Rusiñol’s Modernist Jottings along Life’s Way 
and García Lorca’s Impresiones y paisajes
Nelson Orringer

García Lorca’s earliest writings (1917–18) reveal his initial identification with Hispanic modernism, which first came into being in Catalonia.1 Catalan modernistes had introduced the word “modernist” in its contemporary acceptation into the languages of the Iberian Peninsula. L’Avenç, a Barcelonese journal and publishing house, first employed the adjective modernista in the sense of an attitude of approval towards innovation in all spheres of culture. One leader of L’Avenç, the Barcelonese essayist, novelist, poet, playwright, and painter Santiago Rusiñol y Prats (1861–1931), achieved popularity in Catalonia for his poetic essays on travel, on life in general viewed as a journey, and on landscapes in particular (Ginsberg 1445). His collection of artistic essays Fulls de la vida (“Life’s Pages,” 1898) received a poetic, laudatory review from Unamuno (1296–98)—a figure much admired by Lorca (3: 964)—in the Madrid review La Época in March 1899. Rusiñol’s first essay collection in Catalan, Anant pel món (“Rambling through the World,” 1896), along with Fulls de la vida, went through many editions.2 The present study compares these jottings along life’s way, added to a third collection of travel essays titled Impresions i paisatges (1880–82), with García Lorca’s earliest published book, Impresiones y paisajes (1918), to help define his adolescent modernism. First, we examine Rusiñol’s mature notion of modernism while citing notable examples from his three essay collections already mentioned. Second, we study young Lorca’s proximity to that notion and his application of a like conception to his vision of Castilian-speaking Spain as reflected in Impresiones y paisajes. Lorca never mentions Rusiñol in any of his published writings or correspondence. Yet the many coincidences between the two situate the Granadan author’s earliest prose in its historical context.

The need for such contextualization is clear: Impresiones y paisajes has received relatively scant critical attention.3 Yet it obeys literary conventions and is not unmediated lyric communion with the landscape, enjoyed in the company of Martín Domínguez Berrueta, Lorca’s Professor of Art History at the University of Granada, who in 1916 and 17 took him all over the Peninsula. Impresiones y paisajes belongs to the subgenre of modernist ekphrastic prose. Daniel Devoto (22–31) has briefly examined Rubén Darío’s impact on this work. However, to compare Lorca to Rusiñol, in many ways much closer, is to understand the depth of the younger writer’s commitment to artistic modernism in

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1. Modernista
2. Fulls de la vida
3. Impresions i paisatges
4. La Época
5. Anant pel món
6. Rubén Darío
7. L’Avenç
8. Martín Domínguez Berrueta
9. Daniel Devoto
10. Impresiones y paisajes
11. Ekphrastic prose
12. Decimonónica 2.1 (2005): 22-39. Copyright © 2005 Decimonónica and Nelson Orringer. All rights reserved. This work may be used with this footer included for noncommercial purposes only. No copies of this work may be distributed electronically in whole or in part without express written permission from Decimonónica. This electronic publishing model depends on mutual trust between user and publisher.
general. Not only Lorca’s title, but also his tone of highly self-conscious melancholy, his estheticism, the content of his prologue, and the form and content of individual essays display a worldview similar to Rusiñol’s. Descriptive techniques applied by Rusiñol to his beloved Catalonia also appear in Lorca’s word-paintings of Castile, though used to criticize Castilian rigidity and stagnation. Favoring material progress as a promoter of innovative thought while decrying it when deleterious to esthetic enjoyment, Lorca indulges in the same paradoxes as writers like “Azorín,” Baroja, and Unamuno. Further, Rusiñol writes mainly with a painter’s eye, frequently employing technical terms from the pictorial arts. Lorca, on the other hand, like his admired Baudelaire, Verlaine, Darío, Juan Ramón, even like Rusiñol himself in the more stylized prose-poems of Oraciones (1897), experiments with combining sight and sound to find mysterious correspondences. Lorca’s book, dedicated to his deceased piano teacher Antonio Segura Mesa (d. 1916; 3: 4), ends with an epilogue mentioning his art teacher Domínguez Berrueta as well as his student traveling companions (3: 121). As Christopher Maurer reminds, Lorca in 1916 had ceased to study music and began the pursuit of letters (“Sobre la prosa” 13). Still, he had the good fortune to begin his writing career when Hispanic modernism was in vogue: veneration of music belonged to its essence in its Symbolist phase. This philharmonic attitude, a constant of Lorca’s writing, especially marks his earliest prose.

Let us begin by explaining Rusiñol’s painterly travel prose as a function of his modernism. In a speech titled “Modernisme,” modestly subtitled a conversation (“Conversa”) to avoid dogmatism, and addressed to friends of the modernist journal El Francolí of Tarragona, Rusiñol suggests a conception of modernism similar to the one implied in the prose of the early Lorca. Rusiñol reveres art as a religion—the only one he finds tolerable because of its “eternal fibers.” He refrains from making precepts of modernist esthetics, since he views esthetics as being derived from the works themselves, not the reverse. Hence he prefers to converse with a few friends who understand artistic affairs in a Catalonia where art and poetry interest only a small minority (2: 612–13). Politicians and men of wealth, acknowledges Rusiñol, pursue material happiness, yet ignore the essence of art, because they lack examples, hopes for glory, and stimuli to seek compensation for it. Inquiring into what modernism is, Rusiñol perceives it more as a sentiment, a love, than as knowledge. Modernism he conceives as the art soon to come, desired by some, feared by others. Striving to delve into the impulses of the great multitudes, such art cannot escape its destiny of rapidly aging: time goes by ceaselessly, carrying most art to oblivion. Modernist art, felt by everyone with a young, enthusiastic heart, changes over the centuries. Following decadence comes growth; following realism, idealism; after correct classicism, exaggerated romanticism; after realism, spiritualism; after positivism, mysticism; after weariness, reaction; after oppression, liberty; oppression after unbridled passion. Always the modernists of their own times and their own people live as martyrs of the ideas they bear. Such artists yield to the ignorant multitudes, who accept their ideas when rooted and set them up as hindrances to new ideas that come forth with new light and life, leaving in their wake masterpieces like mileposts that mark the glorious achievements of mankind (2: 613–14).

Everyone with established ideas defends them, while scorning newer ones. Yet the ongoing struggle with past ideas renews them with future ones. A self-proclaimed modernist, therefore, may one day combat the modernists arising afterwards. He sees his
work threatened or set aside to give life to new works. Disconsolate, he finds it difficult to believe that everything follows its own path in the mysterious course of destiny. Rusiñol deems fortunate those who can always be modernists, with faith in the future, not disillusionment about the past. The modernism concerning Rusiñol—and he limits himself to speaking only of artistic modernism—is irreducible to a fad or to a yearning to be up-to-date with the latest developments as many suppose. It is a force that impels with wings of hope; it is man stretching to look beyond toward the unknown (2: 614). In short, it is a cultural attitude, not a mode (which, at best, can only be the temporary object of that attitude).

Rusiñol characterizes modernism of his epoch as individualistic with spiritual elements. It advocates liberty in art, with each artist doing what he feels and what the heart dictates, but remaining sincere, not buying applause or showing docility to patrons. Before beginning a work, Rusiñol recommends consulting the conscience; absorbing good sources while pursuing new roads; valuing more the orienting idea than its verbal execution; feeling the intimacy of things, not their presence; sensing vibrations of color, the character of sketching, the vibrant, felt note of the composition, and the mysterious essence of everything (2: 614). The art of his time seems to Rusiñol to have wearied of naturalism and to seek spiritualities. Symbolism, decadentism, estheticism, and other labels receive his scorn as badly applied names of sensations striving for an explanation. With mysticism the modernism of Rusiñol’s time shares sufferings and visions; it shares with anarchism its impossible fantasy; with Symbolism, its breadth and distance from well-known terrain; with anarchism, ideal revolutionary spirit, little faith in the practices of men; finally, it shares with everything what it may continue to dream, and it dreams alone, without hindrances from rich or poor bourgeoisie. By this Rusiñol understands the bourgeois of art, incapable of inwardly trembling before a sunset, a crying woman, a passing pink cloud, or a dawn that is breaking. Rusiñol closes by advising admiration for the good performed in the past, so that the future may esteem what present artists do today (2: 615). In summary, Rusiñol conceives of modernism as an attitude towards cultural creativity which esteems innovation over tradition insofar as it places tradition at the service of this creativity. With all tradition, including the religious, in a state of crisis, Rusiñol’s modernism tentatively converts art into a (non-dogmatic) religion.

To clarify, let us examine a specific application of Rusiñol’s modernism to pictorial and verbal landscape art. Displaying his reverence for art as a religion, in the essay “Eremitans d’ara,” gathered in the collection L’illa de la calma, he imagines landscape painters as religious hermits living in the wilds. They plant their easels and canvases, take out their palettes, daub them with color, face the mountain, and begin their daily prayer (2: 463). The prayer may last for days, months, or years. It implies speaking to no one else. Someone chancing to appear either will not understand or will take the painter for a madman. Unaware of what is happening in the world, he has two inner forces that never leave him: the inner one of faith and the outer one of the landscape. The first demands sacrifice; the second, love and faith. The more the landscape resists him, the more he loves it and sacrifices himself to it. A sunbeam escaping him makes him ill; clouds crossing the sky without giving him time to copy them make him restless; an unrepeatable sunset saddens him. The more light and clouds flee him, the more lovingly he follows them. Only the inebriation called love of beauty and faith could make him strive as he does.
Only sustained by these two wings could he fly from faraway countries, leaving his people and land as an emigrant of the ideal. If he finds what he seeks—communion with the landscape—, he deserves no pity for the loneliness, bad weather, or nostalgia he must endure. He forgives the present with his look fixed on the beyond of his dreams. This is modernism for him: the materialization of dreams (2: 462–63).

When we examine the early Lorca, we easily observe that he, like Rusiñol, views art as a religion. "En todos nosotros una ilusión constante es el buscar un algo espiritual o lleno de belleza para descargar nuestra alma de su dolor principal [. . .], y corremos siempre animados con el deseo de esa imposible felicidad." He here equates spirituality with beauty. Also he rejects orthodox conceptions of what is spiritual: nuns isolated from the world in convents produce "un gran fracaso sentimental." Like other modernist poets, he regards monastic closure as an escape from frustrated erotic fantasies, with the convent at best as an institution to sublimate impossible earthly love (Maurer, "Introducción" 30). The mystic love of faraway lips ("labios lejanos") too often springs in the chaste fantasies of the nuns (3: 112; cf. 1: 405). Like Rusiñol, Lorca favors mysticism, but only insofar as it denotes vision and suffering brought about by the creation or contemplation of worldly beauty. Hence he applies the adjective místicos to organ keyboards, wherewith he can evoke "dolor extrahumano" by playing Beethoven (2: 52). Moreover, with Rusiñol he shares an affinity with Symbolism for its breadth of vision and its distance from the commonplace: in a convent the novitiates "no tenían las manos precisamente como las de los monagos del delicado verismo de Verlaine" (2: 49). At the same time, with the Symbolists he can find supreme beauty in unexpected places. A woman in Baeza who sells useless items—rabbit-skins, old rags—announces her wares with "el acento de un canto wagneriano" (2: 71), a form of music revered by the Symbolists (Marasso 29; Mallarmé 542–46) and by the Catalan modernists (Resina 515). Further, Lorca shares Rusiñol's disdain of the artistic bourgeoisie: "¡Desgracia grande la de los españoles que caminamos sin corazón y sin conciencia! . . . Nuestra aurora de paz y amor no llegará mientras no respetemos la belleza y no nos riamos de los que suspiran apasionadamente ante ella. ¡Desdichado y analfabeto país en que ser poeta es una irrisión!" (3: 68).

In view of Rusiñol's adoring obsession with the landscape and Lorca's aim of reverently describing memories of his travels through Spain, Lorca chooses for his work a title in Castilian identical to Rusiñol's in Catalan. The brief but intense collection of travel writings titled Impressions i paisatges contains word paintings of Rusiñol's wanderings through rural Cataluña. The two other collections, Anant pel món and Fulls de la vida, also have analogues in Impresions y paisatges. Lorca's introduction to his collection of descriptive travel essays bears a marked resemblance to some of the introductory essays employed by Rusiñol. Fulls de la vida begins with a prologue titled, "Al lector," addressing the reader in second person singular and explaining its pessimism, justifiable if the reader will persevere to the last page of these leaves of intimate prose. What most understand as progress does not correspond to what the author of the prologue considers to be such: much machinery, steam, and comfort, but not esthetics for the eyes, poetry for living, ideas for the spirit, and intimate art that consoles. Amidst the disillusionments of the present, the essayistic subject, speaking in first person plural, professes love for exploring the heritage of the past, for gathering flowers from it, and making of it a "modernist art": a serious art which does not obsfuscate the view with tinsel; a spiritualist art full of original esthetic delicacies. It is an
art that the author would like to see cultivated in his land as its first devotee, albeit its last artist in rank. His pages he describes as sketches of the present, intimate notes jotted into the album of life, quill pens that could give wings to the artist who puts to flight and is strong enough to rise; pages ripped out of a calendar of prose, incoherent documents of an archive of thought, dusty some, dirty, indifferent or embittering others, but written with sincerity and love. The road of our time seems to him to be a corridor of an inn, long, endless, with all equal doors, with numbered rooms, uniform furniture, the same décor to the end. Every door that opens is a day of the modern calendar. Within each room is seen the same in every one: the same indifference, the same egoisms, the same solitude with more or less comfort and with two or three more pieces of furniture. Only some reclusive room lets poetry be glimpsed, and only at the depth of everything are seen limbs of clarity that encourage the one who walks among those smooth walls.

Lorca begins his prologue with the apostrophe, “Amigo lector,” and like Rusiñol addresses him in second person. Both Rusiñol’s and Lorca’s essayistic voices refer to themselves in the first person plural. Both begin by setting a pessimistic tone. Writes Rusiñol, “Si fullejant aquests ‘fulls de vida’ trobes potser que hi ha més planes d’hivern que planes de primavera [. . .] repassa per un moment el llibre del tus records [. . .] i veuràs que poques boires de rosa i quantes nuvolades negres passen pel fons de la ruta.” Rusiñol continues, “Si això fàs, i et porta la voluntat fins a la darrera plana d’aquests fulls de prosa íntima, espero l’absolució. Consultant el natural amb ta experiència pròpia, ben segur que trobaràs a faltar més malalties de l’ànima que imaginades ventures” (2: 63). Lorca, more concise, shares Verlaine’s taste for vagueness: “Amigo lector: Si lees entero este libro, notarás en él una cierta vaguedad y una cierta melancolía. Verás cómo pasan cosas y cosas siempre retratadas con amargura, interpretadas con tristeza” (3: 5). In the introduction to Fulls de la vida, there appears a vague enumeration of content: “Tots els fulls que aquí segueixen no són més que dibuixos del present, notes íntimes apuntades en l’àlbum de la vida” (2: 62). Lorca’s enumeration, despite his professed vagueness, displays more precision than Rusiñol’s: “Todas las escenas que desfilan por estas páginas son una interpretación de recuerdos, de paisajes, de figuras” (3: 5). Whereas Rusiñol claims that his sketches can compare to the reader’s reality, Lorca makes no such claim. He favors imagination to embellish everyday reality. With Symbolists, he finds that poetry resides in everything. The only difficulty lies in discovering it. In the preface of Anant pel món, Rusiñol writes, “Els records, a dintre el cap, crec que fan com el vi dintre la bóta: a mida que van passant anys i més anys, s’evaporen i s’escapen com a fum per les esquerdes dels sentits: però els pocs que queden en el fons del cervell són més dolços i tenen més força i més graus” (2: 2). Hence, when dying after wandering the world, according to Lorca, we may “apurar la copa de todas las emociones existentes.” Using wine metaphor even as Rusiñol does, Lorca continues, “Hay que interpretar siempre escanciando nuestra alma sobre las cosas [. . .] dando a las formas el encanto de nuestros sentimientos” (3: 6). Both Rusiñol and Lorca, hence, seek a delicious dreaminess for their prose. In the preface to Fulls de la vida (2: 64), Rusiñol writes that perhaps we dream and wander alone. However, “si tu [the reader] vols fer companyia i vols somniar amb nosaltres, vés seguint els fulls de vida del qui daria la seva per veure l’art del seu poble desensopit d’egoïsmes i ple de llum verdadera” (2: 64). Writes Lorca, “Hay que soñar. Desdichado del que no sueña, pues nunca verá la luz” (3: 6).
A general “Meditación” on Castile followed by two Castilian pieces—one on Ávila, the other on a Castilian inn—immediately comes after Lorca’s prologue. The reason for beginning the work with the “Meditación” becomes clear from its title and contents. Lorca strives to start his book on the most universal note possible. For him the problem of Castile defines that of Spain in general: “Toda la España pasada y casi la presente se respira en las augustas y solemnísimas ciudades de Castilla” (3: 9). The use of the adverb “casi” all but excludes from present-day Spain her diminished creativity. As Rusiñol’s Tarragonese friend Yxart has remarked to him, “A Espanya encara no sabem crear coses noves; però les velles, ja les sabem tirar per terra” (2: 60). For this reason, in the “Meditación” Lorca cultivates a tone of imprecision and sadness, present in Verlaine and Juan Ramón as well as in Rusiñol: “Hay un algo de inquietud y muerte en estas ciudades. [ . . . ] No sé qué sonido de campana profunda envuelve sus melancolías” (3: 8). The image of the deep bell tolling, as if for a funeral, adds sound to sight in a synesthetic sensation dear to the modernist sensitivity, particularly to Lorca’s. The same blending of sensations we find in his striking simile that in some of those silent, forgotten cities like Ávila, Zamora, Palencia, “el aire parece de hierro” (3: 8). Here a subtle echo of the bell image recurs, to which Lorca adds an atmosphere comprised of the hardness, gray, and rigidity of iron. Just as Rusiñol, as noted, equates modernist youth to enthusiasm and openness toward the future, so Lorca’s essayist voice suggests that as lovingly as those old cities seek shelter from the wave of youth, youth comes anyhow and will continue to come, with the airplane triumphing over the ruddy crosses of the cities (2: 8). The ruddiness of the tombstones, painted by Lorca with a nuance, an impure color, as if borrowed from an Impressionist’s palette, stems from the shade of the countryside, represented with a reminiscence of Théophile Gautier (“Symphonie en blanc majeur”) and Rubén Darío (“Sinfonía en gris mayor”) as a “sinfonía en sangre reseca” (Lorca 3: 8). Vision (blood redness), sound (symphony), and tactility (dryness) merge to form a landscape familiar to Unamuno’s Castile of _En torno al casticismo_ (1895; Unamuno 1: 808) and to Antonio Machado’s of _Campos de Castilla_: the fields convey aridity, poverty, yet strength. Their redness suggests they have been kneaded with the blood of Abel and Caín (3: 8), even as has the land presented in Machado’s poem, “Por tierras de España,” with its famous final line, “Por donde cruza errante la sombra de Caín” (748).

Like Rusiñol in the ruins of the monastery at Ripoll, cradle of Catalan history, Lorca tends to project legendary and historical figures over the old cities of Castile. Rusiñol, visiting the cloister of Ripoll, seems to see the pillars transformed into “fantasmes vaporoses,” each the hiding-place of a historical figure. He has seen them walking by twos around the cloister in a ring moving at a rhythmic pace, hands hidden in wide sleeves, and ever looking at the inscription on the stone. When they pass beside the essayistic subject, their look freezes his blood and they proceed onward, as if murmuring a pious prayer. In the oldest, he recognizes the Count of Barcelona Wilfred the Hairy (878–97) with a serene look and a count’s crown atop his head. Wilfred according to legend served as the first independent ruler of Catalonia. In a figure as delicate as the buds of the lemon tree in the cloister patio there appears Winidilde, Wilfred’s wife. In two abbots with a serene and venerable look, there come to view the noble Arnulf, Catalan bishop noted for his adventures in war, and the sage Abbot Oliba, founder in 1025 of the Benedictine monastery at Montserrat. The essayistic subject beholds bishops and abbots, warriors and monks, counts and lords. One of these ghosts wears iron armor under his habit. This is
the Count of Besalú, Bernat I (990–1020), known by the surname Tallaferro, and called by Rusiñol “el comte religiós, l’espant del alarbs” (2: 269). In Besalú appears an entryway dedicated in its day to that count, who participated in an expedition to Cordova in 1010. Lorca, writing of Castile, may have thought of Tallaferro’s Castilian counterpart. In the *Poema del mio Cid*, the hero arrives at the Court of Toledo to seek justice while dressed with a sword hidden under his mantle (“so los mantos las espadas—dulces e tajadores”; Cantar III, st. 137, line 3077, p. 1140). Without referring to this episode, Lorca’s essayistic voice addresses the old cities of Castile: “Estáis tan majestuosas en vuestra vejez, que se diría que hay un alma colosal, un Cid de ensueño sosteniendo vuestra piedras y ayudándoos a afrontar los dragones fieros de la destrucción” (3: 9). Rather than limiting himself like Rusiñol to the Spanish Middle Ages, Lorca regards these cities as a foreshortening of all Spanish history. By contrast with the admiring Rusiñol, he projects conflicting sentiments upon the past: “Todo el horror medieval con todas sus ignorancias y todos sus crímenes . . . «Aquí—nos dicen al pasar—estuvo la Inquisición; allí, el palacio del obispo que presidia los autos de fe.» Y en compensación exclaman: «Aquí nació Teresa; allí, Juan de la Cruz . . . » ¡Ciudades de Castilla, llenas de santidad, horror y superstición!” (3: 9).

The essay ends with a reflection on memories in general, similar to the reflection in the prologue to *Anant pel món*. At first, writes Rusiñol (2: 3), in the depths of memory we merely perceive facts as sketchy as shadows and a confusion of things without body and colors without light. Afterwards, the facts take shape with greater relief, and those persisting in the brain we keep with intimate devotion. From these memories come memories for study, troubling at first, but afterwards seen so voluntarily and to which we would gladly return were we no longer so mature (2: 4). Analogously, according to Lorca, sentimental explorations of the Spain of warriors inebriates the soul and senses with new emotions unique to this area and leaving behind a wondrous gamut of memories. Travel memories constitute a return trip, though more melancholy and with more intense awareness of the charms of objects. To remember is to become enveloped in a soft, sad light, and to ascend with thought above everything else. But if we could relive the same experience, we would not feel the joy we have on seeing it materialize in our fantasy. After we see the heavy, earthen Castilian sun blazing over the fields, the thought of “Castile,” writes Lorca, fills our souls with leaden melancholy (3: 10–11).

His first subsection, comprised of five pieces (“Meditación,” “Avila,” “Mesón de Castilla,” “La Cartuja” [of Miraflores, Burgos], “San Pedro de Cardeña”), presents impressions of Castile, constituting a unit as do the pair of studies integrating *Impressions e paisatges* of Rusiñol. One member of the latter pair bears the title, *Impressions de una excursió al Taga, Sant Joan de les Abadessas i Ripoll* (1881). The grandiose landscape viewed from the top of the Taga mountain in the Ribes valley gives way to a description of a night arrival at the village of Ribes, and finally to a detailing, in laudatory, patriotic language, of the ruins of the cloister at Ripoll. Hence Rusiñol, in what is perhaps his most moving travel piece, displays an emotional ascent, produced by increased patriotic commitment to the landscape as the essay advances. Lorca, however, given his critical posture towards Spain, seems to prefer greater emotional distance from his object and a movement of descent. He begins by generalizing about the old cities of Castile and the conflicting emotions they awaken, then presents Ávila as a concrete example of this spiritual conflict; subsequently, he studies a Castilian tavern (“mesón”) as a typical portion of this
landscape; and finally, examines two religious structures, the Carthusian monastery at Miraflores and the convent at San Pedro de Cardeña.

The writing on Ávila continues techniques already seen in “Meditación.” The entire Spanish past and most of its present are to be found living and breathing in streets of Castilian cities (2: 9); and Ávila represents the “ciudad más castellana y más augusta de toda la meseta colosal . . .” (2: 12). However, rather than evoking a hero like the Cid to sustain the stones of the streets, the essayistic voice again alludes to Teresa of Ávila: “Nadie debe hablar ni pisar fuerte para no ahuyentar el espíritu de la sublime Teresa . . . Todos deben sentirse débiles en esta ciudad de formidable fuerza . . .” (3: 12). Just as Rusiñol projects legend over his hallowed surroundings, so Lorca does in Ávila. The merlons of the walls, where storks nest, belong to the “realidad de un cuento infantil. De un momento a otro espérase oír un cuerno fantástico y ver sobre la ciudad un Pegaso de oro entre nubes tormentosas, con una princesa cautiva” (3: 12). Apart from Pegasus, modernist symbol of poetic inspiration, Lorca’s Ávila has Machadian “colinas doradas” surrounding it as it basks in a light with an “acorde magnífico de monotonia roja,” to put it with synesthesia combining vision and sound (3: 12). This first segment of the piece on Ávila closes with a striking, synesthetic simile of violence, combining sight (the clash of foam) and sound (rushing water): “Todo ello bajo un cielo grisáceo y un silencio en que el agua del río suena a chocar constante de espadas” (3: 13, emphasis added). The second segment, describing the Cathedral of Ávila, begins with a series of fused sensations: by night that structure has a formidable “negrura sangrienta,” that is, a black so intense it acquires reddish overtones, frightening like blood. The essayistic voice deems it possible to discover faith amid the cathedral shadows, humid with the eyes of sacred candles (“ojos de cirios”) that provide spiritual consolation (3: 13). Incense and wax fashion “un aire marmóreo y místico que da consuelo a los sentidos” (3: 14). Hence, Lorca’s modernistic piety, like Rusiñol’s, combines mysticism, estheticism, and sensualism.

To perceive the tenor of this piety, let us examine one of Lorca’s most detailed impressions, “El convento,” on a convent near Covarrubias. His attitude resembles that of Rusiñol, mercilessly excoriating bad taste in religious art: “L’iglésia és gran, molt gran, però d’art ni una espurna en té” (2: 262). Thus Lorca: “La portada es fea, desproporcionada [. . .]. Entramos en un gran patio de desolaciones doradas [. . .] de una frialdad artística desconcertante. Se cree hallar a la entrada de este monacato el claustro románico que le da fama. La impresión es desagradable” (3: 42). Enclosed in a monastic cell, the essayistic voice wishes to meditate, but the horror of anesthetizing passion frustrates this wish. Then follows a lengthy description of the hellish howling of dogs heard from the cell.

However, architecture arouses religious fervor both in Rusiñol and in Lorca. Rusiñol, contemplating the ruins of the church at Ripoll, writes, “M’h’a semblat sentir llunyans acords sortits de dins l’iglesia, el cant de vespres ressonar per l’ampla volta seguint el ritme majestuós que marcaven les arpes i psalterions [. . .]. m’h’a semblat sentir olor d’encens i veure esboirades pel fum les severes línies del temple” (2: 269). Likewise, Lorca, associating visuality with harmonious sound, remarks, “Cada vez que se miran las arquerías magníficas, estalla en el alma un acorde de majestuosidad antigua . . .” (3: 46). The theme of ruins appears both in Impressions i paisatges (1882) and in Impresiones y paisajes.
Yet how differently each author treats the same theme! In Rusiñol, fantasy takes joy in playing over the ruined structures; in Lorca, a sense of weariness, of frustrated effort, dominates the scene. Often juxtaposing imagined with actual reality, Rusiñol’s essayistic voice, faced with the ruins of a Gothic castle, exclaims how ruins in general speak to the imagination, comparing what the ruins once were to what they are now. The exclamations accumulate, in conformity with Rusiñol’s augmentative style: “Quantes històries hi ha escrites en aquests llibres de piedra! . . . Quin atractiu més gran se sent davant d’aqueix misteri i d’aqueixa vaguetat . . . ” In the face of the ruins, continues the essay, fantasy creates for itself a thousand stories. It sees troubadours passing by, feudal lords, falconers, ladies and pages, and once convinced of the truth of that whole dream, the eye turns and sees cold reality, but does not erase the memories inspired by the ruins (2: 263). For some instants, continues Rusiñol, the silvery moonbeam illumines them. On every side, opened and covered with ivy, great windows conserve their svelte colonnade, walls lay fallen among the vegetation, the tower still stands that once served to guard the castle. In the semidarkness, the speaker expresses a pensive sadness while contemplating so much lost beauty, so much grandeur that was and so much destruction that is (2: 264–65).

Lorca’s traveler similarly stops “emocionado” in front of the ruins. Unlike Rusiñol’s narrator, however, Lorca’s feels “un cansancio abrumador” before the spectacle of fortresses undone. Broken arches, doors opening onto rooms carpeted with nettles, capitals (“chapiteles”) lying on the ground, and high lonely walls display “la esencia de mil colores tristes” spread among the ivies. Lorca surpasses Rusiñol in the plasticity of his presentation of the ruins. He finds the “visión decorativa de una ruina [. . . ] magnífica”: light comes through the broken ceilings, and having nowhere to reflect, except in the heaps of a gallery open to the fields or in a cloister, “penetra ondulando tonalidades sombrías.” Like Rusiñol he loves contrasts, though between different hues, as in impressionist paintings or in “Azorín”’s word-paintings: “El contraste de los colores verdes y los dorados, bajo la caricia dulce de la luz, forma una gama admirable de apagamiento y amargura” (3: 10) Moreover, as already seen, Lorca, by contrast to Rusiñol, adds auditory sensations to visual ones. In his essay on ruins, he invents a myth about echoes as small geniis who, having nowhere to rest, entered the fallen building to mock every sound, repeat laughter and disconsolate screams, multiply footsteps and confuse conversations in a high tide of words. As the ruins slowly sink into the ground, the echoes escape into the surrounding plain, and the legend ends (3: 101).

Without a doubt Lorca most approaches Rusiñol’s sensitivity in his longest essay, “El convento.” Lorca’s estheticism, on which he depends for strong religious experiences, now takes flight. The Catalan writer crosses a wing of the cloister at Ripoll guided by the authority En Pellicer, who has written a monograph about those venerable ruins, among which he resides. “Aquí [in the cloister] dormen, en somni etern, els nostres primers herois; entremig d’aquestes ortigues resten perdudes les venerandes cendres dels nostres primers Comtes. Cada grapat de terra conté part d’una gran figura, i amb tot, la terra que Catalunya hauria de conservar, com Roma la de les seves catacumbes, està quasi oblidada, i solamente té per guarda els qui, com En Pellicer, es converteixen en apòstols de la seva vàlua” (2: 270). In Lorca a wise monk serves as guide and artistically evokes Castilian legend: “En una pared del claustro duerme un caballero de nobleza castellana,
que fue el héroe de una hermosísima gesta de amor. Un monje inteligentísimo y sabio nos lo cuenta. Pasan por la leyenda, que tuvo realidad en las tierras de Castilla, las figuras de siempre... El caballero generoso y valiente, el moro aristocrático y amigo, las mujeres de ambos [...]. Fuerte y serena surge la leyenda de los labios apasionados del religioso, brillan sus ojos melancólicos en el ensueño de una evocación artística” (3: 46). Wherever the modernist finds a fellow artist, secular or cleric, he accords him equal appreciation.

The similarity of vision between the modernists Rusiñol and Lorca becomes most striking in the reaction of each writer towards the Romanesque capitals of medieval cloisters: in Rusiñol’s case, the ruined one in Ripoll; in Lorca’s, one in operation in Covarrubias. Let us place passages of each side by side:

Mirem amb detenció aquests variats capitells, i davant de cada un passariem hores senceres admirantlos. Tota la fantasía de l’Edat Mitjana hi està acumulada: tots els símbols que ideà aquella època de misticisme, tots els animals fantàstics que veié en somnis, tot el caràcter dels seus costums, tot el foc de la seva inspiració i la potència del seu geni, estan retratats en aquestes pedres; els variats vestits que es portaren des del segle X fins al XIV, els penitinats i mobiles, les armes i armadures, ballestes i instruments musicals estan com a col·leccionats en aquest magistral museu; tot el gust exquisit en combinar arabescos; tots els entrellaçats, reles i motllures que l’Orient col·locà en les seves mesquites, volten i rematen aquestes aparellades columnes; pertot dracs, feres, llúites, dragons, guerrers, en fi, un deliri d’escultura, un cabdal pulcritud u paciencia, una mar d’inspiració (Impressions i paisatges 2: 271, emphasis added).

Los capiteles grandes y macizos, según la proporción del conjunto, son el encanto artístico del claustro... Muestran una época en que el sentimiento de las líneas tuvo una admirable apoteosis de comprensión y de fuerza. Los dibujos son de una sobriedad complicada, un bosque de líneas graciosas y mórbidas ordenado y correcto... Son tallos vegetales lo que muestra la piedra dorada, son tejidos artísticos, bordados primorosos y delicados. Es cada capitel una piedra preciosa, enorme, pero sin brillo. Está tallada magistralmente. Tienen los capiteles hojas raras, acantes varios, enredaderas exóticas, enrejados cálidos, plantas míticas desconocidas, estilizaciones vegetales. En las más predominan las representaciones de animales. Ya había visto en Avila el capitel de dos pelícanos con dos cuellos de amorosa y extrañamente enlazados en un estremecimiento espasmódico; pero no había visto las representaciones de locura en el capitel románico. Bien pudiera ser porque nunca contemplé tan de cerca el capitel [...]. (Impresiones y paisajes 3: 47, emphasis added)
Both texts emerge out of vision newly concentrated on the capitals (“Mirem amb detenció”; “contemplé tan de cerca”). Both begin with general approval of the capitals as art (“admirantlos”; “encanto artístico del claustro”). Both next generalize about the Middle Ages as an epoch of artistic genius (“foc,” “inspiració,” “geni”; “admirable apoteosis de comprensión y fuerza”). Both regard the sculpted stone as a treasure-trove (“magistral museu”; “piedra preciosa”). Both wonder at the arabesque design (“entrellaçats”, “enrejados”). Both marvel at the imitation of cloth by stone (“variats vestits”; “tejidos”, “bordados”). Both express astonishment at the fantastic animals (“dracs,” “dragons”; “harpías” in part of Lorca’s passage beyond the quote, 2: 47). Both writers use anaphora (“Tota,” “tots,” “tots,” “tot,” “tot”; “Son,” “son”) and ample enumeration to convey the abundance of detail and its disposition—now horizontal, now vertical—on the capital. Clearly Lorca and Rusiñol practice a similar kind of ekphrastic modernist prose.

However, Rusiñol depicts the capitals as museums of ordinary medieval life, occasionally intertwined with legend. Lorca, on the other hand, stresses what he finds wild and strange about the capitals, forming part of a cloister which, unlike Rusiñol’s idealistic vision of Ripoll, does not wholly promote religious idealism. What truly impresses Lorca is the fantastic fauna of those capitals. A witness of violence in the universe, he underscores “las escenas de tortura infinita que observé.” There appears on some capitals, amidst the exuberance of stems and leaves, the following bestiary: “harpías de pesadilla con cuerpos de búho, con alas de águila, con cabezas de mujer . . . y estos pájaros se muerden unos a otros, juntando sus bocas, antechocando sus alas, en espantosas inversiones de expresión inverosímil . . . En otras estas escenas están formadas por animales extravagantes, que se muerden las colas unos sobre otros con marcada expresión sexual, de un sexualismo satánico, formando trinidades espantosas de tortura carnal” (3: 47).

Lorca’s essay next describes a sacred Mass from the standpoint of modernist estheticism, though an estheticism more secularized than Rusiñol’s. The initial description of the church sets the tone for what follows; the essayistic standpoint establishes esthetic enjoyment as supreme standard, irrespective of other spiritual values: “Es una iglesia fría, enorme, destatralada, antiáctica. No tiene retablos, ni imágenes, ni color . . . En el altar principal se venera un San Sebastián mártir, que muestra su desnudez de una manera antiartística” (3: 48). The dehumanizing description of the officiating priests resembles that of friars depicted in Rusiñol’s essay, “El dinar negre,” with the adjective negre understood as brutish or macabre. The meal (“dinar”) here described unfolds in an inn, usually deserted, yet filled in this instant with “strange people.” Rusiñol identifies them as brothers of some congregation who, “havent ajudat a morir o bé a matar un condemnat a garrot d’un poblet d’allí a la vora, aprofitaren el dia [ . . . ] per fer una sortida al campo” (2: 101). Their faces bear the round lines of self-satisfaction. Employees of a severe tribunal, with yellowish faces and crimson cheeks like comic actors, they resemble wax figures from the booth of a fair, coming out into the sunlight (2: 101). Their remarks reveal that they have just witnessed the death of a man in full health, a murderer but a man, wicked but a mother’s son; and that they had executed him outdoors. They have observed the serenity of the condemned criminal, determined by taking his pulse, and have marveled at the size of the crowds at the executions, as well as at the quality of those witnesses, bullfighting fans wishing even stronger emotions than those produced by seeing
horses gored (2: 102). Resolved to avoid such “sad” subjects at mealtime, these wax figures, this macabre jury, these ascetics of torture who celebrate a black meal, open more bottles, tell tales, and cause their laughter to resound through the hall (2: 102). In Lorca appear figures whose only shortcoming is their physiological grossness. With a black-and-white contrast also to be found in Rusiñol’s word paintings, Lorca’s text establishes an antithesis between the blackened hands of monks officiating at mass and the lily-pure hands of imagined priestesses! Thus the monks: “Son los monjes que ofician, hombres de tez curtida, de andar grosero, de manos impuras por el color negruzco que tienen, llenas de cerdas, ese castigo cruel de la Naturaleza” (3: 49). Affirms the essayistic voice, while assuming a shockingly pagan estheticism, “Debiera por estética no permitir a esos hombres decir la misa [. . . ] alzar la hostia, sublime símbolo de pureza y de paz universal. Las tareas sacerdotales debiera tenerlas la mujer, cuyas manos, que son azucenas, se perdieran entre las blancuras de las randas [. . . ] lirios de verdadero encanto sacerdotal” (3: 49).10

Not surprisingly, therefore, the lyrical voice of Lorca’s essay sustains a conflictive conversation with a priest about music, a leading art of his own early modernist religion of art. Gregorian chant, sung by the monks of the convent, produces a synesthetic reaction, combining sight and sound. This form of melody is openended like fine smoke: “La melodía, como enorme columna de mármol negro que se perdiera entre las nubes, no tiene solución. Es accidentada y lisa, profunda y de un vago sentimiento interior” (2: 50). However, as a modernist, the essayistic subject, favoring novelty, creativity, recognizes the antiquity of that form of music. Conversing with the organist of the convent, who expresses himself with a “grata inocencia nativa,” the first-person speaker pities his artistic naivété. “El pobre no conocia nada más que el canto llano. Entró de niño en el convento y no ha salido de allí.” With his limited knowledge of music, this monk has apparently never emerged out of artistic childhood: he ignores the “maravillas sinfónicas de la orquesta,” has never savored the “solemn romanticism” of the cello, nor shuddered before the grave fury of the trumpets. “Únicamente sabía el secreto del órgano, pero puesto al servicio del arcaísmo gregoriano . . . Le nombré a Beethoven y sonó a cosa nueva en sus oídos el apellido inmortal” (3: 51). In Impressions i paisatges (2: 259) appears Rusiñol’s comparison of “harmonious evenings” in the Catalan Pyrenees to the “melodies de Beethoven, poètiques com la mateixa poesia (puix que la poesia són).” Rusiñol’s syntax makes it impossible to determine whether the adjective poètiques modifies the melodies of Beethoven, or the tardes of Catalonia. However, the vagueness which Rusiñol cultivates makes the antecedent a matter of indifference, as the adjective may well apply to both nouns (tardes and melodies). In Lorca, the music of Beethoven carries additional semantic weight, because in the dedication of his Impresiones y paisajes to his piano teacher Segura Mesa, he writes that the aged maestro, who felt the music he performed “con aire de galán enamorado,” relived his former passions “al conjuro de una sonata beethoviana. ¡Era un santo!” (3: 4). Lorca clearly considers him saintly for his worship of the musical art. The essayistic subject determines to initiate the ingenuous organist of Covarrubias into the cult of Beethoven.

After approvingly hearing the organist render a “maravillosamente estupendo” Agnus Dei on his instrument, the essayistic ego attempts its own (modernistic) religious rite. Sitting down before the “teclado místico con patina amarillenta”—remember that in Rusiñol
mysticism signifies supernatural sufferings and visions,—the first-person narrator attempts the allegretto of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony, a movement here characterized as an “obra de dolor extrahumano,” a “lamentación de amor patético” (3: 52). Hardly has this new organist played by memory three measures of this anguishing piece, than the monk who told him the legends of the cloister comes up behind him and claps his hands over his eyes. The action interrupts the rendering of the piece, which the performer now forgets. Clearly visuality goes hand-in-hand with sonority in Lorca. Between the lines, he inserts an explanation for the monk’s strange behavior. As already noted, Lorca finds that monks enter the cloister to flee the world (2: 25). Apparently, the monk who hides the narrator’s eyes is no exception. The act of covering those eyes perhaps symbolizes the attempt to avoid worldly troubles: “El monje apasionado tenía los ojos puestos en un sitio muy lejos. Ojos que tenían toda la amargura de un espíritu que acababa de despertar de un ensueño ficticio, para mirar hacia un ideal de hombre perdido para siempre” (2: 25). In short, it embitters the monk to awake from the daydream of monastic life, only to realize that his ideal of solitary serenity through separation from the world has vanished. The narrator closes this episode by incorporating into his prose a metaphor often employed by the author of *Fulls de la vida*—the image of life as a book: “Al salir de la iglesia sentimos una gran palpitación en el ambiente: era un libro enorme que se había cerrado sobre el facistol” (2: 52). The book of the monk’s life has closed, as it were. The hope of flight from the world has revealed itself to be an optical illusion.

Likenesses with Rusiñol are at hand not only in Lorca’s lengthy essayistic pieces, like the series on Castile, but also in brief separate impressions—for instance, impression XVIII, “Romanza de Mendelssohn.” The latter impression strongly resembles Rusiñol’s “Marina,” from *Fulls de la vida* (2: 85). At sunset on a solitary beach, suggests Rusiñol, a pointillist painting takes shape. Faraway, bathed by the final yellowish rays of the sun, many little points appear to enter and leave the water, frolicking and running over the sand like a human crowd. In mid-ground lies an anchored boat, its keel beside the sea and about to set sail. In the foreground, smooth sand glistens with water extending over it and with great waves ever approaching, singing the song of twilight (“cantant la cançó del vespre”; 2: 85). Facing the sea and touching the sand with his cane, his head held high, a blind man comes along, walking straight and mechanically, guided by the sound of the waves and by the sound of the water, attracted by the lament he hears, perhaps seduced by rhythmic instinct, the touch of blue that he does not see, and the saltiness of the air (2: 85). Rusiñol narrates how the blind man, convinced of being alone, undresses and carefully makes his way toward the sea. He possesses for Rusiñol a biblical image of a legendary prophet, who tries to penetrate into the great mysterious ship, if not an old Judean ascetic consulting the language of the waves. He advances into the sea at sundown, the water turned from the green of metal shards to a very sweet violet (“un violeta dolcíssim”). The sky darkens, with a rosy border of waves and sapphire blue surrounding the emerging stars. The majestic moon appears. The waves cover with new night the night of the blind man (2: 86–87).

In “Romanza de Mendelssohn,” Lorca also presents the scene of a seaport, but, while eliminating the narrative element, intercalates a synesthetic one, uniting sight, sound, and taste. What in Rusiñol was sweet violet water in Lorca is “la miel azul del mar,” where
boats sleepily bob up and down. As in Rusiñol’s marine sketch, “es la hora crepuscular y empiezan a encenderse las luces de los barcos y de las casas” (3: 119). Lorca’s essayistic voice presents the contents of a reflection in the water, a “caserío invertido en las aguas en medio de los ziszás dorados y temblorosos de los reflejos.” As in Rusiñol the moon comes out, but in Lorca softly coloring the water. With the wharf abandoned and quiet, only two large men dressed in blue take center stage (instead of Rusiñol’s blind man), but at once disappear, conversing heatedly. Now the music of Mendelssohn becomes the protagonist of Lorca’s piece. The Song without Words, emerging from a distant piano, replaces the twilight song of the waves in Rusiñol. The piano music seems to envelop the whole port. Amidst this harmony, water seems to fall in love with earth; the waves break “lamiendo voluptuosamente las gradas del embarcadero.” While the piano continues to play, night falls, as in Rusiñol. The final sensation that appears here presents the same unusual aquatic color change already seen in Rusiñol, to which Lorca adds the Wagnerian motif of the phantom ship (Die Fliegende Holländer, 1843): “Sobre las aguas verdes y plomizas pasó una barca blanca como un fantasma al compás lento de los remos” (3: 120).

Finally, both Rusiñol and Lorca offer seriated essays. A poetic theme tenuously ties together several descriptive pieces. For example, Fulls de la vida joins “La primavera artificial” (2: 65) and “Primavera natural” (2: 66); “Llum eterna” (2: 106), “Llum freda” (2: 106), and “Llum apagada” (2: 107); “Un somni negre” (2: 121) and “Un somni rosa” (2: 122). Under the title “Jardines” Lorca groups together the five essayistic pieces “Jardín conventual,” “Huertas de las iglesias ruinosas,” “Jardín romántico,” “Jardín muerto,” and “Jardín de las estaciones” (3: 89–99).11 The twilight gardens, with their vagueness, melancholies, fountains, pale ladies, and courtly poets, seem to echo Juan Ramón Jiménez of Arias tristes (cf. Lorca 3: 93). If any of Lorca’s five pieces show a sensitivity akin to Rusiñol’s, it is perhaps “Jardín romántico,” where the lyrical subject laments the departure of the past for its poetic beauty, yet awaits the work of the present. The present may appear antipoetic and squalid for now: “Es irremediable, la fiesta pasó . . . Verlaine llora y Eduardo Dubus está sonando su violín negro. Pronto el arado entrará en las maravillas umbrosas del jardín.”12 However, the marchioness of times past has handed her garden over to the woman of the proletariat to feed her children on whatever cabbages and lettuces they can raise. Like Rusiñol, seeking poetic values in the new, the narrator says of the marchioness’ vanishing garden, “Que está muy bien desaparecido el jardín” (3: 96).

In conclusion, the foregoing study has just shown the proximity of Lorca’s early travel prose to Rusiñol’s. Lorca’s first-person plural introduction, addressed to the reader in second person, resembles the prologue to Fulls de vida. Here as in Lorca’s prologue, memories, persons, and landscapes are first foregrounded and later accorded first rank in the travel prose that follows. In Impressions i paisatges, the landscape artist Rusiñol charts an emotional ascent, marked by Catalan patriotism; in Lorca, affected by the older modernists Unamuno, “Azorín,” A. Machado, a descent in spirits quickly becomes noticeable, with criticism of Castilian staticism. Both Rusiñol and Lorca focus on myriad facets of medieval religious architecture, judged with more severe estheticism by the writer from Granada. Both authors love the tenuous seriation of essayistic pieces under a single vague theme: sunsets or gardens. Finally, single essayistic studies by Rusiñol have
their analogies in Lorca. Rusiñol verbally paints a twilight seaside, using nuances of the water comparable to Lorca’s twilight marine word-painting, embellished by the music of Mendelssohn. However immature the pieces of the adolescent Lorca, too heavy-handed with social criticism in some passages, too imitative of Juan Ramón and “Azorín” in others, the comparative study of Impresiones y paisajes does serve major functions: it situates Lorca within the context of Peninsular modernism. It may also help contextualize other early writings of Lorca, printed as his juvenilia (1917–1918). What of his mature works? Points of striking similarity to Rusiñol lie beyond doubt.13 A new panorama of critical possibilities awaits Lorca criticism, situating his writings within the plurality of Peninsular cultures.
Notes

1 On Rubén Darío’s early influence on Lorca: Andrés Soria Olmedo 12, 16. On Catalan origins of Hispanic modernism: Eduard Valenti Fiol 147. The first issue of the journal L’Avenç, initially spelled L’Avens (July 3, 1881), contains the following political explanation of the journal title (meaning “The Advance”): “Son titol ja indica que perteneixem á un partit avansat, y al ferlo «periodich catalanista», manifestem tenir gran amor á la terra ahont havem vist la llum per primera volta.” The first use of the word modernistes in the current sense (i.e., attitude of respect for newness in all spheres of cultural endeavor) appears in the supplement of the January 15, 1884 issue: Valenti Fiol 158–59. The members of L’Avenç initially endorsed Zola’s naturalism as the dernier cri, but subsequently espoused French Symbolism when this trend eclipsed naturalism. Santiago Rusiñol’s pictorial travel-prose, which seems to have influenced Lorca, is Impressionist in orientation. Further on L’Avenç, on Rusiñol’s leadership, and on Catalan modernism in general: Mary Lee Bretz 30–32, 53.

2 Anant pel món contains impressions and notes of the author’s travels through Catalonia, Castile, and Andalucía, as well as jottings about his childhood and his stay in Paris: Carles Soldevila, “Pròleg,” in Santiago Rusiñol, Obres completes 2: xxvii. See note 4, below, for the contents of Lorca’s Impresiones y paisajes, in many ways similar.

3 Writes Christopher Maurer (1986: 13), “a esta primera época de Lorca, en la que el músico se convierte en escritor, se ha prestado poca atención.”

4 In three excursions, Lorca explored Baeza, Úbeda, Cordova, and Ronda (1916); Madrid, El Escorial, Ávila, Zamora, Santiago de Compostela, A Coruña, Lugo, León, Burgos, and Segovia (1916); and finally Old Castile, Galicia, and Baeza once again (1917). The order of his impressions does not follow the schedule of his excursions. Instead, a section on Old Castile comes first, another on the Monastery of Silos, a third on tombs of Burgos, a fourth on Baeza, next an intercalated essay on the popular images of Christ throughout Spain, a section on Granada, one on gardens, and a final section of twenty brief miscellaneous impressions. The loose thematic structure of the whole resembles that of most of Rusiñol’s impressions. For both authors, artistic freedom, spontaneity, apparently prevails. For less finished versions of travel impressions in Lorca: Prosa inédita de juventud 465–88.

5 See especially “Baladas y otros diálogo fantásticos,” ibid., 229–82, where the young Lorca attempts in every way possible, at times to excess, to link literature and music.

6 Although Rusiñol phrases this thought impersonally, in terms of his times, it is he himself who may have tired of naturalism, esthetic position of Catalan modernists in their initial moment (1884). Parnassianism and Symbolism are the idealisms in France which react against Zola’s materialism.

7 Recall Rusiñol’s novel L’aigua del senyor Esteve (1906), centering on the bourgeois philistine, endowed, unfortunately for the artists, with economic power over them: Resina 519.

8 Cf. Rusiñol’s purposely imprecise description of a feminine figure, seen from afar: she is “un quelcom de samaritana amb no sé qué d’odalisca” (2: 87, emphasis added).

9 See “Blanc i negre,” Fulls de la vida, in Obres completes 2: 97, with two characters, a woman with white-powdered face who laughs mercilessly while humiliating a dark-skinned, inebriated black. The essay ends with this sentence: “I res més dolorós i trist que el
contrast d’aquella figura negra, plena la cara de llàgrimes, amb l’altra figura blanca, tota plena de farina.” Here as later in Lorca, femininity becomes associated with whiteness, masculinity with blackness.

10 Cf. Rubén Darío, “Stella,” Prosas profanas, in Obras completas 5: 805, where the purity of the beloved gets linked to the Virgin Mary and to the whiteness of the lily.

11 Santiago Rusiñol compiled a collection of reproductions of his own paintings and titled them Jardins d’Espanya (1903): Obres completes 2: 687, n 1. I find no evidence of direct influence on Lorca of Rusiñol’s poetic prologue to the collection. Perhaps it could be argued that the paintings affected Lorca’s prose, but I leave the question for a future study. Here I deal solely with Rusiñol’s essays.

12 Edouard Dubus (1837–1895), poète maudit, left as his legacy Quand les violons sont partis. Vers posthumes (Paris: Messein, 1905).

13 In Fulls de la vida appears a memorably tragic essayistic piece, “El darrer viatge.” This lyrical treatment of a train carrying the war-wounded, discharging ailing veterans at every village, may have inspired two haunting verses of “Romance sonámbulo.” “I el tren caminava sempre,” writes Rusiñol, “caminava via enllà, emportant se’n les desferres i deixant rastre de sangre y negra rosada de llàgrimes” (2: 116, emphasis added). In “Romance sonámbulo” we find, “Ya suben los dos compadres/ hacia las altas barandas / Dejando un rastro de sangre. / Dejando un rastro de lágrimas” (1: 402). The question arises, could Rusiñol’s essay have inspired as well Miguel Hernández’s well-known poem “El tren de los heridos” in El hombre acecha (1939)? Writes Rusiñol of the train, “Ja quasi no era hospital, ja respirava la màquina, ja havia tret del seu ventre aquell rebuig de la guerra” (2: 116). Of his train Hernández writes, “Detenerse quisiera bajo un túnel / la larga madre, sollozar tendida. / No hay estaciones donde detenerse, / si no es el hospital, si no es el pecho” (100).
Works Cited


