23. Julio Caro Baroja "Prólogo," in Pío Baroja, *Cuentos* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2008), 11.

24. García de Juan, *Los cuentos de Baroja*, 87, 91–92. This author also indicates that the tales "Colloque entre Monos et Una," "Conversation d'Eiros avec Charmion," "L'ile de la Fée," and "Le portrait ovale" seemed to have been subject to a detailed study by Baroja owing to the pencil marks that are still visible in the manuscripts of these narratives.

25. Rubio Jiménez, "Temas y formas," 194.

26. Pío Baroja, *Juventud y egolatría* (Madrid: Rafael Caro Raggio, 1917), 105–6. Baroja may not have had access to Poe's original essay, "The Philosophy of Composition," and instead read it in Baudelaire's translation.

27. Baroja, 136.

28. Baroja, 13.

29. Baroja, 13; italics added.

30. Edgar Allan Poe, *Essays and Reviews* (New York: Library of America, 1984), 571; italics added.

31. Baroja, *Juventud y egolatría*, 14.

32. Mariano Baquero Goyanes, "Los cuentos de Baroja," *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*, 2009, http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/.

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33. Baroja, *Cuentos*, 134. Subsequent references to this edition will be cited parenthetically in the text.

34. Edgar Allan Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart," in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (London: Penguin, 1987), 303. Subsequent references to this edition will be cited parenthetically in the text.

35. García de Juan, *Los cuentos de Baroja*, 92. I disagree with this assessment. Both narrators aim to convince not themselves, but the reader of their sanity. Thus, the narrator of "The Tell-Tale Heart" begins by stating "Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story" (303). He thus strives to make the reader believe that he can relate in a composed way how he planned the old man's murder. In "Médium" the narrator asks a rhetorical question to his readers: "Ah! ¿Os sonreís; dudáis de mi palabra?" (Oh, are you smiling; do you doubt my word? (19).

36. Roas, *La sombra del cuervo*, 160–61.

37. Murphy, "Experiments in Genre," 138.

38. In a recent study, José R. Ibáñez has noted the recurrence of anaphoras, sentence repetitions, and linking verbs in "The Tell-Tale Heart"; see "Poe's Unity of Effect Called into Question: Revisiting Cortázar's Translation of 'The Tell-Tale Heart,'" *Edgar Allan Poe Review* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 78, 85.

39. Murphy, "Experiments in Genre," 122.

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