

Moral Forces, Philosophy of History, and War in José Rizal

This article attempts to reconstruct an aspect of José Rizal's interpretation of history from some fragmentary remarks in the important essay "The Philippines a Century Hence" (1889–1890). It argues that previous efforts to arrive at such an understanding have been hampered by a lack of attention to the categories that Rizal himself used in that work. Employing the method of conceptual concordance, the study proposes that a possible source for Rizal's historical categories may ultimately be traced to the tradition of German historicism and, in particular, to the military theorist Carl von Clausewitz.

KEYWORDS: RIZAL · CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ · GERMAN HISTORICISM · FRANTZ FANON · CONCEPTUAL CONCORDANCE

The foremost logical positivist philosopher from the University of the Philippines, Ricardo Pascual, wrote in 1961 one of the first studies devoted to José Rizal's "philosophy of history." Although he believed that Rizal did not make any explicit "exposition of [his] interpretation of history," Pascual (1961/1991, 317) nevertheless believed that Rizal's philosophy could be reconstructed since the latter had actually "displayed its technique in all his writings." He proposed to demonstrate the faithfulness of his reconstruction by piecing "together circumstantial evidence which, [he] believes, points to the aptness of such [an] interpretation" (ibid., 307). In short, according to Pascual (ibid., 313), Rizal's philosophy can be called the "cultural interpretation of history":

In this cultural interpretation of history social forces shall be understood in terms of cultural institutions and social movements. To each social force displaying its effects upon the others shall be accorded a higher level of status and operation than that attached to the status of single, individual persons . . . Vector analysis and tensor analysis, together with the field theory technique of physical science, shall be employed, *mutatis mutandis*, in order to surmount the difficulties perceived in Rizal's cultural interpretation of history.

Furthermore, although Pascual (ibid., 316) disavowed a "faultless understanding of Marx," he asserted that Rizal's philosophy of history:

simply holds that the history of society is the resultant, adjustment or resolution of the conflict in contending cultural institutions, or social movements, within a given relatively sizable community. Depending upon the sophistication and complexity of the community, the number of commanding institutions is variable, unlike the Marxian limitation thesis and antithesis, and that opposition need not be one of contradiction but at best a contrariness, that kind of continuous opposition in which the initial species participate in their struggle for survival. Herein lies the advantage of this philosophy of history over that of Marx's, for its framework is shorn of artificiality, resulting from oversimplification.

Pascual (ibid., 312–13) explained Rizal's alleged "condemnation of the revolution" by attributing to the latter a strict fidelity to the dictates of "scientific methodology" and "rationalism" that led him to abjure any kind of "extra-rational advocacy." In his view, the great virtue of Rizal's approach, as opposed to that of Marx, was that Rizal "did not permit his enthusiasm or extra-rational emotions to muddle his perspective in applying the scientific technique to social phenomena" (ibid., 312). The philosophy of history attributed by Pascual to Rizal could be seen therefore as a superior and more sophisticated alternative to the simplistic tenets of Marxist dialectical materialism. In spite of all his efforts, it is painfully obvious from just the few quotes above that Pascual's attempt to develop a "philosophy of history" from Rizal's novels suffers from the all too familiar tendency to try to make Rizal a precursor or unimpeachable authority for one's own intellectual position *avant la lettre*. Pascual's interpretation of Rizal's philosophy of history as sui generis imposed upon it a fundamentally ahistorical and decontextualized reading, which deemed superfluous any consideration of Rizal's intellectual milieu. The "gem of an idea worth polishing further," which he claimed to have discerned in Rizal's writings, was probably Pascual's own "gem" rather than Rizal's. In pushing for a "Rizalian" (which was actually a "Pascualian") philosophy of history as an alternative for the increasingly radicalized Filipino youth of the 1960s (while vulgarizing Marx appallingly in the process), Pascual revealed his own predilection for a rather crude scientism devoid of "extra-rational emotions." And one may ask how far in actuality did "vector" and "tensor" analysis combined with the "field theory technique of the natural sciences" take him in polishing this "gem" of an idea further. Finally, one could also take issue with Pascual's rather hasty assertion that Rizal had not left behind any fragments of a possible "philosophy of history" in any of his works. Has he proven that this actually is the case?

Epifanio San Juan (1997) offers another notable interpretation of Rizal's views on the historical process. His account however, in contrast to Pascual's and seemingly taking issue with the latter's "positivism" (San Juan 1971, 10), valiantly tries to assert Rizal's affinities with Marx and dialectical materialism. According to San Juan (1997, 76), Rizal's "scientific acumen and totalizing intellect bear affinities with the historical genius of Marx, Engels and Lenin. He is therefore the real founder of our indigenous tradition of national-popular radicalism despite the objective class limits of his origin." Whereas Pascual tried to reconstruct Rizal's philosophy by giving consideration to the

latter's "technique," San Juan gives a similar importance to Rizal's "mode of applying ideas in actual life," his "dialectical style of encounter" (San Juan 1971, 8) and his "dialectical mode of conceiving the material of social-historical life" while pointing to the "dynamic comprehensive treatment [Rizal] applied to reveal the internal contradictions and the law of motion of social experience" (ibid., 45). Lacking any textual basis for attributing any direct Marxist influence on Rizal, San Juan (1997, 70–71, italics added) explains the development of Rizal's "dialectical mode of thought" as follows:

Rizal's dialectical approach may be traced to pressures of specific life-circumstances, especially his exile in Dapitan, the ordeals suffered by his mother and the whole clan in Calamba, and his own personal agonies as son and ilustrado. The scholastic education he received imbued him with lessons of the classical dialectics found in the preSocratic Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle, up to the neoPlatonists, Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibnitz. It was the natural science of the 17th and 18th centuries, particularly the discovery of differential and integral calculus (Newton), that led to the mathematical description of process of motion and speculation on the unity of the infinite and the finite, the discrete and the continuous. In addition, the cosmological hypothesis of Kant and Laplace also demonstrated that nature enjoys a life in time, that nature evolves in history and has a history of its own.

In his studies in Europe, Rizal *spontaneously absorbed* the ideas of Kant, Fichte and Hegel: Kant's theory of the antinomies of Reason, Fichte and Schelling's idea of opposing and contradictory forces in the psyche and in all natural phenomena.

More recently, San Juan (2011, n.p., italics added) wrote:

Given his numerous visits to Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, England, and Spain, and his contacts with intellectuals (Blumentritt, Rost, Jagor, Virchow, Ratzel, Meyer, aside from the Spaniards Morayta, Pi y Margall, Becerra, Zorilla, and others), *it was impossible*

for Rizal to escape the influence of the socialist movement and its Spanish anarchist counterpoint.

Indeed, it was impossible for any intellectual worthy of the name in late-nineteenth-century Europe to have escaped either a positive or negative "influence" from the socialist and anarchist movements of the time, but this notion of "influence" is surely too broad to give any genuinely productive insight into specific questions of intellectual history. San Juan can only refer to vague "affinities," "life pressures," "personal agonies," "impossibilities," and others. His theory of "spontaneous absorption" of the ideas of the German idealists Kant, Fichte, and Hegel also cannot be adequately formulated in a rigorous way in order to show what Rizal did or did not absorb from these admittedly very difficult authors. If Pascual had resolutely avoided the question of Rizal's historical milieu, San Juan seems to go overboard with a virtual "avalanche" of possible intellectual sources and influences, some of which are taken for granted (i.e., scholasticism) and none of which are substantiated to any satisfactory degree. Although San Juan is more correct than Pascual in focusing attention on the essay "The Philippines a Century Hence" (Filipinas dentro de cien años, 1889–1990) as the main source for a Rizalian perspective on history, it seems rather rash to claim that this work is a "masterpiece of materialist dialectics in action" as he does (San Juan 1997, 72).

If the question of the influence of German idealism on Rizal is taken seriously, Raul Bonoan (1992) apparently offers a more plausible theory by situating Rizal in the intellectual milieu of the Spanish academy where a particular form of Kantianism flourished under the name of "Krausismo." Karl Friedrich Krause (1781–1832) was a minor follower of Kant whose ideas were brought into Spain and popularized by Julian Sanz del Rio (1814–1869). Bonoan (ibid., 312) however admitted that Rizal could not be considered a "Krausista" and that Rizal never mentioned Krausismo or the name of any known Krausist in his writings. He claimed nevertheless that "[Krausismo] was so much part of the intellectual air [Rizal] breathed, [that it had] a profound impact on the neophyte Rizal. And it is possible to find traces of this impact in Rizal's writings" (ibid., 313). It may be true that there are "echoes" and "traces" of Krausismo in some of Rizal's works; however, it is one thing to say this, and another to say that this school of thought

had a “profound influence” on Rizal. If such an influence were “profound,” it should be necessary and rewarding to read Rizal through the lens of Krausismo. But such a project has not yet been undertaken. Despite certain limitations, however, Bonoan’s approach correctly asserts the necessity for more sensitively situating Rizal’s writings within the Spanish and European intellectual milieu of his time. Pascual’s disregard for history and San Juan’s overly broad historical brushstrokes fail to address this need.

In retrospect, one could look at the contrasting positions of Pascual and San Juan as revolving around the long-running dispute over Marx’s purported influence, or lack thereof, on Rizal. Based on textual evidence alone, one cannot but be justifiably sceptical about such an influence. It is often repeated that the name of Marx appears only once in Rizal’s voluminous correspondence, and this was in a 13 May 1891 letter by Juan Luna to Rizal (1933, 198) mentioning the book *Le socialisme contemporaine* (1881) by Emile de Laveleye (1822–1892) and describing it as a compilation of the theories of “Carl Marx,” Ferdinand Lasalle, and others (Anderson 2005, 105). This is surely too thin a thread from which to hang any theory of influence.

Finally, another notable discussion related to understanding Rizal’s “philosophy of history” is Zeus A. Salazar’s influential essay (1983) on the “tripartite philosophy” or “tripartite historical ideology” in José Rizal, Graciano Lopez Jaena, and Marcelo del Pilar. Salazar thinks that this ideology had grown as a reaction to the colonialist “bipartite” historical conception of the Spaniards. Compared with the other propagandists, Salazar considered Rizal’s version to be the “most extreme” and fully articulated as a stage in the Filipino nationalist consciousness. According to him, Rizal characterized the three periods of Philippine history as follows: (1) “Filipinas had a civilization of her own and was progressing, armed with her own capacities and virtues”; (2) “Decay and retrogression under Spanish rule. Civic virtues lost. Vices taken over. Social cancer in late 19th century”; (3) “Release of creative forces of the race with attainment of freedom. Probably through Revolution. Tactically, through reforms” (ibid., 122). Salazar observed that this tripartite view was passed on to the ideology of the Katipunan and continues its dominance up to the contemporary Filipino “historical consciousness” where it seems to have outstayed its welcome. This kind of approach, which looks into the structures of historical consciousness through the lens of periodization, has certainly produced much more dependable results from the point of view of intellectual history than the previous efforts to describe Rizal’s “philosophy of

history.” However, since Salazar focused exclusively upon the undoubtedly valid etic classification of historical perspectives according to terms which the Spaniards and the Propagandists did not themselves use to describe their own thinking (“bipartite” and “tripartite”), he did not find it necessary to enter upon any detailed consideration of the actual language or terms that Rizal used in explicating his particular conception(s) of history. However, it is obvious that both dimensions are indispensable to a deeper understanding of intellectual history. Salazar’s general approach, which classifies texts as being representative of certain ideologies or perspectives in toto rather than as being complex and internally heterogeneous discursive structures, tends to ignore the other levels of analysis.

Fragments of a Philosophy

The essay “The Philippines a Century Hence” was published in the periodical *La Solidaridad* in four installments from the 30 September 1889 to 31 January 1890. In it Rizal broaches the most basic question, “Will the Philippines continue to be a colony of Spain?” Pondering on this difficult problem, he concludes that predicting events in history is much more difficult than in nature, “If there is no eternal state in nature, how much less can there be in the life of people, given its mobility and motion!” (Si no hay un estado eterno en la naturaleza, ¡cuánto menos lo debe de haber en la vida de los pueblos, seres dotados de movilidad y movimiento!) (Rizal 1889–1890/1961a, 138–39).

Considering it necessary to “open the book of the past” in order to see into the future, Rizal recounted the great difficulties encountered by the Spaniards during the first centuries of their colonization of the Philippine islands. Compared to these, he writes, the contemporary situation promises a rosy future for the Spaniards. Rizal (ibid., 140) writes, “the material forces available for Spanish domination have tripled” (se han triplicado las fuerzas materiales con que cuenta la dominación española), and then proceeds to enumerate these “material forces”: The navy has relatively improved, the degree of organization in the civil and military domains is much better, communication with the metropolis is faster and more reliable, there are no foreign enemies, and the dominated country (*país dominado*) possesses less spirit and aspiration for independence. Indeed the word “independencia” is almost incomprehensible to the “natives” who have reached the lowest possible degree of “moral abasement” (*rebajamiento moral*) (ibid., 137). At

first sight, one would think that another three centuries at least of peaceful domination and lordship are guaranteed. However, Rizal thinks that this is not necessarily the case. He writes, “above these material considerations rise those which are invisible, others of a *moral* character, much more transcendental and powerful” (por encima de éstas consideraciones materiales se ciernen invisibles otras de carácter *moral*, mucho más transcendentales y poderosas) (ibid., 141, italics added).

Rizal then defines the concept of “historical necessity” as follows (ibid., 158, italics added):

La necesidad es la divinidad más fuerte que el mundo conoce, y la necesidad es el resulta de las leyes físicas puestas en movimiento por las fuerzas morales.

Necessity is the most powerful divinity the world knows, and necessity is the result of physical laws set in motion by moral forces.

“Necessity” (necesidad) in history is therefore the result of “physical laws” (leyes físicas) set in motion by “moral forces” (fuerzas morales). “Material forces” are explicitly opposed to “moral forces” as the two major factors within the historical process. However, since what he called the “moral forces” are said to be transcendental and *much more* powerful, these actually determine the outcome, over and above any “material forces,” of the historical process. He then goes to assert, “It is not good to rely on contingency, there is an imperceptible and incomprehensible logic sometimes in the workings of History” (No es bueno fiarse en lo eventual hay una lógica imperceptible é incomprendible á veces en las obras de la Historia) (ibid., 164). Historical necessity therefore follows a certain logic, although this may be “imperceptible” and “incomprehensible.” This is because nonempirical, invisible, and transcendental moral forces are posited to determine the mechanism of historical necessity.

The essay asserts that if Spain does not grant the reforms demanded by those who work through legal and peaceful means, it will have to face the prospect of armed rebellion. Rizal was certain, despite the superior material forces arrayed on the side of the Spaniards, that the “natives” would eventually triumph. He wrote, “the terrible lessons and hard teachings which these struggles will give to the Filipinos will serve to improve their



Fig. 1: Schematic representation of José Rizal's concepts of history

moral condition and strengthen them” (Las terribles lecciones y las duras enseñanzas que estas luchas hayan dado á los filipinos, habrán servido para mejorar su moral y robustecerlos) (ibid., 161). He added, “To the extent that they are bathed in blood and drenched in bile and tears, the colony, if it has any vitality, learns to fight and perfect itself in combat” (á medida que se bañan en sangre y se empapan en hiel y lágrimas, la colonia, si tiene vitalidad, aprende á luchar y á perfeccionarse en el combate) (ibid., 160). Through struggle, the Filipinos who have reached the depths of “moral abasement” will raise or “improve” their “moral condition.” And Rizal (ibid., 163) surmised that these “new men” (*hombres nuevos*) will “perhaps dedicate themselves to go upon the wide road of progress” (se dedicarán tal vez á entrar abiertamente en la ancha vía del progreso).

These few sentences are fundamental to understanding the internal logic of Rizal’s interpretation of history as expounded in this essay. It can be argued that the whole structure of exposition of the essay would be unintelligible if removed from these considerations, which place “moral forces” at the

center of his historical understanding (fig. 1). Indeed, one cannot avoid noticing the language of philosophical “vitalism” and of “regeneration” in these sentences. However, one should be cautious about a number of things. Firstly, that perceiving the structure of such a “philosophy of history” in this particular essay, no matter how important it may be, does not mean that Rizal had no other “philosophies” or “understandings” of the historical process, whether taken in a synchronic sense of simultaneously being subscribed to at a single point in time, or diachronically in the sense of conceptions evolving and changing through time even to the point of indicating breaks or turning points in his intellectual development. Secondly, it is far from being implied here (and it is on this point that Pascual is on the mark) that Rizal possessed any fully developed philosophy of history and that the most that could be said is that there are some fragments that could be connected to certain other fragments in certain ways. Thirdly, it is evident that the argument in “The Philippines a Century Hence” should not be taken in isolation from its companion essay, “The Indolence of the Filipinos” (*Sobre la indolencia de los Filipinos*, 1890), and from the annotated Morga edition (Rizal 1890/1961c). It so happens that the concept of “moral forces” also occurs in a crucial passage in the study on indolence (Rizal 1890/1961b, 251–52). Finally, the current interpretation necessarily cannot exhaust the rich intellectual and literary texture of the essay in itself. Rizal’s discussions of “historical laws,” “racial traits,” and his frequent use of biologicistic metaphors, among others, demand a closer and much finer level of analysis than can be undertaken here.

Scouring the whole of Rizal’s correspondence and other writings for more clarification might prove useful as well. For example, on 3 July 1890 Rizal wrote to the young Antonio Luna from Brussels, “It is good that the youth dedicate themselves to something more serious than playing cards: and as Marco Espada said very well, the handling of arms gives *moral force* (fuerza moral) to the individual and makes him prudent and restrained” (Ésta bien que la juventud se dedique á algo más serio y noble que el juego de cartas: y como dice muy bien Marco Espada, el manejo de arma da fuerza moral al individuo y le hace prudente y comedido) (Rizal 1933, 74, italics added). A few weeks later, on 24 July 1890, Juan Luna wrote to Rizal, that among the Filipino students in Madrid there were a few diligent students, some who were lazy and addicted to gambling, but “the good thing is that due to the influence of Antonio, everyone now applies themselves to fencing,

and the Filipinos already have a reputation for bravery and of being skilled with weapons” (lo bueno es que por influencia de Antonio todos se dedican ahora al florete, y los filipinos tienen ya fama de valientes y de fuertes en las armas) (ibid., 86).

Conceptual Concordance: Droysen, Humboldt, Clausewitz

Now that it has been established to a certain extent, and contrary to Pascual’s hasty conclusion, that Rizal had indeed written quite clearly on some aspects of a possible “philosophy of history,” it might now be of some interest to try to situate this philosophy within the intellectual milieu(s) in which he lived and moved. In this respect, a closer examination of Rizal’s concepts and categories is in order. One should not simply be content with discerning “echoes,” “traces,” “affinities,” or explanations by “spontaneous absorption.” The most pressing question that arises relates to the possible origins of his central historical concepts of “moral forces” (fuerzas morales) and “material forces” (fuerzas materiales). In a recent essay, John Blanco (2011, 369–71) clearly senses the importance of these categories but fails to pose the problem of their genealogy. Clues are not completely lacking, and one could perhaps do no worse than turn to the nation that Rizal called his “scientific home” (*wissenschaftliche Heimath*), Germany (Schumacher 1991, 109).

Herbert Schnädelbach (1984, 46, italics added), in his synoptic history of German philosophy from 1831 to 1933, noted that “the ‘holistic’ approach is as characteristic of Hegel’s philosophy of history as of the view of history current in the Historical School. Popular spirits (as in Herder), nations, states, *ethical forces* (as in Droysen), cultures, and later also classes, populate the historical space . . .” Johann Gustav Droysen (1808–1884) was one of the foremost political historians of Germany in the nineteenth century and one of the founders of the school known as “Historismus.” He wrote an influential book on methodology entitled *Grundriss der Historik* (Outline of the Principles of History) (1857), which expounded on his historical perspective. As Schnädelbach had pointed out, Droysen’s central historical category was indeed the notion of “ethical powers” (*sittliche Mächte*) (this term occurs eighteen times in Droysen’s book). For instance, Droysen (1977, 425) wrote in his *Grundriss* that “historical objects have their truth in the ethical powers (as the natural forces have theirs in mechanical, physical, chemical and other “laws”); these are the actualizations of these ethical forces” (Die

geschichtlichen Dinge haben ihre Wahrheit in den *sittlichen Mächten* (wie die natürlichen in den mechanischen, physikalischen, chemischen usw. “Gesetzen”); sie sind deren jeweilige Verwirklichung). Furthermore, “The continuity, labor and progress of history lies in the ethical powers” (In den *sittlichen Mächten* ist die Kontinuität der Geschichte, ihre Arbeit und ihr Fortschreiten . . .) (ibid., 433). On the subject of historical necessity, Droysen wrote, “Necessity is the opposite of arbitrariness, accident, aimlessness, it is the irresistible ought of the good, the ethical” (Das Notwendige ist der Gegensatz von Willkür, Zufall, Zwecklosigkeit, ist das unbezwingliche Sollen des Guten, *das Sittliche*) (ibid., 442). Finally, in accordance with the general antipositivist thrust of Historismus, Droysen was skeptical about the role of empirical sciences in gaining a meaningful understanding of history. (It should also be pointed out that “Historizismus” ought not be confused with “Historismus,” the former, generally associated with Hegel, believes in “progress” and “historical law” while the latter, associated with Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), emphasizes “historical relativism” and the “unique individuality” of the objects of history. English has only one term, “historicism” for both.) Droysen (ibid., 443) wrote, “the highest, the unconditioned which conditions, which moves everything, contains everything, explains everything, the goal of goals is not to be investigated empirically” (Der höchste, der unbedingt bedingende, der all bewegt, alle umschliesst, alle erklärt, der Zweck der Zwecke ist empirisch nicht zu forschen).

The above pronouncements of Droysen may indeed bear some similarities to Rizal’s discussion of “moral forces”; however, important differences remain. “Ethical powers” (*sittliche Mächte*) are somewhat different from “moral forces” (*fuerzas morales*). In the first place, although “ethical powers” may play a similar role in Droysen’s historical schema, its actual referent is not the same. Droysen’s concept was probably borrowed from Hegel’s *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Outline of the Philosophy of Right) (1820/1911, 132), where the “ethical powers” (*sittliche Mächte*) are defined as including social institutions such as the family and the state that regulate the lives of individuals. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Rizal ever read Droysen or ever owned a copy of the latter’s works. Droysen, however, did call the polymath Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) the “[Francis] Bacon of the historical sciences” (1977, 419). Rizal owned a copy of Humboldt’s *Über die Kawi-Sprache auf der Insel Java*

(On the Kawi Language of the Island of Java) (1836–1839) and wrote to his friend Ferdinand Blumentritt that “Humboldt’s work is very impressive” (Rizal 1938, 30). Humboldt also had a strong affinity with the tendency, which will eventually be called “Historismus.” Humboldt (1968, 58) wrote in the abovementioned work, for example, that “Spiritual and ethical powers work like nature itself, undiscerned and grows suddenly from a seed which is inaccessible to observation” (*Geistige und sittliche Kräfte wirken, wie die Natur selbst, unbemerkt und wachsen plötzlich aus einem Saamen empor, der sich der Beobachtung entzieht*). Humboldt’s terminology is somewhat different from Droysen in that he uses “Kraft” (force) instead of “Macht” (power), and it is therefore closer to Rizal’s conception of “*fuerzas*” rather than Droysen’s “powers.” However, although the referent of Humboldt’s “*sittliche Kräfte*” (ethical powers) may be closer to Rizal, it is still not completely similar in its use of “ethical” rather than “moral” (though the difference may really be a thin one).

It seems that the closest analogue to Rizal’s categories can be found neither in Droysen nor in Humboldt but in the most famous work by Gen. Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831), *Vom Kriege* (On War) (1832). Clausewitz served in both the Prussian and Russian armies in campaigns against Napoleon’s military offensives and was eventually appointed director of the *Kriegsakademie* (Prussian Military Academy). His philosophy of war might usefully be summarized as follows: “War must be an utmost exertion of force, and especially of moral force, for the complete destruction of the enemy’s armed resistance, and to this end the offensive should be undertaken whenever practicable and in its simplest, most direct, and most vigorous form” (Irvine 1940, 154). The direct and literal German equivalent of “*fuerzas morales*” is “*moralische Kräfte*” and this phrase occurs in *Vom Kriege* twenty-nine times, whereas “*physische Kräfte*” (physical forces) occurs thirteen times. Aside from having invented the phrase “war is nothing more than the continuation of politics by other means,” Clausewitz is known primarily as the philosopher who devoted his genius to developing and extending Napoleon’s fragmentary observations on the role of “moral forces” in war. Similar to Rizal, Clausewitz gives priority to “moral forces” over “physical forces” in determining the victory of one side over another in an armed conflict. Clausewitz wrote,

Der Verlust an *physischen Streitkräften* ist nicht der einzige, den beide Teile im Verlauf des Gefechts erleiden, sondern auch die *moralischen* werden erschüttert, gebrochen und gehen zugrunde. Es ist nicht bloß der Verlust an Menschen, Pferden und Geschützen, sondern an Ordnung, Mut, Vertrauen, Zusammenhang und Plan, welcher bei der Frage in Betrachtung kommt, ob das Gefecht noch fortgesetzt werden kann oder nicht. *Diese moralischen Kräfte* sind es vorzugsweise, welche hier entscheiden, und sie waren es allein in allen Fällen, wo der Sieger ebensoviel verloren hatte als der Besiegte. (Clausewitz 1832, 292–93)

The loss of *physical fighting forces* is not the only one which the two sides suffer in the course of the combat; the *moral forces* also are shaken, broken, and go to ruin. It is not only the loss in men, horses and guns, but in order, courage, confidence, cohesion and plan, which come into consideration when it is a question whether the fight can still be continued or not. It is principally the *moral forces* which decide here, and in all cases in which the conqueror has lost as heavily as the conquered, it is these alone. (Clausewitz 1873/1982, 309)

He elaborates further, “Every combat is therefore the bloody and destructive measuring of the strength of *forces*, *physical* and *moral*; whoever at the close has the greatest amount of both left is the conqueror . . . In combat the loss of *moral force* is the chief cause of the decision . . .” (ibid., 310) (Jedes Gefecht ist also die blutige und zerstörende Abgleichung der *Kräfte*, der *physischen* und *moralischen*. Wer am Schluß die größte Summe von beiden übrig hat, ist der Sieger . . . Im Gefecht war der Verlust der *moralischen Kräfte* die vorherrschende Ursache der Entscheidung . . .) (Clausewitz 1832, 294). As in Rizal’s account, Clausewitz (1873/1982, 185; 1832, 120) asserts that spiritual (moral) forces (*geistige Kraft*) “give life” to matter (or set matter in motion) and that these two are therefore fundamentally inseparable; however, these “spiritual magnitudes” (*geistige Größen*) in themselves are only visible to the “inner eye” (*das innere Auge*). According to him, determining the “relations of material things are all very simple; the right comprehension of the *moral forces* which come into play is more difficult” (Clausewitz 1873/1982, 242–43) (die Verhältnisse der materiellen Dinge sind alle sehr einfach; schwieriger ist das Auffassen der

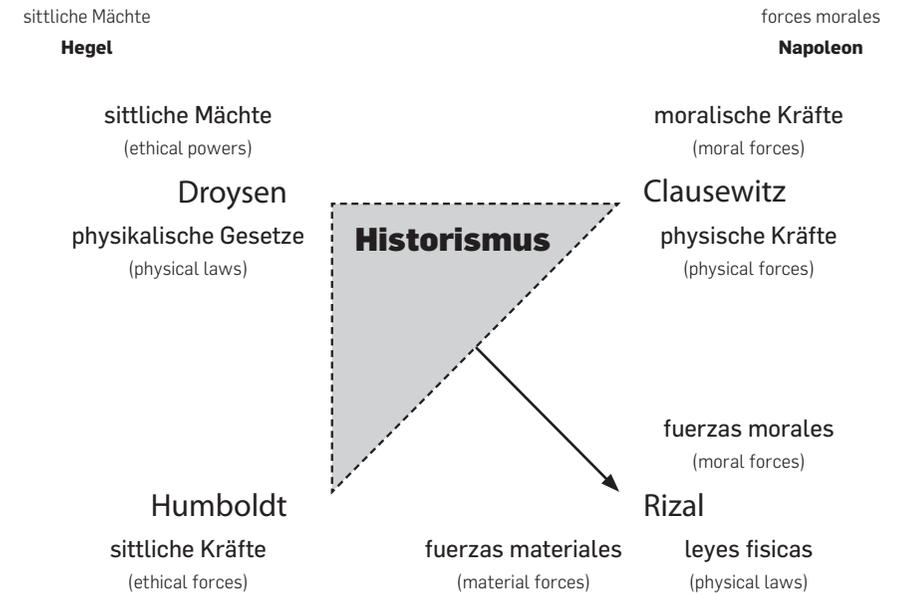


Fig. 2: Conceptual concordance, Rizal’s terminology and that of German historicism

geistigen Kräfte, die im Spiel sind) (Clausewitz 1832, 199). These passages from Clausewitz, chosen from among several, obviously hew very closely to Rizal’s usage of the term. The military context of Rizal’s historical schema cannot also escape attention (fig. 2).

To avoid some confusion that may arise from confounding the words “moral” and “morale” in their English usages, it might be useful to consult the venerable *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). “Morale” in 1752 was apparently still undifferentiated from “moral” (OED 1992, s.v. “morale”). According to the OED (1992, s.v. “moral”), usages of “moral” (without an “e”) as “pertaining to the ‘morale’ of an army” occurs earliest in 1817. A later example from 1889 is as follows, “The squadron was in an indifferent moral condition, divided by sour professional factions, and impatient of its Admiral.” The first use of “morale” as referring to the “moral condition; condition, behaviour; esp. with regard to confidence, hope, zeal, submission to discipline, etc. Said of a body of persons engaged in some enterprise, esp. of troops” was in 1831, with the following example from 1870, “The

morale of the troops is excellent.” In a kind of interesting reversal, the word in English for “morale” is referred to as “moral” in French while “moral” in English is “morale” in French (Larousse 1996, s.vv. “moral,” “morale”). Although all English translations of Clausewitz’s “moralische Kräfte” from Graham (1873/1982), Howard and Paret (1976) to Willmot (1997) invariably use “moral forces,” this latter phrase is not recorded in the OED.

Despite the apparently close conceptual correspondence, there is no evidence that Rizal read or owned Clausewitz’s chef d’oeuvre. In contrast, although it is well known that Rizal owned a complete set of Johann Gottfried Herder’s (1744–1803) works, Floro Quibuyen’s (1999, 163) assertion that the “author who influenced [Rizal] most profoundly, as far as history and culture was concerned was Herder” might strike one as being somewhat fanciful. This thesis awaits a similar study of the conceptual concordances between Rizal and Herder. However, Rizal owned two books by the Swiss-Italian Gen. Antoine-Henri Jomini (1779–1869), *Précis de l’Art de la Guerre* (Summary of the Art of War) (1838) and the first volume of the *Histoire Militaire des Guerres de Frédéric II* (Military history of the wars of Frédéric II) (1841) (De Ocampo 1960). Jomini was considered the principal competitor of Clausewitz in the theory of war in the nineteenth century, and the fact that Rizal owned two books in French by him reveals an interest in the latest knowledge on the subject. What are some of the facts that may allow either a theory of direct or indirect influence of the Clausewitzian philosophy of war on Rizal?

The intellectual development of Gen. Ricardo Burguete (1871–1937), ten years younger than Rizal, might be instructive as point of comparison and as a barometer for Clausewitzian influence in Spain. Burguete fought in the Spanish wars in Africa, Cuba, and the Philippines. He published a book on his experiences in the Philippines entitled *La Guerra! Filipinas (Memorias de Un Herido)* (War! Philippines [Reminiscences of One who was Wounded]) (1902). As a young writer, he moved in the milieu of the intellectual avant garde and the “regeneracionistas” like Pio Baroja and Miguel de Unamuno, which became known as the Generation of ‘98 (Jensen 2007). Among his numerous books, mostly on Spanish history and military theory, was a notable Nietzschean work amusingly entitled *Así hablaba Zorrapastro* (Thus Spake Zorrapastro) (1899). The most comprehensive recent study on the thought of this fascinating figure in fin-de-siècle Spain is by the military historian Geoffrey Jensen (2007). According to Jensen (2002, 21), “Spanish military thought in general remained receptive to antirationalist approaches to war,

rooted in the ‘guerrilla myth’ and valuing courage, heroics, spirituality, and morale over material resources, tactics, and strategy.” This was particularly the case with Burguete. Jensen notes that many of Burguete’s writings on military theory contained detailed discussions advocating Clausewitzian ideas. According to Jensen (*ibid.*, 56), “In the manner of many European military thinkers during the years before World War I, Burguete believed in the dominance of Clausewitzian ‘moral’ forces in combat.” Although Clausewitzian ideas did not immediately take root in Spanish military thinking, increasing interest in German military ways and the defeat of the Russians at the hands of the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) eventually ensured the more general acceptance of his ideas:

Spaniards, like many other European observers, attributed the ability of the Japanese to continue launching frontal assaults even in the face of terrible casualty rates to the high moral character of the Japanese soldiers, which they linked directly to policies of nationalist education and spiritual regeneration. The fact that the Japanese eventually prevailed, they believed, demonstrated that in the end spiritual strength, morale and a general offensive posture in thought and deed could outweigh material superiority. Given the particularly weak state of the Spanish armed forces and their lack of resources, this argument carried especially strong appeal to many officers in Spain. (*ibid.*, 35)

Jensen (2007, 880) therefore surmised that the “idea of the dominance of the so-called ‘moral forces’ in war over material factors such as new technologies was very attractive in a country like Spain with relatively few economic resources.”

Even though Burguete was younger than Rizal by a decade, Clausewitz’s writings were not unknown in Spanish military circles at the time of Rizal’s stay there. Spanish officers most likely first encountered Clausewitz’s treatise in French translations (Jensen 2002, 26; Irvine 1940) of which the first appeared in 1886 as the *Théorie de la grande guerre* (Theory of the Great War) (Jensen 1999, 33). It was only as late as 1908 that selections from Clausewitz’s treatise were translated into Spanish while a complete text would not be available until the end of the Second World War (Baquer 2010, 2). Further research on the dissemination of Clausewitzian ideas in

nineteenth-century Spain is necessary to obtain a clearer picture, but it is quite certain that he had achieved a certain degree of popularity in Spain similar, even if it was to a much lesser degree, to that received by Friedrich Nietzsche, who was said to be “the philosopher” of the Generation of ‘98 (Ilie 1964; Rukser 1962). However, because Rizal knew German, he was after all not completely dependent on Spanish or French translations.

Rizal and Fanon on the “New Men”

Departing from what, in Blochian (1969) terms, may be likened to a “historical” comparison of the Rizalian and Clausewitzian deployments of historical concepts based on a theory of intellectual influence, this section turns to a “universal comparison,” which does not presuppose any kind of historical connection or relationship between texts widely separated in time and space. In this spirit Frantz Fanon’s essay “De la violence,” which opens the revolutionary work *Les Damnés de la terre* (The Wretched of the Earth) (1961), can be compared interestingly with Rizal’s “Filipinas dentro de cien años.” Fanon (1925–1961) was born in the French Martinique in the Caribbean and studied philosophy and psychiatry in France (Caute 1970). Aside from the abovementioned work, he is also known for an earlier book *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Black Skin, White Masks) (1952), which dealt with the effects of colonial subjugation on the psyche of the oppressed races. His style of thought was deeply influenced by Sartrean existentialism and Marxism, which dominated France intellectually at the time of his stay there. He joined the Algerian National Liberation Front in the struggle for independence from France and spent the last years of his life in the midst of revolutionary activities. His book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, which had a famous preface written by Jean-Paul Sartre, has had a lasting influence among African-American activists in particular and upon contemporary “postcolonial” academics. These two works will only be compared as outstanding representatives of what may be called the genre of the “anticolonial tract.” Indeed, although this cannot be dealt with in detail here, these works contain rich materials relevant to a psychological analysis of colonialism. Although there are undeniably several differences between them, there are also some striking parallels. Some of these may be remarked upon here.

For example, Rizal thought that the worst thing was not that the *indio* was considered “evil” (capable of vices) but that, deprived of all humanity

through “three centuries of brutalization” (*tres siglos de embrutecimiento*) (Rizal 1889–1890/1961a, 142) and his reduction to an “animal” (Rizal 1890/1961b, 252), the native is considered to be incapable of having a disposition either for virtue or vice, for good or evil. For Rizal, to be considered capable of “evil” and, therefore, to be human is better than being considered an animal or plant beyond good and evil. For his part, Fanon also writes of the “animalization” (*animalisation*) of the native implicit in the colonial notion of his alleged “impermeability” to ethics. According to him, the native is considered by the colonizer to be the “negation” and “enemy” of all values. He is therefore, in Fanon’s (2002, 44) view, turned into the representation of “absolute evil” (*le mal absolu*). Despite the underlying agreement that colonialism “animalizes” colonized peoples, Fanon differs from Rizal in pushing the envelope further by interpreting the supposed absolute “lack of values,” not as the banal and inert lack of “evil” as in Rizal, but as representing “absolute evil” itself.

Another interesting instance relates to Fanon’s description of the colonial world as being “compartmentalized,” “divided into two,” inherently “manichaeic.” One example of this divided world is the way the heroes of the anticolonial struggle are represented by the colonizers and the colonized:

Et il ne sert à rien, évidemment, de dire que tel héros est un voleur, une crapule ou un dépravé. Si l’acte pour lequel cet homme est poursuivi par les autorités colonialistes est un acte exclusivement dirigé contre une personne ou un bien colonial, alors la démarcation est nette, flagrante. Le processus d’identification est automatique. (ibid., 68)

It is obviously pointless to say that such a hero is a thief, a scoundrel or degenerate. If the act for which this man is being pursued by the colonial authorities is exclusively directed against a person or asset of colonialism, then the demarcation is clear and obvious. The process of identification is automatic.

Rizal’s describes this aspect of the “manichaeic” world in almost identical terms:

en países dominados por una raza extranjera, el acto de severidad más justo se interpreta por injusticia y opresión, por aquello de que lo dicta una persona extraña que no tiene simpatías ó que es enemigo del país; y la ofensa no sólo ofende al ofendido, sino á toda su raza, porque no se suele considerar personal, y el resentimiento, naturalmente, se extiende á toda la raza gobernante y no muere con el ofensor. (Rizal 1889–1890/1961a, 159–60)

In countries dominated by a foreign race, the most just act of severity is interpreted as unjust and oppressive, because it is dictated by a person who has no sympathy or is an enemy of the country, and the offense is not just an affront to the one to whom it has been done, rather it offends the whole race because it is not only considered personal, and resentment [resentimiento], naturally, spreads to the whole governed race and does not die with the offender.

Rizal (ibid., 159) tells of how the “hatred and resentment on the one side and suspicion and anger on the other will finally end in a violent and terrible conflict” (Odio y resentimiento por una parte, suspicacia é ira por otra, acabarán por fin en un choque violento y terrible). The result of this spiraling cycle of reciprocal violence is that a deep “river of blood” (*arroyo de sangre*) (ibid., 144) now separates the dominator from the dominated races. This is a metaphorical description of the manichean colonial world worthy of Fanon’s poetics.

However, perhaps due to the accumulated experiences of more than a half-century of anticolonial struggle, Fanon differs from Rizal in being able to reflect more keenly on the problem of the relationship of the “national bourgeoisie” and “colonized intellectuals” to the revolutionary masses in arms. Rizal’s (ibid., 145) relatively unproblematic portrayal of the relationship of the “enlightened class” to the people as one of the “brain of the nation” to its body or extremities contrasts with Fanon’s more critical approach. This is evident in the latter’s analysis of the rhetoric of “nonviolence” and of “compromise” among the “colonial intellectuals” (Fanon 2002, 61–62). The end of the third section of “Filipinas dentro de cien años,” where Rizal (1961a, 156) warns of the horrifying things that may happen if they who are working in the legal and peaceful terrain are silenced by violence or

have the misfortune to fall, calls to mind Fanon’s (2002, 62) condemnation of reformist colonial intellectuals who, deathly afraid of the rising of the masses, proclaim to the colonists, that “We are still capable of arresting the carnage, the masses still have faith in us, act quickly if you do not wish everything to be compromised” (Nous sommes encore capables d’arrêter le carnage, les masses ont encore confiance en nous, faites vite si vous ne voulez pas tout compromettre). Rizal’s distinct advantage over Fanon’s “colonial intellectual” is that he refused to turn his sober and penetrating gaze away from the possibility of “another solution” to the colonial conflict, even though this may have differed from what he may have personally desired in the first instance.

Fanon was perhaps most controversial for his notion regarding the positive role of violence in anticolonial struggles. He criticized what he called the “position puerile” of Friedrich Engels, in the book *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft* (Herr Eugen Dühring’s Revolution in Science) (1878) more popularly known as *Anti-Dühring*, regarding the decisive role of technological (and economic) superiority in war. He quoted the following passage from Engels (1878/1947, 189):

Crusoe enslaved Friday “sword in hand.” Where did he get the sword? Even on the imaginary islands of the Robinson Crusoe epic, swords have not, up to now, been known to grow on trees, and Herr Dühring provides no answer to this question. If Crusoe could procure a sword for himself, we are equally entitled to assume that one fine morning Friday might appear with a loaded revolver in his hand, and then the whole “force” relationship is inverted. Friday commands, and it is Crusoe who has to drudge. We must apologise to the readers for returning with such insistence to the Robinson Crusoe and Friday story, which properly belongs to the nursery and not to the field of science—but how can we help it? We are obliged to apply Herr Dühring’s axiomatic method conscientiously, and it is not our fault if in doing so we have to keep all the time within the field of pure childishness. So, then, the revolver triumphs over the sword; and this will probably make even the most childish axiomatician comprehend that force is no mere act of the will, but requires the existence of very real preliminary conditions before it can come into operation, namely, instruments, the more perfect of which gets the better of the

less perfect; moreover, that these instruments have to be produced, which implies that the producer of more perfect instruments of force, *vulgo* arms, gets the better of the producer of the less perfect instruments, and that, in a word, the triumph of force is based on the production of arms, and this in turn on production in general—therefore, on “economic power”, on the “economic situation”, on the material means which force has at its disposal.

Fanon tellingly used Spain as a counterexample to refute Engels’ argument. That Iberian nation, he says, animated by an “unquenchable national fervor,” and having “rediscovered” guerrilla war, successfully forced the overwhelmingly superior forces of Napoleon to retreat through the acts of heroism of its people. Engels’ opinion therefore seems to coincide with that of the pessimistic “colonized intellectuals” who lacked faith in the people and whom Fanon (2002, 63) considered “losers” from the beginning. Nevertheless, Fanon seems to have overlooked a passage in the same work where Engels writes of the “moral impetus” produced by revolutions and its liberating effect on the consciousness of a nation. In this respect, Engels, a highly regarded military theoretician during his time, may himself have been influenced by Clausewitz whom he read with pleasure (but this issue has also been a matter of debate [Gat 1992]). Engels (1878/1947, 209–10) wrote:

It is only with sighs and groans that [Dühring] admits the possibility that force will perhaps be necessary for the overthrow of an economic system of exploitation—unfortunately, because all use of force demoralises the person who uses it. And this in spite of the immense moral and spiritual impetus which has been given by every victorious revolution! And this in Germany, where a violent collision—which may, after all, be forced on the people—would at least have the advantage of wiping out the servility [Bedientenhaftigkeit] which has penetrated the nation's mentality [nationale Bewußtsein] following the humiliation of the Thirty Years' War.

According to Fanon (2002, 40), decolonization

introduit dans l'être un rythme propre, apporté par les nouveaux hommes, un nouveau langage, une nouvelle humanité. La

décolonisation est véritablement création d'hommes nouveaux. Mais cette création ne reçoit sa légitimité d'aucune puissance surnaturelle: la «chose» colonisée devient homme dans le processus même par lequel elle se libère.

introduces into being a new rhythm, provided by the new men, a new language, a new humanity. Decolonization is truly the creation of new men. But this creation does not receive its legitimacy from any supernatural force: the colonized “object” becomes a man in the same process by which it liberates itself.

These “new men” (hommes nouveaux) are forged in the fires of the violent struggles of the anticolonial movement:

Au niveau des individus, la violence désintoxique. Elle débarrasse le colonisé de son complexe d'infériorité, de ses attitudes contemplatives ou désespérées. Elle le rend intrépide, le réhabilite à ses propres yeux. (ibid., 90)

At the level of individuals, violence removes the poison from the body. It takes away from the colonized his inferiority complex and his contemplative and pessimistic attitudes. It makes him courageous, it rehabilitates him in his own eyes.

It has been seen how Rizal, in the passages already cited above, likewise wrote of how the anticolonial struggle (where the people are “bathed in blood and drenched in bile and tears”) can improve the morale, strengthen and perfect the Filipinos in combat. He then expressed his optimism that these “new men” (hombres nuevos) will be able to embark on progress and defend their liberty.

For Fanon and likewise for Rizal, the affirmative role of violence in anticolonial revolution lies in the forging of these “new men” of a higher moral character, capable of building independent and free nations. As Rizal (1889–1890/1961a, 163) wrote,

Muy probablemente las Filipinas defenderán con un ardor indecible la libertad comprada á costa de tanta sangre y sacrificios. Con los

hombres nuevos que broten de su seno y con el recuerdo de su pasado, se dedicarán tal vez á entrar abiertamente en la ancha vía del progreso.

Very likely the Philippines will defend with unutterable ardor the liberty which was bought with so much blood and sacrifice. With the new men (hombres nuevos) who will spring from its womb and with the memory of its past, they will perhaps dedicate themselves to enter into the wide road of progress.

In contrast to this notion of revolutionary/postrevolutionary “new men,” Quibuyen (1999, 310) believes that “Rizal was skeptical of the idea that revolutionary violence creates the new society or the new man. This is the fundamental difference between Rizal on the one hand, and Fanon and Che Guevara on the other . . . For Rizal, the new man is not created by the revolution; rather, he is *required* by the revolution.” There may be some partial truth to this, but it is evidently only half the story.

Conclusion

The argument for a Clausewitzian influence in Rizal’s conception of the historical process based on a conceptual concordance may be too striking to be a simple matter of chance. The commonality in terminology and their specific deployment in argument is sufficiently close to say that, from the point of view of textual statistics, this kind of concordance could almost be considered an improbable coincidence.

The strong version of the argument is that Rizal had read Clausewitz himself directly despite the lack of any other presently available corroborating evidence. The weak version is that Rizal had imbibed the Clausewitzian categories from popular writings, discussions, secondary materials, and other possible sources in Spain and elsewhere in Europe. Perhaps, in the most extreme case, he had never even heard of Clausewitz himself. But the argument for a certain degree of direct or indirect “influence,” whether strong or weak, is perhaps convincing enough on the grounds of conceptual concordance alone. It is arguably no longer the case of simply detecting loose affinities, echoes, and traces. It is here no longer a question of proposing a weak theory of “spontaneous absorption” of whatever from wherever.

Rizal’s argument about the superiority of the moral forces of a resurgent

Filipinas in the face of the declining and decrepit Spain is inversely mirrored in the belief of many Spanish intellectuals of the time that the “regeneration” of Spain and eventual rebirth as a world power rested upon its superior moral forces. Although he was around ten years older and died too early, Rizal’s intellectual world might therefore usefully be compared to that of the famous Generation of ‘98, especially some of its older leading members like Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936) and Pio Baroja (1872–1956). It is no longer useful to simply dwell on a broadly “European” basis of the “*Encyclopedia Britannica* type” of Rizal’s intellectual development. His intellectual maturation occurred principally within the Spanish milieu of the final decades of the nineteenth century, and this formation was also the basis that led him to explore some other currents of thought in Germany, England, and France.

Finally, despite the complexity and fluidity of his views on the subject, Rizal’s position on the use of peaceful or violent means in dealing with the colonial problem was basically a pragmatic one depending on historical circumstances (Guillermo 2002). If he showed a marked preference for peaceful means in the first instance, in some of his writings (Frey 2005), this was not at all “ideological” in the pacifist or Gandhian sense but hinged on the existence of certain conditions that had to be met in order for a revolution to succeed. “Material forces” cannot be left out of the equation after all, as Blumentritt’s letter to Rizal dated 30 January 1892 emphasized (Anderson 2005, 124). The pious but ultimately baseless Gandhian myth clinging to Rizal is so pervasive that a former student of this author recently wrote in a test paper that she was dismayed to discover in class that “Rizal had a dark side.” Would a similar student in the US say that she was dismayed in class upon learning that George Washington had a “dark side” for leading the American Revolution? With great vigor, Quibuyen (1999, 41–64) has already demolished the nonsense surrounding this issue. However, it is lamentable that considerations on this matter continue to be shaped decisively by the posthumous American effort of the colonial era to turn him into a “safe” hero, and the related persistently anachronistic tendency of educational institutions and biographers to impute to him some kind of free-floating and contextless “pacifism,” in some cases reeking more of the Cold War rhetoric of the latter half of the twentieth century than the restless world of late-nineteenth-century Spain.

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