

SHOW AND TELL: FROM MUSEUM TO NOVEL  
IN CLARÍN'S *LA REGENTA*

HAZEL GOLD  
Northwestern University

What if they opened a museum and nobody came? In this current age of blockbuster exhibitions, characterized by the crush of ticket holders, the glitter of black-tie opening night galas, and the intensive marketing of posters, catalogues, and other sometime-related merchandise, the notion seems all but inconceivable. Even in the nineteenth century, novels, travel diaries, and newspaper accounts all tell us that the likelihood of chancing upon a museum empty of visitors was relatively remote. Copyists, students, educated burghers, and the merely curious of all classes crowded into galleries in search of... Entertainment? Esthetic enlightenment? Moral uplift?

The novelty of its democratic entrance policy, the fabled wealth of its collections, and the patina of social and intellectual respectability presumed to accrue to its frequenters combined to make the museum an indispensable stop on the itinerary of tourists and a prominent feature of the cultural landscape of the local inhabitants. Once fixed upon that landscape, it then passes into the pages of the novel as well. There it may function as an omnipresent trope that foregrounds the narrative, as occurs in the works of Henry James (Tintner). Alternately, it may crop up as a seemingly incidental motif grafted onto the body of the text. Readers of *La Regenta*, for one, have regularly skipped over the passages dealing with *museofilia* (and, by extension, *museofobia*) as extraneous to their interpretations of history, language, and desire in Clarín's mammoth text. In either case, the insertion of the museum into the

novel — each a means of containing and classifying representations of experience — signals an important mutation in the general cultural text governing the nineteenth century.

Classical temples and, subsequently, medieval churches accumulated valuable icons and treasure hoards, and the art of collecting was further stimulated by Renaissance humanism and a growing interest in scientific observation and experimentation. Nonetheless, the museum itself is a relatively recent invention. It owes its emergence at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth to a particular confluence of economic realities and political pressures that together transformed the hitherto private enterprise of acquisition and contemplation of art works into a public venue. Almost immediately, the museum achieved a privileged institutional position. Located at the center of a field of power generated and sustained by the numerous and exceedingly diverse roles it played within society, the museum was from its inception a polymorphic institution. Simultaneously it functioned as a center for scholarship and education, temple of meditation, financial patron and promoter of the mystique of art and the artist, agent of social change (or, conversely, bureaucracy whose very structure impeded such change), arbiter of taste and standards of excellence, and interpreter of the historical past (Weil 30-55).

Yet the enthusiasm greeting the constitution of the modern museum soon came to be tempered by a persistent skepticism regarding both its professed achievements and the very ideological constructs on which its existence was predicated. While the museum's mission to house and care for the monuments of nature and human artifice was an admirable enough one, it soon became apparent that the expanding popularity of museums was not necessarily accompanied by an increase in the level of comprehension or interaction on the part of the public. Lack of education, inability to perceive any relation between rarified art and artifacts and one's daily life, unrealistic expectations for some sort of epiphany in the presence of the great works: these were all factors often enough determining the individual's visit to the museum as an experience in confusion, alienation, and disappointment<sup>1</sup>. More

---

<sup>1</sup> This attitude towards the ritual of museum-going is summed up in an engraving attributed to Eugenio Burnand, «En el Museo del Louvre», reproduced in *La Ilustración Española y Americana*, XXVIII (30 de julio de 1889),

and more the trip to the museum became ritualized; it was a religious pilgrimage in secular disguise, a ceremony of uncertain purpose. The viewer, already intimidated by the museum's «geste autoritaire et le sentiment de contrainte» (Valéry 1290), was sent reeling by the visual overkill of an endless parade of objects that was dizzying in its variety.

Of course, one museum-goer's variety is another's incoherence, and what was intended as the living record of human endeavor could as easily be interpreted as a cemetery, an ossuary in which were stored the dry bones of a society's cultural ancestors and familiars (Adorno 175; Valéry 1290). It is just this moribund character of the museum that Ortega y Gasset rued when he observed: «En el museo se conserva a fuerza de barniz el cadáver de una evolución. Allí está el flujo del afán pictórico que siglo tras siglo ha brotado del hombre. Para conservar esta evolución ha habido que deshacerla, triturarla, convertirla de nuevo en fragmentos y congelarla como en un frigorífico» (188). As will soon become apparent, Clarín, too, rebelled against the charnel house of civilization that the museum had already become in his day, seeing in it less an instrument of mass acculturation than a beguiling but ultimately useless fiction with which to mollify the anxieties of a society edging ever closer towards the crisis of systems of knowledge and belief that characterizes the *fin de siglo* in Spain and the rest of Europe.

Developments in Spain are no exception to this pattern of initial admiration and subsequent disillusionment with the museum's aspirations to totality and integration of knowledge. Museums there proved to be as eminently useful to the state as they were edifying to their clientele, and the first Spanish public museums figured in an unofficial government campaign to promote a spirit of civic boosterism among its citizens. The paintings and sculptures belong-

---

56. The scene pictures two gentlemen placidly dozing in front of the paintings on display. Literary depictions in a humorous vein of the futility or pretentiousness of the museum experience can be found, however, at a much earlier date. See, for instance, Ramón de Mesonero Romanos, «La exposición de pinturas» (1838), *Escenas matritenses. Segunda serie (1836-1842)* included in *Obras*, ed. Carlos Seco Serrano, 4 vols. (Madrid: Atlas, 1967 [BAE v. 200]), 2: 144-48. Alas sets the stage for his own critique with the ridiculous scene in ch. 1 in which Saturno Bermúdez guides the visitors from Palomares through the cathedral, showing off the church's collection of art works and his own pseudoerudition.

ing to the Real Academia de San Fernando and the Prado were indisputable evidence of the talents of native Spanish artists. Moreover, these works, as well as foreign ones, attested to the superior esthetic judgment of both Spanish monarchs and the aristocratic and ecclesiastical patrons who had assembled the private collections that formed the basis of the national artistic patrimony — a monument, in essence, to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century preoccupation with *buen gusto*, here colored with patriotic overtones. The weapons, armor, maps, and models of fortresses and gunpowder factories on view in the Museo del Parque de Artillería offered proof of the country's military prowess. Even the Gabinete de Historia Natural, by including mineral and ornithological specimens shipped back from the Americas, stood as a reminder of Spain's imperial legacy, the colonization of the New World. In 1814 an anonymous handbook intended for foreigners in Madrid extolled the praises of the capital's many imposing private homes and museums, concluding: «¡Ojalá que despertando de este modo la curiosidad, y excitando el interés de los forasteros y naturales, lográsemos sacar a luz muchas de las bellezas que yacen en un injurioso olvido!» (*Paseo* v-vi). Shortly thereafter, in his urban manual of Madrid, Mesonero Romanos inventoried the contents of Spain's artistic, military, engineering, and scientific museums, deploring their cramped quarters but enthusing warmly over the objects they housed: «todos ellos suspenden el ánimo, ya por la impresión profunda y los sentimientos patrióticos que escitan, y ya por el esquisito trabajo de su ejecución» (272).

Yet by the closing decades of the nineteenth century the revised view of the museum as a potentially fraudulent establishment had already entered into the literature of the period, first by way of *costumbrista* satire and later in realist narratives. Increasingly, novelists registered their dissatisfaction with the phenomenon of a museum that in its concentration on material goods all but eliminated the human element of enjoyment. A case in point is offered by Leopoldo Alas' *Vetusta*, a living museum (as its very name denotes) dedicated to preserving modes of dress and patterns of thought that Madrid and Paris have already sloughed off.

As explained by Robustiano Somoza, physician to the heroine of *La Regenta*, it is hardly surprising that the young women of *Vetusta* so often choose to consecrate their lives to the cause of religion.

Life in their city may well be an intellectually numbing «andar de templo en templo con los ojos bajos», but a greater tribulation is the customary trip to Madrid and the «farsa piadosa de hacerles ver el siglo... por un agujero». While there, the poor girls are dragged off to the «Museo de Pinturas, el Naval, la Armería». Who among them, the doctor wonders aloud, would not prefer the undemanding tranquility of the convent to the peripatetic «ir de museo en museo rompiéndose los pies y tropezando» (1: 431-32) which seems to comprise the whole of their stay in the capital?

In fact, the supposedly gender-neutral program of middle-class education that don Carlos proposes for his daughter includes just such unavoidable outings to the museum: «[Carlos] creía cumplir con Anita llevándola al Museo de Pinturas, a la Armería, algunas veces al Real» (1: 200). Her father's pedagogical intentions, however, come to naught, as the narrator openly commiserates with the protagonist: «La pobre muchacha se aburría mucho en Madrid. Mientras a su imaginación le entregaban a Grecia el Olimpo, el Museo de Pinturas, ella, Ana Ozores, la de carne y hueso, tenía que vivir en una calle estrecha y oscura, en un mísero entresuelo que se caía sobre la cabeza» (1: 201). With characteristically deflationary irony, Alas thus introduces one of the principal topics of his century: the bourgeois ostentation of high culture and the simultaneous degradation of such values at the hands of the overbearing but fundamentally ignorant residents of Vetusta (Rutherford 27-28).

Of course, the museum is scarcely the only example of the trivialization of culture in *La Regenta*. The *gabinete de lectura* in Vetusta's casino is a place where newspapers are either pillows for drowsing old gentlemen or coveted trophies stolen by younger patrons. The newspapers themselves, especially the foreign language ones, are read almost as infrequently as the books locked up (with a now-lost key) in a nearby cupboard, so that, finally, «[l]os socios antiguos miraban la biblioteca como si estuviera pintada en la pared» (1: 205). If the library has no more reality than a *trampantojos*, the theater provides an equally sham literary experience for «la Vetusta levítica». With the exception of Ana, those who attend the local performances are drawn by the lures of gossip, fashion, and sexual intrigue; the play being performed is for them merely a pretext.

However, the often overlooked presence of the museum in

Clarín's novel, while similarly providing the reader with details relating to the sociology of cultural production and consumption in nineteenth-century society, also responds to inquiries of a more purely epistemological nature. The manner in which the museum is organized and the aims to which it is dedicated reveal underlying patterns of cognition and categorization, modes of acquisition of knowledge best understood in the context of the philosophical climate of the period. Conveniently, in *La Regenta* Clarín manipulates the *topos* of the museum as a barbed allegorical figure for the aspirations and defeats of middle-class society in Restoration Spain. At the same time, the emblematic persistence of the museum and its incessant debunking is another indication of the author's rejection of positivism and empiricism as sustaining ideologies. The museum may function as a model for rationality, but Clarín favors instead a more suprarational means of seizing the meaning of objects in nature and in art, the better to allow humanity to apprehend the syncretic nature of the real which lies at the bottom of all his fiction (Lissorgues 263-66, 286).

The museum figures prominently in three narrative kernels or sequences of *La Regenta*, corresponding to so-called indices or integrational units of narrative discourse — that is, diffuse concepts (as opposed to consequential acts) that refer to implied signifieds occupying ever higher vertical levels in the text and that operate metaphorically as either notations of atmosphere or, in this case, explanations of character and being (Barthes 92-93). Each of these sequences, in which Alas develops the problematic of the museum relative to economic, esthetic, and ontological concerns, is centered upon a different character or group of characters. Common to all of them, however, is the consistent negativity of the representation awarded the museum as an agency of fragmentation, depersonalization, and deceptive epistemic assurances.

The initial discussion of the museum motif in Alas' novel fixes on the incontrovertible power it wields as an institution, encompassing first Ana and eventually much of the female populace of Vetusta. This power is conferred by the prevailing culture of materialism, which deifies the object, and is activated by the museum's gaze, described as ubiquitous and judgmental. The museum, along with the Church and the theater, are all milieux that in *La Regenta* signify the primacy of spectacle. Yet unlike the

latter two, the museum's power of vision is neither passive nor impartial. Its gaze is one of intense critical scrutiny that by its very selectivity sets norms of connoisseurship, criteria of valuation. In Vetusta's museums, who views, rules; and any object appearing in this field of vision is subjected to that rule. This explains the treatment Ana receives from the moment she moves back to Vetusta in the company of her aunts and continuing even after her marriage to Víctor Quintanar. Were there a guidebook to the sights of the city, Ana would be listed in it along with local architectural monuments and natural wonders. Like some tourist attraction, she is characterized as a female so exceptional as to be worthy of figuring in a public exposition: «Cuando llegaba un forastero [a Vetusta], se le enseñaba la torre de la Catedral, el Paseo de Verano, y, si era posible, la sobrina de los Ozores» (1: 224).

The judge's wife, like many a museum object, can claim no intrinsic utilitarian or commodity value. She is left impoverished upon her father's death, and even when she weds the retired magistrate Quintanar she neither works nor contributes to the community property of the spouses. Nevertheless, Vetusta bestows great value upon her by reason of her extraordinary beauty and uncompromising virtue, a combination of attributes that occurs all too rarely in her society: «En Vetusta, decir La Regenta era decir la perfecta casada» (1: 182). Ana thus becomes «una joya en su estuche» (2: 111), «un *bijou* [que] se guarde en tan miserable joyero» (1: 164), of all the Magistral's female flock «la más apetecible de sus joyas penitenciarias» (1: 150). She has become a living incarnation of the preciousities that in the terminology of collecting are so aptly called *objets de vertu*. Because of her social cachet and moral singularity, the jewel-like Ana attracts the gaze of all the city's inhabitants, from the factory workers who promenade up and down the *Boulevard* to the powerful members of the titled nobility and the church. She has been torn from the intimate privacy of the home and, like the greasy paintings hanging in the cathedral for the inspection of visitors, has been obliged to suffer the imposition of this new condition as public spectacle. Ana's exhibition value will only intensify as the novel progresses, reaching a climax during her waltz with don Alvaro at the Casino ball (ch. 24) and her barefoot trek during the Good Friday procession (ch. 26).

As one of the novel's most insistently recurring themes, *la mirada*—symbolized in the first chapter by the quasi-phallic intrusion into her garden of Fermín De Pas' telescope—brazenly appropriates Ana and atomizes her, converting her into an object of admiration and envy. This process of objectification would appear to be inevitable, since the provincial capital the novel describes is a world based on voyeurism, exhibitionism, and espionage. The aggressive gaze of Vetusta diminishes the individual and weighs his or her profitability, dehumanizing the person to the level of inanimate fetish. To her suitors, most of them *americanos* like don Frutos Redondo, Ana represents a luxury article or a piece of decorative art. Yet the consideration of human beings as objects of purely material appeal is not a stratagem exclusive to the industrial magnates who covet Ana Ozores. The church itself, satirized repeatedly in *La Regenta* for abusing its temporal power, views the souls of its flock as the spoils of a war ostensibly directed against liberals and freethinkers, but in reality waged between its own feuding members. Ana in this context becomes a prize claimed by De Pas' faction and disputed by his rivals. In her role as daughter of confession, she is treated as a possession that Cayetano Ripamilán has bequeathed to the Magistral («una especie de herencia, o mejor, sucesión *inter vivos*»), perversely analogous to the manner in which Paquito Vegallana inherits Alvaro Masía's former mistresses.

The reification of Ana, her conversion into an object of otherly desire that is at once sexually and ideologically motivated, is repeated more explicitly still in the scene of the catechism class attended by the girls of Vetusta. Contemplating one young woman who has just delivered an impassioned philippic against progress and who, not coincidentally, also happens to be delectably prepubescent, De Pas congratulates himself: «Sí, era obra suya aquel fanatismo deslumbrador; aquella rubia era la perla de su museo de beatas, pero todavía estaba en el taller... [cuando tuviera más años] la maravilla de su estudio saldría a luz, el público la admiraría, y para sí la guardaría la Iglesia» (2: 203). Be she Venus or virgin, or a threateningly ambiguous combination of the two, the woman of Alas' Vetusta finds herself transformed into a piece of public property and placed on display, a less than subtle example of the victimization wrought by the twinned forces of social



control and erotic mystification. Some, like Obdulia, will positively relish such exposure; others, like Ana, will feel only mortification at this inclusion in the museum's showcases.

In a second narrative syntagm, Clarín introduces the parodic image of the museum as a reflection of the economic and psychological realities on which the popular nineteenth-century pastime of collecting was based. With the creation of a cluster of secondary characters including the Marqués de Vegallana, Amadeo Bedoya, and Saturnino Bermúdez, Clarín offers a somber rewriting of the stereotypical portrait of the collector, a recurring target of nineteenth-century humorists and essayists of contemporaneity. Among Vetusta's inhabitants the prevalence of collecting, with its emphasis on the concepts of ownership and private property, clearly signifies the triumphant accession to power of the middle class. Within the framework of bourgeois rhetoric, collecting becomes a kind of displaced discourse in which what matters is not so much the functionality or use-value of the items in the collection. What matters, instead, is the objects' status as mirror of the subject. The social habit of collecting as practiced by countless characters in the novels of Galdós, for example, is predicated on the idea that these objects are valuable insofar as they are signs of abundance and (super) saturation, ostentation, expenditure, even gratuitousness — in other words, signs that communicate the pre-eminent position of the middle class within a determinate social and cultural hierarchy. Moreover, the fetishism that overtakes capital and its signifiers necessarily intrudes upon the psychological makeup of collectors, who demonstrate all manner of aberrant and obsessive behaviors in the storing and displaying of the often trivial objects they hoard (Gold 320-26)<sup>2</sup>. As *La Regenta* illustrates, the art of collecting sentences the individual to a lifetime of fanatical pursuit and unisatisfied desires: «Para él [Bedoya] un objeto de arte no tenía mérito aunque fuese del tiempo de Noé, si no era

---

<sup>2</sup> Pardo Bazán offers a particularly extreme example in her short story «La joya del museo», in which the deluded protagonist suffers from the unoriginal «manía ... del cervantismo fetichista y minucioso». According to the narrator, «Si no había contado las letras del *Quijote*, se había consagrado a rebuscar objetos que, según él, se relacionaban más o menos con el asunto del libro inmortal. Con tal propósito [reunió?] una colección digna del carro de la basura». In Emilia Pardo Bazán, «La joya del museo», *O.c.*, ed. Harry L. Kirby, Jr. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1973), 3: 404.

suyo. Así como Bermúdez amaba la antigüedad por sí misma, el polvo por el polvo, Bedoya era más subjetivo, como él decía, necesitaba que le perteneciera el objeto amado» (1: 261).

Interestingly, Clarín takes exception with the standard portrayal of the collector as a relatively benign albeit boring sort. Rather, he sees in him a seriously flawed individual whose foibles are symptomatic of a deeply troubled Spanish society that has turned its back on its own historicity. The literature of *costumbrismo* depicted the collector and the antiquarian as stock figures in its repertoire of social types. Exemplars of crass materialism, they were usually portrayed as dilettantes and parasites, decadent and sometimes effeminate men whose very approach was about as welcome as the plague. «Un castigo que Dios me impuso por alguna falta cometida», one such put-upon narrator complains, speaking of «invasiones epidémicas» provoked by «la justa cólera celeste» (Al-Margherití 193). In these set-pieces, the *coleccionista* is presented as a notoriously gullible type who, after compulsively purchasing everything in sight, routinely badgers his acquaintances to inspect his trophies:

Es en su casa y sólo en su casa en donde ha de considerar a mi tipo el que quiera conocerlo por entero. Disponte, amigo lector, ... puedes ya entrar en la mansión enciclopédica, en el arca de Noé de cosas inanimadas, en el valle de Josafat de objetos movibles, en la *vera efigies* de la más completa anarquía, en la casa, en fin, del *Anticuuario*, que no contento con franquearte generosamente la puerta llevará su condescendencia hasta el punto de servirte él mismo de *Cicerone*, explicándote artículo por artículo cuanto ha podido recoger en sus repetidos y minuciosos paseos por el rastro y por las prendaderas. (Ilarraza 167).

In *La Regenta* Alas shifts the focus from the standard critique of the collector as inoffensive eccentric and social nuisance. In comparison with the composite portrait of the collector that emerges from the various *costumbrista* expositions on the topic<sup>3</sup>,

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the essays by Ilarraza («El anticuario», 1851) and Al-Margherití («El coleccionista», 1872), see also the following: Manuel Ossorio y Bernard, «Caracteres contemporáneos. Un coleccionista», *La Ilustración Española y Americana*, XLII (15 de noviembre de 1889), 286; Romualdo Nogués y Milagro, *Ropavejeros, anticuarios y coleccionistas por un soldado natural*

he draws on only two particular attributes which he then makes the centerpiece of his depiction of this fast-multiplying type: the collector's fundamental lack of originality, and his almost tangible fear of the loss of a historical past that, ironically, may never have even belonged to him except in mythic terms. In *La Regenta* individuals collect prefabricated objects since they are not inclined to create new ones; not unrelatedly, they collect antiquities in an attempt to hold on to an irretrievable past that in fact had vanished almost a century earlier.

Clarín's sharp-witted condemnation of politics and society under Restoration Spain, easily documented in his writings for the periodical press<sup>4</sup>, is replicated in the risible presentation of Vetusta's many private collectors. The latter are non-productive individuals; not only do they create nothing of esthetic or mechanical originality, but they often unwittingly lend themselves and their capital to a thriving trade in fakes and forgeries. Moreover, in comparison to Doña Cándida, Francisco Bringas, and other Galdosian characters, all of them early consumers of mass culture who hoard ephemera and objects of recent manufacture, the characters in *La Regenta* place value solely on antiques, that is, objects that belong to the «cultural baroque» of the bygone in which «the stigmata of industrial production and primary functions are eliminated» (Baudrillard 43). Those who collect artifacts of the bygone — and here one thinks not only of the titled Marqués but also the salaried Bedoya («despuntaba en la Arqueología» [1: 260]) and Bermúdez («el primer anticuario de la provincia» [1: 121]) — are examples of «social success that seeks a legitimacy, a heredity, a 'noble' sanction», the desire to «transmute their economic status into inherited grace» (Baudrillard 43).

Against the background of Spain's Restoration and the undisputed economic, political, and social hegemony of the middle class, the Marqués de Vegallana and his fellow collectors devote their

---

*de Borja* (Madrid: Tip. de Infantería de Marina, 1890); Benito Pérez Galdós, «El coleccionista», *La Prensa*, 30, de mayo de 1893 (reproduced in *Obras inéditas*, ed. Alberto Ghirardo [Madrid: Renacimiento, 1823], I: 197-208).

<sup>4</sup> The most comprehensive study of the evolution of Alas' position on the outstanding political and cultural issues of his day as expressed in his journalistic writings can be found in Yvan Lissorgues, *Clarín político* (Toulouse-Le Mirail: Institut d'Etudes Hispaniques et Hispano-Américaines/Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 1980-81), 2 vols.

considerable energies to purchasing furniture, tapestries, paintings, and books dating from the eighteenth century or earlier in an attempt to reconstruct the simulacrum of a prelapsarian aristocratic privilege unclouded by the advancing European tide of class struggle. An *artículo de costumbres* included in the widely-circulated anthology *Los españoles pintados por sí mismos* (1851) quite rightly points out that the *anticuario*, in diverting his gaze from the historical present to the past, «es, en fin, el verdadero retrógrado de la época» (Ibarra 166). The proliferation of his species is in fact attributable to the cataclysm signified by 1789: «... nació al mismo tiempo que la revolución francesa, pues la naturaleza, sabia en todas sus creaciones, al levantar aquel terrible huracán, aquel recio torbellino que amagaba destruirlo todo ... quiso descendiese al mundo un recolector de antiguallas, a fin de que si unos destruían las cosas el otro recogiera los pedazos» (166). The Marqués, who fills his *salón de antigüedades* with Henry II furniture (1547-1589), and also his wife doña Rufina, whose Yellow Salon is decorated with period pieces from the Regency and reign of Louis XV (1715-1774), demonstrate their utter disregard for the reality of the events of 1868, pretending to inhabit a prerevolutionary status quo that in theory (if not in fact) had been imperilled long before Spain's own relatively belated restructuring of society along modern bourgeois norms.

In matters of art and archaeology the Marqués is an amateur long on «dinero y credulidad» but short on discrimination (1: 314), and the things he buys are simply an index of the redundancy of his own wealth: «El marqués tenía la vanidad de ser anticuario por su dinero; pero le costaba mucha plata lo que resultaba al cabo obra de los *truqueurs*, palabra del capitán [Bedoya]» (1: 313). Unwittingly, the Marquis has fallen into the chief vice of his city: imitation, or *truquage*, as the affected captain says in French, himself in imitation of the worldly Parisians. With the possible exception of his tapestries, everything in his suite is a recent copy; nothing bears the pedigree of a genuine antique.

The significance of this unconscious fraud goes beyond symbolizing the hypocrisy and lack of originality that characterize Vetustan society in general and its culture vultures in particular. What the Marqués has installed in his palace is in fact a «museo de trampas» (1: 313). On the one hand, his household is dedicated to the

museum's custodial function of collecting and preserving — in this instance, not just accessories and furnishings but an entire way of life distinguished by political conservatism, social snobbery, and moral laxity. On the other hand, this museum can boast only of «trampas», that is, deceit and fakery, since the lifestyle it defends is based on imitation, and only an imperfect imitation at best. As doña Rufina suggests: «... lo único bueno que la aristocracia de ahora podía hacer era divertirse. ¿No podía imitar las virtudes de la nobleza de otros tiempos? Pues que imitara sus vicios» (1: 305). Just as the Marquis' armchairs are nineteenth-century reproductions of authentic historical artifacts, so too his insular lifestyle is sustained by the most threadbare of illusions. Meanwhile, the very existence of the Campo del Sol neighborhood is mute but eloquent testimony to the fact that eventually these fictions of power and privilege will be dismantled. It is the pragmatically ambitious Fermín De Pas who most clearly recognizes where the challenge will come from:

... allí vivían los rebeldes; los trabajadores sucios, negros por el carbón y el hierro amasados con sudor; los que escuchaban con la boca abierta a los energúmenos que les predicaban igualdad, federación, reparto, mil absurdos, y a él no querían oírle cuando les hablaba de premios celestiales, de reparaciones de ultratumba... El Magistral no se hacía ilusiones. El Campo de Sol se les iba. (1: 113-14)

After 1789 in Europe and Spain's own 1868 watershed, the pseudo-bucolic sexual frolickings at El Vivero and the cozy, closed-ranks intimacy of the *tertulias* in the Vegallana palace must be viewed as weak imitations of a social configuration that is either in the process of disappearing or already absent. The museum that still evokes this phantasmic presence, according to Alas' narrator, must evoke only derision and disavowal.

The image of the «museo de trampas» provides a transition to a third, closely allied narrative section of the text describing Víctor Quintanar's wing of La Rinconada mansion. Víctor's living quarters are indeed another museum, one which quite literally contains a *trampa*: the device built by him and his friend Frígilis to trap foxes in the henhouse but which snares Ana instead when she stumbles upon it in the dark, in what amounts to an obvious foreshadowing of the discovery of her adulterous relations with

Alvaro Mesía. The museums cultivated by the wealthy Vetustan status-seekers, of whom the Marquis is the prototype, are significant by virtue of the object lesson in failed historical consciousness the reader is forced to extrapolate. By contrast, Víctor's involvement with the museum resonates not so much with historical as with metaphysical overtones. In positing the magistrate's failed enterprise, *La Regenta* explores the profound epistemological deception perpetrated by the museum upon its clientele, fully evoking the poignantly inadequate character of its promises of universal order and knowledge.

Don Víctor is depicted in the novel as the proud owner of a museum that includes representative examples of all the many disciplines that fascinate him. The ex-Regent dabbles in arts and letters, in natural and military sciences, and he rather proteanly describes himself as follows: «primer ornitólogo y cazador sin rival de Vetusta» (1: 179); «espadachín lírico [cuya] mayor habilidad estaba en el manejo de la pistola» (1: 182); «fabricante de jaulas y grilleras, artista en marquetería, coleccionador entomólogo y botánico» (1: 386); «aficionado de teatro casero» (2: 85); «cazador, botánico, inventor, ebanista, filósofo, todo lo que querían hacer de él su amigo Frígilis y los vientos del azar y del capricho» (2: 86-87). The implements and objects associated with all these fields of inquiry are included in the vast miscellany that fills two entire rooms of his home. In his office — «su museo, como él decía» (2: 130) — he keeps his collections of butterflies, plants, stones, and the intricate mechanical apparatuses that he devises. His weapons collection, along with his theatrical wardrobe, stage props, and other souvenirs of his aborted acting career, lines the walls and overflows the drawers of a second chamber (2: 131).

Quintanar's labor of collection and assemblage is distinguished first and foremost by its lack of scientific or artistic transcendence. The enthusiasm Víctor musters for all his accumulated possessions is not shared by any other character in *La Regenta*. For the housemaid Petra, her master's collections only manage to arouse a sort of superstitious incomprehension, just as for don Álvaro they evoke a terrible boredom and for Ana desperation: «sería hipócrita si aseguraba que bastaba para colmar los anhelos que sentía el cariño suave, frío, prosaico, distraído de Quintanar, entregado a sus comedias, a sus colecciones, a su amigo Frígilis y a su escopeta»

(2: 70). In Petra's eyes, all these menacing artifacts are «objetos que ella tenía que considerar como vasos sagrados de un culto desconocido» (1: 374). Forced to handle these objects as though they were «reliquias santas», she nonetheless delights in seeing Víctor's *sanctum sanctorum* profaned when Ana, caught in her husband's trap, thrashes about and breaks everything in arm's length. To the resentful servant the judge's treasures are «cachivaches» (1: 374); for Ana they are «cacharros del museo de manías» (2: 326) and for Mesía «tantas cosas inútiles» that when viewed in rapid succession induce vertigo (2: 130). All told, they represent a decontextualized assortment of objects, as ridiculous and impotent as their owner and conservator, that impart neither practical knowledge nor moral wisdom to their captive viewers.

At the same time, Víctor's museum is notable for its astonishing anachronism. A review of its contents reveals that the kindly judge has apparently modelled his archives on the so-called *Wunderkammern* («gabinets de maravillas») that flourished during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In lieu of the specialization that is the hallmark of the contemporary museum, dedicated to either art or science or anthropology, Víctor's collections propose an indiscriminate mixture of *Naturalia* (botanical, mineralogical, and zoological specimens) and *Artificialia* (products of technology and the mechanical arts). As he is scarcely an expert in matters of erudition, his collecting activities are consequently based more on superficial curiosity than on the sort of rigorous and disinterested scientific inquiry promoted by Enlightenment rationalism. Not unlike his obsolete concept of marital honor copied from Calderonian drama, his little museum also corresponds to outdated Siglo de Oro notions regarding the nature of the cosmos and its apprehension by humankind.

By annexing a practically unlimited variety of objects, the cabinets of curiosities could boast of a certain expository character; they pretended to present in microcosm a coherent, organic model of the universe. The same purpose could be ascribed to institutional museums founded during the Enlightenment period. Relying upon linear taxonomic arrangements established upon the basis of surface structures, they provided the viewer with a «description of the visible» (Foucault 137) that was both immutable and ahistorical. Undoubtedly, it is this demonstrative capacity of the museum that

Víctor seeks out when he finds himself confounded by all the unknown and invisible phenomena (and they are many) that confront him: the mysterious workings of medicine, magnetism, the human psyche in general and his wife's nervous system in particular, spirituality and religious ecstasy, and the supernatural, among others. Given his splanetic cry of protest, «¡Ni electricidad ni misticismo!» (2: 209), it is understandable why he would shut himself up in his rooms to study trays of dead insects and plant specimens; they provide an orderly and unchanging view of natural phenomena easily within his grasp. While Ana, under Fermín's influence, more and more is swept away by «la voluptuosidad dúctil de imaginar el mundo anegado en la esencia divina» (2: 208), her uncomprehending spouse retreats predictably to the world of the concrete: «Entraba entonces en su despacho. Volvía entonces a sus máquinas y colecciones» (2: 209). There he can take solace from the tidy display he has arranged and of which he is exaggeratedly protective: «Don Víctor alborotaba pocas veces; pero si se tocaba a los cacharros de su museo, como él llamaba aquella exposición de manías, se transformaba en un Segismundo» (1: 386).

Unfortunately for Víctor, neither his mechanical contrivances nor his stones, leaves, or bugs can tender him the metaphysical security blanket he so evidently requires. The nineteenth century's absorption with history and science can be traced respectively through Víctor's collections of armor and implements of warfare and of specimens taken from nature. Yet the control he exercises over his collections is at best a pallid sort of compensation for his lack of real control in his own life, and does little to allay his anxieties and uncertainties. On the contrary, his carefully-tended world of Linnean genus and species is left in total disarray by Ana's unprecedented foray (ch. 10) into his formerly private domain. The damage she causes is for Víctor the surest sign of the failure of his efforts to construct and then inhabit the fiction of secure knowledge and permanence that the museum promotes. Objects that were once inert, docile, rise up in rebellion against him, and it is at this point that he largely abandons his museum project:

Don Víctor no paraba en casa. Si no estaba de caza, entraba y salía, pero sin detenerse; apenas se detenía en su despacho. Le había tomado cierto miedo. Varias máquinas de las que estaba inventando o perfeccionando se le habían sublevado, eri-



zándose de inesperadas dificultades de mecánica racional. Allí estaban, cubiertos de glorioso polvo sobre la mesa del despacho, diabólicos artefactos de acero y madera ... En tanto Quintanar, un poco avergonzado en presencia de aquellos juguetes irónicos que se le reían en las barbas, esquivaba su despacho siempre que podía, y ni cartas escribía allí. Además, las colecciones botánicas, mineralógicas y entomológicas yacían en un desorden caótico, y la pereza de emprender la tarea penosa de volver a clasificar tantas yerbas y mosquitos también le alejaba de su casa. (2: 95)

The anarchic disintegration of form and matter that overtakes Víctor (all of *Vetusta*, really) finds its scenic equivalent in the shattering of post and crystal in his study. As one critic observes, these objects are transformed into «symbols of their own inadequacy... things are broken, the real *qua* real is destroyed» (Valis 256). Perhaps more significantly, what remains is only a jumbled heap for which systems of classification based on propinquity and tabular relations are no longer relevant. After an entire lifetime spent carefully compartmentalizing the world around him, both in his profession as a judge sworn to uphold a rigid juridical code of order and in his hobbies as a collector classifying «yerbas y mosquitos», Víctor discovers, to his discomfiture, that the compartments are not airtight and the glass jars scarcely unbreakable. Often their contents will become unavoidably intermingled, with disastrous results.

Past readers have already identified how *La Regenta* creates a world in which hierarchical distinctions dissolve and bleed into one another: the clerical dimension becomes confused with secular concerns, spiritual vocation becomes indistinguishable from sexual desire, masculine attributes are confounded with feminine ones, literary conceits and archetypes are mistakenly hailed as true-life experiences. «Thus the extremes [in *La Regenta*] are always meeting each other in unexpected ways», writes Weber. «[T]hrough psychological analyses and through social satire the author consistently brings together what his characters would keep apart» (189) — Ana's adulterous affair with don Alvaro being perhaps the most notorious example of the bringing together of that which should remain separate. What needs to be stressed, however, is that these textual confusions and blurrings are never truly resolved through dialectical synthesis, nor through the eventual privileging of one pole over

another. Instead, as Alas profiles it, life in Vetusta is a constantly shifting, agglutinative, and sometimes jarring juxtaposition of ideas, values, and social classes. Even its cathedral tower is a strange combinatorial figure connoting disembodied spirituality and emphatic carnality, virile grace and corseted rigidity, the product of what Nimetz calls «this disparate embrace between sex and religion» in which «[v]itiated, each lacks a fixed identity» (243). A never-ending oscillation between extremes, a basic undecidability, symbolized in Ana's ricocheting from Fermín to Alvaro and back again in a circle: this is what characterizes both the texture of Vetustan life and the written text that enfolds it. At bottom, the smashing of the displays and the ensuing disarray of Víctor's collections can be read as a textual reenactment of late nineteenth-century society and culture as one vast museum whose operative tenets are levelling, eclecticism, and heterogeneity<sup>5</sup>.

Reinforcing this notion are several compound images associated with Quintanar's friend and hunting companion Frígilis. The latter's two pet projects — the acclimatization of the *Eucalyptus globulus* tree to Vetusta's alien ecosphere, and the grafting of bits of English roosters onto Spanish ones — represent a deliberate attempt at fusing incompatible entities and species. Frígilis' experiments for the most part go ignored; but a few Vetustans are irritated by them, not least of all Ana:

¿Y quién es Frígilis? Un loco; simpático años atrás, pero ahora completamente *ido*, intratable; un hombre que tenía la manía de aclimatación, que todo lo quería armonizar, mezclar y confundir, que injertaba perales en manzanos y creía que todo era uno y lo mismo, y pretendía que el caso era «adaptarse al medio». Un hombre que había llegado en su orgía de disparates a injertar gallos ingleses en gallos españoles: ¡lo había visto ella! Unos pobrecitos animales con la cresta despedazada, y encima, sujeto con trapos, un muñón de carne cruda, sanguinolenta, ¡qué asco! (1: 375)

---

<sup>5</sup> Clarín himself makes use of this connotation of the museum in titling one of his collections of essays. See Leopoldo Alas, *Folleto literarios VII: Museum (mi revista)* (Madrid: Fernando Fe, 1890), where he writes in the prologue: «En cuanto al modo de llamarle: *Museum*, se refiere a la variedad del contenido, y otros se llamarán así también cuando no haya, o no se me ocurra, bautismo más adecuado» (6).

Ana's anger is to her mind justified, since she styles herself a victim of Crespo's most egregious failure, this time in the realm of human biology: his well meaning intercession in bringing together Quintanar and his future wife<sup>6</sup>. Víctor, too, is disturbed by the outrageous figures created out of the bizarre asexual copulation which his friend practices on the plant and animal kingdoms. Crespo's grafts interfere with the operation of natural law and speed up the process of disunification, destroying the immobility of classificatory hierarchies the judge so wishes to preserve. The cultivation of apple trees that bear pears is symptomatic of larger ills. Priests who behave like lovers, wives who tryst with men other than their lawful mates, proletarians who commingle with their social superiors along the boulevard and the Paseo del Verano: no wonder Víctor feels that his world is breaking apart, part of a general process of decomposition that turns Vetusta into a world of fluid value-structures and destabilized identities<sup>7</sup>.

What *La Regenta* ultimately suggests is that as an institution based on the rational ordering of knowledge, the museum — of Madrid or Vetusta, real or figurative — will always fall short of achieving its goals. Its collections can never really be completed;

---

<sup>6</sup> It is revealing to note the childless condition of Ana and Víctor's marriage. On the one hand, the absence of offspring is the *sine qua non* of the collector's situation: «es condición precisa que no tenga prole. Un niño en casa de un Anticuario sería una aberración espantosa, un insoportable anacronismo» (Ilarrazza 166). On the other hand, Ana's union with Quintanar, the result of Crespo's illfated graft, is not unlike the crossing of incompatible species that thereby renders them sterile.

<sup>7</sup> Obviously, the *injerto* or graft can also be considered an apt figure for describing *La Regenta* itself as an infinite series of transplantations of preexisting discourses and texts into other texts and contexts. The result of such transplantations is the modification of both root stock and scion, that is, of base text and framing text, and the abolition via this permeability of such concepts as inside / outside, anterior / posterior, form / content, and difference / identity. The intertextual process might be described as follows: «It is the sustained, discrete violence of an incision that is not apparent in the thickness of the text, a calculated insemination of the proliferating allogene through which the two texts are transformed, deform each other, contaminate each other's content, tend at times to reject each other, or pass elliptically one into the other and become regenerated in the repetition, along the edges of an *overcast seam* [*un surjet*]. Each grafted text continues to radiate back toward the site of its removal, transforming that, too, as it affects the new territory». This being the case, the only conclusion possible is a global one: «The heterogeneity of different writings is writing itself, the graft». See Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1981), 355-56.

the historical or evolutionary process it is meant to embody becomes frozen in time and space; and the partial knowledge it conveys does not — cannot — go beyond the empirically derived. Perhaps even more valuable forms of knowledge, Clarín's text implies, are left unexplored: the invisible, ineffable world of sensation and feeling, the deeply subjective realm of personal, psychic experience, as well as the teleology that might integrate them along with the phenomenal world into a single purposive structure. Because of its restriction to the Cartesian *cogito*, the consolatory vision of an eternal, universally valid natural and social order is precisely what the museum cannot provide, for it excludes the transcendental signified from its purview. The archaeological method that governs the museum's operations optimistically proposes an «epistemological master pattern» regarding natural and human history, one that will explain origins and justify ends, but such optimism proves unjustified (Donato 226-29). The radical discontinuity between objects and their representations, between signifier and signified, defeats the museum's promise of meaningful interpretation of the human environment. To the extent that the museum is featured prominently in the nineteenth-century episteme, its destruction in *La Regenta* either by physical violence (Ana's) or verbal violence (the narrator's) is an overture to the disorienting crisis of philosophical values that will beset Spain at century's end.

Recognizing these deficiencies, what Alas would offer us in lieu of the museum is the novel. All art, including that of the novel, as he maintains in «Del naturalismo», represents «una manera irremplazable de formar conocimiento y conciencia total del mundo bajo un aspecto esencial de totalidad y de sustantividad, que no puede darnos el estudio científico» (cited in Beser 143). *La Regenta* elaborates in fact a three-tiered approach to existence that accords the novel preferential status as a mode of cognition and apperception of reality. In *Vetusta* one may simply subsist on an inorganic level, or *vegetar* (2: 70; 2: 147; 2: 391; 2: 483); one may by the use of ratiocination arrive at a knowledge of externals (among other means, by dallying in the museum); or one may hope to transcend reason — through mysticism and intuition, but also through art and literature (as Ana tries, and Alas after her) — in an attempt to reach the non-objectifiable and nonquantifiable contents of human consciousness. In a review of Galdós' *Marianela*, Alas writes of this

hierophantic nature of art: «Para las cuestiones sociales, naturales, etcétera, quizá ya el arte sirve mucho menos que la ciencia; mas para otras regiones de la vida y de la conciencia, que muchos llaman nebulosa, pero cuya realidad se impone con un *positivismo* tan palpable como las piedras, el arte es mejor quizá ... que una ciencia que no lo es» (*Solos* 269). Throughout his career Alas was never to waver significantly from this position. If anything, Alas' final decade sees a strengthening of his conviction that the «novela poética» or «novelesca» can facilitate a means of entry into that recondite interior life that eludes statistical or scientific analysis.

Problematically, though, the preceding descriptions and proscriptions of collectors and museums are contained within a realist novel which, with its wealth of observed detail, its reliance on patterning, and its aspiration to the full transcription of human experience, is itself nothing less than a colossal meta-museum. Once *costumbrista* authors started preserving scenes of daily life in their writings against the day of their eventual disappearance they inevitably burdened fiction with this new curatorial role. Fernán Caballero could thus write in a letter to José Joaquín de Mora that «El fruto de estos mis trabajos lo tengo puesto en orden, como el director de un museo pone sus cuadros, buscándoles la luz y la altura en que deben aparecer, en cuatro novelas que me atrevo a recomendar a usted como aquél su museo, puesto que esos bellos cuadros no son suyos» (*Valencina* 16). Her comment regarding her debt to the Andalusian folklore that she acknowledges as the source of much of her material — «Sé que nada de cuanto escribo es mío y que no he tenido más que el buen tino y el buen gusto de *recolectarlo*» (emphasis added) — will later find an echo in Menéndez y Pelayo, who on the occasion of Galdós' election to the Real Academia, allows in his welcoming remarks that the *Novelas contemporáneas* are a giant storehouse of *moeurs*, «un gran almacén de documentos sociales» (78), many of them previously unrecorded and uncatalogued. Which is the same as saying that realist novelists are «collectors and depictees of sensory impressions, especially of sensory impressions valuable for their strangeness or novelty» (Auerbach 498).

And yet the more novel-museum tries to encompass, the farther into the distance its ultimate goal seems to recede. Instead of engaging in more expansive explorations of meaning, the nineteenth-

century novel seems somehow narrower, more circumscribed. Writing on certain practitioners of the French novel, early in his career Alas comments:

... ahora se prefiere un estrecho y modesto círculo, un horizonte limitadísimo para hacer acabadas labores de filigrana, irreprochables miniaturas. Tal autor se refugia armado de microscopio, en un rincón del alma, y de allí saca a la estampa un museo de curiosidades psicológicas; tal otro prefiere la naturaleza, y corre, con sus lienzos preparados, a cualquier pintoresco lugar de próximo o lejano departamento, y de allí vuelve con perfectas fotografías; parece que el tono consiste en limitarse» (*Solos* 338-39).

Ultimately, the realist novel, like the museum it emulates, cannot achieve all that it sets out to do; as an esthetic program it founders on the shores of its own contradictions. It can no more furnish an adequate link between reality and language than can the museum and, like the latter, it solidifies into a vehicle expressive of the bourgeois craving for maintenance and tenure. The sense of this impending dissolution under antithetical pressures is clearly present in *La Regenta*, particularly at the level of literary technique, where incursions into narrative self-reflexivity and the critique of culture and of language itself work to loosen the mooring lines tenuously holding Alas' fiction to the shores of representation. It is for this reason that the image of a chastened Víctor contemplating the destruction of his study is such an elegiac moment in the text, for what he surveys is more than the simple breaking of boxes and bell jars; it is nothing short of an act of metaphysical vandalism: «Se quedó solo en su despacho meditando sobre las ruinas de sus inventos, máquinas y colecciones» (1: 387). The debilitation of the museum's foundations is thus for Clarín a punctual metaphor for the insolvency of ideological values and of the realist novel in which they are so firmly embedded. In Víctor's sorry confrontation with his broken specimen trays and in the novel's own questioning and eventual cannibalization of mimetic structures, the reader discovers the ethos, and, more pertinently, the pathos of the Clarínian museum.

## WORKS CITED

- Adorno, Theodor. «Valéry Proust Museum». *Prisms*. Trans. Samuel and Sherry Weber. London: Neville Spearman, 1967, 173-85.
- Alas, Leopoldo. *La Regenta*. Ed. Gonzalo Sobejano. 2 vols. Madrid: Castalia, 1981.
- *Solos de Clarín*. Madrid: Alianza, 1971.
- Al-Margherití, Rudheriq [pseud]. «El coleccionista». *Los españoles de ogaño. Colección de tipos de costumbres dibujados a pluma*. Ed. Alcalde Valladares, Corrales, et al. 2 vols. Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1872, 1: 193-215.
- Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953.
- Barthes, Roland. «Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives». *Image-Music-Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977, 79-124.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*. Trans. Charles Levin. St. Louis: Telos Press, 1981.
- Beser, Sergio, ed. *Leopoldo Alas: teoría y crítica de la novela española*. Barcelona: Laia, 1972.
- Donato, Eugenio. «The Museum's Furnace: Notes Towards a Contextual Reading of *Bouvard et Pécuchet*». *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*. Ed. Josué V. Harari. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979, 213-38.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. 1970; New York: Vintage Books, 1973.
- Gold, Hazel. «A Tomb With a View: The Museum in Galdós' *Novelas contemporáneas*». *MLN* 103 (1988): 312-34.
- Ibarra, Manuel. «El anticuario». *Los españoles pintados por sí mismos*. Madrid: Gaspar y Roig, 1851. 165-79.
- Lissorgues, Yvan. *La pensée philosophique et religieuse de Leopoldo Alas (Clarín) 1875-1901*. Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1983.
- Menéndez y Pelayo, Marcelino. «Contestación». *Discursos leídos ante la Real Academia Española en las recepciones públicas del 7 y 21 de febrero de 1897*. Madrid: Viuda e Hijos de Tello, 1897, 33-96.
- Mesonero Romanos, Ramón de. *Manual histórico-topográfico, administrativo, y artístico de Madrid*. Madrid: Abaco, 1977. (A facsimile rpt. of: Nueva ed. Madrid: Imprenta de Antonio Yenes, 1844).
- Nimetz, Michael. «Eros and Ecclesia in Clarín's *Vetusta*». *MLN* 86 (1971): 242-53.
- *Paseo por Madrid, o Guía del Forastero en la Corte*. Madrid: Repullés, 1814.
- Ortega y Gasset, José. «Sobre el punto de vista de las artes». *La deshumanización del arte y otros ensayos de estética*. 3rd ed. Madrid: Alianza/Revista de Occidente, 1984, 187-205.
- Rutherford, John. *Leopoldo Alas. «La Regenta»*. London: Grant and Cutler, 1974.
- Tintner, Adelaide R. *The Museum World of Henry James*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986.
- Valencina, Diego de, ed. *Cartas de Fernán Caballero*. Madrid: Sucesores de Hernando, 1919.

ESPAÑA CONTEMPORÁNEA

- Valéry, Paul. «Le problème des musées». *Oeuvres*. Ed. Jean Hytier. Paris: Gallimard, 1962. 2: 1290-93.
- Valis, Noël M. «Order and Meaning in Clarín's *La Regenta*». *Novel* 16 (1983): 246-58.
- Weber, Frances Wyr. «The Dynamics of Motif in Leopoldo Alas' *La Regenta*». *Romanic Review* 57 (1966): 188-99.
- Weil, Stephen E. *Beauty and the Beast: On Museums, Art, the Law, and the Market*. Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983.