

THE ANTI-CLERICALISM OF VICENTE BLASCO IBAÑEZ  
IN THREE OF HIS NOVELS

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION. . . . .	1
EL INTRUSO. . . . .	5
ENTRE NARANJOS. . . . .	39
LA CATEDRAL . . . . .	66
CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	102
BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .	107

## ABSTRACT

Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, presents anti-clerical attacks upon the Roman Church in a series of three novels: El Intruso, La Catedral and Entre Naranjos. This thesis is mainly concerned with an analysis of the methods that the author uses to present his anti-clerical ideas. His manipulative processes primarily consist of anti-clerical techniques of devaluation and negation. The author makes some use of his experiences with the Naturalistic school of literature in his descriptions. He emphasizes the negative elements of clericalism. On the other hand, the author enhances the positive values of anti-clericalism as much as possible. He contrasts the negative elements in clericalism and religion with positive elements of anti-clericalism. The Church is shown to consist of only negative values while anti-clericalism is shown to consist of positive values. In this thesis an attempt is made to show just what these anti-clerical methods are, and the manner in which the author uses them.

## INTRODUCTION

Vicente Blasco Ibáñez was born in Valencia the 29th of January, 1867. He was educated in parochial schools and seemingly was destined for the priesthood. By the age of nineteen, he was a confirmed Republican and in constant trouble with the authorities. These difficulties were minimized when he gained success abroad, and also upon his election in Spain as a delegate to the Cortes.

From 1900 to 1905, he wrote a series of social-protest novels, including Entre Naranjos, 1900, La Catedral, 1903, and El Intruso, 1904, which are the three that have been selected for their anti-clerical elements. As Blasco Ibáñez was a Naturalistic author,<sup>1</sup> he used some of the elements of Naturalism in his works, mainly for manipulative purposes in some of the descriptions.

There are differing opinions as to the value of the works of Blasco Ibáñez; some critics rate him quite highly,<sup>2</sup> while others cast all manner of abuse upon his

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1. Ramón Martínez de la Riva, Blasco Ibáñez, su vida, su obra, su muerte, sus mejores páginas (Madrid, 1929), p. 107.

2. Angel del Río, Antología general de la literatura española (New York, 1954), p. 422.

literary efforts.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this thesis, however, is not to evaluate the literary merits of his trilogy of anti-clericalism, but to analyze only the methods of the anti-clerical presentations that they contain.

It is interesting to note that there are only a few references to the fact that Blasco Ibáñez is anti-clerical, and that his trilogy is anti-religious in content. Martínez de la Riva does state that La Catedral is a novel in which the principles of a purely official religion fight against the principles of humanity,<sup>4</sup> and that the purpose of La Catedral and El Intruso is to show the harmful aspects of religion and the need for religious reform.<sup>5</sup>

Charles Pitollet says that the author presents the Jesuits as a militant organization seeking a political role: "me semble incarner un autre aspect de cette même religion, son aspect moderniste, ses prétentions d'Eglise militante,<sup>6</sup> qui, fuyante les cloîtres, se mêle au tumulte de la rue." This idea is important in El Intruso, because the author

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3. José María Carretero, El novelista que vendió a su patria (Madrid, 1924), p. 121.

4. Martínez de la Riva, p. 121.

5. Martínez de la Riva, pp. 240-242.

6. Camille Pitollet, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (Paris, 1926), p. 252.

tries to imply that the Jesuits' militancy destroys them as a Christian organization.

Eduardo Zamacois also writes that El Intruso and La Catedral are basically vehicles for anti-clericalism.<sup>7</sup>

James O. Swain and other critics agree with this statement.<sup>8</sup> I was unable to encounter a single reference to any anti-religious aspect of Entre Naranjos, but I believe that the chapter relating to this novel will satisfactorily prove that it can be analyzed from an anti-clerical point of view, and that one of the purposes of the novel is to express ideas in opposition to the clergy.

The purpose of this thesis is not to attempt to prove the existence of anti-clerical elements in the author's trilogy, but rather to present Blasco Ibáñez' literary approach towards the Church.

Essentially, the specific composition of the techniques that the author uses is the main preoccupation of the thesis. These techniques will be examined principally from the standpoint of their depreciation components. These devaluating components are the polemics, the descriptions, the contrasts, the symbolism, and some other

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7. Eduardo Zamacois, Mis Contemporáneos (Madrid, 1910), p. 51.

8. James O. Swain, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (Knoxville, 1959), pp. 50-51.

minor factors which the author uses in his anti-clerical processes.

The author presents most of his opposition to the Church as negative, but occasionally, some of them are combinations of both positive and negative factors.

As the three works are very similar in style and in the components which are used for clerical attacks, the thesis will be an analysis of each individual work. A structural defect might otherwise be the result if the thesis were to be divided into a series of character studies. So, each of the three works has been considered as a separate entity with the anti-clerical elements being analyzed novel by novel. Within each of the novels, an attempt has been made to integrate all of the anti-clerical factors into a unified form.

The question that this thesis proposes to answer is, how does the author present anti-clericalism in these three novels? Within this question are two others: what are the characteristics of the techniques which he employs, and what are the negative values that these techniques contain?

## EL INTRUSO

El Intruso, 1904, consists of a series of very strong and bitter attacks against the Church in general, and against the Jesuits in particular. El Intruso, anti-clerically, lies between La Catedral, and Entre Naranjos. The anti-clericalism in this novel is of interest as it is fairly easy to define and since the attacks directed toward the Church are of a vicious nature.

Basically, the author uses two principal methods to present his point of view as regards anti-clericalism, and to manipulate his reader towards a favorable concept of anti-clerical contentions. The first and more complex method contains many ramifications and is so construed as to present the Church in as negative a position as possible. This the author does by employing a series of presentations containing negative elements.

These negative elements consist of misrepresentations, iconoclastic presentations, and other devices which tend to manipulate the reader towards a positive concept of anti-clericalism while devaluating the Church in negative presentations.

The second major block of techniques consists of a series of logical, rational, and seemingly irrefutable arguments presented by the author using one of the

protagonists as a vehicle for these contentions. The arguments of the Church are presented in such a way as to be self-depreciating. The Church condemns itself while purporting to defend itself, as the arguments are so construed, that the positive elements contained in the clerical contentions contain negative elements which refute the positive clerical elements. These seemingly positive clerical elements consist of arguments which are futile, biased, lacking in intelligence, and slanted towards negativism rather than towards the positive position which they purport to represent.

The author's purpose in utilizing these techniques is of course to influence the reader towards a general condemnation of the values of the Church and its institutions. The author attempts to manipulate the reader with anti-clerical scenes directed towards the reader's emotions as well as his reasoning processes. These methods are utilized in contrasts to depict the difference between the positive position of anti-clericalism and the negative position of clericalism. Logic is presented as the epitome of anti-clericalism, while ignorance is a dominant feature of clericalism.

Assuming that the Church has some sort of intrinsic value of varying degrees for the reader, the author begins his negation of the values of the Church by destroying the value of her servants, the priests. The

method that the author employs in these character presentations is varied, direct, not very subtle, and attacks the Church in a serious manner.

The author makes use of these negative elements to erode the positive character of the priests along a type of axiological scale of values. The author begins with a minor presentation of a character defect and then carries it out to as complete a negation of the positive elements of the priests as is possible.<sup>1</sup>

The techniques consist of elements designed to stun, repulse, and finally to horrify the reader by attacking the priests with ideas which are the antithesis of a preconceived, impregnated, traditional point of view towards the clergy.<sup>2</sup> The attitude of the priest towards his own faith, the intrinsic value of religion for the priest is written in a manipulative manner by emphasizing a minor aspect of the duties of a priest: "Para él, la religión verdadera no decrecía ni experimentaba quebranto alguno mientras se celebrasen bautizos, casamientos y sobre todo entierros, muchos entierros."<sup>3</sup> The word entierros is emphasized. It is a negative concept, and by emphasizing it

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1. Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, Obras Completas (Madrid, 1961), Vol. I, p. 1120. All subsequent references to this work in this chapter will be labeled Obras.

2. Obras, i, 1120.

3. Obras, i, 1086.

the author implies that this element represents faith, at least for this priest.

What is important to keep in mind in these techniques is that basically they all change a value. Naturally, these value changes are from the positive to the negative. In order to make the passage anti-clerical, the lugubrious aspects of the burial performed are emphasized.

By misrepresenting a purported positive element, the author emotionally manipulates his reader towards a negative reaction: "a misa sólo iban algunas viejas del pueblo. La iglesia estaba siempre vacía, pero el país era muy religioso. La prueba estaba en que él no tenía libre un momento."<sup>4</sup> The author emphasizes the burial aspects of the priest's duties to evoke revulsion and other negative reactions towards the priesthood.

The author makes use of a ridiculous element to emphasize a misplacing of a value. This farcical concept of the end result of life as far as the Church is concerned is not really so dröll as it appears at first glance. The opinion of the priest is an example of humor, but with the serious intention of devaluating the Church.

An example of this humor may be seen in the priest's enthusiasm for his work: "un alto en la marcha

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4. Obras, i, 1086.

era lo único que le hacía perder la calma, -¡Aprisa, hijos míos!- decía a los conductores del cadáver, -que hoy aún me quedan tres-." <sup>5</sup>

Death is the most negative element Blasco Ibáñez uses, and he seeks to link it to the Church. This method is one that the author has in common with the Generation of 1898. Azorín <sup>6</sup> and Pío Baroja <sup>7</sup> also share this trait of linking the Church with death. Blasco Ibáñez repeats this idea several times in El Intruso.

He combines descriptive modifiers with certain nouns to elevate the negative value of the latter. This is one of his more important methods, as these modifiers serve to change both the meaning and the value of the object being described. The actual meaning of the substantive (versículos del oficio de difuntos of the passage quoted below) itself is either harmless or would tend to have a positive value, but when the modifier is added, a shift occurs in the value of the substantive: "repitiendo automáticamente los versículos del oficio de difuntos." <sup>8</sup>

The addition of the modifier, repitiendo automáticamente, changes the whole concept of the burial

5. Obras, i, 1086.

6. José Martínez Ruiz, Don Juan (Madrid, 1962), p. 143.

7. Pío Baroja, La Busca (Barcelona, 1961), p. 79.

8. Obras, i, 1086.

service. The modifiers usually stand in opposition to the object being described and are used to reject the concept of the object that is modified.

When the satire of the author is viewed objectively, the result is anti-clerical. The priest does not mean to say that his faith and death are tied together, but the author implies this. The satire consists of linking together two statements that complement each other in a negative manner. The priest's statement must be misinterpreted in order to make it satirical: "con éste van hoy ocho. Es un pobrecito que ha muerto de la viruela, y le he dejado para lo último. ¡Después dirá usted que la Iglesia no trabaja!"<sup>9</sup>

The author's satire is formed by contrasting two statements which at times are opposites. The result of linking these two opposites together is a negative one for the Church: "yo no voy a privar de un jornal a mis peones después de tantos días de lluvia, en los que no han podido hacer nada. Además, tengo mis contratos con el dueño de la mina."<sup>10</sup>

The use of descriptive modifiers by the author in his condemnations of the Church is useful to form insinuations, allegations, and implications to depreciate clerical values. Minimizing of clerical values is at times accomplished by presenting two concepts. The first is usually

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9. Obras, i, 1086.

10. Obras, i, 1087.

harmless when taken by itself, but when it is contrasted with the other, a negation of any religious value takes place: "¿Dicen que han matado al Maestrico? . . . ¡Vaya un caso! Era un buen muchacho, serio y ahorrador. Este es el mundo . . . ¡A la tarde, entierro! ¡Arre burra!- y se alejó con alegre contoneo, gozoso por la seguridad de que había caído un nuevo trabajo."<sup>11</sup>

This type of satire appears to emphasize the positive side of the Church but actually negates any religious value when the comparative elements are considered.

The main purpose of the author in devaluating the clergy is to destroy their image. Regardless of what one's concept of the clergy is, the author presents them as being preoccupied with putting people underground. What is important here is not so much what the author has accomplished, as how he went about it. He has undertaken the depreciation of the priesthood by the use of satire consisting of misplaced descriptive adjectives, absurd contentions, and with comparisons construed to have a neutralizing or a negative effect upon the concept of the clergy.

This is rather a gloomy way of portraying priests, but it is effective because the author's purpose is to manipulate his reader. Blasco Ibañez alleges more anti-clericalism in some of his scenes than they actually

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11. Obras, i, 1087.

contain by not fully explaining what he means: "aquella gente vivía feliz en su estado, sin soñar en repartos ni en revoluciones; antes bien, dispuesta a dar su sangre por Dios y por las sanas costumbres."<sup>12</sup> The idea of giving one's blood for some kind of healthy custom might be somewhat repugnant for the author's readers. The author has not made clear just what he means, but he implies that one should be ready to spill one's blood for these healthy customs, which are clerical.

The following section deals with the author's attacks on the wealth of the Church. Basically, these attacks are formed with contrasts and comparisons between the wealth of the Church and the poverty of the people. The main purpose of these techniques is to solicit an emotional response from the reader in favor of anti-clericalism. The attacks are very effective since they are easy to visualize because of their descriptive elements. The author uses language that not only describes, but that evokes a concept: "Aresti miró la imagen, el fetiche bizkaitarra, como decía él en sus cenas con los amigos de Gallarta, y la encontró grotescamente fea, como todas las imágenes españolas que son famosas y hacen milagros."<sup>13</sup>

There is a mixture of positive and negative elements in the descriptions. One purpose of the positive

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12. Obras, i, 1110.

13. Obras, i, 1098.

elements is to negate their own position when they are combined with negative elements. In the last quote, the author implies that the statue does not really perform miracles. Its miraculous ability is compared with its grotesque ugliness.

Certain of the descriptive elements are positive, such as the idol's being classified as a religious statue. But the author changes and shifts these values downwards by creating a sensation in one's mind of a type of image other than a religious one: "Su cabecita de bebé parecía abrumada por una alta corona inflamada como un globo; hasta sus pies descendía, como un miriñaque."<sup>14</sup>

Symbolically, the image is equated in value with religion. The statue represents a religious value. The author depreciates this value by alluding to a secondary facet of the statue. The rich decorative elements of the statue cannot improve the statue's value, because they have become debased by being compared with a mundane idea: in this instance, they are compared with their ability to shine, and this idea helps focus one's attention on aspects of the statue which are not religious.

El manto, cubierto de toda clase de piedras preciosas. Los diamantes, perlas y esmeraldas, arrojados a manos llenas por la devoción como si el brillo

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14. Obras, i, 1098.

pudiese aumentar la hermosura de la imagen, esparcíanse también sobre el pequeñuelo que la Virgen mostraba en sus brazos.<sup>15</sup>

One aspect of the author's descriptive techniques is his use of similes to make direct contrasts and comparisons: as if, as like, similar, etcetera. In the last example, the author uses como si to imply denial of the positive clerical language which follows the simile. The simile divides two positive parts of the clerical description into a negative picture and negates both the preceding and the succeeding statements.

The author also frequently uses analogy. He twists the language to show his examples of anti-clericalism to such an extent, that the ideas presented seemingly are the result of an analysis carried out to a logical and reasonable conclusion: "el doctor pensó involuntariamente en el sucio y doliente rebaño de las minas, calculando en cuánto habría construído su miseria a estos regalos inútiles colocados por la fey la ostentación de unos pocos sobre un madero tallado."<sup>16</sup> If object A is represented as fallacious, and is purported to be a religious object or symbol, then by analogy the Church is in error.

The author implies that if money were not spent upon the adornments of religious statues, it could be used

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15. Obras, i, 1098.

16. Obras, i, 1098.

to alleviate the sufferings of the poverty-stricken miners.

The Church as an institution comes under attack by the author because he considers her a dangerous enemy which at times occupies herself with meddling in the internal family affairs of people. In order to suggest this idea, the author frequently uses a conversation between some member of the clergy and a lay person. The technique suggests an insight into the methods which the Church employs to control the lives of the people. Anti-clerically, the value of the presentation is increased if the speaker is someone whom the author presents as a representative of a Catholic position: "casi nadie se casa por amor y las uniones entre ricos son negocios vulgares convenidos por las familias con la ayuda y buen consejo de algún padre jesuíta."<sup>17</sup>

The discussions also contain a great deal of suggestive technique. Usually these suggestions are quite direct, and are designed to imply some nefarious dealing or machination of the priesthood. Also, they have the manipulative value of creating suspicion in the reader towards the ideals of the Church. The direct statements made by the priests are in themselves anti-clerical and negative, but the author goes a step further and infers

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17. Obras, 1, 1109.

other negative qualities than the ones which are obvious:  
 "-Je, je.- rió maliciosamente el confesor . . . -El padre Paulí es viejo y sabe mucho del mundo para que pueda engañarle un boquirrubio de esos a la moderna. Queremos en nuestro jardín árboles que hayamos plantado nosotros, guiándolos desde que son tiernos . . . -"<sup>18</sup> The author paints a negative environment by his choice of language.

This character scene is important as this priest is alleged to be the epitome of Catholicism in the district.<sup>19</sup> The young girl whom he is advising is important to the Church since her father is the local millionaire.<sup>20</sup> Another factor in this scene's anti-clericalism is that the young girl is a very nice girl who has done nothing immoral.<sup>21</sup> The question of immorality or of morality must be of little importance for the Church, because the priest's basic interest in her is that she subordinate her will to his: "-Y tú, hija mía, ¡con qué calor defiendes a ese hombre! Veo que el peligro es más grave de lo que creía. Si persistes en esa mala pasión, contra la voluntad de tus padres y de tu director espiritual, estás en pecado, y no podré absolverte. ¿Entiendes?-"<sup>22</sup>

The last word is really a cue for the reader.

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18. Obras, i, 1160.      19. Obras, i, 1156.  
 20. Obras, i, 1118.      21. Obras, i, 1158.  
 22. Obras, i, 1160.

Entiendes asks him if he understands what the priest has said, and if he has, then the author has made an anti-clerical impression upon him.

The language that the author uses contains negative connotations: peligro, grave, mala pasión, contra, en pecado, no. These words form certain concepts such as the inference of evil, the suggestion of decay and depravity, insinuations of threats, and the use of force. This type of language jars one's emotions. It evokes disgust, repulsion and rejects any positive elements that the clerical position might have. The idea of obeying one's parents is a positive value, but the author discredits it by linking the value with this negative environment.

The faithful are also made negative by acceding to the demands of the priest, which are themselves negative because of the purpose to which they are put: "Mañana me envías todas las cartas que tengas de ese hombre."<sup>23</sup>

Although the whole scene is fairly direct in its anti-clerical content, it is still an important one since several ideas are developed within it. The author's techniques were used to mold or to change the reader's opinion towards a positive anti-clerical position. He creates the idea of interference by the Church to disparage the Church. His tone is one of repulsion.

Logic is also used to influence the reader. The author takes one scene to present the argument, the foundation for a logical contrast in order to be able to contrast it with the second scene. Both of the scenes are made anti-clerical because of the effect the second scene has upon the first one: "si en un convento habia una monja enferma de gravedad; si un padre jesuita se quejaba del estado de su salud, las de Lizamendi enviaban a Luis con indicaciones que eran órdenes."<sup>24</sup> Having presented the basis for his contrast, he gives it: "contentas de poder servir gratuitamente a los elegidos del Señor. El médico racionalista se vió convertido por su familia en un trotaconventos, curando a gentes que insultaban su ciencia después de aprovecharla."<sup>25</sup> The priests are discredited because of their lack of intelligence. They accept Luis' science on one side and reject it on the other.

The reference to trotaconventos is of interest. Perhaps the services rendered by Trotaconventos to the Arcipreste de Hita in El Libro de buen amor could be compared to the burden put upon Luis by his family.<sup>26</sup>

The overt vehicle for the author's point of view,

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24. Obras, i, 1105.

25. Obras, i, 1105.

26. Juan Ruiz, El Libro de buen amor (Valencia, 1960), pp. 144-145.

his opinions, and his personal contentions is represented by the protagonist Luis Aresti, and by the declamatory individuals who are used both as pawns and as straightmen in the disparaging arguments in this novel. Luis is positive in his views, and they elevate the position of the anti-clerical polemics. The vehicles used to portray the clerical ideas are the various priests, their people, and their actions, which are negative in tone, concept and in action.

Luis may be said to represent the extreme side of logical contention in his presentations, which one may contrast with the illogical assumptions and ideas of his clerical opponents.

The employment of assumptive processes is one method by which a truism is implied; this does not mean that the assumption is necessarily true. Blasco Ibañez, however, implies that the clerical assumption of poverty, being a sign of piety, is held by the Church to be a fact. The clergy maintains that misery and poverty are a natural state of man: "hacían la apología de la vagancia y la miseria, convirtiéndolas en el estado perfecto del hombre, y tenían la sucia miseria como signo de la santidad."<sup>27</sup>

The author then amplifies this statement by showing an obvious negative theory of the Church: "y

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27. Obras, i, 1124.

anatematizaban el amor carnal como obra del demonio. Eran, en una palabra, los que divinizaban todas las miserias y los rigores que martirizan al hombre, marcando, en cambio, con el sello de la execración las únicas alegrías que se hallan a su alcance." <sup>28</sup> The inference is that these ideas are positive. They are not. They are negative because of their absurd contentions.

Blasco Ibáñez uses the technique of continually alluding to a situation to make his point. He moves from one anti-clerical example to another to overwhelm one with his ideas. In Bilbao, there is a Jesuit Monastery that has preserved the heart of Ignacio de Loyola in an urn upon an altar. This is a fact, and the author uses it to evoke a negative clerical response in his reader. Although the scene is not cannibalistic, as the heart is not eaten, a repulsive impression may be extracted from the passage. Although the embalming of Loyola's heart was meant as a tribute, one can but compare this passage: "en un relicario de oro estaba el corazón del santo. Era lo único que conservaba allí del fundador," <sup>29</sup> with the scenes described by Bernal Díaz de Castillo <sup>30</sup> and by John Crow, <sup>31</sup> of the Aztec

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28. Obras, i, 1125.

29. Obras, i, 1197.

30. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Historia de la conquista de la Nueva España (Mexico, 1962), p. 161.

31. John A. Crow, The Epic of Latin America (New York, 1946), p. 83.

pagan treatment of the human heart. A correlation may be drawn between Christian Spaniards and pagan Aztecs.

The author presents a series of commentaries concerning the activities of the Church's meddling in the lives of others to the detriment of the nation. During the Carlist Wars, many Spaniards took up arms on the Carlist side following the orders of their priests.<sup>32</sup> The Church is shown to be the arch-enemy of humanity because of the fact that thousands of people gave their lives in these wars in the name of religion.<sup>33</sup> The Church has built new monasteries and churches with money donated by the mine owners, who have sweated the money out of their starving workers.<sup>34</sup>

Blasco Ibáñez takes the position that there is a correlation between much of the evil and horrible living conditions of the poor, and the Roman Catholic Church in Spain. He does not aver that there is an evil conspiracy among the clergy to destroy the nation deliberately. He does, however, form a triangular relationship between the Church, the evil agent, and the harmful results. One can, therefore, only draw the conclusion, that the Church is negatively involved in these tragedies. Another aspect of this idea is that the Church is not even interested in

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32. Obras, i, 1077.

33. Obras, i, 1077.

34. Obras, i, 1096.

alleviating these conditions, since it does nothing about them.

The author presents the idea that the Church does little if any good, and that its main interest lies in its own welfare and prerogatives. The attacks against progress and modernism emanate principally from the new Jesuit Church. <sup>35</sup> This fact in itself is important, because the author has employed the Jesuit Order as his principal target. Of course the Order is a functional part of the Roman Catholic Church; its actions and its attitudes, therefore, must be acceptable to the Church hierarchy. Progress, from the author's point of view, is equated with a general meaning of positive value while clericalism, being anti-progressive, is equated with a negative value.

Luis is in continual conflict with the Church and with its institutions; his difficulties are directly and indirectly caused by the Church, and his efforts to better local conditions are constantly being thwarted by the Church. A strong contrast is made by the author's ennobling the qualities of Luis while disparaging those of the Church. After his marriage, Luis is ordered by his religious mother-in-law and wife to treat the clergy medically without payment. These priests take advantage of his scientific training and then revile him for

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studying a science not in accord with the Church. One facet of Luis' generosity is presented here. Regardless of the fact that Luis realizes what these people are doing to Spain, he will treat them anyway because they are human beings, capable of suffering, sickness, and death, and he is a doctor. This contrast is interesting, as both the doctor and the priests have taken vows. The reader must draw his own conclusions as to which one best exemplifies the basic promises and commitments of these vows.

Luis' wife, a pious product of the Church, loved only the Church. Luis serves simply as the vehicle of her own edification. The author employs a series of actions and ideas on her part to form a contrast between her and Luis. She represents the pious, end-product of Catholic instruction which the Church uses to press its will upon the anti-clerical Luis. She has few pleasures, one of which is to confess her sins to the most fashionable priest in the area. <sup>37</sup> It is of interest to note that she,

an example of piety, refuses to have normal marital relations with Luis because her conscience must be clear <sup>38</sup> when she goes to mass. Indeed, she goes to mass on every possible occasion.

The Church is allegedly responsible for his wife's nefarious subversion of his individual liberty and of his

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36. Obras, i, 1105.

37. Obras, i, 1105.

38. Obras, i, 1106.

free will. She tells Luis that she does not love him, but that she would if he would only burn his books and attend church.<sup>39</sup> His books are scientific but she considers them evil or of a non-religious nature since she cannot understand them because of her ignorance and she will not accept them on account of her religious intolerance which is abetted by instructions from her local priest. She would also steal his books and papers for the purpose of giving them to her confessor for his perusal, and for his appro-<sup>40</sup>bation or rejection.

There are many conclusions and many inferences which might be drawn from these actions. The most obvious point is the inference that Luis does not have a wife, but rather that he has an enemy in his own camp, which seems bent upon destroying instead of helping him.

The idea of marriage as being a personal matter is attacked by the Jesuits, who believe it to be a question of convenience, usually to be helped along by a priest, instead of a matter of love and personal preference.<sup>41</sup> Ramón, the wealthy agnostic who married a religious woman, proves to be vulnerable to the insidious attacks upon his beliefs and way of life by the Church. His wife is coached by the priests in ways to handle him, his money, and his power.

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39. Obras, 1, 1106.

40. Obras, 1, 1106.

41. Obras, 1, 1109.

The author uses her to reflect the views of the Church towards marital relations. She reasons as follows:

El matrimonio era para que el hombre y la mujer viviesen sin dar escándalo, procreando hijos que sirvieran a Dios, y también para que no se perdiese la fortuna de la familia. Lo que llamaban amor las personas corrompidas era un pecado repugnante, propio de gentes sin religión. Tratar un marido a su mujer con melifluidades de éstas que sólo se ven en amantes de comedia, era envilecerla, igualarla con las que viven de su cuerpo. La esposa cristiana había de ser casta en el pensamiento, cuidar de la salud material y moral del esposo, aconsejarle el bien y dirigir, el hogar. Más allá, sólo iban las mujeres perdidas.<sup>42</sup>

Ramón's wife reflects this concept of the Church, which states that anything that brings people some happiness is evil.

This raises the question of just what is marriage for? Is Ramón's wife correct in her assumptions or not? While not overtly disclaiming her ideas, the author has manipulated this character into the position where any statement that she makes is suspect. Essentially, the author presents the champion of Catholicism as making one idiotic remark after another; then he twists the wording or the presentation of a positive statement to impart a negative value to the point in question.

Amusement per se is equated with being evil and anti-Christian. Since the Church contends that dancing

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42. Obras, i, 1116.

and other forms of amusement are evil,<sup>43</sup> the place to sanctify oneself is of course in Church.<sup>44</sup> The author implies that the Church exerts a forceful influence on women in order to gain control indirectly of their husbands.

Luis then proselytizes with anti-clerical arguments, which are one-sided and of course detrimental to the Church. He seeks to alienate the reader from the Church through discrediting contrasts. Luis states that the Jesuits are laughed at in any modern nation, but that they are revered in Spain.<sup>45</sup> The word modern is the key here. By his choice of words, the author has made a contrast between a modern country and one which is not. This is certainly a logical inference which one might possibly make. A modern country is one without Jesuits, and a non-modern or backward, undeveloped, not progressive, or even perhaps not too civilized country is one where there are Jesuits. The reader is led to believe that the backwardness of Spain is due to the influence of the Jesuits and to their religion. The reader may carry this assumption out to a logical conclusion that Spain may, indeed should, be progressive and modern, and that one way of accomplishing this would be to eliminate the Jesuits.

By proceeding one step further, one may assume

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43. Obras, i, 1120.

44. Obras, i, 1120.

45. Obras, i, 1122.

that the achievement of this goal might be facilitated by the negating of religious influences altogether. The author equates Spanish Catholicism with the Inquisition, San Ignacio de Loyola and the Auto-de-fe.<sup>46</sup> The inference is that Spanish Catholicism may be equated with barbarism.

This being the case, then of what positive value is Christianity? Luis answers this question by asking one of his own:

"¿Por qué conceder las ventajas de la libertad a los que habían empleado antaño su inmenso poderío combatiéndola, arrumbando escombros sobre su tallo naciente, y ahora, al verla convertida en vigoroso árbol, querían ser los primeros en gozar de su sombra? No; él no reconocía derechos para existir a unas creencias que eran la negación de la vida; no podía conceder la libertad a los enemigos tradicionales de esa misma libertad."<sup>47</sup>

This first statement of Luis' answers in part the value of Christianity in Spain. Spanish Christianity seeks to take away the value of freedom of choice from all others and retain this value only for itself.

Why indeed should an intolerant institution be allowed religious freedom when for so long it has fought against it? The author's opinion is seen in Luis' evaluation of the propriety of religious freedom for the Roman Church. Luis claims that the Roman Church should have this freedom only when her fangs have been pulled as one would do to a dangerous dog.<sup>48</sup> Luis claims that there is no

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46. Obras, i, 1124.

47. Obras, i, 1124.

48. Obras, i, 1124-1125.

positive value in the Church as it has brought only misery to the Spanish people and denied them the pleasures of life.<sup>49</sup>

The Church is blamed for nearly every type of calamity ever to have struck Spain. The Church is presented as the arch-enemy of the people and as an active partner of the well-to-do.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the real enemy of the worker is the Church, because it is the partner of sweatshop management.<sup>51</sup> The importance of this partnership cannot be stressed too highly because the author implies that the Church has a part in separating the upper from the lower classes in society. It is of interest to note the similarity of the position taken by Karl Marx regarding the differences between social classes, and the ideas of the author when he, too, interjects status of class into his arguments. Of course, Marx meant class warfare,<sup>52</sup> whereas Blasco Ibáñez is merely speaking of cleavage.

Blasco Ibáñez apparently is more interested in showing the Roman Church to be an organization willing to make a distinction between classes to the point of discrimination. Doña Cristina, the wife of wealthy Ramón

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49. Obras, i, 1125.

50. Obras, i, 1125.

51. Obras, i, 1125.

52. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto (New York, 1964), pp. 57-58.

feels that it is only natural that she should receive preference over the other women waiting to give their confessions: "me ha conocido, se dijo doña Cristian con orgullo. -No tardará en despedir a la que está delante-." <sup>53</sup>

The servants of the Church are portrayed as willing accomplices to the concept of preferential treatment:

"le inspiraba profundo respeto este rico devoto, al que trataban con gran deferencia todos los padres, permitiéndole fumar a todas horas, con otros privilegios no menos importantes, que sólo se concedían a muy contadas personas." <sup>54</sup>

One implication that may be extracted from these passages, is that the clergy is more deferential towards the wealthy because they constitute a major source of the Church's income.

The Jesuits and their minions refuse to visit the homes of the poor as they do the homes of the wealthy, apparently because they would be unable to derive benefit therefrom: "los jesuitas y los frailes sólo visitaban las casas de los ricos, y no podían esperar los pobres que se introdujesen en sus miserables tugurios." <sup>55</sup>

Luis has drawn a contrast between the classes with his insistence that it is the wealthy who receive the Church's principal attention. The author further develops

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53. Obras, i, 1156.

54. Obras, i, 1199.

55. Obras, i, 1126.

this theme by giving the reader an idea of why the rich are so attracted by this attention: "además con el apoyo del rico, de tradicional estolidez, que atormentado por el remordimiento, compra con un trozo de su fortuna, la seguridad de no ir al infierno."<sup>56</sup>

The statement is not so ludicrous if one views it in the light of what is implied. It certainly could imply that the Church, that heaven itself, is for sale to the highest bidder. This assurance of entering heaven must originate from somewhere, so one makes an assumption that the Church does encourage this type of reasoning on the part of the wealthy.

Certainly as important as the previous concept is the one made by the author to explain the extreme piety--false, of course--that some of the devout have reached. Doña Cristina is a good example of false piety because "no entraba nunca en esta iglesia sin experimentar un coquilleo de placer. Sentía igual satisfacción que si penetrase en un salón elegante, donde sin esfuerzo alguno, con una dulzura casi voluptuosa y sin molestos contactos, se ganaba la salvación del alma."<sup>57</sup>

This passage is interesting from several points of view. Doña Cristina apparently is having a love affair with the Church. She is in love with the exterior manifestations of Christianity rather than with the interior ones.

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56. Obras, i, 1127.

57. Obras, i, 1154.

The author is attempting to place an element of doubt into the narrative as regards the orthodoxy of her piety. Assuming that doña Cristina is a model Catholic, one must consider the intrinsic values of her religious experiences in a contrast with what she purports to adhere to.

The author, speaking through Luis, has left no doubt of a nefarious connection between the clergy and the wealthy classes. He has even gone further by claiming that the wealthy class is a tool of the clergy.

A él no le extrañaba que el ejército de la miseria, en sus protestas y rebeldías, se dirigiese contra sacerdotes ignacianos, a pesar de que éstos no tomaban parte directa en las empresas industriales. Eran los directores y los educadores de los ricos, ellos daban forma a la clase superior, la moldeaban a su gusto.<sup>58</sup>

As the clergy, and especially the Jesuits, serve in educational capacities in some instances, the Church is in a position to orient its wealthy students towards its own philosophy.

Even the arguments in behalf of the Church are so construed by the author as to be self-discrediting. As the contentions expressed are assumed to be the position of the Church, they are damaging to her reputation because of their manipulative effect upon the reader. One of the Catholic champions, Uriquiola, states that if they let the people do as they wish, they will not come to church.<sup>59</sup>

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58. Obras, i, 1178.

59. Obras, i, 1109.

With statements similar to this one, the author implies that the Church is a type of Big Brother, a monolithic organization dedicated to the proposition that it, not the people, knows what is best for them. One is able to infer that there is not only a desire for absolute power within the Church, a form of thought and action control, but also a conspiracy to keep the lower classes in their form of peonage.

According to Uriquiola, Spain should return to the past and its values since formerly there was no progress and also no social unrest.<sup>60</sup> The past of which Uriquiola speaks is probably the reign of Felipe II.

Educated in Jesuit schools, Uriquiola reflects what is purported to be the Church's philosophy towards one's lot in this life. The status quo and her desire to maintain it, is assessed as a praiseworthy goal. The status quo that exists in Vizcaya, however, is misery and poverty for the workers, affluence and luxury for the upper-classes.

Aquella gente vivía feliz en su estado, sin soñar en repartos ni en revoluciones; antes bien, dispuesta a dar su sangre por Dios y por las sanas costumbres. Pero que no le hablasen del populacho de las minas, corrompido y sin fe: . . . siempre descontentos y promoviendo huelgas, deseando el exterminio de los ricos y comparando su miseria con el bienestar de los demás, como si hasta en el cielo no existiesen categorías y clases.<sup>61</sup>

Since the Roman Church also has an earthly hierarchy

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60. Obras, 1, 1110.

61. Obras, 1, 1110.

consisting of her deacons, priests, and bishops, they must perforce maintain class differences also. In any case, the author implies that a sharp difference in material matters does and should continue to exist as a natural state of man.

Because Uriquiola has the firm support of the Church, and since he has been educated in her philosophy, Blasco Ibáñez implies that the Church approves and condones poverty and misery.

Besides contending that the Church is a parasitical organization, the author suggests that she is also an organization of despoilers: "el saqueo de la Naturaleza, la amputación de sus entrañas de hierro había servido únicamente para la felicidad de unos cuantos y para que el parásito sagrado que se ocultaba tras de ellos fuese el verdadero amo de todo."<sup>62</sup>

The author attacks Christian aims as a mask for self-interests and greed. The Church could be compared with a band of merciless exploiters masquerading in the guise of a benevolent society of miracle workers.

Y al ausentarse la Fortuna loca se marcharían tras de sus pasos, aquellos hombres negros que la seguían a todas partes como merodeadores y sólo se mostraban hablando del cielo allí donde se amontonaban los beneficios de la tierra. No vacilarían en abandonar esta tierra al verla

exhausta. La olvidarían como olvidaban a los países pobres, cual si en ellos no existiesen hijos de su Dios.<sup>63</sup>

If this position is valid, then the Church at best could be considered ineffectual as a worthwhile organization and perhaps as malign at the other end of the spectrum.

Vicente Blasco Ibañez implies a great deal more than he says directly. He is operating on two levels. He mixes implications and direct comments. From his implications, it is possible to infer almost any kind of insidious attitude on the Church's part.

El Intruso, of course, is death.<sup>64</sup> Luis compares death with the Jesuits, averring that they both enter a man's house in silence and by stealth.<sup>65</sup> This comparison is in line with his purpose of anti-clericalism. Death<sup>66</sup> does represent different ideas to different people, but to many it is certainly not a welcome guest in one's house. There are those who fear and abhor death and to whom it conjures up a number of negative tableaux. This is the essence of the author's polemics. Death and the Church are symbolically equated as creatures from the same cloth.

As the plot unfolds, the tempo of attacks against the Church is increased. The two main elements in these

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63. Obras, i, 1213.

64. Obras, i, 1123.

65. Obras, i, 1123.

66. Baltasar Gracían, El Criticón (Madrid, 1957), p. 393.

attacks are Doña Cristina and the attitude of the Jesuits themselves. Doña Cristina's favorite priest is the arrogant one who boasts that he has physically mistreated the enemies of religion.<sup>67</sup> He has become well known among the faithful for a deposition that he published asking the wealthy to buy votes to send a Catholic candidate to congress and for forbidding his women parishioners to make purchases in liberal establishments.<sup>68</sup> This is perversion of democratic institutions.

The priests begin to organize for the defeat of the liberal forces at work in Vizcaya. While the workers hold a protest meeting, the priests gather their flocks and inform them that they must be ready to die for the faith.<sup>69</sup> Later the streets begin to fill with people. Among them are insolent Jesuits with hidden pistols who are only looking for an opportunity to begin exterminating liberals.<sup>70</sup> The Catholics do have some cause for jubilation: Ramón has been converted and has fired his non-religious workers and is replacing them with Catholics.<sup>71</sup> He has also fired all of his sailors that have been found guilty of blasphemy and even more ridiculous, at the instigation of the Church, the prows of his ships are being

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67. Obras, i, 115.

68. Obras, i, 1155.

69. Obras, i, 1203.

70. Obras, i, 1203.

71. Obras, i, 1203.

fitted with religious statues.<sup>72</sup> This situation is ridiculous when it is viewed in the light of logic. The end result of these actions, in the eyes of the Church, is to make him a better Christian. His former actions do harm to people and the latter merely shows superstition.

The riot begins when, at their priests' urgings, the people shout a "religious" slogan: "¡Viva la religión! ¡Mueran los liberales!"<sup>73</sup> During the riot, a priest takes out his weapon and begins shooting at liberal participants.<sup>74</sup> Even with the zest displayed by this priest, the battle turns against his faction. Paradoxically, it is the soldiers of the liberal governmental regime, which they hate, that save them.<sup>75</sup> The reflections of Luis are bitter, but of interest. He notes the unpleasant truth that people are fighting and killing one another over a grossly carved piece of wood, while hunger and injustice stalk the land.<sup>76</sup>

What does Luis (and the author) want? The answer is given by Luis while he watches the religious idols, which had been tossed into the river, float towards the sea: "aquellos ídolos habían engañado a la Humanidad demasiado tiempo y debían morir . . . Eran los encubridores

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72. Obras, 1, 1203.

73. Obras, 1, 1208.

74. Obras, 1, 1209.

75. Obras, 1, 1210.

76. Obras, 1, 1211.

de la injusticia. Bajarían de sus altares, como habían descendido los dioses del paganismo cuando les llegó su hora, . . . y la Humanidad, adoraría en el infinito de su idealismo las dos únicas divinidades de la nueva religión: la ciencia y la Justicia social."<sup>77</sup>

The author has made use of several techniques in his anti-clerical protestations. Many of his characters may be classified into various types, all of which contribute to his anti-clerical point of view. The young doctor Luis Aresti, is the most important, as he is the personification of anti-clericalism. Luis is intelligent, logical, reasonable, and humane. He has a dual role: one, he can be said to represent the progressive future that the Church is seeking to combat; and two, he has the function of developing the anti-clerical attacks with an intellectual approach.

The clergy form a group which help in two different ways to express the author's anti-clerical position. They represent the antithesis of Luis' position. As they are at the opposite end of the intellectual pole, their arguments for the Church merely aid Luis' efforts to present them in an unfavorable light. Their actions certainly speak for themselves. They do not practice gentle Christianity and to all purposes and intents represent barbarism versus civilization.

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77. Obras, i, 1214.

Finally there are the lay people. Their attitudes are mere reflections of the clergy's desires, and they are shown to be the tools for the clergy's schemes.

Blasco Ibañez has presented the anti-clerical character as a progressive figure while presenting the Church as evil. He has done this mainly through his use of descriptive language, employing value-building modifiers in his clerical presentations. The reader is given a choice. Either choose the Church, which is evil, corrupt and radical, or anti-clericalism which is progressive, humane and, in fact, Christian in the true sense of the word.

## ENTRE NARANJOS

Entre Naranjos is primarily a Naturalistic novel, more concerned with the social, governmental, and financial evils of the Valencian area of Spain than with the abuses of the Church. The author's purpose is to present the government and its party bosses as direct contributors to the social inequalities and ruinous financial policies of Spain. They are linked to the Church by the latter's approval of them.

Don Jaime, the grandfather of Rafael, amasses his wealth in part by the buying and selling of Spanish Justice.<sup>1</sup> His son Ramón continues the family tradition by employing local governmental machinery to exempt favorites and those who pay from military service.<sup>2</sup> Don Ramón also has kept murderers from going to prison, in order to use them against the political opposition.<sup>3</sup>

There are many other examples of Naturalism too numerous to mention: the great flood, marital behavior, Leonor's seizure, etcetera.

Rafael Brull and his family are pillars of society,

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1. Obras, i, 569.

2. Obras, i, 572.

3. Obras, i, 573.

and they fully accept the social and religious mores of their country. They are supporters of the Church, and the Church has placed its stamp of approval upon them. The grandfather, Don Jaime, who is a usurer, a prevaricator, and a miser, is trusted and believed in by the very ones he deceives. In fact, his clients believe in him as they believe in God.<sup>4</sup> It is not unreasonable to associate the two beliefs by analogy, as a lack of judgment process. With this analogy, the author intends to discredit the faithful.

The faithful are presented in many guises, and none of them is very reassuring. The mother of Rafael, a very pious woman, prays a great deal. She prays mainly for her husband to die: "¡Que se muera cuanto antes! ¡Para lo que hace! . . . ¡Que el Señor nos proteja llevándose pronto."<sup>5</sup> In answer to her prayers, her God finally does kill Don Ramón.<sup>6</sup> The woman's piety is contrasted and compared with her actions. There is no doubt that doña Bernarda is a true believer. She believes in the power of San Bernardo to make the rains cease and to alleviate the resultant flood conditions. As someone will receive the credit for persuading the priests to take the statue of San Bernardo out to perform his miracle, she insists that

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4. Obras, i, 570.

5. Obras, i, 576.

6. Obras, i, 577.

her son Rafael be the one to receive it.<sup>7</sup> The mother is used in a negative manner as a member of the faithful: "había caído en un marasmo senil rayano en la idiotez, sin más manifestaciones de vida que la permanencia en la iglesia hasta que la despedían cerrando las puertas, y el rosario continuamente murmurado por los rincones de la casa, huyendo de los gritos y los juegos de sus nietos."<sup>8</sup>

The author depends principally upon a reaction of sensation in making his point. By equating senility with piety, one has a reduction in value of the concept of prayer. Doña Bernarda is alluded to as a good Christian who seizes an opportunity to disillusion and berate an old lady with gossip, which helps destroy the domesticity of her home.<sup>9</sup>

The actions of a good Christian may be contrasted with hers. The author employs the good Christian as a perpetrator of evil deeds to connect the concept of Christianity with the concept of harmful deeds.

Blasco Ibáñez has a tendency to make direct comparisons between a negative worldly value and a positive religious value, the purpose of the comparison being to form a correlation between the two values. At best the negative value will cancel out the positive one and in

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7. Obras, i, 595.

8. Obras, i, 672.

9. Obras, i, 672.

most cases will equate the two: "el clamoreo sin fin del rebaño electoral, que no tropezaba con el más leve obstáculo sin acudir inmediatamente al diputado como el devoto apela al milagroso patrón."<sup>10</sup> The result of the correlation accomplished with similes and metaphors, is a lowering of the positive value to the level of the negative one.

The Brull family has been presented as a not very welcome addition to society because of their political machinations. The pious and the priests of the Alcira district, however, are all for them. In fact, don Andrés, don Ramón, and doña Bernarda are a Holy Trinity for the faithful of the area.<sup>11</sup> The author disparages religion by equating the word religion with the actions of the Brull family.

Leonor's aunt, doña Pepa, believes that the asocial actions of her niece have stained her soul. She is very religious and is presented as an "alma sencilla."<sup>12</sup> Both "alma" and "sencilla," when viewed separately, have one meaning, but when connected, they have a negative value. An "alma sencilla" is presented as representative of the faithful. Doña Beppa, the servant of Leonor and another representative of the faithful, leaves her estate to the

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10. Obras, i, 669.

11. Obras, i, 574.

12. Obras, i, 659.

Church when she dies, to insure the salvation of her  
<sup>13</sup> soul. As was alleged in El Intruso, here, too, one finds  
 the implication that one can gain salvation by bribing God.  
 In this case, heavenly salvation is sought by bribing the  
 servants of God.

The pious, as a group, are presented as bundles of  
 neuroses in need of psychiatric power: "La dominaba el  
 pavor de lo sobrenatural y buscaba con infantil ansiedad  
 una protección, un poder fuerte que atajase el peligro."<sup>14</sup>  
 They are equated with children to show the illogicalness  
 of their pioussness.

The people know that San Bernardo is as powerful  
 as God Himself where Alcira is concerned.<sup>15</sup> In fact, San  
 Bernardo is a stone statue, and his life and deeds are con-  
 sidered by the author to be legend,<sup>16</sup> fantasy,<sup>17</sup> and super-  
<sup>18</sup> stition.

Rafael, who becomes the Catholic Deputy and who  
 represents the Church in her fight against the liberal  
<sup>19</sup> faction in the Cortes, is used by the author to dis-  
 credit the Church in several instances. According to  
 Rafael, the pious believer has a psychological handicap;

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13. Obras, 1, 673.

14. Obras, 1, 594.

15. Obras, 1, 593.

16. Obras, 1, 596.

17. Obras, 1, 564-565.

18. Obras, 1, 597.

19. Obras, 1, 679.

he must use the Church as a crutch, attributing all his boons to the protection of some pious Saint.<sup>20</sup> He compares his drab, dull tour of Milan accompanied by his mentor, a canon of the cathedral, with the gay, bright life led by Leonor when she was in Milan.<sup>21</sup> Essentially, the author negates the religious quality with his selection of adjectives, while elevating the mundane qualities with positive adjectives.

The protagonist, Rafael, is certainly a study of contrasts. He accepts and defends Catholicism on the one hand while depreciating it and demeaning the faithful on the other. Rafael is a hypocrite. He uses the following comparison to describe the religious experiences of the faithful: "se detenían a venerar cualquier reliquia acreditada por absurdos milagros."<sup>22</sup> He believes the faithful to be fools, for they kill themselves with prayers and devotions when they are ill instead of going to a physician for a cure.<sup>23</sup>

As a delegate, Rafael speaks for an extended period to protect the government subsidies of the Church. The author labels his defense of Catholicism "lyrical enthusiasm."<sup>24</sup> Both his lyrical language and his long polemics are nothing more than a potpourri of ramblings which

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20. Obras, i, 609.

21. Obras, i, 624.

22. Obras, i, 579.

23. Obras, i, 585.

24. Obras, i, 679.

neither defend nor expound. They merely serve to waste  
time.<sup>25</sup>

Rafael defends Catholicism by stating that Spain  
is only great when Catholic.<sup>26</sup> This is certainly not the  
case according to Nicholson B. Adams.<sup>27</sup> The author ironi-  
cally uses Rafael's defense of Catholicism as an attack on  
the latter, the deputy states that all non-Catholic  
countries are dens of obscenity and depravity: "Y a  
continuación una apología entusiástica de la familia  
cristiana; del hogar católico, nido de virtudes y dulzuras,  
con tal fervor, que no parecía sino que en los países  
donde no imperaba el catolicismo eran todas las casas  
repugnantes lupanares u horrosas cuevas de bandidos."<sup>28</sup>  
An absurd contention which negates any veracity that his  
polemics might contain.

These expressions are important in establishing  
the author's anti-clerical position because they set the  
stage for Rafael's betrayal of them. He does not even be-  
lieve in his own defensive propositions as he asks Leonor  
to run away with him, a few minutes after he has defended  
the Christian sanctity of the home.<sup>29</sup>

The liberal champion is presented in an entirely

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25. Obras, 1, 678-679.

26. Obras, 1, 680.

27. Nicholson B. Adams, The Heritage of Spain (New  
York, 1959), pp. 124-134, and pp. 203-207.

28. Obras, 1, 680.

29. Obras, 1, 683.

different light. Rafael himself gives this presentation with his description of the liberal delegate: "Pero habia sabido ajustar su existencia al deber, y sin creer en Dios, sin otro apoyo que la filosofia, la fuerza de la virtud era tal, que desarmaba a los mas apasionados enemigos."<sup>30</sup>

The polemics of the liberal delegate stand in sharp contrast to the absurdities of Rafael. The liberal delegate defends freedom of conscience with "sencilla amenidad."<sup>31</sup> The schools are filthy hovels while churches and convents rise overnight on the principal streets of Madrid like magic palaces: "en Madrid . . . las escuelas instaladas en inmundos zaquizamis; iglesias y conventos surgiendo de la noche a la mañana como palacios encantados."<sup>32</sup>

The author implies that the backward educational situation of Spain is due to the favored financial position of the Church. By contrasting the educational situation with the religious one in relation to the needs of the people, he presents the Church as being favored before education in the matter of building programs. This reflects doubt regarding the Church's desire to better conditions in Spain.

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30. Obras, i, 676.

31. Obras, i, 676.

32. Obras, i, 677.

The blame for the poor state of educational affairs in Spain is laid at the door of the Church. The author might have been influenced by the theories of Krausism, since he is interested in tolerance and reforms in education.<sup>33</sup> He contrasts the educational situation in two Protestant countries with that in Spain: "en veintitantos años de Restauración, más de cincuenta edificios religiosos, completamente nuevos, . . . y, en cambio, una sola escuela moderna, como la de cualquier población pequeña de Inglaterra o Suiza."<sup>34</sup> By directly equating the religious and educational situation in Spain with that in England and Switzerland, he finds that the reason for the discrepancy in the Spanish system is the difference in religious establishments.

The state asks for fewer taxes while creating new bishoprics.<sup>35</sup> The Church collects pay for its services from the faithful and then once again from the state.<sup>36</sup> He describes the Catholic youth as feeble, unenthusiastic, selfish and pious.<sup>37</sup> Feeble, unenthusiastic, and selfish are used in a series with pious and Catholic, forming a negative value.

The Church is presented as having a double standard.

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33. Richard Chandler, A New History of Spanish Literature (Baton Rouge, 1961), p. 35.

34. Obras, i, 677.

35. Obras, i, 677.

36. Obras, i, 677.

37. Obras, i, 677.

It preaches Christian morality on the one hand while condoning, on the other, the immorality of the rich and powerful: -Cuidese usted, don Ramón- decían los curas amigos, únicos que osaban aludir a los desórdenes de su vida. -Va usted haciéndose viejo y a su edad, vivir como un joven, es llamar a la muerte-.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, they are proud of their Catholic defender, the fervent Catholic who almost never goes to mass.<sup>39</sup>

Doña Bernarda is frequently informed of the Church's opinion of her husband: -Cuide usted mucho de don Ramón. Gracias a él, la ola de la demagogia se detiene ante el templo y los malos principios no triunfan en el distrito. El es quien tiene en un puño a los impíos-.<sup>40</sup> Thus the defender of the faith is paradoxically one of the faithless.

The clergy seeks to reciprocate the favor and to promote the welfare of the Brull family by discriminating in favor of the boy Rafael: "terminó sus estudios superiores con los padres escolapios, siendo el protagonista de los repartos de premios, el primer papel en todas las comedias organizadas en el teatrillo de los frailes."<sup>41</sup> The manner in which Rafael, scion of the wealthy Brull family, is treated is used to prove that the Church will

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38. Obras, i, 577.

39. Obras, i, 573.

40. Obras, i, 572.

41. Obras, i, 575.

discriminate in favor of someone if it is to the Church's advantage to do so.

The supreme reward from the Church in behalf of the Brull family is given at the death of don Jaime, the clan's founder. Although a usurer and a perverter of justice, the clergy does everything in its power to insure the salvation of don Jaime's soul. The author compares the religious preparations for don Jaime with those for a saint: "El viejo Brull murió como un santo. Salió de la vida ayudado por todos los últimos sacramentos; no quedó clérigo en la ciudad que no empujase su alma camino del cielo con nubes de incensario en los solemnes funerales."<sup>42</sup> Because don Jaime was not a very good person in life, one may assume that these preparations of the clergy are of little if any value. The value that the priests placed upon their own rites are suspect if one compares don Jaime with a saint.

The author uses similes to set up a ludicrous comparison with a value-depreciation purpose. The Church has been presented as hypocritical, discriminating, selfish, and immoral. By presenting these scenes, the author validates his own position towards the Church. He uses contrasts, comparisons, and hypocritical machinations which refute and negate the religious value of the Church's position on morality and ethics.

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42. Obras, i, 572.

Doctor Moreno, as a non-believer, is presented as a decent, intelligent, educated person whose fellow men benefit from his helping actions.<sup>43</sup> He is kind towards children,<sup>44</sup> and he succeeds in treating illnesses with his scientific knowledge where the doctors who trust God more than they do science,<sup>45</sup> fail. The clergy considers his medical cures sorcery which he obtains from his mysterious foreign books on medicine.<sup>46</sup>

The author employs both satire and irony in his defense of Doctor Moreno. The clergy's reaction to his defense of Charles Darwin's biological theories is satirical: "Era defensor de un tal Darwin, que sostenía que el hombre es pariente del mono, lo que regocijaba a la indignada doña Bernarda, haciéndola repetir todos los chistes que a costa de esta locura soltaban sus amigos los curas los domingos en el púlpito."<sup>47</sup>

The author's irony may be seen in the Church's attitude towards his miraculous cures which they attribute to sorcery:

y lo peor era que con tales brujerías no había enfermedad que se resistiera al doctor Moreno. Hacía prodigios en los arrabales entre la tosca gente de los huertos. Devolvía la salud a los que habían declarado incurables los viejos médicos de larga levita y bastón con puño de oro,

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43. Obras, 1, 587.

44. Obras, 1, 588.

45. Obras, 1, 588.

46. Obras, 1, 588.

47. Obras, 1, 588.

venerables sabios, más creyentes en Dios que en la ciencia.<sup>48</sup>

Obviously these doctors are not sages as the author says they are. The good Catholic doctors and their God are without value.

It is of interest to note that the Church labels its own unexplained benefits "miracles" while labeling the doctor's science "sorcery." The passage shows a vivid contrast between proven science and unsubstantiated miracles. By his use of contrasting contentions, Blasco Ibáñez places the Church in an absurd position, while the persecuted Doctor Moreno is shown as a progressive, educated humanitarian. With a judicious use of contrasts, the faithful and the clergy are depicted as ignorant.

The author directly contrasts Doctor Moreno, the liberal humanitarian, with Ramón Brull, the Catholic champion. Doctor Moreno turns down a deputyship in the Cortes because there would be no one to treat the poor, gratis, if he left.<sup>49</sup> This deputyship is a position for which the Brull family has lied, schemed, cheated, and committed various evil actions during the last three generations of the family's existence. The quote presents a contrast between two behavioral processes, one being liberal, humanistic, beneficial and, most important, anti-clerical; the

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48. Obras, i, 588.

49. Obras, i, 589.

other being malign, ignorant, motivated by self-interest and, most important, pro-clerical.

The role that Doctor Moreno's daughter Leonor plays is also anti-clerical. She may be compared with her father insofar as her actions are concerned. The author has presented her as a non-believer, but as a person of good inclinations who shows herself generous to the poor.<sup>50</sup> To Leonor, music is a religion,<sup>51</sup> her lover being the Supreme Master.<sup>52</sup> Hans Keller, her lover, is compared to her Master in a number of instances.<sup>53</sup> Music has had a very debauching effect upon Leonor and she compares it to religion in general. In fact, she contends that Hans Keller is the chosen representative of the Divinity: "sentía la necesidad de humillarse, la dulzura del sacrificio, como el devoto que se prosterna ante el sacerdote, no viendo en él al hombre, sino al elegido de la Divinidad."<sup>54</sup>

Hans Keller is a degenerate, a woman chaser, an adulterer,<sup>55</sup> who starts Leonor on the road to licentious behavior, and she compares him with a religious figure. It is not illogical to contend that the author attempts to suggest an identification of the false teachings of Hans

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50. Obras, 1, 585-586.

51. Obras, 1, 630.

52. Obras, 1, 630.

53. Obras, 1, 630-632.  
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54. Obras, 1, 632.

55. Obras, 1, 630.

Keller with those of Jesus Christ, who is considered Divine among Christians.

A combination of Naturalistic and anti-clerical elements may be extracted from the descriptions of the religious procession to invoke San Bernardo's traditional miraculous aid in stemming the flood's waters.<sup>56</sup>

The gathering of the faithful to implore the saint's aid is of interest as the description is comparable to that of a violent mob.<sup>57</sup>

The author creates a scene of madness and repugnance by employing similes and descriptive adjectives, and repetition of sounds to portray a religious gathering: "un estrépito horripilante, como si la isla se abriera en mil pedazos, arrastrando la ciudad al centro de la tierra. La plaza se llenó de relámpagos. Era una verdadera batalla: descargas cerradas, arcabuzazos sueltos, tiros que parecían cañonazos."<sup>58</sup> He creates an impression of an animated scene. By mixing the elements of nature with those of man, Blasco Ibañez paints a portrait of insanity which he equates with the devotional experience of a religious procession:

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56. Obras, i, 594.

57. Lewis E. Brett, Nineteenth Century Spanish Plays (New York, 1935), p. 457. See also Vicente Blasco Ibañez, La Barraca (Barcelona, 1958), pp. 148-149, and Norman P. Sacks, Cuentos de hoy y de ayer (New York, 1956), p. 104.

58. Obras, i, 594.

disparábase los pistolones de arzón entre las piernas de los fieles, repetían sus secas detonaciones las escopetas de fabricación moderna, y la muchedumbre, aficionada a correr la pólvora, arremolinábase, gesticulante y ronca, enardecida por el excitante humo mezclado con la humedad de la lluvia y por la presencia de aquella imagen de bronce.<sup>59</sup>

The author effectively negates religious value with a liberal and judicious use of descriptive language. Noise, movement, and pandemonium in general, reign in this passage, and not religious placidity, serenity, and aesthetic values. This scene may be contrasted with the religious procession in Blasco Ibañez' El Préstamo de la Difunta: "La muchedumbre rústica que ocupaba las aceras, gentes de tez cobriza, ademanes humildes y voces cantoras y dulzonas. Las mujeres iban cubiertas con un largo manto negro, igual al de las chilenas; los hombres con un poncho amarillento y ancho sombrero, . . ."<sup>60</sup>

Although both processions are descriptive, the author has created two different types of images. The tone is harsher in the former than in the latter. The author describes the exterior in the former to create an aura of ugliness and repugnance, but he emphasizes a smoother, a more placid exterior coupled with a reflection of the interior in the latter procession.

The descriptions of the ensuing march and

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59. Obras, i, 597.

60. Obras, ii, 1517.

devotional practices are anti-clerical inasmuch as the author continues his depreciating techniques of correlating religious practice with ugliness, false motivation, satire, irony, and fallacious intent. The statue bearers are almost naked;<sup>61</sup> hysterical women break into tears at the sight of the statue;<sup>62</sup> children are tossed about in a helter-skelter fashion to kiss the statue;<sup>63</sup> little children bump their drooling noses on the statue;<sup>64</sup> and the writhing mass of humanity is compared to octopi: "Era una confusa maraña de brazos nervudos y desnudos saliendo del agua para sostener el santo; un pólipo humano que parecía flotar en la roja corriente sosteniendo la imagen sobre sus lomos."<sup>65</sup>

The author uses satire to discredit the faithful's belief in San Bernardo. They maintain that the only reason that the city still exists is because their ancestors had previously carried the statue down to the river to perform his miracle.<sup>66</sup>

They also know, as do even little children, that the statue of San Bernardo could not be lifted and moved unless the statues of his sisters were moved at the same time: "Era cosa sabida hasta por los niños que no había

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61. Obras, 1, 597.

62. Obras, 1, 597.

63. Obras, 1, 597.

64. Obras, 1, 597.

65. Obras, 1, 598.

66. Obras, 1, 595.

fuerza en el mundo capaz de arrancar el santo de su altar si antes no salían las hermanas."<sup>67</sup> The author suggests a rapport of understanding between the statue and its worshippers. A comparison may be drawn between the intelligence of the statue and of its supporters.

Although the statue is brought out, the river continues to rise. The faithful insist that it is not rising and they threaten to disembowel anyone who disagrees with them: "y un mocetón de ojos feroces hablaba de vaciarle el vientre de una cuchillada a cierto burlón que aseguraba que el río subiría."<sup>68</sup> The statue, its religious value, and the fervor of its adherents are presented as valueless when they are presented as factual.

The description of a sick and elderly man is of interest, since it is used to refer to the possible harm done by religious fanaticism: "un viejo temblaba de fiebre. Había cogido unas tercianas en los arrozales, y sosteniendo el hachón con sus manos trémulas, vacilaba antes de meterse en el río. -Entre, agüelo- gritaban con fe las mujeres. -El pare San Bernat el curará-."<sup>69</sup>

During the processional, the false piety of the priests is presented as an example of the real value of this class of religious activity. The parish priest does

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67. Obras, i, 597.

68. Obras, i, 599.

69. Obras, i, 598.

not want the saint to be taken out of the Church since he regards this sort of activity as mummery: "y el buen párroco, bondadoso, obeso y un tanto socarrón, se resistía siempre a acceder a lo que él llamaba una mojiganga tradicional."<sup>70</sup> The Church itself negates the value of this sort of religious experience with an overt statement made by a clergyman. The clergyman's motives are self-comfort and a comprehension that the statue lacks the power to work miracles. Where would religion be if the river carried half the city off?<sup>71</sup> Besides, the last flood almost carried off the statue of San Bernardo itself.<sup>72</sup>

The priest is helpless, however, in the face of superstitions instilled in the people by centuries of fanaticism: "la muchedumbre, inquieta por la tardanza, gritaba contra el cura. Era una escena extraña ver al hombre de la iglesia protestando en nombre del buen sentido, pretendiendo luchar contra las preocupaciones amontonadas por varios siglos de fanatismo."<sup>73</sup>

This is an important method of the author, Blasco Ibáñez contends that the Church itself does not believe in its own teachings, traditions, and miracles. The method has more value-negating influence because it employs the clergy for these observations instead of an obvious anti-

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70. Obras, i, 595.

71. Obras, i, 595.

72. Obras, i, 595.

73. Obras, i, 595.

clerical character such as Doctor Moreno. The curate accedes to their demands, but his attitude towards the whole affair is overtly negative. The curate begins to grumble when the rain falls on him,<sup>74</sup> and he orders the statue to be returned to the Church when he feels the cold water creeping up his back.<sup>75</sup>

The priests are all in favor of a religious environment for Spain. The author presents this attitude with his use of satirical comparisons and with presentations of ludicrous situations. The clergy wanted Doctor Moreno jailed because he desired his daughter baptized without giving her a saint's name.<sup>76</sup> For the priest, the good old days were the best. These were the days when Spain was more Catholic, the days when anyone whose religious orthodoxy and attitude were suspect would be sent to Fernando Po.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, an anti-clerical attitude was a more serious affair than murder.<sup>78</sup>

The other relic employed by the author is the Virgin of Lluch. An embodiment of the author's various techniques are employed in the negation of this statue as a religious value. There are two Virgins of Lluch, the local one being the genuine statue.<sup>79</sup> This is proved

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74. Obras, 1, 597.

75. Obras, 1, 598.

76. Obras, 1, 590.

77. Obras, 1, 590.

78. Obras, 1, 590.

79. Obras, 1, 590.

satirically, as the statue was stolen by the jealous Palmanians but miraculously recrossed the separating waters, and without even getting her feet wet: "llegaron después los de Mallorca para restituirla a su isla; pero como la celestial Señora les había tomado ley a Alcira y a sus habitantes volvió volando sobre el mar sin mojarse los pies."<sup>80</sup>

Since the Virgin is miraculous, she has the power to effect cures. One believer comes to the shrine and grows weaker even while she is praying to the Virgin to make her stronger.<sup>81</sup> After her prayers are ended, she is so weak that she can hardly rise,<sup>82</sup> and when she is asked if she does not feel better, she is afraid to say that she does not: "¿iba aquello mejor? ¿Probaba la visita a la Virgen?- La pobre enferma, cada vez más pálida, revelando con una mueca de dolor las terribles punzadas que sufría en sus entrañas, no se atrevía a contestar por miedo a ofender a la milagrosa Señora."<sup>83</sup> For the reader the value of the relic is destroyed with a tableau of the non-effectiveness of the relic as a worker of miraculous cures.

The shrine keeper and his family contribute to this evaluation with their attitude and behavior towards the religious significance of the shrine. The peasant

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80. Obras, i, 583.

81. Obras, i, 584.

82. Obras, i, 584.

83. Obras, i, 584.

shrine keeper argues with Rafael over the authenticity of the shrine, averring that it must be a real shrine because "where there is smoke there is fire."<sup>84</sup> The description of his daughter is used as a repelling technique. Her voice, actions, and person are all repugnant and the author correlates them with the value of the shrine by association, thereby degrading the religious value of the shrine: "y entró en la iglesia su hija, una mocetona morenota y sucia, con ojos africanos: una beldad rústica que parecía escapada de un aduar."<sup>85</sup>

The girl's religious attitude is suspect because of her actions towards the shrine: "se acomodó en un banco, volviendo la espalda a la virgen con el gesto de mal humor del que se ve obligado a hacer todos los días la misma cosa."<sup>86</sup>

The veracity of the shrine is not attacked here by the author, but he seeks to connect the shrine and its religious value with its caretakers: "y con una voz bronca, desgarrada furiosa, que hacía temblar las paredes del santuario, comenzó una melopea lenta, cantando la historia de la imagen y sus portentosos milagros."<sup>87</sup>

The final factor in the anti-clericalism of Blasco Ibañez in Entre Naranjos is symbolism. It is my belief

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84. Obras, i, 583.

85. Obras, i, 584.

86. Obras, i, 584.

87. Obras, i, 584.

that the author had a symbolical concept in mind concerning doña Bernarda. The saint of the city is San Bernardo and it certainly is possible that the author only intended a play upon words with the names San Bernardo and doña Bernarda. It may well be, however, that the author intended more than a simple word association. The word association of the two names could be extended into a concept association of the baseness of Bernarda relating to the concept of San Bernardo as a saint of the Church. If this supposition is valid, then the Church suffers in an analysis of a correlation comparison.

Rafael speaks of a trip that he made up the side of the Assisi Mountains. The descriptions employed are of a depreciating and negative nature and may be linked together symbolically to present the author's anti-clerical opinion of the religion of Saint Francis of Assisi: "recordaba las montañas de Asís, . . . Era un paisaje ascético. Los peñascos azulados o rojos asomando sus cabezas a los lados del camino; pinos y cipreses saliendo de sus hendiduras, extendiendo sobre la yerma tierra sus raíces tortuosas y negras como enormes serpientes."<sup>88</sup>

The landscape's description contains twisted trees, a semi-sterile soil, and a rock-strewn and uninviting place. There are allusions of things crooked and twisted. This description could be one concerning the Church.

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88. Obras, i, 580.

Carlos Bousoño says that the constant repetition of an idea may result in a change in its value. He says that this reiteration effects a superlative concept of the idea.<sup>89</sup> In this case, the author has emphasized the negative elements of the landscape to such an extent, that the whole picture has become extremely negative.

The local convent is described with symbolical overtones. Because the convent is crumbling away,<sup>90</sup> the author makes the symbolical contention that religion in Spain is paralleling the physical condition of the convent. Since the convent and religion are withering and crumbling away, the efficaciousness of both of them is negated.

King Victor Emmanuel of Italy was representative of the liberal elements in his country, and his troops finally occupied the papal territories in Italy and broke the secular authority of the Pope.<sup>91</sup> His triumphal arch in Milan seemingly swallows up the Cathedral of Milan: "veía en la densa oscuridad la Galería Víctor Manuel, de Milán, con su inmenso arco triunfal, boca gigantesca que parece querer tragarse la catedral."<sup>92</sup> This is an element

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89. Carlos Bousoño, Teoría de la expresión poética (Madrid, 1962), pp. 133-137.

90. Obras, i, 581.

91. Wallace K. Ferguson, A Survey of European Civilization (Boston, 1958), pp. 700-702.

92. Obras, i, 622.

symbolic of the expectation that secular forces will triumph over clerical forces.

Leonor relates how she as an opera singer, was applauded by rustic peasants in Sunday clothes, who wore false rings and plated chains: "un público endomingado de propietarios rurales y señoras cargadas de sortijas y cadenas falsas."<sup>93</sup> Leonor and her anti-clerical ideas may be correlated with her artistic talent.<sup>94</sup> The allusion to a religious element in the clothing of the peasants is linked with their false rings and chains, which symbolically represent the depth of their religiosity. Both their jewelry and their religion are ostentatious and exteriorly valuable, but in fact false and of no value intrinsically.

Doña Remedios is a decent girl, educated in the fear of the Lord.<sup>95</sup> She is at first presented as a good Christian girl because she resists Rafael before marriage, although she desires him in a carnal manner.<sup>96</sup> She denies her natural instincts to serve human morality. And even after her marriage, she refuses to fulfill her marital duties because of her religious scruples.<sup>97</sup> Doña Remedios has been shown to be a good Christian girl according to the tenets of her faith. Symbolically, she represents

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93. Obras, i, 626.

94. Obras, i, 612-613.

95. Obras, i, 610.

96. Obras, i, 644.

97. Obras, i, 674.

Catholic womanhood as approved by the Church. The author destroys her value by contending that she is an intellectual pigmy: "ocultando tras la mansedumbre servicial una inteligencia más obtusa que la del padre, sin otras manifestaciones que la devoción y los escrúpulos en que la habían educado."<sup>98</sup>

Her faith is blind, she believes because she is told to believe; her faith is that of a conformist and not that of an intellectual who questions. Her father, Don Matías, is introduced as a dolt,<sup>99</sup> and his daughter is stated to be even more stupid than he is, although she is a very pious girl.

She is symbolically representative of Catholic womanhood, and as such, her faith is equated to her intelligence. Neither her intelligence nor her faith are of any value.

Leonor makes the final symbolical allusion when she refers to Rafael as a corpse.<sup>100</sup> Rafael, although a vehicle for the anti-clericalism of the author, is the Catholic champion in the Spanish Cortes. A corpse is a dead body,<sup>101</sup> an object containing no animation and of no future dynamic

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98. Obras, i, 636.

99. Obras, i, 639.

100. Obras, i, 685.

101. Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (New York, 1958), p. 331.

value as a living object. The Church is the Body of  
Christ,<sup>102</sup> which, when correlated symbolically with Rafael,  
is accorded the position of nothingness in action and in  
value.

Blasco Ibañez utilizes a variety of techniques  
in his anti-clerical postulations of Entre Naranjos. He  
depends mainly upon repugnance in religious descriptions;  
falseness in examples of piety; negative contrasts and  
comparisons correlated to religious value-producing  
figures; negativeness in symbolic presentations; satire  
and irony in conversation and logic versus the ridiculous  
absurdities in religious polemics. Intermingled among  
his techniques is a pervading atmosphere of depreciation  
and negative values.

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102. See the following references: Saint Augustine's Prayer Book (New York, 1959), p. 345. The Book of Common Prayer (Connecticut, 1960), p. 280. Stephen Neill, Anglicanism (London, 1958), p. 434.

## LA CATEDRAL

La Catedral is the author's principal work on anti-clericalism. All of the basic attack techniques of the author are encountered in this work, which is the most edifying in an anti-clerical sense. This work is different than the other two works studied, as the emphasis of the attacks assumes a different form. Although all of the works are didactic, this one becomes the most important didactically as the author works from within the Church. Essentially this is the important differentiating point; the other two works attack the Church from without and from a lay position. This work discredits the Church with attacks made by clergymen on their own Church and their own faith.

The main vehicle for the author's anti-church polemics is a trilogy of clerical personages: a cardinal, a henchman of the Church and a former candidate for the priesthood. This trilogy is aided by a host of minor characters skillfully woven into the action and also contributing to the basic unity of the work.

The use of descriptive techniques is extremely important in La Catedral. The author employs several different descriptive techniques which form a well-integrated composite by the termination of the action of the novel.

The work appears to be written with skill as each factor in his postulations is carefully developed so that it will mesh with another anti-church part. Descriptively, the work gradates towards a climax, each description forming a unity with the next one and all of them aiding in an anti-clerical unity.

As the entire work revolves around and within the Cathedral of Toledo, a description of the latter would be apropos: "salía de la sombra la immaculada blancura de la catedral toledana, la nitez de su piedra, que hace de ella el más alegre y hermoso de los templos."<sup>1</sup> Having established a light, airy, pleasant quality, the author continues to describe the cathedral even more enthusiastically: "se marcaban con toda su elegante y atrevida esbeltez las ochenta y ocho pilastras, robustos haces de columnas que suben audazmente cortando el espacio, blancos como si fuesen de nieve solidificada . . . con sus vidrieras que parecen jardines mágicos cubiertos de flores de luz."<sup>2</sup>

The description is designed to enhance the extrinsic value of the cathedral and seems to be at odds with the author's anti-clerical objectives. This is misleading, however, as the author stylistically first presents

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1. Vicente Blasco Ibañez, La Catedral (Madrid, 1961), p. 932. All subsequent references in this chapter to this novel will be to his Obras.

2. Obras, i, 932.

the cathedral in a positive manner and then contrasts its extrinsic value with an intrinsic one. It is also of interest to note that the author lends organic elements to an inorganic object: "La catedral era para Gabriel un gigantesco tumor que hinchaba la epidermis española como rastro de antiguas enfermedades. . . . No era un músculo capaz de desarrollo: era un absceso que guardaba la hora de ser extirpado o de disolverse por los gérmenes mortales que llevaba en su interior."<sup>3</sup>

A number of analogies may be extracted from this description by a comparison of the extrinsic with the intrinsic descriptive values. The salient effect here is a contrast of good versus bad, and of beauty versus ugliness. A repulsive effect is generated from this type of antithesis.

The splendor of the cathedral is contrasted with the squalor of its surroundings,<sup>4</sup> and with the wretched poverty of the beggars that frequent its portals to beg alms.<sup>5</sup> By making such a comparison, the author implies a nefarious correlation between the cathedral with its wealth and the seamy surrounding neighborhood with its unfortunate inhabitants.

A part of the splendor of the cathedral is its

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3. Obras, i, 1014.

4. Obras, i, 929.

5. Obras, i, 931.

religious art. The author correlates the religious statues and paintings with religion and then equates the objects themselves with belittling values: "o el Tato enseñaba a Gabriel la figurilla rechoncha de un fraile predicando con enormes orejas de burro."<sup>6</sup> The statue of Christ is treated in a like manner: "Jesús, con corona y manto de rey, flaco, estirado, con el aire enfermizo y mísero que los imagineros medievales daban a sus figuras para expresar la divina sublimidad."<sup>7</sup>

The importance of these two examples of disparagement by descriptive technique is that the former equates the clergymen literally with an asinine figure, while the latter pairs negative concepts with positive objects to their detriment: corona, manto, with rey versus flaco, estirado, enfermizo and mísero.

Instead of simply writing the word Christ, the author will add a series of modifying statements which in themselves are neutral until they are associated with the key word in the description. The key word here being Christ: "El tipo de suprema belleza . . . era el ajusticiado de Judea, el Cristo polvoriento y negruzco de las viejas catedrales, con la boca lívida, el tronco contraído y esquelético, los pies huesosos y derramando sangre, mucha sangre."<sup>8</sup>

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6. Obras, i, 981

7. Obras, i, 930.

8. Obras, i, 1017.

The observer of the novel is able to view the passing life of the cathedral as it is seen through the eyes of Gabriel Luna, the protagonist. It is of interest to note that his thoughts reflect the opinions and the thoughts of others who come to visit the cathedral. In this way a very ugly descriptive portrayal of Saint Christopher is presented.<sup>9</sup> The author's comments concerning the cathedral form a phalanx compact enough to be labeled a unity. They compose the base of the triangle of the author's descriptive methods. In order to complete the triangle and to unify the descriptive elements into the author's purposes in these presentations, I will examine the other two sides of the triangle. It is my contention that a progressive gradation towards a climax is present in Blasco Ibáñez's descriptions.

The cardinal is an important figure in these descriptions, if for no other reason than that of his high clerical office: "El buen jardinero saludaba . . . al cardenal . . . que hacía temblar a toda la diócesis con su genio acre y desabrido y sus arrogancias de revolucionario absolutista."<sup>10</sup>

The cardinal's personal qualities are described and they reflect his religiosity in a negative manner. The author continues with a development of the personality trait

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9. Obras, 1, 952.

10. Obras, 1, 943.

of pride: "Para él, quien llegaba a la silla de Toledo era un hombre perfecto, cuyos actos no se podían discutir, y hacía oídos sordos a las murmuraciones de canónigos y beneficiados."<sup>11</sup> As with the cathedral, descriptives are paired in an opposite way, but the author adds a refinement to several of them. Both "perfect" and "man" could be said to have positive value, but when they are coupled and then correlated with the cardinal, a negative value results.

The cardinal is used as an anti-clerical vehicle when his thoughts are voiced to his old friend the cathedral gardener, who serves as a type of straightman for these anti-clerical contentions. The cardinal tells him how happy he was with his mistress while he was a young bishop,<sup>12</sup> and how he is afraid that greedy monks and nuns will try to get their hands on the money he is going to leave to the fruit of his illicit love, his daughter.<sup>13</sup>

The third side of the triangle is formed by the cathedral sacristan who is the cathedral bully and self-appointed guardian of maintaining the faith among the lay workers of the church and ferreting out heretical ideas from among them. His physical description is made repugnant by a reiteration of negative adjectives: "Era

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11. Obras, i, 943.

12. Obras, i, 1041.

13. Obras, i, 1042.

Eusebio, el sacristán . . . , su corpachón mantecoso, la granujenta, de frente angosta y rugosa, orlada de pelos hirsutos, y el cuello taurino, que apenas si le permitía respirar, convirtiendo sus aspiraciones en un resoplido de fluelle."<sup>14</sup> Eusebio, the cathedral sacristan, is a usurer: "sus vicios eran puramente de eclesiástico.

Ahorrraba en secreto, con esa avaricia fría y dominadora de la gente de iglesia en todos los tiempos . . . don Antolín, de sus ahorros que dedicaba a la usura."<sup>15</sup> This is an important point as the vice of usury is presented as a general preoccupation among the clergy and their staff. Eusebio rationalizes that the Church is poor and as he also is poor, and a good server of God, it is his Christian duty to gouge his clients to better serve God by giving the money to the Church.<sup>16</sup>

The climactic part of these three sections on descriptions is the presentation of all three as an instrument of nefarious machinations. The author begins with one contention and adds to it to form a broader concept of the three figures. They are held together and form a unity as none of them could exist without the others and still be effectively anti-clerical.

They all form a distinct part of the Church and

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14. Obras, i, 932.

15. Obras, i, 966.

16. Obras, i, 966.

they all are negative in value. The three of them represent Christianity in the novel and by equating them with Christianity, the Christian faith becomes a negative value itself.

Let us consider another type of descriptive technique of the author for a moment. Although this section could have been included with the author's preceding descriptive techniques, it has been placed here in immediate succession to them because it does not form an entity as do the others. The technique will be examined from three points: one, the descriptive qualities; two, its structure and three, its anti-clerical intent.

A narrative description of a statue of the Virgin results in a reduction of the value of miracles: "Si en mi lugar estuviera un devoto, creería que la Virgin ríe unos momentos y después llora. Con un poco de imaginación y de fe, ¡he aquí un milagro!"<sup>17</sup> The Virgin is also compared with the pagan goddess Venus: "Estos caprichos han sido una mina inagotable para los sacerdotes. También las Venus de otros tiempos cambiaban la expresión de su cara, riendo o llorando, a gusto de los fieles, como una imagen cristiana."<sup>18</sup>

The author uses como to equate Venus with the Virgin. If the passage is analyzed on another plane, the

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17. Obras, 1, 1065.

18. Obras, 1, 1065.

value of the pagan goddess Venus is the same as that of the Virgin Mary. The "miraculous quality" of the statue is derived from the flickering light rather than from a supernatural force. By suggesting that any power of the statue would be due to both the credulous imagination of the faithful and to the innate propensities of a candle, the statue, miracles, and religious value are all lowered.

As a minimizing technique, the use of similes is quite common in Blasco Ibáñez's works. Basically, the author will select an object of negative value and couple it with a religious one by using a simile: "al terminar la misa, el órgano comenzó a rugir una marcha desordenada y ruidosa, algo así como una danza salvaje, mientras se ordenaba la procesion."<sup>19</sup> Blasco Ibáñez does not always seek to equate the two objects as one and the same, but he does attempt to associate them as kindred spirits.

Even when the author purports a pro-clerical value for the Church, the simile is effective as an anti-clerical device: "La iglesia era para ellos como una bestia enorme y dormida en cuyo regazo encontraban tranquilidad y defensa."<sup>20</sup> The author equates the qualities of an enormous beast with those of the Church. Although peace and protection are positive values, the reader must look beyond them to a concept of an enormous beast.

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19. Obras, i, 1031.

20. Obras, i, 1053.

The author debases the religious value of a processional statue not by directly correlating it with a lesser value, but by suggesting that such a correlation does exist: "Temblaba toda ella desde la base a la cúspide, Gabriel caminaba agarrado a una traviesa del carro, con la vista fija en los timoneles, sintiendo en sus piernas el roce de los que empujaban aquel artefacto semejante a los carros de los ídolos indostánicos." <sup>21</sup> In this instance, the religious object itself is not attacked, but a similarity is shown between the two objects. The concept behind the statue is what the simile indirectly attacks.

Although the use of a direct simile is not involved here, the author manages to transpose value from a mundane object to that of a religious object by directly correlating them: "-Oye Luis,- me dijo -y acuérdate bien de esto. En el mundo no hay más que un Señor: nuestro Señor Jesucristo, y dos señoritos: Galileo y Beethoven." <sup>22</sup>

The importance of satire in the author's anti-clerical presentations cannot be overlooked. Often his satire is crude, but it is very effective in achieving his anti-clerical purpose: "se presentaba en ella a bendecir los panes de media libra . . . que se repartían entre los

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21. Obras, i, 1032.

22. Obras, i, 971.

pobres. Seiscientas fanegas de trigo . . . se gastaban todos los años en esta limosna; pero era en los tiempos que la catedral cobraba todos los años más de once millones de renta." <sup>23</sup> He casts doubt upon the pecuniary generosity of the Church by satirically contrasting their immense income with their pragmatic almsgiving. A comparison of the cathedral's income with its charity is intended to be taken in a satirical manner. <sup>24</sup>

The same effect is achieved with the cathedral gardener's angry reference to the government's current pension of 1200 pesetas a month for the maintenance of the cathedral, when its former income was 6,000,000 pesetas a month. <sup>25</sup> The two financial contrasts have such a large margin of difference that the benevolent image of the Church must suffer as a consequence.

Gabriel's brother prayed to the Virgin to aid his brother, and he claims that she did help him, as Gabriel

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23. Obras, i, 933.

24. As a basis of comparison, the following might be of interest. As the current rents of the cathedral are 1200 pesetas, and once were 6,000,000 a month, the 11,000,000 in annual rents must refer to reales. The real was the equivalent of 12.5 U.S. cents (see Webster's, p. 1210), and even considering the price of today's American price-supported wheat, which is \$1.87 the bushel (see The World Almanac and Book of Facts, p. 657), the purchase of 600 bushels would only amount to 1,152 U.S. dollars. At 12.5 U.S. cents per real, 11,000,000 reales would be worth 880,000 dollars.

25. Obras, i, 945.

was not shot for his social activities; he was only de-  
 ported from Spain as an undesirable.<sup>26</sup> The efficacious-  
 ness of prayer is questioned satirically with a presenta-  
 tion of its lack of value. The author's method is the  
 simple expediency of correlating one value with a ludi-  
 crous effect.

He deliberately employs direct allusions to some  
 famous man with the purpose of satirically presenting the  
 clergy as ignorant: "según dice el maestro de capilla,  
 que sabe mucho de tales cosas, a un tal Diente o no sé  
 cómo, que hace siglos vivía en Italia y bajó al infierno,  
 escribiendo su viaje en verso."<sup>27</sup> The value of the clergy  
 as an intellectual figure is scorned by an overt reference  
 to their stupidity.

The cathedral gardener becomes angry when he re-  
 flects upon the hard duty performed by the early warring  
 bishops of the Church: "¡Ay! ¡Y para esto habían peleado  
 con los moros tantos señores arzobispos de Toledo, con-  
 quistando villas, asaltando castillos y acotando dehesas,  
 que pasaban a ser propiedad de la catedral, contribuyendo  
 al mayor esplendor del culto a Dios!"<sup>28</sup>

His anger increases as he relates to what purpose  
 all this difficultly gained wealth is now being put: "¡Y

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26. Obras, i, 935.

27. Obras, i, 968.

28. Obras, i, 943.

para caer en las manos puercas de los enemigos de todo lo santo habían testado tantos fieles en la hora de la muerte, reinas, magnates y simples particulares, dejando lo más sano de su fortuna a la Santa Iglesia Primada, con el deseo de salvar su alma."<sup>29</sup> The passage is satirical as the gardener emphasizes a negative value which he maintains is a positive one. The anger with which he demeans the government which is seizing properties left to the Church in return for the salvation of their souls,<sup>30</sup> satirically is a misrepresentation of a value which the Church contends is valid.

An archbishop who took a wife became angry as people were accusing him of not keeping his vows of chastity.<sup>31</sup> In order to prove that these tales were lies, the archbishop placed burning coals in his vestments while he said mass and he did not burn: "El arzobispo Montano, que vive con su mujer, indignado por la murmuración, pone carbones encendidos entre sus vestiduras sagradas mientras dice la misa y no se quema, demostrando con este milagro la pureza de su vida."<sup>32</sup>

The author states that the archbishop does have a wife and then he presents the archbishop as angry over the people's comments about his carnal relations. The

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29. Obras, i, 943.

30. Obras, i, 943.

31. Obras, i, 948.

32. Obras, i, 948.

archbishop then proceeds to prove his chastity with a miracle. The value of both the prelate and of miracles is negated in a satirical manner, as the archbishop is not chaste and the purported miracle was employed to prove a false premise. Both the miracle and the cleric are thus debased.

Santiago, the patron saint of Spain is satirically presented as a saint whose good deeds included trampling Moslems to death under the feet of his charger.<sup>33</sup> The actions of the saint would only be considered as having religious value if crushing Moslems to death were a positive value. The implication is that said action has a religious value, although satirically it is a negative one.

The author presents satire by asking a question to which only a ludicrous answer could be given: "¿Ves estas otras que son rojas? Pues sólo cuestan seis reales, y con ellas pueden visitarse las sacristías, el guardarropa, las capillas de don Alvaro de Luna y del cardenal Albornoz, y la Sala Capitular, con sus dos filas de retratos de arzobispos, que sean una maravilla. ¿Quién no se rasca el bolsillo por ver tales portentos?"<sup>34</sup>

The author employs irony along somewhat similar lines. The sacristan of the cathedral maintains that the

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33. Obras, i, 950.

34. Obras, i, 967.

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Church is as poor as a rat, while in the very area in which he is speaking, stands a very valuable statue: "la falda y el manto se ahuecaban con la ampulosidad de un miriñaque, y sobre las tocas lucía una corona enorme como un morrión, empequeñeciéndole la cara. El oro, las perlas, los diamantes, brillaban sobre sus vestiduras. Llevaba pendientes y pulseras de gran valor."<sup>36</sup>

Also, just behind the statue and to their immediate rear, is the Chapel of the Octave which is a treasure house: "la capilla del Octavo, llena de reliquias en vasos de oro y arquillas de esmalte y marfil; con la magnificencia del Tesoro, que amontonaba las perlas y las esmeraldas con tanta profusión como si fuesen guijarros."<sup>37</sup>

By contrasting the two scenes with the picture painted by the sacristan, the irony of the situation is apparent. On the one hand the Church is pleading poverty while on the other it stands amid scenes of immense wealth. The author uses two conflicting scenes to deny the religious truth of the sacristan's statements. The pro-clerical contention is verbal and hence only conjecture, whereas the anti-clerical contention is based on undeniable visual evidence. Also, the author overemphasizes the tangible treasure of the Church. Instead of merely

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35. Obras, 1, 938.

36. Obras, 1, 1065.

37. Obras, 1, 953-954.

mentioning a vessel, it must be of gold; instead of simply mentioning jewels, they must be enumerated and glossed over. The minor point of the sacristan has no value when compared to the visible opulence of the Church.

The author establishes negative value in religion by contrasting the needs of the country with the desires of the Church: "hay piedra para iglesias y nuevos conventos, nunca para diques y pantanos. Se levantan campanarios y se cortan los árboles, que atraen la lluvia."<sup>38</sup> The scene is ironical as there is a choice between pragmatic value and religious value. The religious value triumphs, but is overtly made the poorer and the more harmful choice as it contains no pragmatic value.

The Church has been shown to be wealthy, and yet she does little to alleviate human misery due to poverty. The son of the cathedral shoemaker is slowly dying of hunger because the Church will not pay him a living wage in return for his services.<sup>39</sup> It is indeed ironic that in the midst of wealth, the sacristan can only philosophize that the child's death is God's will.<sup>40</sup> Gabriel, as the author's anti-clerical vehicle, contrasts the two scenes in outrage: "-Tú que lo sabes todo: ¿verdad que ha muerto de hambre?- Y el Tato, con su impetuosidad escandalosa,

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38. Obras, i, 1012.

39. Obras, i, 1045-1046.

40. Obras, i, 1046.

decía a gritos: -¡No hay justicia en el mundo! ¿Esto se ha de arreglar! ¿Mire usted que morir de hambre una criatura en una casa donde corre el dinero y tantos tíos se visten de oro! . . ."<sup>41</sup> The old man's answer is that there is not justice in the Church, as people starve while the Church is wealthy.

In order to aid the anti-clerical action of the novel, the author employs narrative in a variety of ways. In this instance he uses irony for his anti-clerical polemic. Another aspect of these two scenes is that, ironically, the Church is allegedly responsible for the child's death. The allusion is an indirect one; that the Church is responsible for the child's death insofar as it did nothing with its wealth to prevent it. Hunger, of course, is the direct cause of the child's death.

The bulk of anti-clericalism in La Catedral, consists of polemics between Gabriel, a young priest, and Gabriel's lay friends on the cathedral staff. Religious discussions do take place between a Catholic champion and the anti-clerical champion Gabriel, but in some instances the author uses no other technique than direct narration without any attempt to disguise his intentions, and he does this by using a straightman to reinforce his contentions. The effect of his postulations is somewhat

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41. Obras, i, 1046.

negated as they obviously are propagandistic and reflect his values.

Although the young priest also serves as an anti-clerical vehicle, his contentions are more effective than those of Gabriel, as the priest does represent the priesthood and religion. The author's development of this priest is also important because he is first presented as mildly anti-clerical and gradates towards stronger and more outspoken anti-clericalism.

The young priest says that he was induced to enter the priesthood because he was impressed by the Church's theatrical pomp,<sup>42</sup> but he soon became disillusioned with listening to complaining women all day who spend their time gossiping and inventing scandals to tell to their confessor.<sup>43</sup> The complaining and gossipy women, who are also liars, are nuns, and the young priest is their chaplain.

The author nullifies the religious value of these people by coupling depreciating adjectives to their actions. Any religious value that these nuns might possess is simply ignored and they are equated with vulgarity, commonness and reprehensible behavior. Besides, the priest feels that seven duros a month is just not enough compensation.

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42. Obras, i, 1021-1022.

43. Obras, i, 1022.

to endure their actions. He implies that more money might make this situation more bearable. The priest, the nuns, and their faith suffer devaluation because they are presented in a situation as having the negative worldly values of falseness and selfishness.

Father Martín presents the Church as a business in which a few become wealthy while many starve. Essentially, the author's problem is to transport the Church out of its religious orbit and into one of negative value. This he accomplishes by making the Church more mundane, ineffectual and even vulgar, by correlating it with a less regal, a less divine, a less admirable object. In this instance, it is equated with any type of tyrannical and self-interest organization: "-Tiene usted razón, Gabriel; la época de la Iglesia dominante pasó ya. Aún tiene en sus ubres leche suficiente para todos; sólo que son muy pocos los que se agarran a ellas y se hartan hasta reventar, mientras los demás mueren de hambre-." <sup>45</sup> Although the Church is not given human characteristics, that is, personified, it is given the characteristic of a bovine creature, a cow in this instance. The priest continues with a discussion of the non-democratic aspects of the Church: "-Hay para morir de risa cuando hablan de igualdad y del espíritu

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44. Obras, 1, 1021-1022.

45. Obras, 1, 1022.

democrático de la Iglesia. Una mentira: en ninguna institución impera un despotismo tan cruel-.<sup>46</sup>"

Father Martín says that the Church will crush any-<sup>47</sup> one who tries to be a man, and that the Church has forty-one millions in revenue from the state for its own use, whereas the state spends only nine millions for education and one million for the relief of the poor.<sup>48</sup> He sums up his argument by stating that the Roman Church in Spain receives three hundred million pesetas annually from both the state and from the people, the Church's faithful,<sup>49</sup> which is twice what the army costs.<sup>50</sup>

This is an important point, as the Church is continually claiming to be poverty-stricken.<sup>51</sup> He says that the priests are poor, so where does all this wealth go?<sup>52</sup> A partial answer to this question lies in an examination of the prices paid by the archbishop for his personal wines: "son costumbres que se trajo de Andalucía cuando fue obispo . . . . Y el vino de primera, tío; lo sé por un familiar suyo. ¡De a cincuenta duros la arroba!"<sup>53</sup>

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46. Obras, i, 1022.

47. Obras, i, 1022.

48. Obras, i, 1022.

49. Obras, i, 1023.

50. Obras, i, 1023.

51. Obras, i, 1023.

52. Obras, i, 1023.

53. Obras, i, 987. A duro is now the equivalent of 45 U.S. cents. An arroba is the equivalent of 17.04 liquid quarts. Therefore, the Archbishop's wine cost 22.50 U.S. dollars the lot. See Webster's Dictionary, p. 1344.

The Church is presented as mysterious, as sinister, and he implies that all of the Church's activities are not done in the name of religious benevolence, but rather so that a few may become wealthy. Martín disparages his own priesthood by saying that he is neither a man nor a woman, only a sort of intermediate form wearing petticoats and dressed as a lugubrious doll.<sup>54</sup>

Negativism, repulsion, nefarious machinations, and self-despise are employed by the priest to give the reader an insight into the inner workings of the Church, its prelates, and the feelings of the minor clergy as seen through the eyes of one of their peers. These contentions coming from a priest elevate the negativism of his contentions as they purportedly represent the Church's own opinions of itself.

Father Martín equates Christianity with paganism by paralleling the rise and fall of the two religions.<sup>55</sup> He insinuates that both Christianity and paganism are of like value as they both evolved from man's need for the supernatural and he delineates the parallel similarities in their evolution and development.<sup>56</sup> The Church is harmful and dangerous, if not evil, as she subjugates and regulates the lives of men.<sup>57</sup> He implies that the Church

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54. Obras, 1, 1023.

55. Obras, 1, 1023-1024.

56. Obras, 1, 1024.

57. Obras, 1, 1024.

does not want mankind healthy and comfortable, as man is  
 irreligious when he achieves such a condition.<sup>58</sup>

The author implies these negative qualities by correlating the Church's actions for Christian welfare with those of self-preservation and self-interest.

The young priest's narrative has reached its climax. His final act of leaving the priesthood<sup>59</sup> to go out into the world as an ex-cleric is anti-climactic. Rather than a narrative presentation of some new element to show to the reader, the priest's decision is fore-ordained. The scene is necessary, however, to hold the anti-clerical unity of the priest's role together, and also, for the value of his summation of the Church as a personal value.

The author treats the Church in a nebulous manner, relying not on logic, but on passion. His final condemnation of the Church is that its dogma is absurd<sup>60</sup> and its history a tissue of crimes and violence.<sup>61</sup>

Although the values expressed are negative, the emphasis has been changed from that of lesser negativism: selfishness, avarice and ignorance, to that of a greater, and a more potent negativism: cruelty, criminal activity, and a danger to society. The young priest will again

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58. Obras, i, 1024.

59. Obras, i, 1061.

60. Obras, i, 1061.

61. Obras, i, 1061.

become a man by rending his cassock, his shroud as he puts it, so that it may not again be used: "¿Ve usted este disfraz? Hoy lo llevo por última vez. Mañana gozaré la primera alegría de mi vida, rasgando esta mortaja en pedazos pequeños, muy pequeños, para que nadie la pueda utilizar."<sup>62</sup> Symbolically, Spain could be this man, and the Church could be his cassock. In order to create something new, the priest must first destroy the old.

A constant theme in the author's polemics, is that Moorish Spain was more charitable, more benevolent, and more progressive than was Christian Spain.<sup>63</sup> In order to pursue this line of reasoning further, one must first assume that Moorish Spain and the Spanish concept of Mohammedism are negative values, at least for a Spanish Christian. This assumption is based on the war between the Christians and the Moors in Spain from 718 to 1492.<sup>64</sup> A war of over seven hundred years' duration, which resulted in a national fervor against the Moslems and which finally led to their expulsion from Spain.<sup>65</sup>

A brief perusal of the statements of Father Vargas Orozco in La Gloria de don Ramiro,<sup>66</sup> gives one an idea of

62. Obras, i, 1061.

63. Obras, i, 947.

64. Chandler, pp. 11-12. See also Del Río, p. 481, and Adams, pp. 14-18.

65. Adams, p. 90.

66. Enrique Larreta, La Gloria de don Ramiro (Madrid, 1960), pp. 51-57.

a rather common Spanish attitude (although not the only one) towards the Moors,<sup>67</sup> and a Moorish attitude towards the Spaniards: "uno de ellos, al regresar, tuvo que descargar su vientre, y habiendo hecho una cruz de dos astillas de roble, la clavó bien derecha en la inmundicia, y dej<sup>68</sup>óla." This is a very ugly picture that is given to the reader by the author. To show his contempt, the Moor commits sacrilege by defiling the Christian Cross.

In order to present his polemics concerning the positive value of the Moslems versus the negative value of the Christians, the author narrates the historical events contained in the work as if he were pro-clerical: "Al sobrevenir la invasión sarracena se reanuda la serie de los arzobispos perseguidos. No temen ya por su vida, como en los tiempos de la intransigencia romana. Los musulmanes no dan martirio y respetan las creencias de los vencidos."<sup>69</sup> He weaves a narrative of anti-clericalism with a scene containing misrepresentation and double-talk. A clerical value is presented as positive, but it is actually negative. The author negates the value by correlating it with the negative value of the Moslem object which is really positive. The roles and actions of both Moslem and Christian are in reality reversed although the narrative claims the positive role for the Church.

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67. Larreta, p. 53.

68. Larreta, p. 53.

69. Obras, 1, 948.

The author continues with warlike prelates who serve God by killing Moslems, <sup>70</sup> who lie and cheat, <sup>71</sup> and whose religiosity appears to consist of adding properties to the Church's patrimony. <sup>72</sup> Although persecuted, the Moors ask the king not to punish the Archbishop of Toledo for his perfidious actions towards the Moors and who will not revolt, trusting in the king's justice.

The reader is confronted with a series of scenes which the author purports to be historical and being historical, are presented objectively. The two faiths are presented in the light of their diverse reactions in different situations; the positive value being non-Christian and the negative value being Christian.

After the expulsion of the Moors, the prelates continued to amass wealth for the Church, but this time their efforts were turned against their fellow Christians. <sup>74</sup>

With the expulsion of the Moors and the Jews, the country suffered economically and began to degenerate: "¿Y Toledo? A fines del siglo XV empleaba cincuenta mil obreros en sus tejidos de seda y de lana y sus talleres de armas, y a más los curtidores, los plateros, los guanteros y los joyeros. A fines del XVII no tenía apenas

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70. Obras, i, 948.

71. Obras, i, 948.

72. Obras, i, 948.

73. Obras, i, 948.

74. Obras, i, 949.

quince mil habitantes."<sup>75</sup> The implication of this scene is that with the Christianization of Spain came decay.

Christianity is considered negative while non-Christianity, or in this case, Mohammedism, is considered positive. The author proves this contention by contrasting the growth of religious institutions with Spain's economic decline:

"Sevilla, que en el siglo XV poseía diez y seis mil telares de seda, llegó en el XVII a no tener más que sesenta y cinco."<sup>76</sup>

After presenting the economic decline, the author cites the reader a contrast of religious growth which is alleged to be the cause of this economic decline. The author does not directly state that the growth of religion in Seville was the reason for its decline economically; he simply presents the two facts in a contrast and alleges that there is a correlation between them: "Bien es verdad que, en cambio, su clero catedral era de ciento diez y siete canónigos, y tenía sesenta y ocho conventos con más de cuatro mil frailes y catorce mil clérigos en la diócesis."<sup>77</sup> The author does not even state that this number of clergy was not always in Seville, he does not have to, as he merely alleges a connection.

The essence of the historical narrative is that

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75. Obras, i, 1009.

76. Obras, i, 1009.

77. Obras, i, 1009.

the author seeks to divorce anti-clerical position from the narrative by maintaining that it is an historical, factual concept that he is dealing with rather than an invention of the author. Apart from the anti-clerical historical elements in the narrative, the author debases Christianity on an axiological scale by placing it on a lower level than Mohammedism. An anti-clerical image of the Church is obtained by the allegorical rendition of the Church's actions as contrasted to their purported intent. Although there is nothing very witty about the presentation of the historical events, they are construed to misrepresent what they purport to represent; so they are epigrammatic in form.

An important element in the author's anti-clerical polemics is the use of logic. Although the major portion of Blasco Ibáñez's logic is syllogistic, several examples must be considered as they are important to the author's point of view.

Syllogistically, they usually begin with a general statement, progress through a maze of deductive reasoning and terminate in a particular or more specific conclusion than the general premise: "-Entonces- . . . ¿qué es lo que nos enseñan ahí adentro?- -Nada,- contestó Gabriel. -¿Y qué somos nosotros los hombres?- dijo el perrero. -Nada-. -¿Y los gobernantes, las leyes y las costumbres de la

sociedad?- preguntó el campanero. -Nada, nada-." From this premise, Gabriel, reflecting the author's point of view, elaborates the theme into a development of syllogistic logic: "-¿Dios?- preguntó con voz dulce. -¿Dónde está Dios?- -Dios somos nosotros y todo lo que nos rodea . . . Es la materia, que vive animada por la fuerza que reside en ella, con absoluta unidad, sin separación ni dualidades. El hombre es Dios; el mundo es Dios también-."<sup>79</sup>

Having summed up his ideas, the author proceeds a step further and develops the syllogism into a didactic and philosophical approach as regards the reality of God.<sup>80</sup> The most important part of the passage is a direct refutation of the existence of God: "ese Dios vengativo y caprichoso surgió del cerebro del hombre, y el cerebro es el órgano más reciente del ser humano, el último en desarrollarse . . . Cuando inventaron a Dios, la Tierra existía millones de años."<sup>81</sup>

The Biblical theory of the origin of the world is logically attacked in the same manner,<sup>82</sup> with the added refinement of a negative portrayal of the authors of this theory: "Os han enseñado un origen del mundo mezquino y rudimentario, el que imaginaron unos cuantos judíos

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78. Obras, i, 1028.

79. Obras, i, 1028.

80. Obras, i, 1029.

81. Obras, i, 1029.

82. Obras, i, 1026.

haraposos e ignorantes en un rincón del Asia, y que, escrito en un libro, ha sido aceptado hasta nuestros días." <sup>83</sup> The author also presents an apparent error in the Biblical theory itself: "Y dijo Dios: Sea la luz, y fue la luz . . . y fue la tarde y la mañana un día . . . . E hizo Dios dos grandes lumbreras; la lumbrera mayor para que señorease el día . . . y fue la tarde y la mañana el día cuarto." <sup>84</sup>

This statement was compared with an English Bible to ascertain whether a linguistical error had been made. <sup>85</sup> No such error was found.

Gabriel explains the logic of the polemic to his fellow cathedral workers: "Ese Dios personal . . . que trabaja seis días y forma todo lo existente. El primer día 'crea la luz' y el cuarto el Sol y las estrellas. ¿De dónde salía, pues, la luz si aún no se había creado el Sol? ¿Es que hay distinción entre una y otro?" The author takes a Biblical tale of the creation of the world and states that this is an example of Christian mythology. The fable is an attempt to explain the origin of the world and does seem to be ridiculous when taken literally. Gabriel and Father Antolín discuss the merits of

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83. Obras, i, 1026.

84. Santa Biblia (Mexico, 1957), p. 1

85. Holy Bible (Cleveland, 1954), p. 5.

86. Obras, i, 1026.

Catholicism. In this instance, both Gabriel and Father Antolín are vehicles of anti-clericalism. Although Father Antolín's role is purportedly that of defending the Church, just the opposite effect is created due to his passivity and to his role as a straightman for Gabriel.<sup>87</sup>

Gabriel claims that as Spain becomes more Catholic, she also becomes poorer, more ignorant, and less populated.<sup>88</sup> To prove his latter point, Gabriel enumerates a long listing of the clergy in the Spain of the seventeenth century:

España tenía once mil conventos, con más de cien mil frailes y cuarenta mil monjas, y a esto había que añadir ciento sesenta y ocho mil sacerdotes y los innumerables servidores dependientes de la Iglesia, como alguaciles, familiares, carceleros y escribanos del Santo Oficio, sacristanes, mayor-domos, buleros, santeros, ermitaños, demandaderos, seises, cantores, legos, novicios, ¡y qué sé yo cuánta gente más.<sup>89</sup>

Some of the above professions, such as guarding convicts, serve only as a depreciating value for the Church as the author classifies them along with monks and nuns. He imparts the same value to the clergy that he does to the jailers and the others by correlating them in the same category.

In return for the addition of these people to the institutions of the Church, the author says that Spain

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87. Obras, i, 1008.

88. Obras, i, 1008.

89. Obras, i, 1008.

suffered a population decline: "en cambio, la nación, desde treinta millones de habitantes, había bajado a siete millones en poco más de dos siglos."<sup>90</sup> The author continues with this same idea, and implies that the Inquisition was a prime factor in this decline.<sup>91</sup>

Gabriel continues the polemics by suggesting that there was a correlation between the rise of religion and the decline of progress in Spain: "España era cada vez más católica, más pobre y más bárbara."<sup>92</sup> With the advent of Catholicism, knowledge declines. Although the geography of Spain might not be known to her scholars, the geography of Purgatory and of Heaven are well known to everyone.<sup>93</sup> The ideas that Father Antolín and Gabriel discuss which relate to the Church are a continuation and a further development of presenting a clerical contention as if it were positive, whereas the situation to which it alludes is ludicrous and of a negative depreciating nature. In this way, the Church's values are subtly minimized. The second part of this technique consists of the analogy that the opposite position is that of anti-clericalism and therefore positive.

The better farms were in the hands of convents

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90. Obras, i, 1008.

91. Obras, i, 1008.

92. Obras, i, 1008.

93. Obras, i, 1008.

rather than under the control of the starving farmers, the  
highways were infested with bandits who would take refuge  
in monasteries when pursued,<sup>94</sup> and who were even welcomed  
by the clergy because they would order masses said for  
the sins that they had just committed.<sup>95</sup>  
<sup>96</sup>

The clergy advised Charles II that it would be  
preferable to allow the French to occupy Spanish pos-  
sessions in Flanders rather than to allow the Dutch to  
garrison the towns, as the Dutch were Protestants while  
the enemy French were Catholics.<sup>97</sup> At the University of  
Salamanca, Torres de Villaroel could not find a single  
work on geography, and his students informed him that  
mathematics was a kind of sorcery.<sup>98</sup>

Philip IV was petitioned by the doctors of Madrid  
to allow refuse to remain in the streets as this would  
have a salubrious effect upon the air.<sup>99</sup> The learned theo-  
logical philosophers state that they would rather err with  
Saint Clement, Saint Basil, and with Saint Augustine than  
agree with Descartes and Newton.<sup>100</sup>

And while the people died of starvation, the  
Church, the master of more than half the country and of

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| 94. <u>Obras</u> , i, 1008.  | 95. <u>Obras</u> , i, 1008. |
| 96. <u>Obras</u> , i, 1008.  | 97. <u>Obras</u> , i, 1008. |
| 98. <u>Obras</u> , i, 1009.  | 99. <u>Obras</u> , i, 1009. |
| 100. <u>Obras</u> , i, 1009. |                             |

most of the wealth in Spain, gave charity in the form of  
 soup to those that were strong enough to carry it away.<sup>101</sup>

The convents and the monasteries used some of their wealth  
 to build asylums and hospitals where the people died of  
 misery, "pero seguro de entrar en el cielo."<sup>102</sup>

Segovia, where 40,000 people were once employed  
 in the manufacture of cloth, declined in population to the  
 point of containing only 15,000 inhabitants.<sup>103</sup> The items  
 quoted here are only a few of the ones listed by the author,  
 and have been selected on the basis of being representative  
 examples. Gabriel, who continues with many more examples  
 of the type quoted above,<sup>104</sup> also give us his solution  
 for the evils of clericalism: anti-clericalism: "El  
 anticlericalismo era el único remedio para tanta ruina."<sup>105</sup>

The importance of all of these seemingly loosely  
 related events is that the author is blaming the Church  
 for Spain's decline. The author is insinuating that all  
 of these calamities befell Spain as she became more  
 Catholic. He proves this point by contending that these  
 evils can only be remedied by employing anti-clericalism.  
 Catholicism is suggested to be the cause of these national  
 disasters, these evils, and this general ignorance as

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101. Obras, i, 1009.

102. Obras, i, 1009.

103. Obras, i, 1009.

104. Obras, i, 1010-1012.

105. Obras, i, 1010.

clericalism is the opposite of anti-clericalism.

There are two notable parts to his literary techniques here: number one, he attaches a rider onto the tail of a positive clerical sentence to negate it: "-Eso es verdad- dijo el Vara de Plata. -No hay fe: nadie es capaz de hacer un sacrificio por la casa de Dios. Sólo en la hora de la muerte, cuando entra el miedo, se acuerdan algunos de ayudarnos con su fortuna-." <sup>106</sup> Essentially, the author begins with a pro-clerical or a neutral idea, and devalues it by adding on to the idea some concept or explanation which changes either the pro-clerical motives or contentions from a positive to a negative value. In technique number two, he presents us with a series of negative events and then couples clericalism to them as the prime factor in their having been evolved and as the prime factor in their continued development.

This technique is somewhat unusual for Blasco Ibáñez, since he usually presents a clerical contention positively and then couples some negative qualities to it, rather than vice versa.

The Church in general, and the Cathedral in particular may symbolically be linked with the assessment of value made by Gabriel's partisans concerning the statue of the Virgin on the high altar of the cathedral: "De nada

sirven a ese pedazo de palo las joyas que lo cubren. Ni come, ni siente frío en el invierno, y nosotros somos unos miserables. Tú mismo lo has dicho, Gabriel, contemplando nuestra pobreza. Nuestros hijos mueren de hambre sobre las rodillas de la madre, mientras los ídolos se cubren de riquezas." <sup>107</sup> In some instances the author uses personification to aid his anti-clerical contentions, <sup>108</sup> but in this instance, by not giving the statue human elements, it is debased and so is the Church. The situation, as presented by the author is ludicrous, but of anti-clerical value as the human beings are portrayed as negative, when they are correlated with the Church's statue.

The final arguments of the author consist of two strong statements calling religion an invention of man: "me convenzo, oyéndote, de que es algo así como una pamplina inventada por los listos para que los infelices nos conformemos con las miserias de la tierra esperando el cielo. No está mal discurrido. Al fin, los que mueren y no encuentran el cielo no vendrán a quejarse." <sup>109</sup> The anti-clerical language used in the narrative hinges on the author's linking together a series of words which have implied disbelief. Pamplina, inventada, listos and discurrido are words whose concepts imply this disbelief.

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107. Obras, i, 1067.

108. Obras, i, 1014.

109. Obras, i, 1021.

A second example of this type of technique is stronger as it is more direct and contends that this view is the truth rather than a suggestion of the truth: "la inmortalidad del alma era una ilusión del orgullo humano, que explotaban las religiones, haciendo de esta mentira su fundamento." <sup>110</sup> He makes this interesting point by pluralizing religion equating Christianity with other religions; paganism, ones held to be false by Christianity, etcetera.

The second argument is a scientific one alleging that man is the product of animal evolution rather than a product of God: "-A mí- decía -me enorgullece más mi origen animal, ser un descendiente histórico de seres inferiores, que haber salido imperfecto de las manos de un Dios torpe." <sup>111</sup>

It is my contention that La Catedral, from beginning to end, is a dynamic, anti-clerical work. In the following chapter, the conclusions that have been extracted from these three anti-clerical works will be reviewed.

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110. Obras, i, 1050.

111. Obras, i, 1052.

## CONCLUSIONS

The anti-clericalism of Blasco Ibáñez transcends anti-clericalism to the point of becoming anti-religious and atheistic. Helen S. Nicholson has also noticed this aspect of Blasco Ibáñez's novels. "The Cathedral and The Intruder may be classed together as springing from Blasco's atheism, his deep-rooted antipathy to all religion and consequently to clericalism and the Church. He is anti-religious rather than anti-Catholic. Religion he would abolish entirely."<sup>1</sup>

The essence of the methods of Blasco Ibáñez lies in his continual depreciation of clerical values. He presents negative religious values by overwhelming the reader with his techniques. Even when the clerical personage is purported to have positive value, the author will devalue him by coupling a negative value, stronger than the clerical one to this clerical value.

Although a great deal of the methods employed by the author are obvious, he does make an attempt at times to operate on a dual plane by employing logic and symbolism in his examples.

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1. Helen S. Nicholson, The Novel of Protest and The Spanish Republic (Tucson, 1939), p. 5.

Negativism is a key to the understanding of the author's techniques, as the author equates religion with negativism. There are very few positive elements in his anti-clericalism, and they deal mainly with his atheistic polemics. The only other example of positive elements are really equivocations as the clerical positive elements contain negative qualities.

The three novels have very little plot and are really nothing more than a series of anti-clerical scenes. The series of little episodes evolve around a central character that serves as the main vehicle for the author's point of view and who reflects the author's anti-clerical attitudes.

The techniques are essentially the same in each of the three novels; the main deviation that separates them is simply the greater or lesser emphasis placed upon the anti-clerical elements. Entre Naranjos is the least anti-clerical, El Intruso occupies the middle position and La Catedral represents the epitome of his anti-clericalism since it represents the most bitter, the most violent, and the most iconoclastic elements of the three novels.

By using logic and symbolism, the author portrays the Church as ineffectual, pagan, and dangerous. He develops the Church as the antithesis of Christianity.

As there is one main representative of the author who is maligned and harmed by the Church, there is also his

opposite in each of the three novels: the champion of Catholicism. This Catholic representative is presented negatively in contrasts between him and the positive anti-clerical character. The Catholic champion is devaluated in descriptions and in polemics.

It is difficult to ascertain the validity of the anti-clerical historical references, but they are also depreciatory in nature when pro-clerical. Because they do depreciate the Church, they form an integral part of his polemics.

The author's purpose is, obviously, to engender a sympathetic attitude in his reader towards anti-clericalism. A great deal of sympathetic reaction on the part of the reader is created by his naturalistic presentations of the effects of the Church upon the people of Spain. The same techniques are employed in presenting the adverse effects of the Church upon the protagonist of each of the three novels.

Aside from the main character that serves in each of the novels as the author's vehicle for his ideas, there are also several minor ones. These are both clerical and anti-clerical but they all serve the author's ends.

As a final summation, the methods of Blasco Ibáñez are essentially highly selective. He is able to manipulate and to control his reader emotionally by writing only a part of the truth or the truth as he sees it. He

continually emphasizes the negative elements in the Church by either ignoring her positive elements or by devaluating them.

In several of the author's passages, he implies that the Church is evil. The repulsion in some of his scenes is made stronger than it really is by a suggestion of something nefarious in the Church, rather than by an overt statement.

Sainz de Robles also found this element in Blasco Ibáñez's novels, and calls his imagination "muy sugestiva."<sup>2</sup>

Even though there are many scenes in the three works which appeal to one's logic and to one's reason, the author basically manipulates his reader emotionally. He begins his arguments almost as an after-thought and then proceeds to develop them towards an hysterical climax, which carries his reader along with him.

Most of the author's anti-clerical ideas are written in a direct, violent manner. His methods cannot be compared with the more refined ones of Pío Baroja, although they share certain anti-clerical elements such as the idea of destroying in order to create.<sup>3</sup> There is a great deal of repetition in Blasco Ibáñez's novels which

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2. Federico Sainz de Robles, La Novela española en el siglo XX (Madrid, 1957), p. 85.

3. Margarit de Cal, Literatura del siglo XX (New York, 1955), p. 143.

is probably due to his carelessness as a writer. He is sincere in what he is trying to do, but page after page of essentially the same impassioned point is a bit cloying.

He does share an anti-religious attitude with some of the writers of the Generation of 1898. Azorín, Pío Baroja, and perhaps Pérez de Ayala also share his characteristic, which was one manifestation of the materialistic philosophies of their day.

The fundamental conclusion that one derives from these works by Elasco Ibáñez is that he is atheistic and anti-religious. He seeks a new religion, based on science and humanitarianism, which will replace the old one, based on superstition and intolerance.

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