Spanish and Russian Anarchists populate Ramón del Valle-Inclán's third, incomplete novel of *El ruedo ibérico*, *Baza de espadas*, which fictionalized historical events and people, including Mikhail Bakunin, Sergei Nechaev, and Fermín Salvochea. In this cycle of historical episodes, one finds a scathing indictment of the inefficiency, hypocrisy, and corruption of Spanish politics, past and present. Published in the 1920s and 1930s, *El ruedo ibérico* censured the Revolution of 1868 and the Prim Dictatorship while simultaneously critiquing contemporary politics, notably, what Valle viewed as the illegal dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in place when the first novel of the cycle, *La corte de los milagros*, appeared. In *Baza de espadas* Valle's...
solution to past and current political woes was an endorsement of a mystical, idealistic form of anarchism, which the Galician writer perceived as a return to autonomous regional control and the «integrity», «largesse», and «nobility» of Spain's semi-feudal past, a model of ethical government that echoed Petr Kropotkin's imagined medieval city.2

*Baza de espadas*'s clever hybrid of fact and fiction depicts the struggle of fin de siècle anarchism, including some of its leading proponents. In 1891, the historical Salvochea masterminded the Jerez uprising from a jail cell and translated Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1899) and *Memories of a Revolutionary* (1890, 1900, and 1901) from English into Spanish. Bakunin is credited with inciting a popular anarchist movement in absentia, which left an indelible mark upon the political landscape of Spain. The character Arsenio Petrovich Gleboff, also referred to as boy, is an allusion to Sergei Nechaev, Bakunin's frequent companion and an adherent to the radical terrorist branch of anarchism. Although not a character in *Baza de espadas*, Kropotkin was the most important anarchist theoretician of Valle's day and made important contributions to the ideology, including an emphasis on high ethical standards, until his death in 1922 (Confino 408). Ethics, particularly in government, were also a significant concern for Valle-Inclán during the 1920s and 1930s. A close examination of *Baza de espadas* illuminates a latent

There have been a number of approaches to *Baza de espadas* by: Mercedes Tasende Grabowski, Harold Boudreau, Ricardo Carballo Calero, Angela Ena, José Manuel García de la Torre, Juan Gilbert, Madeleine de Gogorza Fletcher, José Antonio Maravall, Julián Marías, Antonio Risco, Roberta Salper de Tortella, Alison Sinclair, Verity Smith, Emma Susana Speratti-Piñero, Peggy Lynne Tucker, Francisco Yndurain. Alison Sinclair's reading is interesting in that it uses linguistic analysis to demonstrate esperpentic aspects of the novel, coming to a similar conclusion as this study regarding Valle's depiction of anarchists in *Baza de espadas*. By contrasting the depiction of positive and negative agents, the critic argues that esperpentic is not necessarily theatrical, finding that characters like Bakunin and Salvochea who are not novelesque are positive, while negative characters, like La Sofi and Indi, are more novelesque and less sincere. In *Palimpsesto y subversión*, Tasende reads *Baza de espadas* through the lens of poststructuralism, arguing that Valle's alleged plagiarism was an intentional use of intertextuality, which created a multifaceted textual dialogue about Spanish history, allowing him to subvert the «institutionally created version of Spanish history» (López de Martínez 281-3). Franco and Boudreau have noted the circular structure of the *Rueda Ibérico*. The former postulated that the «concentric structure... corresponds to philosophical and religious ideas» which Valle expounded in *La lámpara maravillosa* (Boudreau 134). Boudreau concludes from this that Valle wishes to rise above the day's action and achieve a «visión estelar» and in this way «embraces the individual views of an entire people», which fused together provide multiple viewpoints (*ibid* 135).
tendency towards anarchism in Spanish literature and exposes an alternate history/story of Spain’s past in conflict with official historical narratives. Valle’s engagement with anarchists from the Revolution of 1868 and the First Republic provides an idealistic vision of a possible, ethical future for Spain during the social revolution of the Second Republic, in place when Baza de espadas first appeared on the pages of the Madrid daily, El Sol.

1. EUROPEAN AND SPANISH ANARCHISM

In 1910, Kropotkin defined anarchy for the Encyclopaedia Britannica as:

A principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government – harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being.

(Kropotkin 2005, 233)

Characterized by «a nearly total rejection of the familiar norms and structures, especially the political ones, of their age, and... a quest for an existence in a harmonious, ‘natural’ world in which government was a remote memory», 19th-century anarchism has roots in Western European thought and such figures as William Godwin and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. At the same time, Russian anarchists, chiefly Bakunin and Kropotkin, made an enduring mark upon the European field of cultural production during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Shatz vii, Fowler 739). This is especially true of Spain, arguably the country where anarchism reached its apogee.

The popularity of anarchism on Spanish soil during the 19th and early 20th centuries may be due to a number of factors, including such social, economic, and political systems as caciquismo, rule by caciques or political chiefs, and latifundismo, the concentration of land in the hands of a few families, especially prevalent in Andalusia, one of the major strongholds of anarchism, as well as the ancient communal customs of the mountain pueblos of Levant and Andalusia. Some historians trace anarchism in Spain to Proudhon’s federalism, also termed «federal republicanism», which was propa-
gated by the catalán Francisco Pi y Margall (Bookchin 19), while others trace it to «cantonalism» (Carr 1959, 349). Another explanation is millenarianism, in which the political utopia on earth replaces the religious paradise of the hereafter (Kaplan 47). Given Spain's long and vigorous Catholic tradition, a millenarian strain of anarchism makes great sense, yet other historians and political scientists date Spanish anarchism to the ancient customs and privileges of the fueros first established under Roman rule and continued under the Visigoths and successive governments. Instituted for a multitude of reasons, such as payment for military service, fueros granted municipal incorporation and privileges ranging from exemption from taxation to varying degrees of self-government, providing one historical basis for local autonomy that later manifested itself in grassroots regionalism.

All of these ideological tendencies, Republican federalism, «cantonalism», millenarianism, and other longstanding political arrangements like fueros, echo Kropotkin's utopian model of the self-sufficient medieval city as a return to a more «natural» social order. This

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3 «Men like Perez de Alamo and Salvochea were preaching social revolution long before Bakunin's apostles arrived. 'Cantonalism' which the author [Hobsbawm] describes as a 'demand for village independence' represented something besides this primeval urge which is made to explain so much in Spanish history. It was a relatively sophisticated import which spread when the old progressistas [sic] sided with place and patronage in 1868» (Carr 1959, 349).

4 Fuero is derived from the Latin «forum» or market place, and according to the Real Academia Española, is «históricamente, norma o código dados para un territorio determinado y que la Constitución de 1978 ha mantenido en Navarra y en el País Vasco», and by extension, «cada uno de los privilegios y exenciones que se conceden a una provincia, a una ciudad o a una persona» (Diccionario de la lengua española 1095).

5 In Andalusia, one might believe that the tendency towards autonomous rule was exacerbated by the creation of vast latifundios, which resulted in great economic disparities and virtual oligarchy, as did the comparatively late inclusion of Andalusia in Spain, following an extended period of foreign rule (711-1492), which placed the region always on the periphery and never at the center of Spanish politics. However, more importantly, economic and geographic factors in the ancient mountain pueblos of the Levant and Andalusia created a spirit of community and social cohesiveness that presaged anarchism. Like Andalusia, Catalonia and the Basque Country, have rich autonomous histories and cultures, in addition to vigorously maintaining unique and distinct linguistic identities, a phenomenon often credited with the rise of nationalism and the formation of new states during the past few centuries, for example, in Garibaldi's Italy. Both Catalonia and the Basque provinces «resisted centralist, Castilian domination throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries», particularly in Navarra, which at the height of its power in the 11th century «included most of the present-day Basque Country, Catalonia and some of Castile» (Desfor Edles 315, 322).

6 It should be noted that Kropotkin's model of a medieval city has more in common with the medieval Western European city than with the medieval Russian city.
brand of anarchism is felt in Valle-Inclán's work and explains to some extent the apparent contradiction between the author's youthful support of the conservative Carlism and his later allegiance to the radical ideals of the Second Republic. During the Carlist Wars, «God and the fueros» was a common slogan among the rural nobility, peasantry, and clergy (Desfor Edles 323). The Carlist reference to fueros emphasizes an abiding tendency towards regionalism, which also found voice in the liberal phases of the Second Republic, for example, in granting Catalonia and other areas greater self-determination in opposition to the strong centrist government favored by the Falange Española and other conservative parties.

2. Spain's reception of Russian anarchists

Russian anarchists received enormous attention in early 20th-century Spain, which shared many of the social maladies of turn-of-the-century Russia: late industrialization, widespread illiteracy, and a large class of unskilled workers and landless peasants, some of whom lived in virtual serfdom. Bakunin has been credited with inciting a grassroots movement on Spanish soil through his emissaries to the First International, particularly Giuseppe Fanelli in 1868. Although he did not actually visit Spain (as the fictional Bakunin of Baza de espadas does), he knew and maintained correspondence with leading Spanish anarchists, including Ricardo Mella, Rafael Farga Pellicer, and Gaspar Sentíñon (Bookchin 12-6, 41). Moreover, many of Bakunin’s most influential works were published in Spain during the early 1930s, and at the time Valle was writing Baza de espadas, two important biographies of Bakunin appeared, including two editions of Juan de G. Luaces’s La vida dramática de Bakunin (1930) and two Spanish editions of Elena Iswolsky’s La vida de Bakunin (1931), a year following its appearance in French, which Valle could read.

Yet Spaniards were not unaware of the revolutionary’s shortcomings. A 1932 review of Iswolsky’s biography criticized Ulises Editorial for publishing the work and repeated many of the negative observations that appeared in Baza de espadas.

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7 Temma Kaplan argues that 19th-century Andalusian anarchism was ignited by artisans or salaried employees, while Juan Díaz del Moral, Gerald Brenan, and Eric J. Hobsbawm believe «the force of Andalusian anarchism lay in the millenarianism of landless day laborers» (Kaplan 47).
España contemporánea

Amoral, vagabundo y perezoso, [Bakunin] se pasó la vida engañando a las gentes y viviendo a costa de la ingenuidad de sus amigos. Este gigante, este coloso de la destrucción, era gigante por la estatura y coloso en el arte de las simulaciones y del «dolce far niente» (B. de M. 2).

Isowlsky’s depiction of Bakunin was not as uniformly negative as this review suggests, as she contrasted his moderation in comparison with Paris’s extreme licentiousness.

Apenas desembarcado, el joven [aristócrata ruso] escita se lanzaba al torbellino de la gran ciudad [París]. Si era frívolo, corría al vaudeville, al baile de máscaras y a otras «bacanales». Si tenía aficiones serias, abríanse sus puertas los cursos de magnetismo y de frenología y los panoramas. Frecuentaba los teatros con asiduidad. En los gabinetes de lectura hojeaba los diarios y la última obra de Balzac o de Lamennais. Almorzaba en la casa Vefour, en la Casa Vêry o en Los Tres Hermanos Provenzales, y visitaba las tiendas de lujo, admirando el estilo argelino, que acababa de ponerse de moda... Así vivió Miguel [Bakunin] también, y aunque no frecuentó los bacanales, por falta de dinero y de gusto, conoció a la embriaguez de esa libertad que reserva París como su regalo mejor a quienes franquean sus puertas (Iswolsky 94, 95).

Kropotkin, who died in 1921, received greater acclaim among the Spanish press of the 1920s and 1930s, and seemed less scandalous to Spanish sensibilities which favored moderation and self-control, than his predecessor Bakunin, whose appetites and revolutionary penchants drew criticism. The former’s writings were translated into Spanish beginning in 1885 and enjoyed continued popularity through the 1930s. In particular, The Conquest of Bread and Fields, Factories and Workshops were well received in Spain, with ten and five editions, respectively, printed before 1932. Contemporary Spanish magazines like La Lectura and España included articles authored by or about the Russian anarchist, and he was an internationally recognized geography scholar and active contributor to the National Geographic.

The Spanish Press of the 1930s recognized Kropotkin for his preeminent position within anarchist thought, no doubt in part because of Spain’s ascetic emphasis on moderation and abnegation:

Con Kropotkin se extinguía la última gran voz de la filosofía anarquista y la más oída. Las circunstancias personales le da-
ban una resonancia que no tuvo ninguno de los otros evangeliastas del anarquismo; y también, la calidad literaria de la obra escrita... Siempre nos quedará este santo hombre como la encarnación más viva y perfecta de ese ruso universalista del siglo xix en que seguimos confiando, de ese «hermano de todos los hombres» (Baeza 8, my emphasis)\(^8\).

Martínez Sierra called the anarchist, «el gran sabio, el gran escritor, el gran apóstol», adding «su inteligencia, faro de limpia y poderosa luz; su vida, *modelo de todas las abnegaciones*, imponen imperiosamente la admiración y el respeto hasta a sus mejores adversarios» (Martínez Sierra 1, my emphasis). Kropotkin’s model of abnegation is reflected particularly in Valle’s depiction of Salvochea, whom Lerroux called a «Cristo anarquista» (Moreno Aparicio 215).

3. **Valle-Inclán’s Refashioning of History: *Baza de espadas* and the Second Republic**

In *Baza de espadas*, as elsewhere in the *Ruedo Ibérico*, Valle blurs the lines between history and fiction, refashioning Spain’s past in a more authentic, if less «historically» accurate, manner. Modern scholars like Bendelac have pointed out the proximity of «history and fiction», which «occupy a position near the center [of the larger spectrum of human attitudes concerning reality]... sometimes overlapping» (Bendelac 61). She concludes:

Writing history and writing fiction are both basically means of ordering experience. The success achieved, or the truth arrived at, must and can be measured only according to what is conceived as being reality. When historians study a period and a place, when novelists write about a particular story or society, the representation of the smaller reality at hand is shaped, explicitly or implicitly, by their conception of what reality is or encompasses... There is an object of representation and there is a subject who represents the object; both are problematic, and therefore so is their relationship and the representation of one by the other. (Bendelac 61)

\(^8\) Baeza further stated, «Su vida es sin duda de las más hermosas y ejemplares de los tiempos modernos. Contadísimas almas han ardido en un tan puro amor de la humanidad; y no como una fogata pasajera, sino como una lámpara segura. Y nadie tuvo tanta fe en la bondad ingénita y las infinitas posibilidades del hombre como este dulce predicador de la ‘ayuda mutua’» (Baeza 8).
Jenkins further explains the connection between the genres of history and narrative, which he connects to their epistemological underpinnings. Conceiving of history «as a narrative prose discourse the content of which is as much imagined as found and the form», Jenkins has distinguished the past, «all that has gone on before» from history, «a discourse about the past» (Jenkins xvii, 7):

The historicisation of the past... is only one way of ‘past thinking’, only one way of domesticating and making familiar the radical otherness of the ‘before now’ which, though ideologically understandable, is not immune from the usual ravages of time... History... in both its metanarrative forms... and in its academic, professional forms, are both interesting experiments in the construction... of something peculiar on the face of the earth: historicisations of something that doesn't have histories in it: the past, the 'before now' (Jenkins xx).

Furthermore, the historian highlights the bias and subjectivity inherent in reordering facts in order to represent reality.

History is produced by a group of labourers called historians when they go to work... And when they go to work they take with them certain identifiable things. First they take themselves personally: their values, positions, their ideological perspectives. Second they take their epistemological presuppositions (Jenkins 25-7).

Such a view reveals the bias of the «official history» of Isabelline Spain, and validates Valle's creative refashioning of historia, history/story, a pairing of meanings with which the Spanish writer consciously played. Published serially in 1932 in El Sol, Baza de espadas was in dialogue with Russian giants of anarchism. The work's title is a double entendre that can be translated as either Trick of Spades or [The] Advantage of Swords. Espadas, swords/spades, serve as a leitmotiv in the novel and as a metonymy for military officers responsible for armed conflict, acting as a condemnation of the history of juntas and golpes de estado and their inability to effect positive social change. They are also an allusion to «the revolutions of swords» and the generals who lead them during María Cristina's regency and Isabel's reign, 1834-

Sinclair equates swords to military powers, and more properly to «generals, or the rule of law generally supported by military strength» (Sinclair 90).
ANARCHISTS AS ETHICAL MODELS IN VALLE-INCLÁN’S EL RUEDO IBÉRICO

68 (Carr 2000, 207). Valle, who has the distinction of being both a Carlist and a supporter of the Republic, viewed Isabel’s reign as corrupt and immoral, no doubt fueled by the queen’s infamous exploits in the bedroom as well as the administrative corruption and political instability of her reign. Yet Carlism and Spanish Republicanism are not as mutually exclusive, as mentioned previously, if viewed as both promoting autonomy, instead of through the dichotomies liberal/conservative and monarchist/republican.

Baza de espadas may be read as an allegory of political woe during the Second Republic as well as Isabeline Spain and is part of a larger project of social and historical works portraying Spain’s tragicomic past. As Dougherty has contended, this incomplete novel of El ruedo ibérico series was published precipitously, precisely because Valle-Inclán feared that recent actions of the Azaña government would result in a return to caciquismo in Spain, much as the «revolution of the swords» of 1868 had resulted in a return to the monarchy six months later, effecting no profound change.

Holding the Second Republic to an ethical standard, Valle viewed caciquismo as a betrayal of its ideals and the revolution that led to it (Dougherty 124). He further underscored the importance of ethics and revolution.

España es una fuerza ética... El furor ético es la característica de España. Por el furor ético, Isabel la católica sucedió a su hermano, antes de que la corona fuera a una hija del adulterio... El furor ético redactó el documento de destronamiento de Isabel II. La última revolución española ha sido una sanción ética («Una conferencia de don Ramón del Valle-Inclán» 3).

Valle’s concern with ethics and revolution are personified in the fictionalized Bakunin and Salvochea. In addition to the anti-government impulse and the quest for a «natural» harmonious existence, the historical Bakunin and Salvochea had an abiding interest in social justice and morality. Kropotkin believed in «the good sense and instinct for justice which animates the masses» (Shatz xvii), while

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10 Balseiro attributes the popularity of El ruedo ibérico to Valle’s criticism of the monarchy and other government officials (Balseiro 173).

11 Maravall asserts that Valle’s anti-bourgeois impulse is responsible for this contradiction. «A Valle-Inclán la revolución socialista no le interesa; le mueve la revolución contra la burguesía —y el matiz es importante. Por eso pudo ser carlista o anti-burgués y pasar a ser anarquista o anti-burgués» (Jerez Farrán 183).
Salvochea led a saintly life of abnegation that mirrored Kropotkin in real life as well as in the fictional accounts in *Baza de espadas*.

4. Three Anarchists

The third chapter of *Baza de espadas*, «Alta mar», takes an intimate look at three anarchists, Salvochea, Bakunin, and Gleboff/Nechaev, representing differing directions of anarchist thought. Bakunin is associated with collectivism and revolution, Gleboff/Nechaev with anarchism by deed or terrorism, while Salvochea is most closely allied with Kropotkin’s «altruistic» brand of anarchism (Glöckner 84).

Of the three, Valle’s depiction of Gleboff/Nechaev/Boy is the most negative as he is a repulsive, opportunist character associated with the extremist, terrorist branch of anarchism. A number of critics note the historical accuracy of the character.

Salvochea siente repulsión por Boy. Luego Bakunin le advierte sobre los aspectos negativos de su personalidad. Valle-Inclán pone entonces en boca del líder anarquista una larga caracterización de Boy que no es invención suya sino fragmentos traducidos de una carta de Bakunin a Talandier. En esta carta, escrita en francés y fechada en Neuchâtel el 24 de julio de 1870, Bakunin advierte a su amigo sobre la peligrosidad de Boy. Para esa fecha la estrecha y contradictoria amistad entre los dos estaba rota y Boy había huido de Ginebra llevándose papeles y cartas robadas a Bakunin y a otros emigrados rusos (Schiaovo 181).

However, Gleboff is to a certain extent a contradictory character who demonstrates admirable traits as well as reprehensible ones. The former include his unswerving dedication to anarchism (the unencumbered excess of which is also his greatest fault), and his willingness to suffer the greatest personal deprivations in its cause. Serving as a practical Sancho Panza to the quixotic Bakunin, particularly in regards to financial affairs, Gleboff exceeds the bounds of practical-

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12 This is also true of the character Fernando Salvatierra, who represents Salvochea in Blasco Ibáñez’s turn-of-the-century novel *La bodega*.

13 García de la Torre agrees, «Siguiendo con bastante fidelidad los testimonios de la época, Valle presenta a Néchaev—llamado Gleboff en *Baza*—como ‘un maníaco de la destrucción universal’» (García de la Torre 18).
ity in his efforts to fulfill his quest, as one sees in Bakunin’s analogy of the seduction of a daughter or sister in Valle’s novel:

Si tienes una hija o una hermana, [Gleboff] intentará seducirla, hacerle un chico para arrancarla a las leyes morales de la familia e inducirla a una protesta revolucionaria contra la sociedad. Su única excusa es su fanatismo: Ha identificado completamente su propia personal con la causa de la Revolución (Valle-Inclán 96).

Valle’s portrayal of Bakunin has been interpreted by critics in a number of ways. Dougherty views him as positive in the face of the Spanish revolutionaries whose political goals are not altogether altruistic:

Miguel Bakunin es la tercera figura que le sirve a Valle-Inclán para criticar a los «revolucionarios» —los dirigentes de la Segunda República— en cuyas manos estaba la «salvación» de España según su visión redentora de la historia. Es Bakunin la fuente de las ideas que infunden en Fermín Salvochea un afán evangélico. Para el ruso visionario, la revolución entraña un fin universal, esto es, la liberación espiritual de todo ser humano. Y de ahí su impaciencia frente a los «revolucionarios» españoles... Contra los «fines particulares» de los españoles..., Bakunin defiende, pues, un propósito trascendente, la lucha por la libertad y dignidad de toda la humanidad (Dougherty 127).

Similarly, García de la Torre finds the narrator’s portrayal of Bakunin positive, although he sees deformation in the anarchist’s physical appearance. In contrast, Schiavo claims that his portrayal is «completely ambiguous». Glöckner views him as a «Romanesque saint» but concludes that Valle was not an anarchist, a valid point in regards to the author’s personal political affiliation, which will be discussed in greater detail below (Glöckner 84). Glaze sees Bakunin

14 «Bakunin y Salvochea son los personajes de más positivo valor en la obra... Los dos personajes de ideología revolucionaria, Bakunin y Salvochea, son los que reciben en su conjunto un trato de excepción, salvo en lo relativo al físico de Bakunin» (García de la Torre 20, 27).

15 Schiavo finds both negative and positive in the depiction of Bakunin, concluding that «La caracterización de Bakunin es completamente ambigua. Valle insiste en su inocencia de niño grande... Como cree que la propiedad privada no debería existir, reparte el dinero del fondo colectivo y luego acepta con naturalidad las ofertas de los demás, tanto en el caso del tabaco de Indalecio... como con el dinero y el pasaje en primera clase que le ofrece Pau y Angulo» (Schiavo 1980 157-8).
as impractical and childlike, concluding that Valle was disillusioned by the impracticality of the anarchist movement. 

Upon his first appearance in «Alta Mar», the anarchist is «Un gigante barbudo, imprecador, enorme la boca desdentada, los ojos azules arrebatados de alocada inocencia... gesticulando con grandes ademanes» (Valle-Inclán 82). Controversial and at times ridiculous, Bakunin’s conspicuous consumption of food, drink, and tobacco reflect the gluttony and excess associated with the bourgeoisie and aristocracy, as does his eager willingness to live at others’ expense and his incapacity to manage money. His passionate outbursts, colossal size, and gigantic appetites are seemingly at odds with his immense generosity and political idealism, leading some critics to suggest his impracticality is a criticism of the anarchist movement or that Bakunin is a deformed, esperpentic figure. Indeed, Valle’s Bakunin is a melodramatic fantoche, to whom theatrical terms are ascribed: «gesticulando con grandes ademanes», and crossing his arms «con teatral silencio»; and he is often the subject of a play performed for the other characters: «en el coro de los oyentes, a la sombra del foque, el gigante barbudo». «ni siguiera se daba cuenta de la comedia que representaba», and «con su indumentaria de artista bohemio» (Valle-Inclán 82, 84, 96, 143).

However, Bakunin is not simply a one-dimensional theatrical puppet. His strength of character and his extreme idealism create a positive portrayal for the most part. As Dougherty notes, the character is one of the few figures in the novel whose political interests are not motivated by personal gain (Dougherty 125). His humility and his acknowledgement of his faults provide depth of character, provoking admiration in the reader. For example, he admits to Salvochea, «He administrado deplorablemente el fondo colectado en Cádiz!... ¡Una vez más he sido la cigarra de la fábula!» (Valle-Inclán 96). Moreover, Valle’s esperpentic, distorted characters were not always negative, as one sees in Max Estrella from Luces de Bohemia.

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16 Glaze admits the frequent historical accuracy of the novel, commenting: «Valle-Inclán’s portrayal closely parallels historical accounts of the period» (Glaze 143). Noting the inclusion of positive traits, she opines that Valle did not, however, idealize Bakunin: «Envisioned by his followers as a type of savior, he is identified as ‘el apóstol de la revolución,’ an epithet reflecting the point of view of his followers. Although Bakunin espouses many ideas that Valle-Inclán may share, his portrayal of Bakunin does not idealize him... The contrast between Bakunin’s ideals and his materialistic instincts suggests the superficiality of his principles. Although Valle’s portrayal is not as intense as in other cases, it indicates his possible disillusionment even with the anarchist movement» (ibid 152-3).
The real-life Bakunin mirrored many of the seemingly *caricature-esque* attributes that Valle assigned to him. Bakunin’s physical likeness suggested the lion-like mane and beard and the colossal size alluded to in the novel. The «boca desdentada» is an actual reference to his losing his teeth while incarcerated in Siberia (Valle-Inclan 82). Alexander Herzen, a fellow anarchist who later had a falling out with Bakunin, described his visit in the following way in «Bakunin and the Polish Affair»:

[Bakunin] argued, lectured, made arrangements, shouted, gave orders, and decided questions, organized and encouraged all day long, all night long, for days and nights together. In the brief minutes he had left, he rushed to his writing-table, cleared a little space from cigarette-ash, and set to work to write five, ten, fifteen letters to Semipalatinsk and Arad, to Belgrade and to Constantinople, to Bessarrabia, Moldavia and Byelaya-Krintsa. In the middle of a letter he would fling aside the pen and bring up to date the views of some old-fashioned Dalmation, then, without finishing his exhortations, snatch up the pen and go on writing. This, however, was made easier for him by the fact that he was writing and talking about one and the same thing. His activity, his laziness, his appetite, his titanic stature and the everlasting perspiration he was in, everything about him, in fact, was on a superhuman scale (*My Past and Thoughts* 139-40) 17.

Although Herzen and Bakunin had a falling out, Dragomanov concurred with the former’s depiction of the latter.

La publication la plus caractéristique qui ait été faite sur Bakounine, se trouve dans les *Mémoires de Herzen* et surtout dans l’article «M.B. et l’affaire polonaise », publié dans ses *Oeuvres posthumes*. Les adhérents de Bakounine y vinrent une caricature et lui-même donna à cet article le nom de ‘diatribe’... A part cela, tout ce que Herzen dit sur Bakounine est confirmé par différents documents et par les lettres qui suivent (Dragomanov 4-5).

17 This is a translation of the following. «Он [Bakunin] спорил, проповедывал, распоряжался, кричал, решал, направлял, организовывал, ободрял целых день, целую ночь, целые суток. В короткие минуты, оставшиеся у него свободными, он бросал за свой письменный стол, расчищал небольшое место от зоны и принимался писать, пять, десять, пятнадцать писем в Semipalatinsk и Arad, в Belgrad и Czyrygradation, в Bessarabia, Moldaviю и Белую Криницу. Серед письма он бросал перо и проводил в порядке какого-нибудь остадого дalmата и, не кончивши своей речи, схватывал перо и продолжал писать; это, впрочем, для него было облегчено тем, что он писал и говорил об одном и том же. Деятельность его, праздность, аппетит и все остальное, как гигантский рост и вечный пот, - все было не по человеческим размерам, как он сам» (Былое и думы 536-7).
Iswolsky’s biography also supported Herzen’s views, noting that Bakunin liked to stay up until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, his financial dealings, and his gambling debts (Iswolsky 224, 225). Characterizing the famous anarchist as a «titán enfurecido» and an «apóstol de la destrucción universal», she made the following comments (Iswolsky 229, 230):

Este demonio de la rebelión presidió la actividad entera de Miguel Bakunin. Al comienzo del presente libro hemos visto ya a este demonio en función sobre la tierra sagrada de Premukino: rebeldía interior, extrañamiento encarnado en aquel hijo de familia, niño mimado, hermano adorado y atormentado por eterna inquietud. Desde su adolescencia revistió tal túnica de Neso, que devoraba a aquel gigante sin yacija, ni puerto de enlace, ni refugio de ninguna clase, y que se dejaría triturar por la pasión destructora que en vano intentaba insuflar a los demás (ibid 232).

Furthermore, the character’s actions are not always in conflict with his political teachings. He gives all of his money to poor beggars before boarding the ship, which is why he relies on the (excessive) generosity of others (e.g., the first class cabin, luxurious meals, tobacco). Likewise, his public defense of Sofia Aranguren is in keeping with the progressive views on women that anarchists espoused. «¿Es que se puede así maltratar a una mujer? La pareja humana tiene los mismos derechos», although one might argue that it was not as effective as Salvochea’s defense of the girl (Valle-Inclán 94).

Bakunin’s excess, consumption, passion, and larger than life personality contrast sharply with Salvochea’s asceticism, moderation, and reserve, yet there are differing critical opinions regarding Valle’s depiction of the Andalusian anarchist. Dougherty, García de la Torre, and Glöckner view his portrayal as a model worthy of emulation (Dougherty 125, García de la Torre 20, Glöckner 84)\(^\text{18}\). However, — 90 —
some critics find him to be a deformed, esperpentic figure and thus view his portrayal as critical. For example, Glaze considers him «one of the few characters of El ruedo who is motivated by goodness and shows compassion toward his fellow man» but believes Salvochea is a deformed figure because of his excess idealism, which she likens to a puppet or an animal (Glaze 150-2).

As with Bakunin, Baza de espadas emphasizes the Andalusian anarchist's interest in universal social justice, revealed in his reported thoughts:

[El marinero] Permaneció mucho tiempo absorto en sus vagos sueños de revolucionario, los ojos dormidos sobre la lon- tananza marina, el ánimo suspenso en la visión apostólica de unir a los hombres con nuevos lazos de amor, abolidas todas las diferen- cias de razas, de pueblos y de jerarquías: Anhelaba una vasta revolución justiciera, las furias encendidas de un terroris- mo redentor. Sobre las hogueras humeantes se alzaría el tem- plo de la fe comunista. —Destruir para crear.— Intuía la visión apocalíptica del mundo purificado por un gran bautismo de fuego: El soplo sagrado de un Dies Irae que volviese a las almas la gracia perdida, el sentimiento de la fraternidad universal (Valle 97).

Yet Salvochea does not merely dream of social change, he is a man of action. Although some of the «sailor's» characteristics (e.g., «el marinero de las manos pulidas») seem to feminize the character, implying weakness and lack of manly vigor, his quiet, unassuming strength and resolve protect Sofi and support the «benevolent ogre» (Valle 94, 96). Moreover, as with other historical aspects of the novel, Valle's character portrayal mixes fiction with a surprising amount of fact. Although there is no indication that he took a fateful cruise with Bakunin, the historical Salvochea was ostensibly an intellectual who eschewed carnal pleasures in favor of practicing a priestly
devotion to his political cause and who evinced an abiding interest in social justice (Moreno Aparicio 204-17)\(^1\).

The absent Russian anarchist Kropotkin, a notable theoretician of the movement, must also be considered in this work, as *Baza de espadas* resonates with his writings on a number of levels, particularly in the concern for social justice and ethics that guide Bakunin and Salvochea, as well as the latter’s saintly life of abnegation that mirrored that of Kropotkin reported in the Spanish press. In Valle’s novel, Salvochea is frequently referred to as the master’s [Bakunin’s] disciple, but perhaps he should have been called Kropotkin’s (Valle 106). As mentioned previously, the real Salvochea translated two of Kropotkin’s major works into Spanish. Moreover, Kropotkin, rather than Bakunin, was the model for the Russian anarchist of an early version of the chapter «Alta mar». In *Otra castiza de Samaria*, Schiavo discovered that Kropotkin replaced Bakunin, further indication that Valle considered both of the Russian anarchists when writing *Baza de espadas* (Schiavo 218, 220).

5. VALLE’S ONEIRIC VISION: ECHOES OF KROPOTKIN’S MEDIEVAL CITY\(^2\)

When contrasted with Spain’s past, *Baza de espadas*’s inclusion of three anarchists has important ramifications: They represent certain directions of political thought which might be restated as ethical consciousness, the need for social justice, and the threat of terrorist violence, which echo important grassroots movements during the Second Republic, particularly concern for justice/ethics and the positive aspects of revolutionary violence. In 19\(^{th}\)-century Spain, anarchists

\(^1\) Moreno Aparicio, a biographer, comments: «Sobre cuestiones amorosas no se tienen detalles muy concretos, Valle Inclán, en su libro Baza de espada, da a entender algo, pero muy impreciso» (Moreno Aparicio 216).

\(^2\) Kropotkin’s ideas regarding the medieval city have a great deal in common with those of Proudhon, who, according to Kropotkin, «was the first to use, in 1840 (Qu’est-ce que la propriété? first memoir), the name of anarchy with application to the no-government state of society.» In particular, the Russian anarchist noted: «The name of ‘anarchist’ had been freely applied during the French Revolution by the Girondists to those revolutionaries who did not consider that the task of the Revolution was accomplished with the overthrow of Louis XVI, and insisted upon a series of economical measures being taken (the abolition of feudal rights without redemption, the return to the village communities of the communal lands enclosed since 1669, the limitation of landed property to 120 acres, progressive income-tax, the national organization of exchanges on a just value basis, which already received a beginning of practical realization, and so on)» (Kropotkin 2005, 238, my emphasis).
were unsuccessful in their bid to effect social change; however, Valle's anarchists breathe life into their idealistic dreams of revolution and social justice prevalent during the Second Republic, when the novel was published. Indeed, their presence in the novel is indicative of the hopes found in much of Valle's literary production. Salper and Maier concur with this view:

It is important to emphasize that the utopian «vision» evidenced in Valle-Inclán's hope for the Second Republic... did not suddenly appear, fully articulated, in 1931. On the contrary, it can be glimpsed in all his work... If it is more openly expressed and closer to the surface towards the end of his life, this is no doubt because he sees a possibility for the political redemption of Spain with the defeat of the dictatorship and the advent of the Second Republic (Salper 29).

The quixotic dream of anarchism introduced in the novel by the characters examined above suggests the importance of a visionary future, which resonates with Kropotkin's medieval city. In La conquista del pan, Kropotkin proposed anarchist communism as a natural means of organizing society: «Cualquiera sociedad que se ponga en pugna con la propiedad privada, no tiene otro remedio que organizarse en comunismo anarquista» (Kropotkin 1908, 30). He further postulated a medieval city of mutual cooperation as an archetype for human society21. Kropotkin's mystical return to an imagined period of autonomous rule resonates with the author of the Sonatas and the collective imagination of many Spaniards, who sought greater local autonomy during the Second Republic in contrast to a strong [absolutist] central governmental, which has remained a defining tension in Spanish politics. This was true of many areas traditionally associated with anarchism or anarcho-syndicalism.

Kropotkin's imagined city of mutual aid contrasts sharply with the internecine Spain of Isabel II depicted in the El ruedo ibérico, as well as the Primo de Rivera Dictatorship in place when Valle published the first novel of this series. As previously mentioned, Dougherty opined that it was no accident that an incomplete Baza de espadas appeared at a moment when Republican Spain was threatened by caudillismo. In 1929, Díez-Canedo made a similar observation regarding the second novel in the series, Viva mi dueño:

21 Kropotkin traces mutualism to Proudhon's anti-communist brand of «mutuellisme» and the latter's English and American predecessors, William Thompson (and his followers John Gray and J.F. Bray) and Josiah Warren (Kropotkin 2005, 239-40).
Ocurre que Valle-Inclán, puesto a escribir historia novelesca, sitúa en un ayer inmediato su intriga y hace intervenir en ella a personas que viven o cuyos descendientes viven y ocupan altas posiciones sociales... Sabida es la historia [de Viva mi dueño, i.e., la abdicación de Isabel II], y nadie negará que un período como el que este libro refleja es terreno apropiado para que la imaginación de un novelista, ayudada por los testimonios y documentos auxiliares que ha de tener a mano, reconstruya con hervor de vida el tiempo que fue. Si con algún inconveniente se tropieza, querrá decirse que ese tiempo no ha dejado de ser del todo (Díez-Canedo 230-231).

In 1936 Carmona Nenclares's reading of El ruedo ibérico coincided with Díez-Canedo's views: «En los Esperpentos y El ruedo ibérico aparecen los personajes de ese siglo convertidos en fantoches movidos por un resorte mecánico: el de sus intereses de clase» (Carmona Nenclares 50). Echoes of Kropotkin's medieval city were still resounding on the political landscape of the Second Republic.

6. THE HISTORICAL NOVEL: REFLECTING ON THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

As Glöckner claims, although Valle was not a member of the anarchist party (e.g., F.A.I.), his writing demonstrates both a familiarity with Spanish and Russian anarchists, as well as an admiration for certain aspects of libertarianism23. Valle's witty and playful re-

22 This quote originally appeared in La Nación on Feb. 8, 1929. Other critics make a similar point: «La Reina Castiza y El ruedo ibérico, a pesar de que el autor da en ellas un salto atrás, hacia la España de 1868, el blanco a que apunta la sátira biliosa del autor es, ante todo, la España actual, o sea, la anterior de la segunda República» (Jerez Farrán 154).

23 As numerous critics have commented, Valle’s enthusiasm for anarchism in his literature was by no means an isolated case among Generation of 98 authors. Azorín and Pio Baroja both demonstrated anarchist tendencies early in their literary careers, and Blasco Ibáñez’s La Bodega (1905) also fictionalized the life of Fermín Salvochea in the figure of Fernando Salvatierra. However, as Carmona Nenclares notes, Valle stands out as one of the few members of the Generation of 1898 who continued to demonstrate anarchist tendencies during the 1930s, and who served as an immediate role model for prewar social novelists such as Ramón J. Sender and Andrés Carranque de Ríos. «Valle-Inclán era para las jóvenes generaciones actuales el más respetable de los hombres del 98 y de la promoción inmediata. Acaso el único. Desde luego fue el único de ese grupo literario cuya pluma no se puso nunca al servicio de Mammon. Estuvo siempre, y sobre todo en sus últimos años, al lado de cuantos padecieron injusticias, y muy señalamadamente injusticias sociales. Tenía de don Quijote, no sólo la traza, sino la pasión ética» («Glosas del mes» 8-9).
imagination of Isableline Spain subverts official histories, revealing the self-interest of political factions and inviting the reader to construct his own history/story of the nation's past. At the same time, Baza de espadas exhorts the reader to reexamine the present, the Second Republic, which, at the time of the novel's publication, was faced with ever increasing threats of civil war and extinction, not unlike the brief, ill-fated First Republic of 1873 that followed Isabel II's dethronement.

It is common place to observe that one of the functions of the historical novel is to reflect upon the nation's present course. In this regard historical narratives are imbued with a power that «history», the mimetic project of recreating the past, lacks —the ability to imagine the course of the future. Valle's sometimes quixotic anarchists suggest that revolution in its capacity to disrupt and destabilize the empirical and logical, creates a new vision of the nation as a federation of mutual aid and autonomy, one that history was incapable of fashioning, but that might be fulfilled in the Republican future.

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