

Norwegian Influences on Spanish Modernism: Ibsen, Hamsun and Unamuno

Juan Antonio Garrido Ardila

Edinburgh University

Scarcely has the influence of Norwegian literature on Spanish letters been researched. Generally speaking, Norwegian authors have remained largely unknown to Spanish scholars and readers, to the point that Spanish translations of, for instance, Bjørnson's and Hamsun's works are, still today, a rarity. Gagen (69) has sustained, some Scandinavian playwrights, particularly Ibsen and Strindberg, were known in Spanish literary circles already in the 1890s; yet the quantity of critical studies into their reception in Spain is scarce. This situation has limited our understanding of Spanish Modernism; for example, Nil Santiáñez (119) has contended that Spain was the first nation where the term *modernism* was used to put Spanish literature at the front of Modernism; however, there had been a Modernist or pre-Modernist literary trend in Scandinavia known as *det moderne Gennembruds Mænd* (the men of the modern breakthrough), as Georg Brandes called it in 1883. Indeed, some of the deepest and strongest roots of Modernism are to be found in Scandinavian soil, particularly in the later works of Ibsen and Strindberg but also in other authors such as Jens Peter Jacobsen, Sophus Claussen, Gustaf

Frøding, Sigbjørn Obstfelder, Herman Bang and Knut Hamsun, to name but a few.¹

Greguersen's *Ibsen and Spain* published eight decades ago, Siguán Boehmer's recent study ("Ibsen...") also on Ibsen, and the points made by Gagen with regards the popularity of Scandinavian authors in Spain, are all particularly intriguing at the present time, when critical interest on Spanish and Scandinavian modernisms is mounting. In this article I will discuss the influence of Ibsen and Hamsun on Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936). Unamuno was a prolific novelist, playwright, poet, philosopher and journalist, revered for the aesthetic quality and philosophical profundity of his works. The beauty of his works is equalled or surpassed by very few other Spanish authors of the twentieth century. Whilst critics have acknowledged and examined Kierkegaard's influence on Unamuno,² very little research has examined his passion for Ibsen and his interest in Hamsun.³ I will here try to examine his knowledge of Ibsen and Hamsun, the influence that Ibsen exerted on his plays and also on one of his novels, and how Hamsun's representations of inward states of consciousness had a direct bearing on Unamuno's novels.

Ibsen was widely known in late-nineteenth-century Spain. Writing about Joaquín Dicenta, author of the controversial play *Juan José* (1895), Luis Bonafoux wrote in an article published in 1898: "Dicenta, dramaturgo, ha tenido y sigue teniendo mis simpatías, sin que por ello esté yo dispuesto a compararle con Shakespeare ni con Ibsen" (Dicenta, the playwright, has had and still has my admiration, although I will not compare him to Shakespeare nor Ibsen) (cited in Pérez de la Dehesa 79).⁴ Ibsen was sometimes cited by Spanish authors, e.g. in Ramón del Valle-Inclán's *Luces de Bohemia* (1920).⁵ As

¹ In the case of Ibsen and Hamsun see, for example: Moi and Ewbank on Ibsen; and Humpál, Kierkegaard and Kittang on Hamsun.

² The most recent research includes the works by Evans and Ardila ("Nueva lectura...", "The Origin").

³ Research includes the recent study on his theatre (García Lara), and on Hamsun's influence (Ardila, "Unamuno, el monólogo interior...").

⁴ All translations from Spanish and Norwegian are mine.

⁵ This character, Dorio de Gadex, tells the main character, "Usted es un poeta y los poetas somos aristocracia. Como dice Ibsen, las multitudes y las montañas se unen siempre por la base" (78) (You are a poet, and we poets are the aristocracy. As Ibsen says, the people and the mountains are always united by their base).

Bonafoux's quote illustrates, Spaniards held Ibsen in high esteem; however, some important critics disliked Scandinavian literature, e.g., Emilia Pardo Bazán, a professor of literature at the University of Madrid and one of the most popular novelists of her day. In her novel *Memorias de un solterón* (1896) (Memoirs of a bachelor), she describes the main character as an avid reader, always fond of "el más reciente drama de Ibsen" (the latest play by Ibsen) (106). On the other hand, in an article published in *La Revue des revues* in 1899, she explained a range of differences between the theatre in Nordic and in Mediterranean countries. In that article, she criticised Scandinavian playwrights on the grounds that they tended to present characters suffering from mental disorders; she accordingly branded their plays *dramas patológicos*. Pardo Bazán presented Racine and Ibsen as the icons of these two traditions. As her comments in *La Revue des revues* reveal, although Ibsen was widely known, he was also frowned upon.

Ángel Ganivet was also reluctant to acknowledge Ibsen as the leading playwright of the age. His article "Henrik Ibsen" was published in *El Defensor de Granada* in 1896, during the time he served as Consul General of Spain in Helsinki. That article was one in a series of pieces on Scandinavian authors later published as a book in 1905 with the title *Hombres del norte* (Men of the North). Ganivet suggests that Ibsen's works have been largely overestimated by Scandinavian literary critics, and describes him as "un gran autor dramático, comparable a Echegaray, a Dumas, a Hauptmann, no superior a ellos" (1998: 246) (a great playwright, comparable to Echegaray, Dumas and Hauptmann, not better than them). For Ganivet, Ibsen's dramas could never be met with success in Spain:

En el teatro de Ibsen, la mitad o más del pensamiento del autor queda detrás de la escena y ha de ser comprendido con el espectador; en el norte esto puede pasar, porque el público va al teatro a entender y aprender, y lo mismo asiste a la representación de un drama que a una conferencia en que se le habla de religión, filosofía o historia; pero en el mediodía la gente va al teatro a divertirse, a ver y a aprender sólo lo que entre por los ojos: nuestro teatro es escénico, no intelectual (254-255).

(In Ibsen's plays, half or more of the author's thesis is to be found behind the scene and needs to be elicited by the audience. This is common in Nordic countries, because the people go to the theatre to learn and to think; they go to the theatre as they attend a lecture on

religion, philosophy or history. However, in Southern countries the people go to the theatre to enjoy themselves, to see and to understand only what they see with their eyes: our theatre is scenic, not intellectual).

Ganivet goes on to criticise Ibsen's use of symbols, which he finds superficial compared to Calderón's.

Unamuno met and befriended Ganivet in 1891, during the two months when they both resided in Madrid before sitting competitive exams for university tenured positions. It is possible that Unamuno's fascination with Scandinavian literatures was prompted by Ganivet's articles on Nordic authors. In any case, in Spain, Ibsen was famous enough to interest Unamuno, who was an avid reader of foreign literature and philosophy. Several Spanish literary journals and magazines published Ibsen's plays—in 1891 and 1892 *La España Moderna* published translations of *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler*; *Revista Nueva* published *The Wild Duck* in 1899; *Revista de Arte Dramático y de Literatura* published *When the Dead Awaken* in 1902; and *El Globo* serialised *The Lady from the Sea* in 1896.⁶ These periodicals were widely circulated in Spain, and Unamuno himself published a number of articles in *La España Moderna* in 1895, which would later be reprinted in book form with the title *En torno al casticismo*. The Spanish National Library in Madrid currently (as of March 2013) holds 198 works by Ibsen; most of which are Spanish translations, including some editions of collected works,⁷ and also some volumes in other languages, mainly French and Italian. Many of these Spanish translations were published in the period spanning from the 1890s to the 1920s, with *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler* being the most translated and reprinted of Ibsen's plays in Spain.

How Unamuno came to read Ibsen is minutely documented in his private correspondence. In a letter to novelist and literary critic Leopoldo Alas, dated 3 April 1900 Unamuno wrote: "Voy a chapuzarme en el teólogo y pensador

⁶ Some critics, for example Siguán Boehmer (*Recepción...*), have magnified the reception of Ibsen in Catalonia and given the wrong impression that Ibsen was not read or appreciated in other Spanish regions. The dissemination of Ibsen's works by these journals prove that he was widely read across Spain. The references to Ibsen made by Valle-Inclán and Pardo Bazán, the analysis of his works by Ganivet and Pardo Bazán, and Unamuno's fascination with him, all evince that Ibsen was well-known in all corners of Spain, not only in one region.

⁷ *Dramas* (Madrid: Sucesores de Hernando, 1914-1926); *Teatro completo* (Madrid: Antonio López, 1915); and *Teatro completo* (Madrid: Yagues, 1929).

Kierkegaard fuente capital de Ibsen ... según he leído en el libro de Brandes sobre Ibsen que es donde empecé a aprender danés” (*Epistolario a Clarín* 74) (I am going to immerse myself in the theologian and thinker Kierkegaard, who is the main source of Ibsen ... this I have read in Brandes’s book on Ibsen, where I started to learn Danish). Unamuno’s private library—kept in the Unamuno Museum of the University of Salamanca—includes a copy of Brandes’s *Henrik Ibsen* (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandels, 1898). Captivated by Brandes’s examination of the relations between Ibsen’s works and Kierkegaard’s, Unamuno purchased and read the 14-volume *Søren Kierkegaards samlede Værker* (Søren Kierkegaard’s Collected Works) published in Copenhagen by Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag from 1901 to 1906. Unamuno also owned copies of Ibsen’s *Brand* (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1898) and *Peer Gynt* (Copenhagen and Oslo: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1906). He glossed all these works heavily. Most of his glosses are Spanish and German translations of Danish and Norwegian words; others are comments on specific passages. Unamuno’s annotations reveal how he gradually improved his knowledge of Scandinavian languages—the exhaustive annotation found in *Henrik Ibsen* and *Brand* becomes lighter in Kierkegaard’s volumes. Although Ibsen’s influence on Unamuno is most noticeable in the Spaniard’s plays, Ibsenian traces abound in his prose and also in his social attitudes throughout his life.

Unamuno’s plays were turned down by the theatre directors and producers he approached. His tragedy *Fedra*, for instance, was performed in the Ateneo⁸ in Madrid after it was rejected several times. Unamuno wrote an “Exordio” to be read before the performance, which began, “Esta mi tragedia *Fedra* no me ha sido posible que me la acepten para representarla en un teatro de Madrid. La misma suerte han corrido otros dramas que tengo compuestos y presentados” (185) (This drama, *Fedra*, has not been accepted to be staged in any theatres in Madrid. The same has happened to other dramas I have written). Generations of critics have underrated Unamuno’s plays—e.g. Lázaro Carreter, Guillermo de la Torre and Donald Shaw have all argued that Unamuno’s plays were bound to fail because they lacked in technique. However, other scholars (e.g. Gullón, Palomo, Zavala, and Paulino) have praised Unamuno’s dramas for their philosophical and psychological depth. There is still today critical disagreement as to the actual value

⁸ Ateneos in Spain were (and still are) culture associations which used to hold conferences, lectures, or where people simply met to discuss literature and politics.

of these plays, and Unamuno's dramas are little known among scholars and the public alike, who otherwise acknowledge and celebrate his achievements as a philosopher, a novelist and a poet. Coincidentally, Unamuno the playwright has suffered, ever since his day, the same destiny as Ibsen in Spain—his plays have sometimes been ignored and overlooked by some on the grounds of their philosophical complexity. Unamuno's plays are, using Ganivet's expression to describe Ibsen's works, *intellectual theatre* that early-twentieth-century Spaniards were disinclined to understand and appreciate. Indeed, from the 1890s to the 1920s, the theatre in Spain was dominated by the plays in verse by Francisco Villaespesa and Eduardo Marquina and by the comic plays by Pedro Muñoz Seca, Carlos Arniches and the Bothers Álvarez Quintero. These playwrights deserve merit for their innovatory form, e.g. Arniches's tragic-comic *tragedia grotesca*, and Muñoz Seca's comedy sub-genre called *astracán*; yet their plays are very far from the artistic complexity of Ibsen and Strindberg. Not until later, mostly in the 1930s, did a group of playwrights introduce in Spain a new aesthetics, amongst whom Lorca has achieved greater international status. In the three first decades of the twentieth century Unamuno was, alongside Azorín, Ramón Gómez de la Serna and Jacinto Grau, one of the foremost innovators of Spanish theatre; unfortunately, so radically idiosyncratic and innovatory were his plays that they were as sidelined as Ibsen's. An explanation to the commercial failure of both Ibsen and Unamuno can be found in some of Unamuno's own articles on Spanish theatre.

Unamuno mentioned Ibsen in many of his works and extolled him enthusiastically in three particular articles: "Teatro de teatro" (1899) (Theatre of Theatre), "Ibsen y Kierkegaard" (1907), and "De vuelta al teatro" (1913) (Back in the theatre). In "Theatre of Theatre" Unamuno strongly criticises the Spanish playwrights of the day. The expression *theatre of theatre* refers to the inability of Spanish playwrights to break through literary conventions—their theatre is always the same theatre, or *theatre of theatre*. Unamuno disapproves of the Spanish rejection of the new forms of theatre developed in the rest of Europe. He praises Spanish Baroque theatre as being genuinely Spanish, for its passionate and cogent treatment of popular themes, for example in Calderón's *La vida es sueño* (Life is a Dream). This reference to Calderón is most interesting, since the Modernist metatheatre, as defined by Lionel Abel (105), was based on the classic idea of the *theatrum mundi* and also on the Calderonian principle of life being a dream. Unamuno read Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) carefully and dreams soon became a prominent

element in his novels, most clearly in *Amor y pedagogía* (1902) (Love and Pedagogy) and *Niebla* (1914) (Mist). And although in 1899, by the time he wrote and published “Theatre of Theatre” he might not have read Freud, and Strindberg had not yet written *Till Damaskus* (I and II, 1898) and *The Dream Play* (1901), Unamuno acknowledges Calderón’s *Life is a Dream* as a classic play whose originality could help to revitalise Spanish theatre. Unamuno also understood that Ibsen was the world-leading playwright who could best inspire Spanish authors. His assessment of Ibsen differs completely from Pardo Bazán’s and Ganivet’s. Unamuno praises the literature of the Spanish Golden Age, extolling Cervantes the novelist, Calderón the playwright and St John of the Cross the poet, and declares that the artistic power of their literature is matched by Ibsen alone. “Si no se llega a entender y a sentir aquí *Brand* ... es que ha muerto la inspiración de *La vida es sueño*. Y entonces seguiremos condenados a teatro de teatro,” he writes (501) (If here [in Spain] we fail to understand and to appreciate *Brand* ... then that would mean that the inspiration from *Life is a Dream* is dead. If this be so, we will continue to be doomed with theatre of theatre).

The article “Ibsen and Kierkegaard” has often been cited in studies of Kierkegaard’s influence on Unamuno. However, “Ibsen and Kierkegaard” focuses mostly on Ibsen’s theatre. Unamuno praises Ibsen’s subtle treatment of sexuality, and reproaches Spanish audiences because they cannot understand this sophisticated approach to love conflicts, used as they were to the explicitly inelegant presentation of sex in the Spanish plays of the day. Unamuno clearly understands the intricacy of Ibsen’s plays is a high form of what Meateerlink—speaking about his own theatre—called the *dialogue du second degré*. In Spain, where explicitness impregnated most plays, “la ética ibseniana tiene que ser, por fuerza, un misterio indescribable” (51) (Ibsenian ethics will necessarily be an unfathomable mystery), Unamuno writes. He does not specify what he means by *Ibsenian ethics*, other than the subtlety that runs counter to the explicitness of Spanish plays. He also refers to “la moral heroica de la dramaturgia ibseniana” (53) (the heroic moral of Ibsenian theatre), which he describes as a result of Ibsen’s own sense of isolation during his years abroad following *Ghosts* and *A Doll’s House*. Unamuno thus believes that Ibsen’s life and individualism shaped his heroes, their moral strength to confront society, and their capacity to grow stronger by standing on their own.

Ibsen’s heroic moral becomes, for Unamuno, the very essence of the new form of theatre that Spain needed. In Unamuno’s view, the technique is entirely

superfluous and irrelevant, whereas Ibsenian heroism should inspire all Spanish playwrights. He writes, “No he de hablar de su estilo, pues, ni de su técnica. No sé qué tal es su técnica teatral ni me importa saberlo. La técnica teatral y todo ese galimatías de si un asunto es o no dramatizable se reduce a la mezquindad de buscar el cobro de trimestres” (I will not speak here about his [Ibsen’s] style nor about his technique. I do not know which technique his will be and I do not care to know. Theatrical technique and all that fuzz about whether a plot can be dramatised or not, is simply down to the pettiness of those who only worry about the economic profits). In sum, Unamuno’s “Ibsen and Kierkegaard” is a strong criticism of Spanish playwrights and an appraisal of Ibsen’s individualism and social commitment. Unamuno condemns the Spanish public for failing to appreciate Ibsen, largely because the pauperism of the Spanish theatre is such that, he writes, “Si un drama de Ibsen gustase al público de nuestro teatro, empezaría a dudar de su excelencia” (53) (If a play by Ibsen found successful in Spain, then I would have to put its value into question).

In “Back to the Theatre” Unamuno observes that the vast majority of Spaniards who attended a performance of *Ghost* were only interested in the last scene, in which Oswald suffers an attack. He condemns the fact that Spaniards value the play only in terms of how dramatically the actor playing Oswald performs the last scene. Conversely, Unamuno argues that the actual tragedy of the play, the psychological plight that readers/audiences should appreciate, lies in Mrs. Alving’s ordeal, namely her loveless life and ultimate discovery that his son has succumbed to the same sexual vices as his father did. If one reads “Back to the Theatre” in the light of Pardo Bazán’s reservations on Scandinavian playwrights, Unamuno’s article explains the extent to which Ibsen was misunderstood in Spain.

There is a clear correlation between the poor reception of Ibsen’s and Unamuno’s plays in Spain, and in many instances, Unamuno’s praise of Ibsen may be understood as a justification of his own commercial failure as a playwright. Indeed a close reading of some of Unamuno’s plays reveals Ibsen’s direct influence on them. This influence is especially clear in Unamuno’s first play *La esfinge* (1898) (*The Sphinx*), but can also be perceived in *El pasado que vuelve* (1910) (*The Returning Past*) and in his later play *El otro* (1926) (*The Other*).

The Sphinx draws on Unamuno’s own personal tragedy. He lost his Christian faith in his first year as an undergraduate student at the University of Madrid.

From 1894 to 1897, he was a member of the Spanish Socialist Party. In 1897, however, he suffered a severe depression during which he allegedly escaped to the solitude of a convent, where he remained for three days. Ever since approximately 1895 he had demonstrated a consistent disagreement with the positivist bias of the socialist militants (cf. Ardila, “Unamuno y el regeneracionismo”). By the time he wrote *The Sphinx* in 1898, he had grown disillusioned with and critical of political parties and political life. *The Sphinx* is autobiographical in many senses—it tells the story of Ángel, a revolutionary (i.e., left-wing) leader, who decides to give up his political career and retire to the countryside in order to find happiness in spiritual life. In order to argue in favour of the spiritual superiority of religion over politics, Unamuno establishes dichotomies such as city-village and revolution-religion. Ángel is adamant that true happiness is only to be found in the village where he grew up, and his dearest memories are those of the village priest, in whom he perceived a “espíritu sereno” (141) (serene spirit) and whom he remembers in a room, with his books and a crucifix on the wall. Ángel’s spiritual determination defies the anti-religious principles of the left-wing politicians of the time and mirrors Unamuno’s own disregard for his previous political involvement in the Socialist Party. The most obvious similitude with *An Enemy of the People* is the social isolation of the main character—Dr. Stockmann stands alone as he perseveres in speaking the truth against the fallacious politicians and journalists; Ángel stands alone because he realises the futility of politics and of the people’s revolution. In both plays, society and politicians are presented as being biased and selfish.

The two protagonists in *The Sphinx* are based on two of Ibsen’s characters. Ángel’s confrontation with the people of his town emulates Dr. Stockmann’s—they both discover that, in Stockmann’s words, “all our spiritual sources are polluted and that our whole civil community is built over a cesspool of lies” (73). The main difference between these two characters lies in the fact that Stockmann undergoes a learning process after which he arrives at the above conclusion, whereas Ángel does not. The fulcrum of *An Enemy of the People* is Stockmann’s discovery of the true colours of politicians and journalists, and of the shortfalls of democracy. Ángel, however, has already completed this learning process when the play starts, and *The Sphinx* centres upon the conflicts that his spiritual awakening causes. In so doing, Unamuno borrows the Stockmannian character in order to explore further the conflicts of Stockmann’s disillusion with politics. *The Sphinx* is in many ways a play

concerned with Ángel's inner self. At a moment when Unamuno himself had, as a result of his 1897 crisis, made the same realisations as Stockman with regards to politics and spirituality, he takes the Ibsenian character in order to explore his own personal drama. One might argue that Ángel lacks the psychological development of Stockmann; however, this is so because Unamuno uses the Ibsenian character in order to develop his own personal views.

Ángel's frustration with the hypocrisy of politicians is in many instances Ibsenian, e.g. when Ángel claims, "Mucho de predicar tolerancia, sinceridad, libertad; pero cuando alguien quiere ser de veras sincero y libre, contra él todos" (112) (Everyone preaches us to be tolerant and truthful, in the name of liberty; but when anyone wants to be truly truthful and free, everyone goes against him). Both Stockmann and Ángel confront their community. In act IV Stockmann speaks to the people of his town in a public meeting organised to discuss his findings concerning the pollution of the city water. In Act V his house windows have been stoned. In Act III, scene 5 of *The Sphinx*, a group of people comes to Ángel's house in the country to demonstrate against his act of treason. Like Stockmann in Ibsen's play, Ángel speaks to them and explains in conciliatory terms the reasons for his political apostasy. The denouement differs in both plays—Stockmann has learnt that he is happy with his family and away from society, whereas Ángel, who had learnt this at the very outset of the play, is shot by one of the rioters. Unamuno takes the conflict to the most dramatic extremes in order to show the hatred imbued in political life and the moral corruption of society. Ángel's strength throughout the play reflects the Ibsenian maxim, expressed by Stockmann in his last intervention, "that the strongest man in the world is the man who stands alone" (106).

Ángel's wife—named Eufemia—was also inspired by Ibsenian characters. Eufemia once had a relationship with Eusebio, whom she left before marrying Ángel. Similarly, Hedda Gabler was in a relationship with Ejlert Løvborg before she married Jørgen Tesman. Ejlert is in many ways the antithesis of Jørgen—he is the most obvious competitor for the university position Jørgen hopes to win, and he is also a potential lover for Hedda. Eusebio, however, does not pose any threats to Ángel, who is a much more accomplished man and who is no longer interested in a career in politics. Eusebio was possibly inspired by Ejlert, but he is a character whose psychology Unamuno refuses to develop, which shows his often gratuitous reliance on Ibsenian characters. In *The Sphinx* Ramona is Eufemia's aunt, who Unamuno uses to confront Ángel's

ideas and to increase the tension between Ángel and Eufemia. Similarly in *Hedda Gabler*, Jørgen's aunt is teased by Hedda, causing the tension between Hedda and Jørgen to mount.

Nora Helmer provided Unamuno with the inspiration for Eufemia. In *A Doll's House*, Nora's ambition is to achieve social equality to men. Ibsen creates an extraordinary psychological tension in Nora's negotiations with Krogstad—his creditor—whilst she also endeavours at exerting manly-like power over others (e.g., over Kristine) and at making her husband happy. When her husband—called Torvald—rebukes her financial initiative, Nora understands that the only way to be respected by men is to rebel; she accordingly leaves Torvald and their children. Eufemia is also a strong independent female character who wishes to and seeks to influence others, and who will ultimately leave her husband. The difference between Nora and Eufemia is—like that between Stockmann and Ángel—that Eufemia's psychology has already been formed at the start of *The Sphinx*. Whilst *A Doll's House* centres upon Nora's identity crisis, *The Sphinx* is about Ángel's, and Eufemia is merely a secondary character. The Ibsenian inspiration for Eufemia becomes clearer when she speaks to Ángel and rebukes him because he treats her as if she was a *doll*; “Ángel, te dejo. Te haces el loco para mortificarme con el desdén que siempre me has profesado por ser yo mujer y nada más que eso. La esposa del genio debe ser una muñeca, ¿no es eso? Desahogas en mí tu soberbia herida... Represento a tus ojos la concesión que al instinto animal puede tu espíritu privilegiado... Así sois los hombres” (117) (Ángel, I am leaving you. You torment me despising me as you always have, just because I am a woman, only a woman. The wife of a genius must be a doll, mustn't she? You only use me to show your pride... For you I am only the object that nature has granted your superior spirit. This is what all men are like). Eufemia's vindications for gender equality only add to Ángel's sorrows and to his isolation from society. With Eufemia, Unamuno chose an Ibsenian character to complement his Ibsenian play.

In sum, both *The Sphinx* and *An Enemy of the People* were written as a reaction against politics and politicians. They both reach their climaxes in the public meeting and the demonstration, when the main characters speak to their fellow citizens. Unamuno's protagonists are patently Ibsenian, and *The Sphinx* is the most Ibsenian of Unamuno's plays. The reasons why Unamuno resorted to Ibsen when he wrote his first play are threefold. Firstly, Ibsen provided, as Unamuno stressed in his articles on Spanish theatre, a new way to renovate the

old aesthetics of European theatre. Secondly, Ibsen's heroic moral coincided with the purpose that Unamuno assigned to theatre, namely to reflect the social commitment of the playwright. Thirdly, in 1898 (and afterwards) Unamuno's social ideas largely coincided with Ibsen's. Yet the most fascinating aspect about Ibsen's influence is, perhaps, that Unamuno's political attitude throughout his life was consistently and strongly Ibsenian insofar as he, as Stockmann declares, stubbornly believed that "the majority is never right" (76), opposed the authorities when he thought they were acting wrongly—Stockmann denounces "the colossal stupidity of the authorities" (74)—, remained an independent thinker who, like Stockmann, feels "strongest ... when he stands alone" (106), and always fought to proclaim the truth—"All my fellow citizens will hear the voice of truth!" (65) claims Stockmann.⁹ Indeed, Unamuno sought inspiration from Ibsen's plays because his own social ideology largely coincided with Ibsen's. He may be classed alongside those playwrights who followed what Brecht termed "the great attempts to give the problems of the age a theatrical structure" (cited in Fletcher and McFarlane 502), namely Gorky, Hauptmann, Shaw, Wedekind, Kaiser and O'Neill. Whilst Wedekind claimed himself to be Gyntian, and Hauptmann to be Brandian, Unamuno, in *The Sphinx* and also throughout his life and as a political journalist, was Stockmannian.

The Returning Past was published in 1910. The subject matter of this play was inspired by Ibsen's *Ghosts*—both plays are about children whose moral values are biologically determined by those of their parents. *The Returning Past* is the story of Víctor—a Machiavellian financier who has prospered professionally—,

⁹ Unamuno always opposed Spanish politicians. His confrontations with them became louder by the end of his life. Unamuno openly and bitterly criticised the dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera (1923-30) and was forced to exile. When Primo de Rivera understood that Unamuno's exile damaged the international reputation on his regime, he issued a pardon, which Unamuno rejected. Although Unamuno was acclaimed as the symbol of the Republic when the Second Republic was declared in 1931, he soon after opposed left-wing Republicans. He supported the right-wing uprising in July 1936; yet he opposed the rebels in October 1936 after a dialectic confrontation with General Millán Astray at a ceremony in the University of Salamanca. The Republican government ceased him as Vice-Chancellor of the University in July on the grounds of his support of the uprising; and the University senatus voted to cease him in October on the grounds of his criticism of the new government. Such variations in his political sympathies resulted from his stubborn commitment to speaking the truth. In 1930s Spain, where political radicalism was rampant, Unamuno's attitude is understandable given his determination to speak the truth. The most complete biography of Unamuno is Rabaté and Rabaté's; the biography by Salcedo is still illuminating.

his son and his grandson. His son Federico abhors Víctor's extreme egotism, and leaves home in order to fight in a revolution. Yet Federico's son, also called Víctor, will follow in the footsteps of his grandfather. These generational conflicts allow Unamuno to build a tense plot. The problem lies in the continuity of life in one's offspring, a theory that Unamuno considered in his endeavours at understanding death. By 1910, determinism was a Naturalist theme that Modernists largely rejected—e.g., Baroja in *La casa de Aizgorri* (1900) (The House of Aizgorri). Unamuno, however, treats the theme of *Ghosts*, a play that he knew well. In his article "Back to the Theatre," he pointed out that the accepted Spanish translation of *Ghosts*, i.e. "los espectros," was not accurate enough, and that the best rendering would be "los aparecidos" (513).¹⁰ The expression "los aparecidos" correctly conveys the meaning given by Mrs. Alving in the play and suggests that the two youngsters who are starting a sexual relationship are not Oswald and Regine, but Captain Alving and Regina's mother, who have *returned* in their children. The same pattern is repeated in *The Returning Past*, where Víctor the grandfather returns in Víctor the grandchild. This is declared by the grandfather at the end of the play, when he tells his grandson: "¡Ah! ¡Ah! Resucité..., resucité... Sí, eres yo, eres yo" (453) (Ah! Ah! I have returned to life..., I have returned to life... Yes, you are me, you are me). The play closes with the grandfather telling his son that the son will die whereas he will live on in his grandchild: "¡Morirás sólo [sic] ... y yo viviré, viviré..., viviré!" (462) (You will die on your own! ... and I will live, live... I will live!). Although the plot of *The Returning Past* differs from that of *Ghosts*, Unamuno clearly borrowed the main idea from Ibsen.

Ghosts also influenced *The Other*, an intense drama exploring the identity of the self, and one of Unamuno's best plays. *The Other* is Ibsenian not in its themes but in its technique. *Ghosts* begins after Captain Alving's death, when Mrs. Alving has everything ready to open an orphanage to honour his memory. The reader/audience is given the impression that Captain Alving was a model citizen and Mrs. Alving was a devoted widow who loved her husband. However, as the play progresses, Ibsen reveals the actual truth by means of the conversations between Mrs. Alving and Pastor Manders. Captain Alving was a womaniser and Mrs. Alving's servant Regine is the daughter of Alving and their

¹⁰ "Espectros" are "ghosts" or "phantoms"; conversely, "aparecidos" are spirits who return. Unamuno's suggestion is correct and closer to the Norwegian original *gengangere*, and reflects the fact that when Mrs. Alving calls Oswald and Regine "ghosts" she is referring to his husband and Regina's mother.

former servant girl. Mrs. Alving's life was so miserable that she was once determined to leave her husband and run into the man she truly loved, Pastor Manders. However, Manders convinced her to abide by social conventions and remain with her husband. Ibsen shows that the truth in the eyes of society is not the actual truth. There is little action in *Ghosts*, and the past is revealed in intense dramatic dialogues. Similarly, *The Other* opens with Ernesto declaring "aquí hay un misterio" (57) (we have a mystery here). The mystery, or the truth, will be revealed in Ibsenian fashion—by means of intense dialogues. *The Other* begins with Cosme having turned insane. The reader will know that Cosme and his twin sibling Damián both fell in love with Laura. She chose Cosme; and Damián then married Damiana. Cosme had been acting strangely since the day Laura returned home after a trip. The dialogues progressively reveal that Cosme killed Damián one day when Damián, still in love with Laura, confronted him, and also that Laura and Damiana loved them both. At the end of the play, however, the reader cannot be sure as to who the main character is—he could be Cosme but he could also be Damián. Both Laura and Damiana are Ibsenian characters based on Nora—whilst they first appear as doting obeying wives, they soon voice their strong views and their passionate feelings.

Ibsen's themes also found their way into Unamuno's fiction. *San Manuel Bueno, mártir* (1931) (St. Manuel the Good, martyr) is a novel about the priest of a little village in Northern Spain, who, the narrator suggests, did not believe in eternal life and yet preached his congregation to be happy in the certainty that an honest life will be rewarded with a place in Heaven. *St Manuel* is a very sophisticated narration, and critics have not yet agreed on whether the main character did actually believe in eternal life or whether his hypothetical doubts have been wrongly deduced by the unreliable narrator. Nonetheless, this is a novel about ideals and lies, about the impact that ideals have on people's daily life and happiness. The novel includes a character—named Lázaro—with strong Marxist ideals, whom St Manuel talks out of social reform and who will finally join the priest in his apostolic social mission. When Lázaro suggests to St Manuel that they should establish a Catholic union of workers, the priest replies, "Sí, ya sé que uno de esos caudillos de la que llaman la revolución social ha dicho que la religión es el opio del pueblo. Opio..., opio... Opio, sí. Démosle opio, y que duerma y que sueñe" (152) (Yes I know that one of those political leaders of the so-called social revolution, has said that religion is opium for the people. Opium..., opium..., opium, yes. Let us give opium to

the people, so that they sleep and dream). *St Manuel* is a very ambiguous text that some critics (e.g. Zahareas) have read it as a Marxist admonition of religion, whereas others (e.g. Longhurst; Ardila, “Amor...”) have sustained that St Manuel did believe in eternal life, but the narrator distorted her narration because she was in love with him. Recently, Mancing has suggested that St Manuel reflects the demeanour of authoritarian politicians who force people to believe in certain ideas. Mancing argues that St Manuel is guilty of lying to his grey to make them happy. Whichever interpretation one favours, this novel poses the dichotomy ideals-lies at a time when extremist politics and radicalism were on the rise in Spain. This is the same moral problem Ibsen treated in *The Wild Duck*.

In *The Wild Duck*, Gregers Werle’s father—called Haakon Werle—is a womaniser who seduced a servant named Gina and subsequently managed to make Hjalmer Ekdal marry her. Hjalmer’s father was a businessman and an associate of Haakon Werle; old Ekdal went bankrupt whereas Werle maintained his wealth. The characters will learn that Gina’s daughter—named Hedvig—was actually fathered by Haakon Werle. Gregers is determined to reveal to Hjalmer the truth about his marriage, because only the truth, he believes, brings true happiness. However, Gregers’s high ideals of truth prompt a tragedy—Hjalmer ignores Hedvig, and Gregers presses Hedvig to believe that only by sacrificing the wild duck she loves but his father loathes she will regain his love. Hedvig kills herself instead. The play is interspersed with allusions to the power of ideals and lies and how these become a surrogate truth. After Gregers has led Hjalmar and Gina to discuss the circumstances of her marriage, he preaches them; “Now that you have laid bare your souls—this exchange on which you can now build a completely new mode of life—a way of living together in truth, free of deception...” (184). Gregers wishes to right the wrongs of his father by revealing the truth in order to make Hjalmer’s marriage happy; “I want to lay the foundation of a true marriage” (185), he claims. However, other characters remind the reader/audience that Gregers is wrong and that his obsession to reveal the bare truth harmful to others. After Gregers has proclaimed his intention to lay the foundation of a true marriage, Relling asks him ironically, “how many true marriages have you seen in your life?” (185) to which Gregers replies, “I hardly think I’ve seen a single one” (185). Later on, Gregers and Relling converse again and the latter explains the importance of lies. Relling claims, “You see, the life-lie is the stimulating principle” (204), and later on, “Take the life-lie principle from the average man

and straight away you take away his happiness” (205). The play closes with a dialogue between Relling and Gregers, after Hedvig’s suicide, where Relling summarises the morale of the play, “Oh, life wouldn’t be too bad if only these blessed people who come canvassing their ideals round everybody’s door would leave us poor souls in peace” (220), i.e. happiness is not necessarily to be found in the truth, and lies can make people truly happy. This thesis is the same as that in *St Manuel*, where the villagers live a truly happy life believing in eternal life. Lázaro’s attitude and ideals are the same as Gregers’s—he seeks to reveal the truth to the villagers. Unamuno’s novel reminds of Antonio Fogazzaro’s *Il Santo* (1905), where the Benedictine monk Piero Maironi perseveres in his faith whilst reason constantly reminds him that faith is scientifically unsubstantiated. However, the complexities of Unamuno’s ambiguous treatment of this matter, his explicit allusion to the opium for the people, the foil ideals-lies incarnated in Lázaro-Manuel (compared to Gregers-Relling), and his belief in lies as providers of happiness, all point clearly to the influence of *The Wild Duck*.

Not only can Ibsen’s influence be found in Unamuno’s earliest plays; indeed it extends to *The Other* and even to Unamuno’s prose, as it is clear in *St Manuel*. It can therefore be said that a significant number of Unamuno’s works were inspired by Ibsen’s plays, and Ibsen’s social and philosophical thought can easily be detected in Unamuno’s political life. Unamuno opposed the monolithic truth imposed by the late-nineteenth-century positivist authors, and refused to accept that there is only one truth. In *The Wild Duck* Gregers cannot rationalise why Old Ekdal spends his time shooting rabbits and poultry in the loft; yet Relling explains Old Ekdal’s own perception of reality,

Well, what do you think? Him, the great bear-hunter, shooting rabbits there in the loft? There isn’t a happier sportsman in the world than that old man when he gets a chance of raking round in there among all the rubbish. He’s collected up four or five withered old Christmas trees, and there is no difference for him between them and the whole tremendous living forest of Høidal. The cocks and the hens are the game birds in the tree tops; and the rabbits hopping about the floor, they are the bears that this intrepid he-man goes in pursuit of (204).

Unamuno’s conception of the truth being ambiguous and amenable to individual interpretations marked his political life. Like Ibsen, he embarked on a mission to unmask the lies and abuses from politicians. Still today, the façade

of the Unamuno Museum in Salamanca reads the legend “La verdad antes que la paz” (truth before peace), as Unamuno’s social and political credo. Throughout his intense political life Unamuno conducted himself in a most Stockmannian fashion.

Unamuno owned a copy of Knut Hamsun’s *Hunger*, the second edition of 1899 distributed in 1904 in Denmark by Copenhagen publisher Gyndendal (Ardila, “Unamuno, el monólogo...”).¹¹ Unamuno probably learnt about Hamsun in Ganivet’s articles on Nordic writers. Ganivet gave a very favourable opinion of Hamsun, whom he praised as “el más fecundo y original entre los escritores nuevos” (273) (the most original of new authors) and classed him alongside Jaeger and Finne as “resueltamente decadente” (273) (truly decadent). On the decadentism of Scandinavian literature Ganivet claimed that “Hay en el decadentismo un lado bueno, el de ser una protesta contra el positivismo dominante” (276) (there is something good about decadentism—it is a reaction against the prevailing positivism). Ganivet extols Hamsun’s psychological treatment of characters that he compares to Dostoyevsky. In 1896, date of the publication of Ganivet’s articles in *El Defensor de Granada*, or in 1905 when they were published as *Men of the North*, Ganivet’s description of Hamsun would have been decidedly appealing to Unamuno, who by 1897 was openly rejecting positivism—Hamsun was the best of the new authors and one of the decadentists moving away from positivism. Ganivet goes on to describe the cover of the first edition of *Hunger*: “En *Sult (Hambre)* hay, sobre el negro fondo de la cubierta, un esqueleto humano; y por si no bastara pasan, casi volando, de derecha a izquierda, un sinfín de perros famélicos que van en busca de una tajada, que por lo visto no existe en el mundo” (274) (on the cover of *Sult—Hunger*—there is a human skeleton on a dark background; as if this was not enough, countless starving dogs walk past, almost flying, from right to left, in search of a bit of something that, allegedly, is not to be found in the world). His assessment of Hamsun’s anti-positivist bias and psychological depth, and his description of *Hunger* as one of his most dramatic works, may have acted as a stimulus for Unamuno to purchase his copy of *Hunger*.

Unamuno’s copy of *Hunger* is extant in the Unamuno Museum; the annotations he made in the margins provide clear and irrefutable evidence that he read it with great attention. In addition to lexical glosses, in the blank page at the end of the volume Unamuno wrote the following numbers, 127 – 76 –

¹¹ Chabrán provides a list of the Scandinavian books owned by Unamuno.

99 – 108 – 114 – 152 – 169 – 201 — 205 – 213. These are the pages with the passages that he found of particular interest to him, which he also marked with a vertical line on each of those pages. The common denominator to all these passages is that they are inwardly descriptions of the character's psychological ordeal. Some are interior monologues (76, 99, 201, 205, 213), one is an example of stream of consciousness (127), another presents the fusion of consciousness and unconsciousness (169), another refers to unconscious thinking (108), and another describes how the main character unconsciously chews wood (114).¹² It is therefore clear that Unamuno noticed and appreciated Hamsun's narrative introversion, particularly his masterly use of interior monologue and stream of consciousness. Unamuno had experienced with unconsciousness, interior monologue and stream of consciousness in his second novel *Love and Pedagogy*, but *Hunger* had a direct bearing on *Mist*. Unamuno had learnt about the stream of consciousness in William James's *The Principles of Psychology* (1890). In 1901 he used the English term *stream of consciousness* in an article he published in the journal *La Lectura*; writing about Rubén Darío, Unamuno states that in Darío's literature "Cuesta descubrir [...] la famosa corriente o flujo continuo de James (the stream of consciousness)" (it is difficult to find ... James's famous continuous stream or flux [the stream of consciousness]) (cited in Vande Berg 753).

Unamuno's first novel, entitled *Paz en la Guerra* (Peace in War), was published in 1897. It is a historical novel where the author recreated his childhood memories of the siege of Bilbao in one of the Spanish nineteenth-century civil wars known as the Carlist Wars. In *Love and Pedagogy*, however, Unamuno sought to explore and to open up new ways in prose fiction. This novel tells the story of Avito Carrascal, a man obsessed with science who decides to marry and have a child whom he will educate to become a great scholar. Carrascal's positivist bias prevent him from understanding the most basic things in life, such as love. His blind obsession with sciences causes incommunication between himself and his wife Marina and his son Apolodoro, who commits suicide when his girlfriend leaves him for a more mundane man. In *Love and Pedagogy* Unamuno explores the boundaries of reality particularly in the relations between reality and dreams, but also in the unconscious and semi-conscious states of mind. This novel contains the first instance of stream

¹² A detailed analysis of Unamuno's reading of *Hunger* can be found in Ardila ("Unamuno, el monólogo...").

of consciousness in Spanish literature, when Apolodoro, still a boy, thinks and says to himself,

Y por el espíritu del niño desfila en pelotón: “¿Por qué caen las piedras, Apolodoro?, ¿por qué a mayor ángulo se opone mayor lado? ¿Apolodoro... boloro... boloriche...! ¿Apolo... bolo! ¿Ese Ramiro me las tiene que pagar...! Luis, Luis, mi Luis, Luisito... santificado sea tu nombre... no le digas nada, ¿has oído? ¿Por qué me llamará mamá Luis?... El oso hormiguero tiene la lengua así... ¡Pobre conejillo!, ¡pobre conejillo! (109).

(And in the child's spirit, the ideas come together: why do stones fall? why a wider angle goes with a wider side? Apolodoro... boloro... boloriche! Apolo... bolo! Ramiro will pay for this! Luis, Luis, my Luis, little Luis... your name... don't tell him anything? Did you hear? Why does mum call me Luis?... the bear has a strange tongue... Poor little bunny! Poor little bunny!).

In this passage, Unamuno presents Apolodoro's thoughts as they flow unexpectedly from his unconsciousness—Apolodoro is thinking about the law of gravity and the laws of geometry, which his father has recently taught him, when a stream of thoughts about the names he is called at school emerge from his unconsciousness; he then remembers that his mother calls him Luis and Luisito and begs him not to tell his father, and returns to his thoughts about the science lessons; but soon from his unconsciousness comes the image of the bunny that a friend of his father was experimenting on in a laboratory. Unamuno's achievement is simply sensational—he is able to describe concisely the effects of unconsciousness on the thoughts of his character. Nonetheless, interior monologue and stream of consciousness passages in *Amor y pedagogía* are short. In *Hunger*, however, Unamuno found long passages where the main character falls into unconscious states provoked by his physical weakness. Whereas in *Love and Pedagogy* the unconscious emerges sporadically interjecting with consciousness, in *Hunger* the unconscious takes over long parts of the narration. In Unamuno's next novel, *Mist*, the interior monologue and the stream of consciousness take a much larger proportion of the text than they had in *Love and Pedagogy*—Anne Marie Øveraas (21) has estimated that the main character's interior monologues in *Mist* amount to 20 per cent of the text.

This radical improvement in Unamuno's use of stream of consciousness came after his reading of *Hunger*, where he noted the use of interior monologue and stream of consciousness. Indeed, in *Hunger* Unamuno learnt how to integrate the unconscious inner world of characters into the external reality. This is most evident in the way in which he presents his main character lost in thoughts before he suddenly returns to reality. On page 108 of his copy of *Hunger*, Unamuno drew a vertical line to highlight this passage,

Jeg var uden at vide det paa Vejen hjem.
Jeg sulted svare, og jeg fandt mig paa Gaden en Træspån at tygge paa.
Det hjalp. At jeg dog ikke havde tænkt paa det før!

(Without realising, I made my way home.
I was very hungry, and I picked up a chip from the street and started
chewing it. I hadn't thought about that before!)

The act of walking without thinking, when the character is completely lost in thoughts, also happens in the first chapter of *Mist*: "En esto pasó por la calle no un perro, sino una garrida moza, y tras de sus ojos se fue, como imantado y sin darse de ello cuenta, Augusto" (110) (and not a dog but a beautiful girl walked by and Augusto followed her eyes, as if he was magnetised to them, and without realising what he was doing). In *Hunger* and *Mist*, both characters perform the action of walking whilst they are immersed in deep thoughts. Unamuno noticed the same unconscious state on page 169 of *Hunger*:

Jeg forsøgte atter at ryste mig op af denne forunderlige Døs, der gled mig gennem alle Lemmer som en Taage; jeg rejste mig overende, banked mig med flad Haand over Knæerne, hosted saa haardt, som mit Bryst tillod, — og jeg faldt tilbage paany. Intet hjalp; jeg døde hjælpeløst hen med aabne Øjne, stirrende ret op i Taget. Tilsidst stak jeg Pegefingern i Munden og gav mig til at patte paa den. Der begyndte at røre sig noget i min Hjærne, en Tanke, der roded sig frem derinde, et splittergalt Paafund: Hvad om jeg bed til? Og uden et Øjeblik Betænkning kneb jeg Øjnene i og slog Tænderne sammen.

Jeg sprang op. Endelig var jeg bleven vaagen. Der pibled lidt Blod ud af Fingeren, og jeg slikked det af efterhvert.

(I tried, once more, to wake up from this drowsiness, that took over, like Mist, all my body. I sat down and tapped my knees with the palms

of my hands and I coughed as vehemently as I could. But I fell again. Nothing worked; I was falling with my eyes open whilst I looked at the ceiling. I put my finger in my mouth and sucked it. Something started in my brain, something that struggled to reveal itself. What if I bite it? And without hesitating I closed my eyes firmly and bit.

I jumped up. I was at last awoken. A bit of blood came from my finger and I licked it.)

There are two passages in *Mist* where Augusto is lost in thoughts and suddenly comes back to reality. In the first of these passages he is thinking about the girl and unconsciously hugging the air; moments after, the narrator explains, the smile from the door-keeper “Le volvió a la realidad” (130) (brought him back to reality). In the second passage, Augusto is waiting to be introduced to the girl. When she enters the room, he falls “absorto en la misteriosa luz espiritual, que de aquellos ojos irradiaba” (144) (absent in the mysterious spiritual light emanating from her eyes), until the girl’s aunt introduces him to her and “volvió en sí y se puso en pie procurando sonreír” (144) (he came round, stood up and tried to smile). Like Hamsun in *Hunger*, Unamuno in *Mist* distinguishes conscious states from unconscious states, and places his character in the unconscious to bring him back to the conscious reality.

Hamsun’s influence extended beyond *Mist*. In 1917 Unamuno published his novel *Abel Sánchez*, which tells how Joaquín grows dramatically jealous of his best friend Abel. This novel is written as Joaquín’s fictional confession to his daughter. The text is, for most of it, a written monologue where Joaquín describes in great detail his secret drama. The states of unconsciousness and Abel’s dramatic desperation are narrated in the same introverted fashion as *Hunger*. Unamuno recreated the moments in *Hunger* when the character is tormented in the darkness of the night and struggling to fall sleep;

Pasé una noche terrible ... volviéndome a un lado y otro de la cama, mordiéndome a ratos la almohada, levantándome a beber agua del jarro del lavabo. Tuve fiebre. A ratos me amodorraba en sueños acerbos. Pensaba matarles y un día mentalmente, como si se tratase de un drama o de una novela que iba componiendo, los detalles de mi sangrienta venganza, y tramaba diálogos con ellos. Parécíame que Helena había querido afrentarme y nada más, que había enamorado a Abel por menosprecio a mí, pero que no podía, montón de carne al espejo, querer a nadie. Y la descaba más que nunca y con más furia que nunca. En alguna de las

interminables modorras de aquella noche me soñé poseyéndola y junto al cuerpo frío e inerte de Abel. Fue una tempestad de malos deseos, de cóleras, de apetitos sucios, de rabia. Con el día y el cansancio de tanto sufrir volvíome la reflexión, comprendí que no tenía derecho alguno a Helena, pero empecé a odiar a Abel con toda mi alma y a proponerme a la vez ocultar ese odio, abonarlo, criarlo, cuidarlo en lo recóndito de las entrañas de mi alma. ¿Odio? Aún no quería darle su nombre, ni quería conocer que nació, predestinado, con su masa y con su semilla. Aquella noche nació al infierno de mi vida (97).

(I spent a most terrible night ... moving incessantly in my bed, sometimes biting my pillow, getting up to drink water from a jar in the bathroom. I had a temperature. Sometimes I had bitter dreams. I thought about killing them, and one day, as if I was planning a drama or a novel, considering all the details of my bloody revenge, thought about the conversations I would have with them. It occurred to me that Helena had purposely sought to offend me, that she had made Abel love her just because she despised me, but that she, a selfish creature, couldn't love anyone. In the neverending drowsiness of that night I dreamed I made love to her, next to Abel's cold body. It was a storm of bad wishes, bitter thoughts, dirty appetite, anger. In the day, with the tiredness I returned to my thoughts, and I understood that I had no rights on Helena, but I started to hate Abel with all my soul and to conceal my hatred, to nurture it, to grow it, to look after it in the recondite corners of my soul. Hatred? I still didn't want to call it so, didn't want to know that I was born, predestined, with the body and the seed of this hatred. That night I was born to hell in my life).

Joaquín's semi-conscious state, half asleep, half awoken, weakened by a temperature, getting up to drink, and tormented by thoughts from his unconsciousness, mirrors the nights in *Hunger*. Like Hamsun, Unamuno presents of the beleaguered life of an individual who struggles with himself. Like in *Hunger*, unconsciousness takes over consciousness, for example when Joaquín prays to the Virgin in front of the picture that Abel painted, "Pero mientras así rezaba, susurrándose en voz baja y como para oírse, quería acallar otra voz más honda, que brotándole de las entrañas le decía: '¡Así se muera! ¡Así te la deje libre!'" (138) (while he was thus praying, whispering very low so that he could hear himself, he tried to silence another voice, a deeper voice that came from the bottom of himself to tell him: 'May Abel die! And when he dies she will be available for you!'). Similarly to *Hunger*, Unamuno deepens into his

character's unconsciousness pushes him to the brink of insanity, "Luché entonces como no he luchado nunca conmigo mismo, con ese hediondo dragón que me ha envenenado y entenebrecido la vida [...] Comprendí que me agitaba bajo las garras de la locura; vi el espectro de la demencia haciendo sombra en mi corazón" (104) (I then fought like I had never had with myself, with that dragon that has poisoned and darkened my life ... I understood I was under the claws of insanity; I saw the shadow of the ghost of dementia over my heart).

Abel Sánchez may ultimately be inspired by the Biblical story of Cain and Abel. Withall, the role of unconsciousness in this novel was clearly influenced by *Hunger*. In *Abel Sánchez* Unamuno emulated Hamsun's technique of narrative introversion which Hamsun himself explained in his article "Fra det ubevidste Sjæleliv" (From the Unconscious Life of the Soul)—to reach the darkest ends of the human mind, exploring the limits of insanity, the nature of hate and love, and the co-existence of unconsciousness with consciousness. As Unamuno declared in the 1928 prologue to *Abel Sánchez* "El público no gusta que se le lleque con el escalpelo a hediondas simas del alma humana" (79) (the readers are not keen on an author who takes them to the foul-smelling depths of the human soul). These words resemble those used by Ganivet to describe Hamsun's novels—"la de conocer la miseria humana" (supra) (to explore the miseries of humans). *Abel Sánchez* is indeed a Hamsunian novel.

The influence of Scandinavian authors on Unamuno was paramount and extends far beyond Kierkegaard. A true assessment of Unamuno's plays needs to take into consideration his wilful emulation of Ibsen's themes and techniques. The introverted narration in *Abel Sánchez*, the persistent use of interior monologues and stream of consciousness in *Mist* and the fusion of unconsciousness with the external reality, all need to be understood under Hamsun's influence. Norwegian authors were, in sum, instrumental in Unamuno's literary development. Most importantly, this influence is testimony to Unamuno's place in the history of European Modernism. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Unamuno's novel writing focused chiefly on the exploration of unconsciousness and how unconsciousness dominated human behaviour. Hamsun provided him with a masterful insight into the unconscious regions of the human mind. Ibsen influenced Unamuno's plays, from *The Sphinx* to *The Other*. Yet the most fascinating aspect of Ibsen's influence on Unamuno lies in the Spaniard's social attitude which, like Ibsen's,

was grounded on the principle of speaking the truth against social and political forces.

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