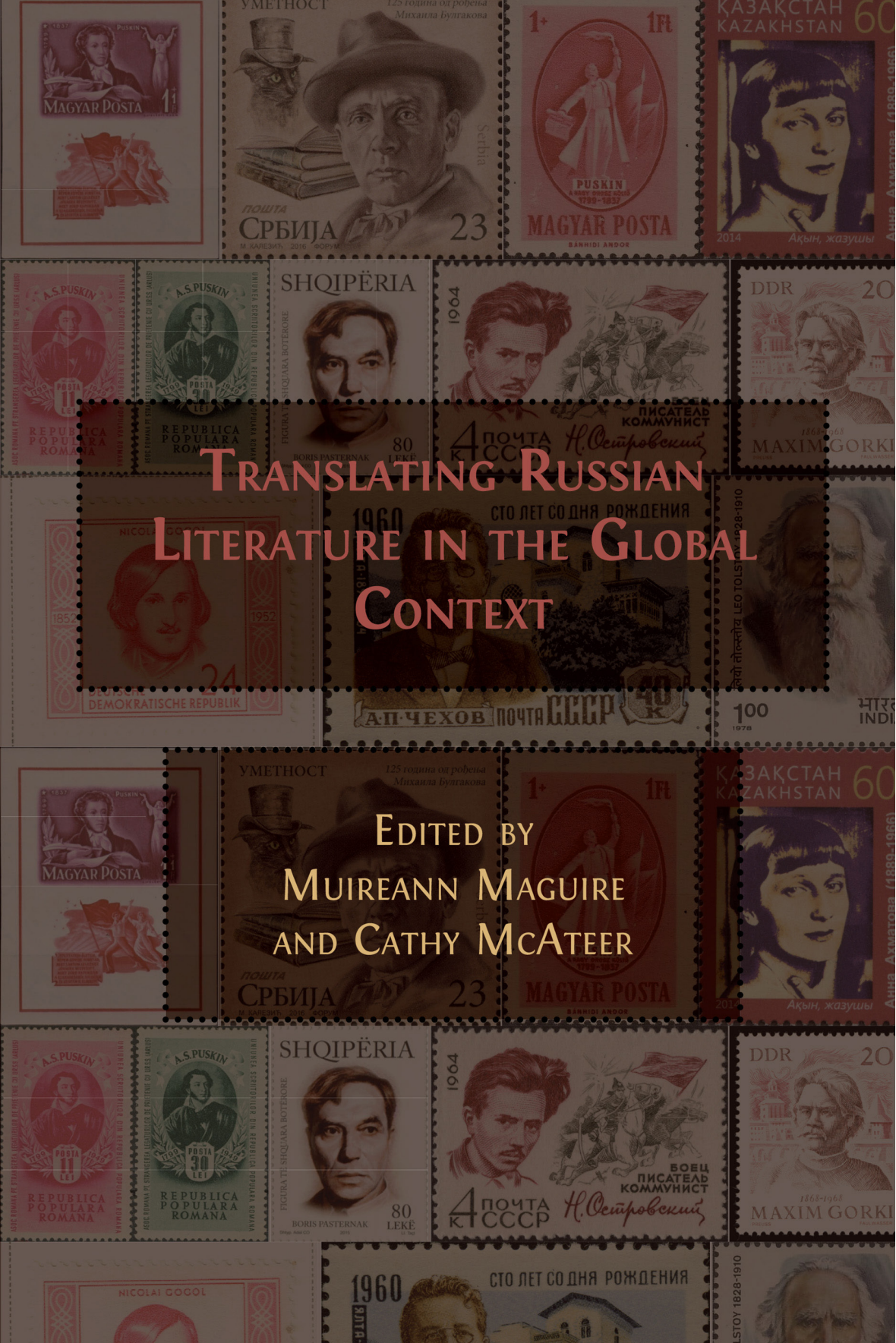

Translating Russian Literature in the Global Context

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Spain

Countess Emilia Pardo Bazán (1851–1921): The Single-handed Populariser of Russian Literature in Spain

Margaret Tejerizo

> What am I working on just now? I am in the heart of Russia. I want to make a study of that strange and curious literature [...] I think that I am one of the few people in Spain who can look at what is happening abroad.
>
> Emilia Pardo Bazán, 1886.[1]

> Look, daughter, we men are very selfish, and if they ever tell you that there are things that men can do which women cannot, tell such people that it is a lie, because there cannot be two sets of morality for the two sexes.[2]

> *Con esta intención salí / de Moscovia*... [I left Muscovy / With this intention....
>
> Pedro Calderón de la Barca, 1636.[3]

1 ["¿En qué trabajo ahora? ... Estoy en el corazón de Rusia. Quiero hacer un estudio sobre esa extraña y curiosa literatura. [...] En España creo ser una de las pocas personas que tiene la cabeza para mirar lo que pasa en el extranjero."] From a letter by Bazán to the Catalan writer (and her childhood friend) Narcís Oller (12 October, 1896), cited by Isabel Burdiel in her monograph *Emilia Pardo Bazán* (Barcelona: Penguin, 2019), p. 267. Unless otherwise attributed, all translations from Spanish are my own.

2 ["Mira, hija mía, los hombres somos muy egoístas, y si te dicen alguna vez que hay cosas que pueden hacer los hombres y las mujeres no, di que es mentira, porque no puede haber dos morales para dos sexos."] Sara Herran, who coordinated a special non-paginated supplement (to mark the anniversary of Pardo Bazán's death) of the women's magazine *Glamour* (Madrid, June 2021) quotes these words, spoken by Pardo Bazán's father to his daughter.

3 Calderón de la Barca, *La vida es sueño/Life is a Dream*, ed. by María del Mar Cortés Timoner (Barcelona: Austral, 2014), p.64.

 https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0340.16

Two Monumental Endings… And a New Beginning.

A certain vague notion of 'Russia'—as a distant, snow-covered and exotic land—may have entered Spanish sensibilities as early as 1636 with the publication of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's (1600–81) tragedy *Life is a Dream* (*La vida es sueño*, 1636), in which one of the main 'dramatic locations' mentioned is the fantastically distant "Moscovia" (Muscovy).[4] In today's Madrid, however, certain monuments and memorial plaques offer 'unspoken tributes' to the four people who, speaking figuratively, laid the foundations for a much deeper cultural relationship between Russia and Spain. This new awareness began, albeit slowly and hesitantly at first, to flourish in the later nineteenth century.[5] A statue of politician Emilio Castelar (1832–99), whose 1881 study *Contemporary Russia* (*La rusia contemporánea*) was crucial for establishing greater political and social understanding of Russia in Spain, towers over a main road junction.[6] A beautiful statue of Aleksandr Pushkin (1799–1837) stands in pensive mode in one of Madrid's small parks, positioned directly opposite his Spanish 'counterpart', the Romantic poet Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer (1836–70), as though the two were engaged in some profound poetic dialogue.[7] Indeed, setting aside the earlier 1832 Spanish translation of Gavrila Derzhavin's 1784 poem 'God' ('Bog'), 'Metel'' ('The Blizzard'), one of Pushkin's *Tales of Belkin* (*Povesti Belkina*, 1830) has the honour of being the first work of Russian literature to be translated into Spanish (as 'El turbión de nieve'). It was not a direct translation from the Russian; French was the medium for the rather flat and lifeless Spanish version of the vivacious original.[8] A statue to novelist Juan Valera (1824–1905) stands in the Paseo de Recoletos; Valera's *Letters from Russia* (*Cartas desde Rusia*, 1856) was one of the first Spanish-language works to describe direct personal experience of life in Russia. Finally, not far from Valera (although, in life, they

4 Calderon's play is likely to have been introduced into Russia early, by Polish Jesuits. The latest Russian translation was done by Russian poet Natalia Vanjanen in 2021; this version was performed in Moscow in the autumn of that year. It is a verse translation which clearly attempts to build creative and literary bridges between the two cultures by subtly referencing works by Pushkin, Griboedov and Nadezhda Durova.

5 2012 was designated as a special year for the celebration of Russian and Spanish cultures. Many new translations of Russian literature were made in that year.

6 For more details about Castelar's work, see Margaret Tejerizo, *The Influence of Russian Literature on Spanish Authors in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Reception, Translation, Inspiration* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007); hereafter, *Influence*. These details can be found in various sections of the first two chapters.

7 See, for example, Margaret Tejerizo, 'Lo exótico se trastoca en familiar: La presencia de la literatura rusa en la Generación del 98 con especial hincapié en páginas escogidas de Miguel de Unamuno', in *1898: Entre la crisi d'identitat i la modernització*, ed. by Joaquim Molas and others, 2 vols (Barcelona: L'Abadia de Montserrat, 1998), II (2000), pp. 395–401.

8 Ibid.

were literary rivals), stands a statue of Countess (doña) Emilia Pardo Bazán, whose single-handed role as the major populariser of Russian literature in Spain is the main topic of this essay. Pardo Bazán also enjoys a memorial plaque at 33 Calle Princesa and another at 35 Calle San Bernardo, each noting (somewhat implausibly) that she died in that location in 1921![9] Important threads connecting Spanish-Russian literary and cultural relations between Spain and Russia have been left dangling for many years. There are, of course, numerous reasons for this—including the vast geographical distances that separated the countries, linguistic and religious differences, and their harsh political regimes. Yet often, on closer inspection, one finds that these two countries have more cultural similarities than differences. Much as Russia did, Spain relied on France for cultural and intellectual inspiration; as mentioned above, Russian literature first entered Spain via French as a pivot language.

It must be stressed that Pardo Bazán was not a translator of Russian literature; she was, nonetheless, an excellent linguist who knew French, Italian and indeed German well enough to translate Heine into Spanish—besides being bilingual in Castilian Spanish and in her native Galician.[10] However, her three lectures and her later essays on Russian culture and literature almost immediately inspired a new wave of interest in her subject, not only in Spain but in the wider Hispanic world. By the time her essays were published, the major novels of Lev Tolstoy (1828–1910), Fedor Dostoevsky (1821–81), and Ivan Turgenev (1818–83) had made their way into Spain (largely as French translations); not until the early 1890s did the first direct translations of Russian writers begin to flourish. Inspired by her great love of Russian literature, Countess Emilia Pardo Bazán shared with her fellow Spaniards and also with the much wider Spanish-speaking reading public in Spanish America an excellent survey of the history, culture and literature of Russia—first of all in spoken form, through her lectures, and then later with their publication as essays—and she did so with great humility, aware that she was reading in translation and that she had never visited Russia.

At best, Pardo Bazán's work has been undervalued by her fellow Spaniards; at worst ignored. But by a curious quirk of fate, Isabel Burdiel, at the very start of her recent biography of Pardo Bazán, makes a link between the latter and Russia when she relates how the Russian-Jewish author and journalist Il'ia Ehrenburg, after leaving Odesa in 1908 for South America, accidentally encountered one of her books in his first 'home' in Santiago de Chile:

9 See Burdiel, *Emilia Pardo Bazán*, p. 15.

10 Among her many other achievements and ground-breaking literary works, she was the first Spanish woman to write detective fiction; as will be noted, she greatly admired Dostoevsky's depictions of the 'criminal' mind. A full scholarly study of the possible impact of Dostoevsky's writings on Pardo Bazán's own fiction is long overdue. Likewise, an examination of Dostoevsky's potential influence on some of her detective stories would be a fruitful academic exercise.

> [H]e could not […] even read Spanish but he tried his best […] and […] for him it was a strange world yet at the same time a familiar one. He was surprised that the author was a woman. He did not discover until later that she was also a passionate admirer of the Russian novel.[11]

This contribution will re-read some of Pardo Bazán's contributions to this field and re-evaluate their importance.

Where It All Began: 1921 to 2021…

On 12 May 1921, the well-known Spanish writer, essayist, champion of women's rights and literary critic Countess Emilia Pardo Bazán died in her home at 27 Calle Princesa, today one of Madrid's busiest streets. She had lived and worked there for the last four years of her life. A little further down Calle Princesa, opposite her last dwelling-place, stands a large statue erected to Countess Pardo Bazán in 1995, engraved from 'The Women of Madrid and Argentina'. Although Pardo Bazán was born in La Coruña, Galicia on 16 September 1851, her adulthood was spent mostly in Madrid. Her prosperous parents encouraged her, unusually for girls of that period, to study and develop her talents. She thus gained self-confidence from an early age. Reading and writing were always her favourite pastimes. Throughout her long life she dedicated herself to literary and intellectual activities, swiftly establishing herself as a successful novelist, essayist, and advocate of women's freedoms in Spain; in addition, she was one of the first writers in Spain to use a typewriter, and Spain's first female university professor (at the Central University of Madrid). Exceptionally for women of those times, she frequently travelled unaccompanied beyond Spain—she notes in the opening section of her volume of lectures and essays on Russian culture that she greatly envied "the daughters of Great Britain" ("*las hijas de la Gran Bretaña*") since they were able to travel freely.[12] Paris was one of her favourite destinations and it was during a visit to the French capital in winter 1885 that her great, lifelong passion for Russian culture began—specifically, after reading Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* in French.[13] Pardo Bazán's close relationship

11 ("[N]i […] leía español, pero se esforzó […] y […] le resultó un mundo al tiempo extraño y familiar. Le asombró que el autor fuese una mujer. Hasta más tarde no supo que era también una apasionada de la novela rusa.") Burdiel, *Emilia Pardo Bazán*, p. 15.

12 Emilia Pardo Bazán, *La revolución y la novela en Rusia :* (*lecturas en el Ateneao de Madrid*) (Madrid: Tello, 1887), p. 11, http://dbooks.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/books/PDFs/300893789.pdf. This edition was personally approved by Pardo Bazán.

13 "I recall that it was in March 1885 that a Russian novel fell into my hands, which produced a profound impression upon me: Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* [...]." ("Recuerdo que fué cuando cayó en mis manos una novela rusa, que me produjo impresió muy honda: *Crimen y castigo*, de Dostoyeusky […]") Pardo Bazán, *La revolución y la novela*, p. 3.

with Spain's most popular and well-known novelist of that era, Benito Pérez de Galdós (1843–1920), placed her securely at the centre of literary developments (and polemics) of those times. Undoubtedly Galdós's own admiration for the works of Tolstoy and Turgenev derived in great part from his contacts with Pardo Bazán.[14] She was also well acquainted with one of the other outstanding authors of that period, Leopoldo Alas, known as 'Clarín' (1852–1901), as discussed below.[15] But not all male authors of that time condoned Pardo Bazán's daring literary ventures beyond the Spanish frontier; the novelist Juan Valera was one of her harshest critics, as will be seen below.

Many events were held in Spain during 2021 to mark the centenary of Pardo Bazán's death, including major exhibitions, dramatisations of some of her works, journalism, and academic articles. And yet one of her greatest achievements has barely been mentioned: the transmission of Russian culture and literature to Spain and the Hispanic world. Even Isabel Burdiel's biography seems almost to dismiss Pardo Bazán's carefully constructed, well-researched, and original work as a cultural intermediary between Spain and Russia as possessing little more than "historical interest" ("*interés histórico*") for contemporary readers.[16] Doña Emilia accomplished her wide-ranging critique of Russian culture single-handedly, despite opposition from male contemporaries who judged her endeavour to be, at best, inappropriate. As I will discuss below, she delivered three polished, stimulating, and informative lectures on Russian culture in April 1887, which were later published in essay form. All of her main written sources for this work are listed in the bibliography accompanying the published lectures; in the spoken version, she repeatedly mentioned how her personal encounters with intellectuals and scholars (mostly in Paris) had inspired and encouraged her. Sadly, even during Pardo Bazán's centenary, no separate edition of these lectures was available for purchase in any of Madrid's main bookstores, although new editions of her other works were published to mark this anniversary.[17]

14 Benito Pérez de Galdós admitted to having acquired a great admiration for Dostoevsky and Turgenev after the publication of Pardo Bazán's essays. His own novel *Doña Perfecta* (1876) has certain similarities with Turgenev's *Fathers and Children* [*Ottsy i deti*, 1862] with the interesting difference that the older generation in Galdós's novel is represented by a woman. I discuss this in more detail in *Influence* (esp. Chapter Four).

15 Alas was accused of plagiarism as his novel *The Regent's Wife* (*La Regenta*, 1885) was considered too close to Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1878). It is one of the great nineteenth-century 'novels of adultery' and both protagonists are called Anna/Ana; but there, in my opinion, the similarity ends.

16 Burdiel, *Emilia Pardo Bazán*, p. 269.

17 It was surprising that in the bookshop of the Spanish National Library which had acquired many editions of her work to sell during its exhibition 'The Challenge of Modernity' ('El reto de la modernidad'), which was planned to mark Pardo Bazán's centenary in 2021, lacked a copy of these essays.

On 6 September 1921, four months after Pardo Bazán's death, the writer Carmen Laforet, whose award-winning novel *Nothing* (*Nada*, 1944) broke new ground for women's literature in post-Civil War Spain, was born in Barcelona (the centenary of Laforet's birth was also celebrated throughout Spain in 2021). Pardo Bazán and Laforet, besides their remarkable contributions to enhancing the position and esteem of women writers at two different critical points in Spanish history, are linked in two further and perhaps somewhat unexpected ways: firstly, by a so-called 'university', the Madrid Athenaeum (Ateneo) in the Calle del Prado, and secondly by Dostoevsky. In the Madrid Ateneo, over three nights in April 1887 (13, 20, and 27 April) Pardo Bazán delivered her lectures on Russian literature and culture, published later that year as *The Revolution and the Novel in Russia* (*La revolución y la novela en Rusia*, 1887). This volume became the first informed, organised, and thorough Spanish-language presentation of Russian literature and culture. Pardo Bazán was the second woman ever to address the Ateneo, and eighteen years later, in 1905, she became its first female member. Still later, in the library of the Madrid Ateneo, Carmen Laforet would write her novel *Nothing* almost in a single sitting. Pardo Bazán claimed that Dostoevsky, whose novels she had read in French translation during her visit to Paris in the winter of 1885, had inspired her ever-increasing passion for Russian literature. Laforet's *Nothing*, with its disturbing, claustrophobic house and irrational, disturbed characters, set in the dark, winding and sinister streets of Barcelona, has long deserved a detailed comparative study alongside Dostoevsky's vision of St Petersburg.[18] (Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* was translated into Catalan directly from the Russian by Andreu Nin in 1929; only in 2021 did Miquel Cabal Guarro complete a new version.)[19] Today, Emilia Pardo Bazán is the only woman commemorated in the Ateneo with a portrait, among the vast gallery of male politicians, writers, and public figures. I shall now turn to examine her contribution to the popularisation of Russian literature in Spain and in the wider Hispanic world.

Russian 'Literary Wars'—And Some Alliances

> She had a remarkable memory, a curiosity that knew no bounds, a superb intelligence and a hot temper: she fought with most of her colleagues for her own rights and for women's rights in general [...].[20]

18 A detailed study of the presence of Dostoevsky in the fictional world of Carmen Laforet is long overdue.

19 There was an excellent discussion about the Nin version and a presentation of the latest translation in the Spanish daily newspaper, *ABC*, 22 May 2021, p 8. On the translation of Dostoevsky into Catalan, see Miquel Cabal Guarro's chapter in the present volume.

20 "Tenía una memoria prodigiosa, una curiosidad infinita, una inteligencia portentosa y mucho genio: se peleó con casi todos sus colegas, por sus derechos

Although Emilia Pardo Bazán was born in Galicia, she moved to Madrid as soon as possible in the hope of establishing herself as a writer. The plaque above her first Madrid residence (35 Calle San Bernardo) notes that she hosted many important literary salons, bringing together major intellectuals of the period. When her marriage (to her childhood friend José Quiroga) ended in 1886 after sixteen years, Pardo Bazán was able to support herself from family legacies and via her profession as a novelist and essayist. Unusually and fortunately for a woman at that time, she could lead an almost fully financially independent life in the capital. By 1887, she had already become known as a novelist and critic. Her frequent journeys to Paris consolidated her cultural authority. While the importance of France as a cultural reference for Spain was noted above, by the late nineteenth century Spain was seeking to discard the sense of French intellectual supremacy. While the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955) would later describe Spain and Russia as "two 'pueblo' races, ("dos razas 'pueblo'") races where the common people predominate—that is, races that suffer from an obvious and continuous lack of eminent individuals". When Pardo Bazán began her work in 1887, Spain was at the very start of what I have elsewhere called the second era of its reception of Russian culture—following a rocky first era earlier in the nineteenth century.[21] I date the end of this second era to the advent of the so-called 1898 Generation, many of whose members were profoundly influenced by Russia and her literature, and also by specific authors like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. I have in mind particularly the great philosopher and writer Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936) and the novelist Pío Baroja (1872–1956), about both of whom much more could be said in this regard.[22] Spain lost a potentially important populariser of Russian culture in the early years of the twentieth century with the suicide of Angel Ganivet (1865–98) in Riga; he had accepted the post of Spanish Consul in Latvia, then part of the Russian Empire. Ganivet produced several short studies on Russia, including his famous *Letters from Finland* (*Cartas finlandesas*, 1898) and a short essay titled 'Spain and Russia' ('España y Rusia', 1898).[23]

However, by 1887 Pardo Bazán had made one important literary enemy, the prominent Spanish novelist Juan Valera who, unlike any of his contemporaries, had spent several years in Russia as part of a Spanish diplomatic mission, during which he compiled his *Letters from Russia* (*Cartas desde Rusia*, 1856–57).[24] These

y por los de las mujeres […]." Cited by Sara Herran in the special anniversary supplement of *Glamour* (Madrid, June 2021).

21 José Ortega y Gasset, *Invertebrate Spain*, trans. by Mildred Adams (New York: Howard Fertig, 1974), p. 71.

22 French cultural dominance in Spain was analogous to its influence over Russia. For further discussion, see Chapter One in Tejerizo, *Influence*.

23 See Tejerizo, 'Lo exótico', p. 395.

24 See Tejerizo, *The Silence Between Two Worlds* for more discussion of Valera and his *Cartas desde Rusia*.

letters barely refer to Russian literature which, as Valera noted, was closed to him because of the difficulty of the language; he only briefly mentions the current state of culture in Russia, instead prioritising his observations on and encounters with members of the Russian aristocracy. Valera openly accused Pardo Bazán on many occasions of "promoting the foreign" ("extranjerismo"), that is, of focusing on cultures beyond Spain's frontiers while neglecting "our own" ("lo nuestro"). He also charged her with displaying "a blind desire for novelties" ("un afán ciego de novedades").[25] Valera frequently suggested that Pardo Bazán should concentrate on analysing her own native Galician literature; her focus on strange, remote, and exotic Russia was not at all necessary or useful for her readers. The Russian language was seen as yet another barrier; Leopoldo Alas, or 'Clarín', suggested that it would pose insurmountable difficulties for her work. Pardo Bazán's response to Clarín, clarifying her views on reading literature in translation, is instructive:

> I do not know a word of Russian either and it is clear that in Russian literature as in all translated literatures, I resign myself to losing the pleasure of the form but there always remains for my literary curiosity knowledge of what lies underneath which is, in that virgin and semi-barbarian literature, that which is most interesting.[26]

Clarín also sought to undermine her lecture preparations by observing that "we all already have been reading our Gogol and our Tolstoi [...]" ("ya hemos leído todos a nuestro Gogol y a nuestro Tolstoi [...]").[27] However, because of her close acquaintance with her fellow, almost exclusively male, authors, including perhaps the most famous of them all, Pérez Galdós (their correspondence has been well documented),[28] she was able to understand their hostility and defend herself accordingly. Interestingly, after her lectures (which the contemporary press praised as intellectually outstanding) and their subsequent appearance in print, several of these male writers admitted the importance of Russian authors and even assimilated their work within their own writings. Critics have observed potential Tolstoyan influence on some of Galdós's later works, including *Reality* (*Realidad*, 1892);[29] Turgenev, whose great admiration for Spain and Spanish

25 For my analysis of this critique, see Tejerizo, *Influence*, esp. Chapters Two and Three.

26 "Yo tampoco sé una palabra de ruso, y claro está que en *ésa*, como en todas las literaturas traducidas, me resigno a perder el placer de la forma, pero siempre resta a mi curiosidad literaria el conocimiento del fondo, que es acaso, en esa literatura virgen y semibárbara, lo más interesante." Cited by Burdiel, *Emilia Pardo Bazán*, p. 267.

27 Ibid.

28 See, for example, Emilia Pardo Bazán, *Cartas a Benito Pérez Galdós 1889–1890*, ed. by Carmen Bravo Villasante (Madrid: Turner, 1975).

29 See, for example, George Portnoff's article 'The Influence of Tolstoy's *Ana* [sic] *Karenina* on Galdós' *Realidad*', *Hispania* 15:3 (1932), 203–14, https://doi.

literature has been well documented, corresponded with Galdós, although sadly their letters have been lost. Three of Spain's most famous writers, Miguel de Unamuno, Pío Baroja and Federico García Lorca (1898–1936), all engaged at important levels with Russian culture, possibly as a direct result of having read Pardo Bazán on this subject.[30] Moreover, not long after her essays appeared, the quality of Spanish translations of Russian literature began to improve; many were now made directly from Russian into Spanish, avoiding French entirely.

From the Spoken to the Written Text

> May God spare me from becoming a prophetess [...]
>
> ("Libreme Dios de meterme a profetisa [...]")[31]

As we have seen, Pardo Bazán introduced Madrid audiences to Russian literature in three separate lectures, each offered a week apart, in Madrid's Ateneo. (Pardo Bazán, as Isabel Burdiel notes, was only the second woman to deliver lectures in the Ateneo; the first was the poet and dramatist Rosalía de Acuña, three years earlier in April 1884.)[32] Burdiel stresses that Pardo Bazán's topic "highlighted [...] the fact that the speaker was both a studious and an erudite woman" ("enfatizaba [...] su autora como estudiosa y erudita").[33] For the purposes of this essay, I have cited Pardo Bazán's own approved text of these lectures, published as *The Revolution and the Novel in Russia.* A careful examination of these lectures as texts that were originally spoken creates quite an impression even on the modern reader. At the very outset of the first lecture, Pardo Bazán admits her own "great inner perturbation" ("gran turbación interior"), making it clear that she is fully aware of her "insufficiencies" ("mi insuficiencia"), which are exacerbated by her femininity: this reflects her lucid awareness of the place of women in Spanish society at that time. She describes her efforts to gain insights into Russian culture as a "new, exotic, arduous and extremely vast" ("nuevo, exótico, arduo y vastísimo") experience.[34] She observes that Russian literature was all the rage in Paris, where people were reading Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky; not, she continues, merely as a caprice of upper-class Parisians, but as a fact of urban daily life. She notes her own interest in Russia's historical, social, and political problems of Russia as well as in Russian writers. She swiftly addresses the issue of translation: "I need something indispensable for this venture, namely the Russian language" ("me falta algo indispensable

org/10.2307/331955.

30 Lorca professed great love for Russian culture. See also Tejerizo, *Influence*, Chapter 5.

31 Pardo Bazán, *La revolución y la novela*, p. 23.

32 Burdiel, *Emilia Pardo Bazán*, p. 268.

33 Ibid.

34 Pardo Bazán, *La revolución y la novela*, p. 1.

tal vez para mi empresa: la posesión del idioma rusa").[35] However, it is worth noting here again that Pardo Bazán received an excellent linguistic education at her French school; she knew many other languages very well. With honesty and humility, she comments that she has always striven to "make up for what I lack" ("suplir lo que me falta") through extensive research and reading, and by consulting the intellectuals she had befriended in Paris.[36]

Pardo Bazán refers to the French diplomat and critic Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé (1829–1916) but her lectures cannot be regarded in any way as a plagiarism or as a mere recasting of the former's *The Russian Novel* (*Le Roman russe*, 1886).[37] Her work has its own clear agenda; her lectures and later essays were intended to inform and inspire her Spanish readers, by creating meaningful connections between Russian and Spanish literature. Each of the three lectures was organised around a clear, logically argued topic. There was no chance of improvisation but, rather the opposite—one senses that Pardo Bazán made careful choices in order to provide a well-formed and interesting text, serving both to introduce Russian culture to her public in the Ateneo and later to suggest an anthology of representative Russian authors and themes. Lecture 1 introduced the topics of 'Nature', 'Race', 'Agrarian Communism', 'Social Classes', and 'Serfdom' ('la servidumbre'). Through this varied content, Pardo Bazán obviously aimed to centre her listeners in the new and exotic terrain of Russian culture, offering as much relevant historical and social information as possible.[38] Gogol is introduced briefly in this lecture, where she also remarks on Russia's relative youth (as a nation) compared to the countries of Europe. Elsewhere she makes what must have struck her audience and later her readers as an extraordinary comparison between the sense of apathy found in Ivan Goncharov's *Oblomov* (1859), and the "sense of sadness and longing" ("morriña") characteristic of her native Galicia. Lecture 2 covered the following topics:

> The Word *nihilism*,—Origins of the Revolution.—Women and the Revolutionary family.—*Going to the People*.—Hertzen and Bakunin—The Nihilist Novel.—The Terror.—Police and Censorship. —Origins of Russian Literature: Romanticism.—The Lyric Poets: Realism: Nicolás Gogol.[39]

35 Ibid., p. 9.
36 Ibid., p. 12.
37 Ibid., p. 13, p. 23, pp. 439–30.
38 Ibid., p. 1.
39 "La palabra nihilismo.—Orígenes de la revolución.—La mujer y la familia revolucionaria.—Ir al pueblo—Hertzen y Bakunine.—La novela nihilista.—El Terror.—Policía y Censura.—Orígenes de las letras rusas.—El romanticismo: los poetas líricos.—El realismo: Nicolás Gogol." Pardo Bazán, *La revolución y la novela*, p. 153. For mention of Goncharov's '*Oblomoff*' [sic] as "a tender Russian novel" ("una delicada novela rusa"), see Pardo Bazán, p. 50.

This second lecture included a short history of Russian women as well, for the first time in Spanish letters, as an organised presentation of both Gogol and Turgenev. There was even a short critical description of Turgenev's character Bazarov: "disobedient, bad-mannered, unbearable and he is the very personification [of Nihilism]" ("díscolo, mal criado é inaguantable que personifica el tipo").[40] In her brief survey of Russian women, she notes that, previously "women's condition in Russia [has been] more bitter and humiliating than in the rest of Europe: [...] beatings and imprisonment in the home turned her into a beast of burden".[41] Happily, however, at the time of writing, "[e]verything has changed, [there are] new ideas [...] and today the Russian woman has most equality with men, she is the most free, the most intelligent and the most respected in Europe".[42] Mikhail Lermontov (1814–41) is introduced as "the Russian Byron" ("el Byron ruso"), "the great Romantic poet [...who complained] about the moral inferiority of women in his country [...]" ("el gran poeta romántico [...q]uejaba de la inferioridad moral de la mujer en su patria [...]").[43] Concluding this lecture, Pardo Bazán referred briefly to the important critics (also authors) Aleksandr Herzen (1812–70), Vissarion Belinskii (1811–48), Ivan Goncharov (1812–91), Nikolai Chernyshevskii (1828–91), and Nikolai Karamzin (1766–1836), before mentioning Pushkin as the "the demigod of Russian poetry" ("semidiós del verso ruso").[44] When introducing Aleksandr Griboedov (1795–1829), she refers generously to her so-called "enemy", Juan Valera, observing that the title of the latter's novel *Being too Clever* (*Pasarse de listo*, 1878) could also serve as the title of Griboedov's play *Woe from Wit* (*Gore ot uma*, 1825), "the pearl of the Russian theatre" ("la perla del teatro ruso").[45] Her third lecture covered exclusively literary topics:

> The Poet and Artist Turgenev.—*Oblomovism*: Slav lassitude—Dostoevsky, the psychologist who hallucinates; Count Tolstoy, the nihilist and mystic;—French naturalism and Russian naturalism.[46]

In these lectures on literature, Pardo Bazán always attempts to give as much relevant background on each writer as possible; sometimes, she also ventures a short original critique of his main works. These lectures would have had

40 Pardo Bazán, *La revolución y la novela*, p. 165.
41 "el estado de la mujer en Rusia [ha sido] más amargo y humillante que en el resto de Europa: [...] el palo y el encierro la hicieron bestia de labor", ibid., pp. 168–69.
42 "[t]odo ha cambiado, las ideas nuevas [...] y hoy es la mujer rusa la más igual en condición al hombre, la más libre, la más inteligente, la más respetada de Europa..." Ibid., p. 169.
43 Ibid., p. 170.
44 Ibid., p. 243.
45 Ibid., p. 257.
46 "El poeta y artista Turguenef.—Oblomovismo: la pereza eslava—El psicólogo y alucinado Dostoyuevsky: El nihilista y místico conde Tolstoi:—Naturalismo francés y naturalismo ruso." Pardo Bazán, *La revolución y la novela*, p. 313.

enormous impact, delivered as they were in the splendid surroundings of the Ateneo. Unsurprisingly, as witnessed by the praise of many of Pardo Bazán's contemporaries, they were regarded as the most important intellectual event of the times. Pardo Bazán succeeded admirably in uniting Russian history and literature, giving a chronological overview of early times in Russia up to the 'modern' era. Her lectures end with a finely tuned study of the works of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Turgenev. She paced her talks cleverly, in order to retain audience interest. Lecture 1, for example, introduces Gogol to counterbalance the extensive historical content; Lecture 2 balances a history of Russian women with a focus on female characters in Turgenev and Tolstoy—hardly surprising given Pardo Bazán's interest in and sympathies with feminism. Lecture 3 invites her audience into the fictional worlds of Russia's greatest writers, from Pushkin to Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky was presented to his future Spanish 'audience' as "the psychologist who hallucinates" ("el psícólogo y alucinante Dostoyeuski [sic]").[47] Intriguingly, much later Pío Baroja, a trained psychologist as well as an author, would seize on this description to produce an excellent yet little-known essay 'Psychological Doubling in Dostoevsky' ('El desdoblamiento psicológico de Dostoievski', 1938).[48]

To conclude, from this brief examination of Pardo Bazán's lectures, we can see that their rhetorical skill would easily have captured audiences; they were well prepared, widely researched and apparently delivered with genuine humility, i.e. via admissions of the speaker's lack of knowledge of the Russian language or of first-hand experience of Russia. The published essays include a full bibliography, which emphasised their utility as a gateway to Russian culture for Spanish readers, and this continues to be true even today. Her closing words demonstrate her honesty and sense of adventure:

> As my farewell, a sincere confession […]. Above all, Russia is an enigma; let others resolve this as best they can; I could not. The Sphinx called me; I looked into her eyes, deep as an abyss: I felt the sweet vertigo of the unknown, I asked questions […]. I am waiting, without much hope, for the sound of the sea swell to bring me an answer.[49]

47 Ibid.

48 For more information about the impact of Russian literature on the works of Pío Baroja, and for a discussion of his long essay on Dostoevsky, see Tejerizo, *Influence* (esp. Chapter 4). Baroja was a physician with a keen interest in psychiatric medicine.

49 "Para despedida, una confesión sincera […]. Rusia es, ante todo, un enigma; otros lo resuelvan si a tanto alcanzan: yo no pude. Me llamó la esfinge: puse mis ojos en los suyos hondos como el abismo; sentí el dulce vertigo de lo desconocido, interrogué […] aguardo, sin gran esperanza, a que el rumor del oleaje me traiga la respuesta." Pardo Bazán, *La revolución y la novela*, p. 445.

Conclusion: 'Making the exotic familiar?'

I have already queried Isabel Burdiel's suggestion that Pardo Bazán's essays on Russia might hold merely historical interest for the modern reader. Even my brief survey of these texts argues that the reverse is true. While Pardo Bazán was indisputably hampered by the fact that she read Russian literature through translations, she was still able to capture the essence of these great literary works and to convey her excitement for them—initially to her Ateneo audiences on three April nights in 1887, and later to readers of her essays. Her enthusiasm and her creative attempts to bridge cultural barriers and connect the literary traditions of Spain and Russia should be applauded and more prominently acknowledged in her oeuvre.

Many scholars and anthologists of Russian culture in Spain have judged the latter as slow to acquire information about Russian authors and literature. Careful re-examination of Pardo Bazán's essays, and a re-evaluation of her lectures, should disprove this view. Her lectures and essays marked a new stage in the transfer of Russian culture to Spain and elsewhere in the Hispanic world—we should note Pardo Bazán's great popularity in countries such as Chile and Argentina (her Madrid memorial was funded by women in both Spain and Argentina). Although Spain had no equivalent of Britain's Constance Garnett to translate Russian literature, Pardo Bazán's work as a creative intermediary between Spain and Russia has been unjustifiably neglected. Many scholars have pointed to the slow reception of Pushkin in the Hispanic world, seemingly forgetting that Pushkin was, in fact, the first Russian prose writer to be translated into Spanish.[50] Pardo Bazán provided ample information on Pushkin while bringing him to life in her own words as a crucial Russian author, naming most of his key works. A wave of new translations of Russian literature into Spanish, some of which were direct translations, followed shortly after the publications of her essays, thus heralding a new era for Spanish readers.[51] Pardo Bazán remains to this day the greatest intermediary between Russian and Spanish cultures, the outstanding populariser of Russia in Spain.

50 See Tejerizo, *Influence* (esp. Chapter 1), for a discussion of these early translations; and see the bibliography in the same volume for suggested further reading on this topic. Another helpful summary and source of further reading is Jordi Morillas, 'Dostoevsky in Spain: A Short History of Translation and Research', *Dostoevsky Studies*, XVII (2013), 121–43, https://core.ac.uk/download/235190384.pdf.

51 Pardo Bazán was well-acquainted with two of the best translators from Russian of her era, the Catalan Narcís Oller and the Spanish poet (and translator of Dostoevsky) Rafael Cansinos-Asséns.

Postscript

In the small but bustling Eugenio Trías Library, almost hidden away in Madrid's Retiro Park, a table displaying works by Pardo Bazán has been set up to mark her centenary. At its centre lies a copy of a Spanish translation of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*—a small detail suggesting that, after all, Pardo Bazán's achievement as a mediator of Russian culture may not have been completely forgotten.[52]

52 This small library maintained its exhibition of Pardo Bazán's writings throughout her entire centenary year (2021), hosting both lectures and workshops to commemorate her life and work.