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# World's Fairs in Chicago and Barcelona: Spectacle, Memory, and Nationalism

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A Senior Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Honors in History.

Faculty Advisor: Antonio Feros

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# World's Fairs in Chicago and Barcelona: Spectacle, Memory, and Nationalism

## **Abstract**

Nineteenth-century international exhibitions served as platforms for national competition and self-expression. Though over 4,000 miles apart, both Chicago, Illinois and Barcelona, Spain were animated by "second city" politics and featured a thriving industrial economy in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Yet while Chicagoans swelled with pride about the city they had helped resurrect from the ashes of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, they also displayed patriotism toward an American nation that had overcome the Civil War and was rapidly amassing power. A burgeoning Catalan nationalist movement, on the other hand, contributed to a widening disconnect between the capital of Catalonia and a sputtering Spanish nation. These pivotal differences - along with historical circumstance - have informed the historical interpretation of Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and Barcelona's 1888 Universal Exposition. The ways in which the collective memory of these two world's fairs have diverged shed light on why, today, remembering Chicago's World's Fair has largely become an intellectual exercise while conjuring up memories of Barcelona's Universal Exposition persists as a critical tool for Catalan nationalists wishing to advance their interests and broadcast their nationalism to the global community.

## **Keywords**

Chicago, nationalism, Barcelona, Spain, United States, world's fair, collective memory, nineteenth century

## **Disciplines**

History

## **Comments**

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**By Uri Friedman**

A Senior Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Honors in History

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## *Author's Note*

This thesis is a product not only of my last two semesters at the University of Pennsylvania but also of the six months that I spent in Barcelona, Spain as a foreign exchange student at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF) and the Universitat de Barcelona (UB) during the spring semester of my junior year. I lived a minute's walk from the Arc de Triomf, the Monument a Rius i Taulet, and the Parc de la Ciutadella, all prominent vestiges of Barcelona's *Exposició Universal* (Universal Exposition) in 1888 and the years immediately afterwards. I gained an appreciation for the profound and far-reaching impact that the act of remembering has on Catalan and Spanish society as Spaniards passionately debated the *ley de Memoria Histórica* (law of historical memory), a bill sponsored by the Socialist government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero to honor victims of the Spanish Civil War and Francisco Franco's dictatorship. The crux of this investigation thus derives as much from my day-to-day experiences in Barcelona as it does from the diverse texts that I have gathered for the purposes of the study.

I'm an American who spent half a year in Barcelona taking courses on Catalan nationalism, chatting informally with peers and strangers about Catalan identity, and voraciously reading *El País* and *La Vanguardia*. I therefore admit that there may be certain intricacies, subtleties, and nuances intrinsic to Catalan nationalism that are beyond my ability to comprehend. When it comes to American nationalism, I know it when I see it but have always struggled to articulate its dimensions. What follows is simply an attempt to combine my anecdotal observations with as broad a sampling of the historical record as possible, and to analyze what this mixture yields.

I decided to write my history honors thesis on Catalan nationalism while still in Barcelona. Once I had committed myself to the task, I began meeting with professors to discuss

my ideas and rummaging through city archives and libraries to dust off aspects of Barcelona's past that only fortified my already-durable connection to the city. I would like to thank Barcelona's librarians and photocopiers for their tireless support of my endeavors. More importantly, however, I would like to recognize the inspiration and guidance provided by my professors at UPF, Albert Garcia Balaña and Raimundo Viejo, and my professor at UB, Joan Lluís Palos, all three of whom fueled my interest in nationalism and cultural and intellectual history. I owe a debt of gratitude to Enric Ucelay da Cal, who, over coffee in Gràcia, challenged me to bridge the traditional divide between European and American history by using Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition as a counterpoint in my study of Barcelona's Universal Exposition. Antonio Feros, my thesis advisor at the University of Pennsylvania, always found time to flesh out ideas with me and to allay my concerns when obstacles arose. I have learned a great deal about how to be an historian from his incisive and candid feedback to my drafts. My thesis instructor, Kristen Stromberg Childers, offered invaluable advice during the research and writing phases and was a superb instructor for our class, never failing to raise our spirits and encourage us to take pride in our work.

### *A Note on Texts and Translations*

All translations of Spanish and Catalan texts into English are mine. I have refrained from translating certain Spanish or Catalan words that I believe lose much of their significance in English.

## Introduction: The Opening Act

*And as the Greek philosophers said of man that he is a tiny cosmos, it is more correct in the last third of the nineteenth century to say that a Universal Exposition is a summary of the world that is germinating and flowering.*<sup>1</sup>

- Saturnino Lacál, Catalan chronicler of Barcelona's Universal Exposition, 1889

Ambling down the chaotic pedestrian thoroughfare known as Las Ramblas toward Barcelona's bustling waterfront, one draws ever closer to a 187-foot monument constructed for the city's *Exposició Universal* (Universal Exposition) in 1888.<sup>2</sup> The soaring structure is capped by an intrepid Christopher Columbus extending his index finger and his gaze providentially toward the Mediterranean Sea. Ask someone in Barcelona—the capital of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia in northeastern Spain—where Columbus is pointing, and you'll get a host of answers. Some Catalans argue that the explorer is directing people's attention to the Catalan harbor and turning his back on Spain's capital, Madrid, others declare that he is gesticulating toward his native Genoa, and still others claim that he is tracing the sea route to an American continent that served as the wellspring of Catalonia's industrial wealth in the nineteenth century. When the tower was erected in the late 1880s, many Catalans believed Columbus was a fellow Catalan and that King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had welcomed the discoverer in Barcelona upon his return from the New World.

Five years after Barcelona's Universal Exposition and over 4,000 miles away, sculptors in the Midwestern United States were putting the finishing touches on a massive statue depicting an emperor-like Columbus standing valiantly in a horse-drawn chariot and facing eastward

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<sup>1</sup> Saturnino Lacál, *El libro de honor: apuntes para la historia de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona, premios concedidos y dictámenes que los productos expuestos merecieron del jurado internacional* (Barcelona: Tipografía de Fidel Giró, 1889), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Note: In Catalan, the event is referred to as the *Exposició Universal*.

toward Europe. The statue crowned a triumphal arch that adorned the Court of Honor at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, Illinois. The memorials to Columbus in Barcelona and Chicago might still be engaged in transatlantic communication if not for the fact that Chicago's monument was destroyed in a massive fire soon after the Columbian Exposition closed its doors.

Building on Pierre Nora's theory that the past is artificially recreated by society in the present through 'realms of memory,' French historian Stéphane Michonneau asserts that visitors who disembarked in Barcelona for the 1888 Exposition and confronted the Monumento a Colón (Columbus Monument) were "driven to reenact the Columbian adventure from the legendary reconstruction of the facts... This magical identification transformed Barcelona into a New World to conquer, Barcelona was the new America of Spain."<sup>3</sup> Even natives rediscovered their city as they were whisked up the Monumento a Colón in elevators for panoramic views of the sprawling urban landscape below them. In analyzing Chicago's World's Fair, which commemorated the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbus's discovery of the New World, Dutch historian Wim de Wit writes, "From whatever direction a visitor entered the fair, she or he could not avoid the ideologically charged messages of America's progress and civilization conveyed by the grandeur of the Court of Honor."<sup>4</sup> As in Barcelona, visitors to the Columbian Exposition were encouraged to relive the Columbian voyage. In one ceremony, full-sized replicas of Columbus's three caravels—the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria—arrived in Chicago from Spain amidst salutatory canon blasts and motorboat-induced vapor streams. A Columbus impersonator thrust his sword into the soil and proclaimed the New World for Spain as Native

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<sup>3</sup> Stéphane Michonneau, *Barcelona: memòria i identitat: monuments, commemoracions i mites*, trans. Rosa Martínez (Vic: Eumo Editorial: Universitat de Vic, 2002), 125.

<sup>4</sup> Wim de Wit, "Building an Illusion: The Design of the World's Columbian Exposition," in *Grand Illusions: Chicago's World's Fair of 1893*, by Neil Harris et al. (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1993), 81.



Americans from Buffalo Bill's nearby Wild West Show scampered about the scene in festival dress. Michonneau argues that the "cult of Columbus, according to the Catalan version, was secular, industrialist, and imperialist," and the Monumento a Colón a "vehicle of propaganda" that embodied the Exposition's principal objective: fashioning a new urban image through which Barcelona could "affirm itself to the world."<sup>5</sup> De Wit maintains that Chicago's Fair "celebrated Columbus as America's supposed first historic figure and...concentrated even more on presenting four centuries of American achievement as testimony to this country's readiness to assume a leading role in the world."<sup>6</sup> It appears that exhibition organizers in both Barcelona and Chicago appropriated Columbus—an enigmatic and pliable historical figure inextricably linked at the time to notions of civilization, progress, and modernity—to transmit specific messages to visitors. The images broadcast hinted at lands bursting with promise that merely required an active imagination and enough money for an entrance fee to discover.

Barcelona's 1888 Exposition and Chicago's 1893 World's Fair beg comparisons not only because they invoke Columbus but also because of the contexts in which they emerged. In the late nineteenth century, Chicago, like Barcelona, boasted a thriving but volatile industrial economy, experienced a widening division between a powerful bourgeoisie and a restive working class, and was animated by 'second-city' politics within a country that had recently overcome devastating regional discord and was striving for unity and stability. Even the language used to describe the enduring mystiques of Barcelona's Exposition and Chicago's World's Fair is strikingly similar. Michonneau explains that the leaders of the early twentieth-century Catalan cultural movement known as *Noucentisme* wasted little time after Barcelona's Exposition in propagating a "myth of the Expo" as the immediate forerunner of their

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<sup>5</sup> Michonneau, *Barcelona*, 128; 132; 134-135.

<sup>6</sup> De Wit, "Building an Illusion," 61-62.

“‘metropolization’ of Barcelona.”<sup>7</sup> Regarding Chicago’s World’s Fair, American historian Peter B. Hales writes that “as the physical White City burned down, its supporters and believers of all classes, backgrounds, and relations with its utopian presence turned with increasing urgency to the construction of a more permanent if more ephemeral Dream City—a city of myth, encapsulated in the official histories, reports, elegies, poems, and photographic albums that the Exposition’s financially troubled administration continued to fund.”<sup>8</sup> Reflecting on the centennial of Barcelona’s Exposition, Catalan businessman Pere Durán Farell claims that “the universalist spirit of that Exposition, much more than its content as an event, has constituted a transcendental and extremely positive reality for Catalonia,” while Catalan historian Ramon Grau contends that even though the strict description of the Exposition has not changed much over the years, the facts have been the “object of a series of reinterpretations throughout time.”<sup>9</sup> One hundred years after Chicago’s Fair, American historian Neil Harris states that “the succeeding century endowed the exposition’s memory and standing with a life of their own,” and touches upon “the shifting status of its reputation, the fickle and erratic chorus that has accompanied its evocations.”<sup>10</sup>

Yet the fact that Michonneau writes about Columbus’s connection to Barcelona and Catalonia while de Wit links the explorer to America hints at a critical difference between the two world’s fairs. On a more symbolic level, it is also telling that Barcelona’s Monumento a Colón is still one of the city’s most renowned landmarks while Chicago’s Columbus statue is

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<sup>7</sup> Michonneau, *Barcelona*, 123.

<sup>8</sup> Peter B. Hales, *Constructing the Fair: Platinum Photographs by C.D. Arnold of the World’s Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1993), 47-48.

<sup>9</sup> Pere Durán Farell, prologue to *Exposició Universal de Barcelona: libro del centenario, 1888-1988*, ed. Ramon Grau and Marina López (Barcelona: Comisión Ciudadana para la Conmemoración del Centenario de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona del Año 1888: L’Avenç, 1988), 26.

Ramon Grau, “Bibliografía. La Exposición de 1888 en el juicio histórico,” in *Exposició Universal de Barcelona: libro del centenario, 1888-1988*, ed. Ramon Grau and Marina López (Barcelona: Comisión Ciudadana para la Conmemoración del Centenario de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona del Año 1888: L’Avenç, 1988), 31.

<sup>10</sup> Neil Harris, “Memory and the White City,” in *Grand Illusions: Chicago’s World’s Fair of 1893*, by Neil Harris et al. (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1993), 4.

now relegated to history textbooks and photographic albums. Despite the surface-level similarities between the international exhibitions, the events themselves and the manner in which historical circumstance and intellectual and political elites have molded their malleable but lasting legacies at discrete moments in time differ markedly. With one exception, Chicago's Fair has increasingly been remembered as a watershed moment for America and, in some cases, for Chicago within the larger context of a changing American landscape. Barcelona's Exposition has, with one exception, increasingly been remembered as an event with powerful resonance for Barcelona and Catalonia but not for Spain.

This divergence arises in part because the municipal government and local elites were almost entirely responsible for organizing Barcelona's Exposition while local and national authorities collaborated more closely during Chicago's Fair. Nevertheless, the contrast also has much to do with the state of nationalism in Chicago and Barcelona—and the United States and Spain—in the decades immediately preceding the world's fairs, and with the way nationalism has developed in these two regions of the world in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. An analysis of these differences will shed light on why recalling Chicago's Fair has, in large part, become an intellectual exercise in contemporary American society. It will also help explain why conjuring up memories of Barcelona's Exposition has never been the exclusive domain of Catalan scholars, instead constituting an essential exercise for Catalan nationalists striving to stage similar large-scale international events in varying degrees of partnership with the Spanish government. Since 1888, Barcelona's elites have consistently gravitated toward 'nationalist spectacle,' perceiving global events on the model of the 1888 Exposition as a way to 1) strengthen local and regional identity among the inhabitants of Barcelona and Catalonia, 2) make swift and vital physical improvements to Barcelona, 3) buttress their power relative to Spain's

national government, and 4) communicate their brand of nationalism to the international community. The ‘communicative nationalism’ practiced by these elites during large-scale events has wrought political and economic rewards for Barcelona and Catalonia, and has much in common with the ways in which Catalan nationalists advance their interests in today’s globalized Information Age.

It is no coincidence that the United Kingdom gave birth to both the Industrial Revolution and the first modern world’s fair. In the late 1840s, Queen Victoria’s royal consort Prince Albert and British cultural reformer Henry Cole developed a plan to showcase Britain’s ballooning manufacturing and commercial strength alongside the industrial achievements of other nations. Their idea was a grand exposition that would emulate on an international scale the trade, industrial, and art exhibitions that many European countries celebrated at the time on the national level. The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations opened in London’s Hyde Park on May 1, 1851 despite fierce opposition from a well-mobilized group of naysayers. Upon its conclusion in October, most observers deemed the Exhibition—which attracted six million visitors and a profit of £176,000 while serving as a boon to British industry, trade, and national spirit—a resounding success.<sup>11</sup> Prince Albert and Henry Cole had fashioned an institution and codified a symbolic language through which nations would define themselves, their peers, and the rapidly-changing world in which they lived in the coming decades.

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<sup>11</sup> Reid Badger, *The Great American Fair: The World’s Columbian Exposition & American Culture* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979), 5-6.

Luis Justo y Villanueva, “Apuntes sobre agricultura y ganadería hechos en Inglaterra,” in *Memorias sobre la Exposicion Universal de 1862 en Lóndres; escritas por los comisionados que á la misma envió la Diputacion Provincial de Barcelona y publicadas por acuerdo de dicha Escelentísima corporación* (Barcelona: Establecimiento Tipográfico de Jaime Jepús, 1864), 174.

London's Exhibition quickly unleashed a dizzying array of increasingly elaborate world's fairs in cities ranging from Cape Town to Copenhagen. In fact, between the years 1851 and 1925 over 100 major exhibitions claimed world's fair status. These fairs, often lasting three to six months, evinced a giddy faith in steady, unstoppable, and inevitable progress while championing unabashed commercial relations and a hyperactive mass consumer society. Glorified exhibits of raw materials, machines, and manufactures served as testaments to practical developments in applied science and more figurative statements about the seemingly limitless potential of human ingenuity to better man's condition. As Catalan exposition chronicler Francisco José Orellana explained in 1860, international expositions demonstrated that man "is the image and likeness of God, achieving, day by day, supremacy over inert material and active nature," and that the sciences "have descended from their Olympus, and have come to humanize themselves...in order to give their powerful support to the productive elements of wealth."<sup>12</sup> The number of people visiting fairs swelled over the course of the nineteenth century because of advances in transportation and communication technologies like railroads and telegraphs, in addition to more extensive coverage of the events through advertising, the popular press, and travel guides.

Increasingly, international exhibitions emphasized that other aspects of human civilization such as natural history, education, agriculture, religion, and the arts were as worthy indicators of progress as cutting-edge inventions. According to historian Reid Badger, art at the fairs may have provided a means of controlling and understanding the disorienting changes occurring simultaneously in applied science—an assertion that would help explain "why architecture, that peculiar combination of esthetics, engineering, and social utility, became such a

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<sup>12</sup> Francisco José Orellana, *Reseña completa descriptiva y crítica de la Exposición Industrial y Artística de Productos del Principado de Cataluña: improvisada en Barcelona, para obsequiar a S.M. la reina doña Isabel II y a su real familia, con motivo de su venida a esta ciudad* (Barcelona: Establecimiento Tipográfico de Jaime Jepús, 1860), 58.

notable feature of the great world's fairs."<sup>13</sup> Advances in engineering cultivated the standard practice of erecting massive but relatively cheap temporary buildings to pepper ever more expansive and sophisticated fairgrounds. These structures embodied Victorian-era values such as grandeur and harmony, and were rarely innovative in an architectural sense. While world's fairs may have comprehensively defined progress, they frequently did not extend the same inclusiveness to the question of who was partaking in that progress. During Philadelphia's 1876 Centennial Exposition, for instance, event organizers consigned women's arts and inventions to a separate building, designated no exposition space for the accomplishments of blacks, and barred black women from entering the Women's Building.

World's fairs also complimented urbanization in the second half of the nineteenth century. Exposition organizers often used the events as pretexts for major transformations of the cityscape—the efforts of Napoleon III and civic planner Baron Haussmann in preparation for Paris' expositions in the 1850s and 1860s are prime examples—while the physical vestiges of these fairs frequently morphed into defining symbols of newly-'modern' urban centers. Cities hosting fairs could experience major growth stemming from visitors spending money on entrance fees, hotels, and food, new businesses gravitating toward the area, and rising real estate values. In seeking to articulate the ways in which they embodied modernity, cities often injected fairs with heavy doses of fantasy and idealism that glossed over more chaotic urban realities.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, as individual and national identity coalesced around cities during this period, the host city often became the main exhibit at the fair.

In an historical period marked by the consolidation of nascent nation-states such as Italy and Germany and the widespread acceptance of Herbert Spencer's philosophy of social

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<sup>13</sup> Badger, *The Great American Fair*, 8.

<sup>14</sup> Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 2.

Darwinism, international exhibitions became channels for national self-expression and platforms for national competition and one-upsmanship. The ‘universal’ billing of these events provided fodder for messianic assertions that fairs could promote world peace. However, Catalan exposition chronicler Felix Maciá y Bonaplata argued in 1864 that, in practice, “The objective that motivated the opening of the first universal exposition has been forgotten; her only perspective is struggle; her only end the desire for triumph.”<sup>15</sup> As political leaders became more cognizant of the benefits that world’s fairs provided, many began co-opting them to achieve national goals. French Emperor Napoleon III’s desires to outdo England in spectacle and to tighten his grip on France’s burgeoning capitalist class, for example, were major motivations behind Paris’ world’s fairs of 1855 and 1867.<sup>16</sup> Governments began subsidizing exhibition costs and appointing government officials to manage the events. Even so, world’s fairs—like many overseas colonies during this age of European imperialism—may have been more valuable as status symbols than as direct catalysts for economic development, since few sales were undertaken at the fairs themselves and the expositions frequently failed to generate net profits.<sup>17</sup> Soon enough, all governments offered their manufacturers and artisans subsidies to display their wares in other countries’ expositions and appointed official commissioners to oversee the nation’s performance abroad. In 1867, Paris set an important precedent by asking foreign nations to erect their own national buildings on fairgrounds. Yet one impressive showing at another country’s world’s fair was not sufficient to build a distinguished national reputation. Maciá y Bonaplata explained that while Russia presented a sumptuous display of its royal court in

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<sup>15</sup> Felix Maciá y Bonaplata, “Las artes químicas en la Exposicion de Londrés de 1862,” in *Memorias sobre la Exposicion Universal de 1862 en Lóndres; escritas por los comisionados que á la misma envió la Diputacion Provincial de Barcelona y publicadas por acuerdo de dicha Escelentísima corporacion* (Barcelona: Establecimiento Tipográfico de Jaime Jepús, 1864), 75.

<sup>16</sup> Badger, *The Great American Fair*, 9.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

London in 1851, other nations had taken note of the country's absence in subsequent exhibitions. He observed that Austria, on the other hand, attributed little importance to world's fairs until, "Convinced that the political importance of nations is measured in large part by the elements of wealth that each one encloses in her bosom...she has awoken from her lethargy...and is seeking to conquer lost ground in recent times by presenting herself as magnificent, imposing, and rich in all of her splendor" during London's 1862 exposition.<sup>18</sup> Success at overseas expositions thus became nearly as important as hosting a fair at home.

A number of the abovementioned elements of late nineteenth-century world's fairs are colorfully substantiated by analyzing the manner in which Spanish visitors perceived Philadelphia's Centennial Exposition in 1876, which marked America's first experiment with world's fairs and commemorated the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia a century before. Luis Alfonso, the Spanish government's official chronicler of the Centennial Exposition, marvels at the industrial virility of a nation capable of producing the likes of Thomas Edison's electric telegraph, Alexander Graham Bell's telephone, and George H. Corliss' steam engine.<sup>19</sup> In characteristically lofty language, Alfonso affirms that the Centennial Exposition's five main "palaces" constitute the "world of civilization that revolves around the sun of progress."<sup>20</sup> The Spanish chronicler acknowledges the theatrical nature of these fairs by setting the scene for the Centennial Exposition: "The author, the United States; the theater, Philadelphia; the actors, thirty-eight countries; the spectators, all the peoples of the world."<sup>21</sup> Emilio Blanchet, writing for the Barcelona-based newspaper *La Gaceta Universal*, demonstrates how expositions could literally put cities on the map by giving readers Philadelphia's exact geographic

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<sup>18</sup> Maciá y Bonaplata, "Las artes químicas en la Exposicion de Londrés de 1862," 75.

<sup>19</sup> Luis Alfonso, *La Exposición del centenar: noticia del certamen universal de Filadelfia en 1876* (Madrid: Tipografía y Estereotipia Peroj, 1878), 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.



coordinates in relation to more prominent cities such as New York and Washington D.C., and by meticulously describing Philadelphia building by building and street by street.<sup>22</sup>

Illustrating how even minor occurrences at world's fairs could have implications for national prestige, Alfonso gushes over the fact that Emperor Dom Pedro of Brazil, a personal guest of U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant, stopped at the Spanish installation in Machinery Hall to chat with Spain's royal commissioner about the Spanish dramatist Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch.<sup>23</sup> Alfonso's account also demonstrates how expositions provided an exhilarating opportunity for nationals of one country to meet and learn about nationals from another country. In one fragment, a spellbound American stares at a striking Spanish woman, prompting one Spanish exhibitor to ask the "Yankee" if he had ever seen a lady before.<sup>24</sup> At another point, Alfonso admires how the "lady Yankees" walk with "their body erect, their step firm, their posture relaxed" while he ridicules those American men who have not mingled sufficiently with the "elegant people of Paris, Madrid, or London" and who therefore display "clumsy manners" while sporting "sturdy and monumental boots."<sup>25</sup> Agustin Urgellés de Tovar, proprietor of *La Gaceta Universal*, reveals the manner in which world's fairs could offer a nation redemption in arguing that since Spanish products were not well-known in America, the Centennial Exposition could equip Spain with a means of "healing the wounds that so many years of disturbance have opened in her heart" and "repairing her broken riches" through mass production and export.<sup>26</sup> Alfonso touches on the nationalistic furor and utopian discourse that these fairs engendered in declaring that national flags—and especially American flags—were ubiquitous at the Centennial

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<sup>22</sup> Emilio Blanchet, "Descripción de Filadelfia: su origen, edificios notables y consideraciones sobre su importancia," in *Cataluña en Filadelfia*, by Agustin Urgellés de Tovar (Barcelona: La Gaceta Universal, 1877), 5-22.

<sup>23</sup> Alfonso, *La Exposición del centenar*, 35.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>26</sup> Agustin Urgellés de Tovar, *Cataluña en Filadelfia* (Barcelona: La Gaceta Universal, 1877), 44-45.

Exposition but that they were the flags of industrial nations, serving not as provocations of war but rather as “standards of peace.”<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, Alfonso’s conclusion regarding the Centennial Exposition belies this portrait of peaceful coexistence among nations, instead indicating an incipient rivalry between the old world and the new. As he writes,

The countries of the old world observed with a strange mix of fear, amazement, repulsion, and enthusiasm that the United States had ascended the splendid pedestal she had amassed, modeled, and erected by the strength of her own arms, and from it...she pointed to the colossal Universal Exposition extending to the soles of her feet and exclaimed with pride, ‘Look here at what we have accomplished in one hundred years!’<sup>28</sup>

It appears that Alfonso viewed Philadelphia’s Centennial Exposition as a microcosm for a newborn colossus of a country and a brazen challenger of the global status quo.

World’s fair historiography since the heyday of these events has splintered into a number of different schools. According to historian Robert W. Rydell’s taxonomy, the ‘cultural hegemony’ school, influenced by Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci and French philosopher Michel Foucault and practiced by historians such as Rydell and Tony Bennett, views the international exposition mainly as a medium through which organizers garnered popular support for national imperial policies or other initiatives of ruling elites. Another school, exemplified by the work of James Gilbert, takes a more ‘audience-centered’ approach and argues that the general public was not as susceptible to the ideological messages broadcast by elites at fairs as it seems, instead filtering the events through their own mental frameworks. Other thinkers with a more anthropological streak, such as Burton Benedict or Warren Susman, holds that world’s fairs were carefully-crafted bonanzas to escort people into consumer-centered modernity and “modern-day potlatches, rituals of abundance and gift giving that usually end in the destruction

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<sup>27</sup> Alfonso, *La Exposición del centenar*, 38.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 615.

of property and possessions.”<sup>29</sup> This study will resonate most with the cultural hegemony school, since it focuses on the way in which intellectual and political elites remember world’s fairs in the context of nationalism.

While most scholars agree that world’s fairs cannot be analyzed without considering their links to the ‘nation’ and to ‘nationalism,’ defining these terms has not enjoyed a similar level of scholarly concordance. Still, many theories on nationalism acknowledge the importance of history in the process of national construction. British historian Eric Hobsbawm is especially cynical about this latter point, declaring that deliberate historical forgetfulness and fudging of historical facts are essential building blocks for nationalism. As he writes, “No serious historian of nations and nationalism can be a committed political nationalist...Nationalism requires too much belief in what is patently not so.”<sup>30</sup> The question of how individuals, collectivities, and societies remember the past and express their ‘historical consciousness’ in the present is one that will play a prominent role in this study.<sup>31</sup> A number of thinkers assert that historical consciousness is primarily shaped by the contemporary environment of the ‘rememberer.’ While calling for objectivity in his profession, French historian Jacques Le Goff admits that historians tend to rearrange the past according to the social, ideological, and political environment in which they are living and working.<sup>32</sup> Dutch cultural theorist Mieke Bal argues for a more expansive view of this phenomenon, explaining that, in the present, “The memorial presence of the past takes many forms and serves many purposes, ranging from conscious recall to unreflected reemergence, from nostalgic longing for what is lost to polemical use of the past to reshape the

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<sup>29</sup> Robert W. Rydell et al., *Fair America: World’s Fairs in the United States* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 5-6.

<sup>30</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992), 12.

<sup>31</sup> John Lukacs, *Historical Consciousness, or, the Remembered Past* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968).

<sup>32</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendal and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), xi.

present.”<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, American psychologist Barry Schwartz argues that if the past were merely a product of the present, this situation would erroneously suggest that there is no continuity in history.<sup>34</sup> American sociologist Lewis A. Coser concurs, maintaining that ‘collective historical memory’ is both cumulative and a product of the present.<sup>35</sup>

While to what extent memory is influenced by the present is contentious, many thinkers agree that history is often idealized by individuals and societies, which creates a skewed conception of the past that is reinforced through replication. French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs writes that all people,

instinctively adopt in regard to times past the attitude of the Greek philosophers who put the golden age not at the end of the world but at its beginning... There is a kind of retrospective mirage by which a great number of us persuade ourselves that the world of today has less color and is less interesting than it was in the past, in particular regarding our childhood and youth.<sup>36</sup>

Halbwachs argues that people remember selectively because memory offers them the illusion of living amongst groups that “impose themselves on us only so far and so long as we accept them.”<sup>37</sup> The repetition of these memories affords individuals and societies a strong sense of identity.<sup>38</sup> Hobsbawm appears to agree with this assertion in his formulation of the concept of ‘invented tradition’ as a “set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity” with a “suitable historic past.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Mieke Bal, introduction to *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, ed. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), vii.

<sup>34</sup> Lewis A. Coser, introduction to *On Collective Memory*, by Maurice Halbwachs, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 25-26.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>36</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 48.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>39</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

If traditions are invented and memories repeated, this implies agency on the part of certain social actors—normally elites—in manipulating the way that societies remember history. In analyzing nationalism in post-Cold War Germany, for example, German scholar Gerd Gemünden claims that the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and German unification a year later stoked national pride but also raised the prickly question of what constituted national identity, triggering German intellectuals to manipulate the history of the Nazi years and postwar West and East Germany in defense of one or another definition of the nation.<sup>40</sup> Bal writes that the construction of historical narrative—whether by elites or by the general public—is crucial for memories to endure: “Narrative memories...differ from routine or habitual memories in that they are affectively colored, surrounded by an emotional aura that, precisely, makes them memorable. Often, the string of events that composes a narrative (and narratable) memory offers high and low accents, foreground and background, preparatory and climactic events.”<sup>41</sup> The rise of the nation-state in England and France in the eighteenth century in many ways politicized memory in all Western European countries, rendering political leaders more eager to fashion and preserve national narratives of collective historical experience through devices such as commemorations, monuments, and invented traditions.<sup>42</sup> A more radical interpretation of this phenomenon is espoused by Situationist and Marxist theorist Guy Debord in his manifesto, “The Society of the Spectacle.” Debord defines the ‘spectacle’ in part as the reflection of the reigning economic order and argues that life in modern society “is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles” where “everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Gerd Gemünden, “Nostalgia for the Nation: Intellectuals and National Identity in Unified Germany,” in *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, ed. Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), 120.

<sup>41</sup> Bal, introduction to *Acts of Memory*, viii.

<sup>42</sup> Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), 38.

<sup>43</sup> Guy Debord, “The Society of the Spectacle,” trans. Ken Knabb, Bureau of Public Secrets, <http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/debord/>.

Foucault, meanwhile, rejects the notion that memory is foisted upon a public devoid of agency and emphasizes the existence of ‘popular memory.’ Even so, he concludes that those in power ultimately hold a great deal of sway over memory generation.<sup>44</sup> This study will focus almost entirely on the memories of elites in part because of the lack of sources that speak to popular memory—a highly ambiguous term itself—, but more importantly because the thesis focuses on the way in which elites wield memory to advance their interests.

In order to appreciate the ways in which the world’s fairs in Chicago and Barcelona were remembered and the reasons why they were recalled in the ways that they were, one must first explore the complex dynamics at work in the United States and Chicago, and in Spain and Barcelona, in the decades immediately preceding these now-legendary events.

## **Chapter 1: The Mise-En-Scène of Exposition**

*The country of mirages, of great riches, of cities full of wonders, of the most eminent politicians on earth, of the greatest patriots, who turn out, when viewed up close, to be men made of the*

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<sup>44</sup> Miształ, *Theories of Social Remembering*, 62.

*same fragile clay with which our men are made, there, as here, the masses are riddled with physical, moral, and intellectual miseries...The only thing we are lacking here...is a little bit of respect, love, and consideration for the land where we were born... And only by enhancing our love for the patria (fatherland) will we be able to obtain the consideration of foreigners.*<sup>45</sup>

- Rafael Puig y Valls, Catalan chronicler of Chicago's Columbian Exposition, 1894

In his official account of Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition for the Spanish government, the Catalan Rafael Puig y Valls censured Spaniards for ranting that "all of what is ours is bad and all of what is foreign is good, that because of North America's initiatives and the prodigious development of her cities and industry, she has presented herself to the world as the model that everyone should follow."<sup>46</sup> Though Puig y Valls was critiquing prevailing stereotypes, his observations do illuminate the general state of affairs in the United States and Spain on the eve of the international expositions in Chicago and Barcelona.

The most daunting and pressing task facing the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century was to pacify and unify the country after the bloody American Civil War (1861-1865). The Compromise of 1877, which conceded the White House to Republican Rutherford B. Hayes in exchange for the withdrawal of federal troops from the South, put an end to the divisive and protracted Reconstruction process that had attempted to reintegrate the secessionist Southern states into a federal constitutional republic. Nevertheless, tense relations between the North and the South and between whites and blacks persisted. Congress and the presidency regularly oscillated between Republican and Democratic control in this precarious climate, with both parties formulating their positions on controversial issues so vaguely that little difference appeared to exist between them. While Congress did pass landmark laws such as the

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<sup>45</sup> Rafael Puig y Valls, *Viaje a América: Estados Unidos, Exposición Universal de Chicago, México, Cuba y Puerto Rico* (Barcelona: Tipolitografía de Luis Tasso, 1894), 48.

<sup>46</sup> Rafael Puig y Valls, *Memoria sobre la Exposición Colombina de Chicago desde el punto de vista industrial y comercial* (Barcelona: Tipografía Española, 1895), 6.

Interstate Commerce Act in 1887 and the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890, and while animated debate did coalesce around issues such as the tariff and free silver, historian David F. Burg suggests that the era was “a period of neither forthcoming legislation nor forceful leadership.”<sup>47</sup> Prevailing political philosophy held that the president’s role was merely to execute laws, and the period featured capable but unexceptional presidents like Republican James Garfield, Republican Chester A. Arthur, and Democrat Grover Cleveland. In 1888, Republican Benjamin Harrison became president in an election that gained notoriety for fraudulent balloting in New York and Indiana. As the French economist Paul Rousiers mused at the time, ““The most remarkable fact about present-day politics in America is that honest men seem to have abandoned them to professional politicians, and to interest themselves only in private enterprises.””<sup>48</sup>

It was indeed rapid industrialization and ‘railroad imperialism’—mainly in the North—that contributed most to the United States becoming a formidable rival in the eyes of many Western European countries that had previously looked upon America with more paternalism or disdain than respect. Railroad tycoons completed old trunk lines and established links to new commercial centers in the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri valleys, while embarking upon ambitious projects for transcontinental railroads that bound the U.S. together and accelerated interstate commerce. By 1893, America could also boast more telephones and miles of telegraph wires than any other nation, which only enhanced the country’s internal communications.<sup>49</sup> The U.S. population, moreover, exploded from 47 million in 1877 to 67 million by the time of Chicago’s World’s Fair.<sup>50</sup> Mammoth steel, oil, sugar, and meat-packing industries developed, while industrialists like steel mogul Andrew Carnegie and oil magnate John D. Rockefeller, and

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<sup>47</sup> David F. Burg, *Chicago’s White City of 1893* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 39.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.



bankers like John Pierpont Morgan, began to oversee large trusts and extensive holding companies. Many Americans contemplated their achievements and swelled with patriotism. In his *Triumphant Democracy*, Carnegie brimmed with bubbly optimism,

In 1860 it was [America's] motherland to whom she held out her hand lovingly as she swept on. In 1870 she overtook and passed France. In 1880 she had outstripped the German Empire...Another decade, and the sound of the rushing Republic close behind will astonish even Russia...Yet another decade, and it, too, like all the rest, will fall behind, to watch for a time the new nation in advance...When five hundred millions, every one an American and all boasting a common citizenship, will dominate the world—for the world's good.<sup>51</sup>

America's economic growth produced a vibrant mass consumer society in which America's self-made millionaires became national—albeit controversial—celebrities, heroized in Horatio Alger's rags-to-riches novels and ridiculed by detractors as 'robber barons.' These entrepreneurs constructed palatial residences in New York City and Newport News, Rhode Island, whose opulence moved Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner to christen the period a 'Gilded Age.'<sup>52</sup>

While scholars debate whether the U.S. became a nation-state at independence, after the Civil War, or at another point in time, it is fair to say that Americans in the post-bellum years strove to articulate the components of national identity with particular fervor. Abraham Lincoln's quelling of the secessionist threat in the Civil War had lent credence to his claim that the Union was indissoluble.<sup>53</sup> The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution—known collectively as the "Reconstruction Amendments"—had further implications for America's social integration and conception of itself as a nation by transferring

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<sup>51</sup> Andrew Carnegie, *Triumphant Democracy; or, Sixty Years' March of the Republic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), 2.

<sup>52</sup> Sean Dennis Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age: From the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 2-4.

<sup>53</sup> Abraham Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address, March 1861," in *The Nationalism Reader*, ed. Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1999), 286.

ultimate political sovereignty from states to the national government, granting freed black slaves voting rights and national citizenship, and, more generally, serving as “political legitimations for a reconstituted and reunited nation.”<sup>54</sup> Some American nationalists declared that the U.S. had indeed achieved the ideal of unity. Though a native of Scotland, Carnegie exhibited this tendency by predicating America’s success as a nation on its largely Anglo-Saxon ethnic stock, its coastal mountains and central plains that allowed “for the amalgamation of its dwellers, North, South, East, West, into one homogeneous mass,” and its commitment to “perfect equality,” which enabled the country to subsume immigrants into a uniform American citizenry.<sup>55</sup>

Yet America’s pronounced social fissures and inequalities in the second half of the nineteenth century spoiled Carnegie’s sanguinity. Historian Lawrence W. Levine argues that American public culture, once widely shared among social classes, precipitously branched off into discrete “high, low, and folk” cultures at this time.<sup>56</sup> Jim Crow laws and lynching episodes proliferated in the South as black leaders like Booker T. Washington struggled to devise the most viable methods for African Americans to succeed in American society. Relations between Americans and Native Americans were also strained; in 1876, Sioux Indians killed General George Custer and hundreds of his men at Little Bighorn River in Montana, while the U.S. Army assaulted the Lakota Sioux at Wounded Knee, South Dakota in 1890. A budding feminist movement, led by figures such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, gained national prominence in 1848 by issuing a Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions in Seneca Falls, New York. Massive waves of immigration—between 1860 and 1890, ten million immigrants

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<sup>54</sup> Albert Bergesen, “Nation-Building and Constitutional Amendments: The Role of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments in the legal Reconstitution of the American Polity Following the Civil War,” *Pacific Sociological Review*, volume 24, number 1, 3-15 (January 1981), in JSTOR, <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0030-8919%28198101%2924%3A1%3C3%3ANACATR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-G, 3>.

<sup>55</sup> Carnegie, *Triumphant Democracy*, 13-14; 19

<sup>56</sup> Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 207-208.

entered the U.S.—contributed to population growth and economic development but also amplified ethnic tensions and inflamed nativist sentiments in certain areas of the country, especially since most immigrants came from Italy or Eastern Europe and were thus neither Anglo-Saxon nor Protestant.<sup>57</sup> Wide chasms existed between rich and poor in America's cities, perhaps captured most poignantly by Jacob Riis's camera during his study on sanitation and health problems in New York's tenements. The Homestead Strike in Pittsburgh in 1892, the terrorism of secret societies such as the Molly Maguires, and the growth of labor organizations such as the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor epitomized the dramatic clashes between corporate management, labor, private security agents, and police that took place throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. The financial Panic of 1873 left millions of workers unemployed and propelled many American farmers to establish third parties that advocated reducing the power of railroads and middlemen and issuing inflated currency to help pay off debts.<sup>58</sup> Disgruntled workers gravitated toward radical or reformist political alternatives such as Socialism and Populism. The Panic of 1893—partially sparked by a run on the gold supply—ushered the U.S. into its worst economic crisis yet, effectively ended the Gilded Age, and served as the backdrop for Chicago's World's Fair that same year. The period's gilded finish had cracked, revealing the problematic divisions festering underneath.

Chicago, strategically situated along the banks of Lake Michigan and the Chicago and Calumet Rivers, was first visited by Europeans in the late seventeenth century with the arrival of French explorers. The U.S. established Fort Dearborn there in 1804, and the location soon developed into a small village where traders and fur trappers exchanged goods with nearby

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<sup>57</sup> Lisa Krissoff Boehm, *Popular Culture and the Enduring Myth of Chicago, 1871-1968* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 27.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World: Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993), 13.

Native American populations. In 1857, a cabinetmaker from New York named George Morton Pullman drew from his experience working on the Erie Canal to elevate Chicago's buildings eight feet above their swampy foundations with the assistance of jackscrews and a large team of workers. The feat helped raise Chicago's spirits at a time when the completion of the Illinois and Michigan Canal and numerous trunk-line railroads was transforming Chicago into a full-fledged city and regional trade center.<sup>59</sup> Yet on October 8, 1871, after a summer of intense drought, flames ravaged the city's predominantly wood-framed commercial and residential structures. While figures vary considerably, historian Robert Muccigrosso estimates that the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 killed 300 people, destroyed nearly the entire downtown business district and \$200 million-worth of property, and left around 100,000 individuals—roughly one third of the city's population at the time—homeless.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, almost 90 percent of the city's manufacturing capacity was unharmed, its railway freight terminals were not generally affected, and three fourths of its livestock, lumber, and grain holdings were left intact.<sup>61</sup> The tragedy steeled the resolve of Chicagoans to not only rebuild their city but to aspire to new levels of urban greatness. As Joseph Medill proclaimed in his oft-cited *Chicago Tribune* editorial column three days after the fire, “In the midst of a calamity without parallel in the world's history, looking upon the ashes of thirty years' accumulations, the people of this once beautiful city have resolved that Chicago shall rise again.”<sup>62</sup> Within a week after the blaze, Chicago had erected over 5,000 temporary structures and had begun work on 200 permanent buildings, inspiring clergyman Henry Ward Beecher to refer to Chicago as the ‘phoenix city.’<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age*, 124.

<sup>60</sup> Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World*, 21-22.

Badger, *The Great American Fair*, 32.

<sup>61</sup> Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World*, 21-22.

<sup>62</sup> Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893*, 46.

<sup>63</sup> Badger, *The Great American Fair*, 33.

Chicago's urban renewal efforts persisted long after the fire's immediate aftermath. Between 1871 and 1893, the city erected 98,838 buildings worth nearly \$450 million.<sup>64</sup> Experimental architects such as Louis Sullivan and John Wellborn Root developed 'commercial style' or 'Chicago-style' skyscraper architecture, constructing steel-skeleton giants like the Masonic Temple in 1891 to rival New York City's finest analogues.<sup>65</sup> Chicago's population also ballooned—in part because of the city's annexation of adjacent townships—to estimates of 1.5 million by the time of the World's Columbian Exposition, making it the second largest city in the country after New York.<sup>66</sup> Aside from its considerable strengths in grain and lumber, Chicago thrived economically on animal slaughtering and meat-packing. The Union Stock Yard squatted upon 400 blood-strewn acres of land and produced wealthy 'lords of Packingtown' or 'beef barons' such as Philip Armour and Gustavus Swift. The city also challenged Pittsburgh for bragging rights in the iron and steel industries and excelled in the manufacture of railway and agricultural equipment—exemplified by George Pullman's sleeping car and Cyrus Hall McCormick's reaper works, respectively. Wholesale and retail dry goods received an impetus from Marshall Field, while mail-order merchandising rose to prominence as a result of the activities of Sears, Roebuck and Company. America's post-Civil War economic expansion had helped create around 4,000 millionaires and Chicago had sprouted 200 of them, many of whom displayed their wealth on the lavish corner of Michigan Avenue known as 'Millionaire's Row.'<sup>67</sup> Yet this frenzied economic activity endowed the city with a rough exterior. Though muckraker Upton Sinclair published *The Jungle* in 1904, his description of Chicago approximated the appearance of the city on the eve of Chicago's World's Fair,

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<sup>64</sup> Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893*, 48.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>67</sup> Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World*, 27.

Here and there would be a bridge crossing a filthy creek, with hard-baked mud shores and dingy sheds and docks...Here and there would be a railroad crossing...and locomotives puffing and rattling freight cars filing by...Here and there would be a great factory...and immense volumes of smoke pouring from the chimneys, darkening the air above and making filthy the earth beneath.<sup>68</sup>

The writings of those who visited Chicago from Western Europe or from more established American cities such as New York and Boston frequently expressed visceral disgust with the jarring aesthetics of a city that so shamelessly exposed the underbelly of industrialism to the public eye.

The political machines that dominated Chicago in the late nineteenth century only further tarnished the city's reputation. Corrupt politicians like Mike 'Hinky Dinky' Kenna and John 'Bathhouse' Coughlin of Chicago's infamous First Ward exploited the opportunities for graft in real estate, utilities, and transportation franchises that Chicago's rapid growth spawned. English editor William T. Stead's celebrated study of vice, *If Christ Came to Chicago!*, presents an indelible image of Chicago politics a year after Chicago's World's Fair through a profile of one Farmer Jones, a local political leader who proudly tells Stead in a saloon during an election that he motivated nine men in a stable to vote earlier that day by offering them pails of beer.<sup>69</sup> Carter H. Harrison Sr., whom Chicagoans elected to a fifth term as mayor on the eve of the Columbian Exposition, was a native of Kentucky, a collateral descendent of U.S. Presidents William Henry Harrison and Benjamin Harrison, a supporter of Grover Cleveland, and a bosom friend of Chicago's gambling empire. With its thousands of saloons, gambling halls, bordellos, and brothels—particularly concentrated in the red-light district known as the Levee—, its notoriously high crime rates, and its pervasive police corruption, Chicago could not easily shed its image as a sinful city.

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<sup>68</sup> Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (Memphis: Peachtree Publishers, 1988), 19-20.

<sup>69</sup> William T. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago! A Plea for the Union of All Who Love in the Service of All Who Suffer* (London: The Review of Reviews, 1894), 43-44.

Chicago at this time was a hodgepodge of ethnicities and social groups, with each group generally congregating in its own urban enclave. By 1880, an astounding 78 percent of the city's population was of foreign parentage, with 35 percent of the foreign born from Germany, 15 percent from Ireland, and large numbers of Scandinavians, Poles, Britons, Italians, Greeks, and Bohemians as well.<sup>70</sup> Lutherans constituted the largest single Protestant denomination, and a sizable Roman Catholic community and a growing number of Jews also called Chicago home.<sup>71</sup> Many immigrants lived in crowded tenement buildings, struggling with polluted air, lack of education, and chronic unemployment. Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr established Hull House in 1889 so that they could offer educational and recreational activities, day care facilities, and vocational services to the poor, spurring other middle-class women to join the settlement house movement and raise awareness about the sorry state of America's urban slums. Child labor and substandard factory conditions motivated Addams' associate Florence Kelley to convince the Illinois legislature in 1893 to enact a law setting the minimum age to work at 14 and empowering the state to inspect factories. A polarized and unstable relationship between the city's corporate management and labor, coupled with periodic economic downturns, provoked violent railroad strikes in the summer of 1877 and tragedies such as the Haymarket Riot of 1886, in which seven policemen were killed and nearly 100 people injured after a bomb exploded in Haymarket Square during a protest by Black International anarchists.

As Chicago prospered in the late nineteenth century, Chicagoans increasingly expressed local pride and chauvinism that fed off second-city politics and, more specifically, the city's rivalry with New York City. New York, though not the nation's political capital, was widely regarded as America's premier city, and many New Yorkers viewed Chicago as a money-loving,

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<sup>70</sup> Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893*, 66.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

provincial braggart that flaunted in commerce what it lacked in culture. In Chicago native Henry B. Fuller's 1893 novel, *The Cliff-Dwellers*, Chicago-based real estate agent Eugene H. McDowell retorts that New York "'ain't a city at all; it's like London—it's a province. Father Knickerbocker is too old, and too big and logy, and too all-fired selfish. We are the people, right here.'" <sup>72</sup> The narrator adds that Bostonian visitor George Ogden,

Seemed to see before him the spokesman of a community where prosperity had drugged patriotism into unconsciousness, and where the bare scaffoldings of materialism felt themselves quite independent of the graces and draperies of culture. It seemed hardly possible that one short month could make his native New England appear so small, so provincial, so left-behind. <sup>73</sup>

In associating Chicago with the same youthful *joie de vivre* and raw vitality that were often invoked at the time to characterize the Midwest as a whole, both McDowell and the narrator appear to be overflowing with as much regional pride as local pride. Yet McDowell's assertion that Chicago was the authentic representative of "the people" and the narrator's contention that Chicago was leaving New England in the dust suggest an implicit argument beyond local and regional pride: that Americans should recognize Chicago as the 'first city' of the Midwest and thus as the metropolis at the vanguard of an American society moving westward, not eastward. Determined to combat the notion that Chicago was nothing more than the world's hog butcher and to prove their fitness for leading the country, many of Chicago's entrepreneurs affirmed their civic pride by contributing financially to a cultural renaissance in the city. These leaders sent donations to the University of Chicago—which was founded two years before Chicago's 1893 World's Fair—and subsidized projects such as the Art Institute of Chicago and the Auditorium Building, the latter of which housed the distinguished Theodore Thomas and his Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Writing in *Harper's Weekly* shortly before the opening of the Columbian

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<sup>72</sup> Henry B. Fuller, *The Cliff-Dwellers* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1893), 51-52.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.



Exposition, Julian Ralph marveled at Chicago's "supervoluminous civicism" and explained that "underlying the behavior of the most able and enterprising men in the city is this motto, which they constantly quoted to me, all using the same words, 'We are for Chicago first, last, and all the time.'" <sup>74</sup>

The decades immediately preceding Barcelona's Universal Exposition of 1888 afforded Spain a respite from the chronic political instability—in particular the Carlist Wars between supporters of the moderate Queen Isabella II and followers of her traditionalist uncle, Don Carlos, and his descendents—that had predominated in the country for most of the century. Spanish politics since the ouster of the French from the Iberian Peninsula in 1814 had been guided primarily by the *pronunciamiento*, an often bloodless act by which certain military officers and their civilian allies publicly denounced the government and instead declared loyalty to another political group. This tool for periodically modifying the direction of Spanish statecraft reflected, more generally, the military's far-reaching influence on civilian institutions and policies during this period. <sup>75</sup> In the Glorious Revolution of 1868, Generals Juan Prim and Francisco Serrano had supported the moderate liberals against the increasingly conservative Isabella, resulting in the brief reign of Amadeus of Savoy and, beginning in 1873, the hapless First Spanish Republic's short-lived flirtation with power. On December 29, 1874, Spanish military leaders led by General Arsenio Martínez Campos revolted in Sagunto against President Serrano and overthrew the Republic, returning the seventeen-year-old Bourbon monarch Alfonso XII to the throne in a 'Restoration' regime that would last until 1923.

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<sup>74</sup> Julian Ralph, *Harper's Chicago and the World's Fair: The Chapters on the Exposition Being Collated from Official Sources and Approved by the Department of Publicity and Promotion of the World's Columbian Exposition* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1893), 2.

<sup>75</sup> Carolyn P. Boyd, "The military and politics," in *Spanish History Since 1808*, ed. José Alvarez Junco and Adrian Shubert (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2000), 67; 64.

Like U.S. political leaders after the American Civil War, Restoration architect and Conservative politician Antonio Cánovas del Castillo faced the challenge of pacifying and unifying a deeply-divided nation that had been scarred by bitter civil war. Cánovas del Castillo undertook efforts to preclude the Spanish army from wielding the destabilizing political power it had enjoyed in the past and to reconstruct many of the country's ramshackle institutions. The new government scored a major victory for stability by successfully terminating the Second Carlist War in 1876, the same year that Cánovas del Castillo helped draft a new constitution establishing Spain as a bicameral constitutional monarchy. Employing a tactic similar to that used by Republicans and Democrats in America at the time, Cánovas del Castillo tried to shore up the national government by encouraging the formation of a viable opposition party as a political counterweight. The 'Liberal Fusion' politician Práxedes Mateo Sagasta eventually answered the summons, assuming control of the Spanish government for the first time in 1881.

Since, however, centralized administration of the country proved unworkable in practice, local politics was dominated by the *cacique*, typically a professional and a large landowner in rural areas or small provincial cities. The *cacique* oversaw activities like tax collection and conscription, and enjoyed perks such as easy access to government jobs and even concessions of public-works projects. In exchange, the *cacique* helped rig elections to guarantee that Liberals and Conservative regularly alternated in power with parliamentary majorities not only in the national government but as far down as town councils.<sup>76</sup> As Catalan political activist Valentí Almirall complained in 1887, "Electoral lists, ballot boxes, tallying, everything is falsified. Elections in Spain turn out to be no more than a farce worthy of being put to music by Offenbach or Suppé... It does not matter if suffrage is universal or restricted, for there is never more than a

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<sup>76</sup> Stephen Jacobson and Javier Moreno Luzón, "The political system of the Restoration, 1875-1914: political and social elites," in *Spanish History Since 1808*, ed. José Alvarez Junco and Adrian Shubert (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2000), 98-100.

single voter: the minister of government.”<sup>77</sup> Historians Stephen Jacobson and Javier Moreno Luzón argue that *caciquismo* not only led to the unequal distribution of resources and pervasive corruption but also, in valuing interest over ideology, had serious implications for Spain’s political future. As they write, “Parties were no more than unstable alliances forged by local oligarchs, in which the distribution of spoils was more important than the development of political ideas or the elaboration of national platforms based on long-term goals and objectives.”<sup>78</sup> Thus, while Cánovas, Sagasta, and other Restoration leaders achieved a degree of political stability through their machinations, they may have weakened the nation’s political system in the long run.

Alfonso XII’s sudden death from tuberculosis in 1885 infused even more uncertainty into Spanish politics. To prevent Spain from plunging back into the dynastic wars of the Carlists or the anti-monarchist revolutions of the Republicans and Radicals, Cánovas del Castillo went to greater lengths to discourage free elections during the Regency of Alfonso XII’s second wife, Maria Christina of Austria, who had given birth to the next king, Alfonso XIII, in 1886. Cánovas del Castillo and Sagasta institutionalized the political order they had first put into practice in the elections of 1876, where liberal-conservatives and liberal-progressives rotated ministries in the national, regional, and local governments according to the concept of the *turno pacífico* (the pacific turn).<sup>79</sup> Sagasta assumed power in 1885 as a member of the newly-formed Liberal Party and governed until 1890 in a period known as Sagasta’s ‘long parliament.’ These years, which coincided with Barcelona’s Universal Exposition, also witnessed the expansion of

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<sup>77</sup> Valentí Almirall, “Spain Such as It Is (1887),” in *Modern Spain: A Documentary History*, ed. and trans. Jon Cowans (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 71.

<sup>78</sup> Jacobson and Luzón, “The political system of the Restoration,” 101.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

freedoms of the press and association, the partial opening of domestic markets to Europe, and the introduction of universal manhood suffrage.<sup>80</sup>

Prior to the Restoration, Spain had steadily become more dependent on foreign capital and more subservient to Europe's Great Powers in the realms of trade and industry. Spain's role as a pawn in the eyes of its more powerful neighbors was perhaps best illustrated in 1868, when Prussia and France wrangled over which country could place its candidate on the Spanish throne in the wake of the Glorious Revolution. To be sure, Alfonso XII restored a measure of economic prosperity to the country and managed to prevent Cuba, a lucrative vestige of Spain's once-great colonial empire, from gaining its independence from Spain by putting an end to the Ten Years' War in 1878. But in an era when nations such as England and France flexed their industrial muscle, gobbled up overseas colonies, and justified much of it in terms of racial superiority, many Spaniards developed a conspicuous inferiority complex that mingled with nostalgia for a purportedly glorious past, pessimism about the present, and despair in regards to the future. In Spanish writer Benito Pérez Galdós' epic late nineteenth-century novel *Fortunata y Jacinta*, Moreno Isla—who returns to his native Spain after spending many years in England—fumes that compared to Northern Europe, “There are no more than three good things in Spain: the Civil Guard, the Albillo grape, and the Prado Museum.”<sup>81</sup> Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy may have fleetingly admitted Spain to their Triple Alliance in 1887, but as the nineteenth century drew to a close it became increasingly clear that while countries like the U.S. were building strong cases to become major players in world affairs, Spain had been relegated to the sidelines.

Spain's social cleavages exacerbated the country's political and economic difficulties. British historian Gerald Brenan asserts that the country's system of ‘elections from above’

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>81</sup> Benito Pérez Galdós, *Fortunata y Jacinta: Dos Historias de Casadas* (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa, 1998), 373.

widened the gulf between the general population and a landowning oligarchy that controlled politics, business, finance, the army, and the professions.<sup>82</sup> Most peasants and landless laborers, who constituted about 70 percent of a Spanish population that had increased from around 15 million in 1857 to 18 million in 1887, wallowed in poverty and illiteracy under the domineering influence of the *caciques*.<sup>83</sup> The Restoration, moreover, occurred soon after the International Workingmen's Association splintered into rival Marxist and anarchist sects over disagreements on socialist doctrine between Mikhail Bakunin and Karl Marx during the Hague Congress of 1872. In response, trade unions and worker societies of various ideological inclinations proliferated in Spain at the same time that the Monarchy continued to face threats from Carlists on the political far right.

Under the direction of Cánovas del Castillo, the Spanish educational system—which often bypassed the Spanish working classes entirely—banned regional languages like Catalan, Galician, and Basque from the classroom. Schools emphasized the unity of Spain by teaching students national tales such as the Catholic *reconquista* of Spain from the Moors, and by repudiating ideologies such as Protestantism, Republicanism, and Socialism. Cánovas del Castillo also enlisted the support of the Catholic Church by guaranteeing Church officials a certain number of *ex officio* seats in the Senate and the right to establish their own schools. This tacit alliance was especially important for a Church that was confronting threats such as declining religious practice in many parts of the country and the growth of cities such as Madrid, Barcelona, and Bilbao, which endangered the Church's parish structure.<sup>84</sup> By the early 1880s, the conception of Spain as a nation-state, first catalyzed by Spain's victory over Napoleon in

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<sup>82</sup> Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Civil War* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 13-14.

<sup>83</sup> Charles J. Esdaile, *Spain in the Liberal Age: From Constitution to Civil War, 1808-1939* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 149-150.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 155-156; 181.

1814, had achieved greater articulation. In 1884, the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy defined *lengua nacional* for the first time as “the official and literary language of a country, and the one generally spoken in that country, as distinct from dialects and the languages of other nations.” Before 1884, the word *nación* was defined as “the aggregate of the inhabitants of a province, a country or a kingdom” and also as “a foreigner.” After 1884, it was defined as “a State or political body which recognizes a supreme center of common government” and also as “the territory constituted by that state and its individual inhabitants, considered as a whole.”<sup>85</sup>

Nevertheless, Spain enjoyed neither the economic ascendance nor the political system nor the interwoven lines of internal communication and commerce that had encouraged the growth of American nationalism. Instead, Spain’s poverty, poor communications systems, inadequate educational system, lack of a common market, disjointed judicial system, and conflicting nationalist discourses—along with conservative oligarchs’ shunning of public opinion and channeling of nationalist goals through the Catholic Church rather than through the mobilization of the masses—all complicated the construction of a clear and durable national identity.<sup>86</sup> In his famous discourse on the nation in 1882, Cánovas del Castillo meditated on the nineteenth century and declared, “I do not know of one modern man of State in whom patriotism was lacking...What was lacking, above all, was a national consciousness that could inspire the

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<sup>85</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, 14.

<sup>86</sup> Angel Smith and Clare Mar-Molinero, “The Myths and Realities of Nation-Building in the Iberian Peninsula,” in *Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberian Peninsula. Competing and Conflicting Identities*, ed. Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith (Washington, D.C.: Berg, 1996), 3-4.

Sebastian Balfour, “‘The Lion and the Pig’: Nationalism and National Identity in Fin-de-Siècle Spain,” in *Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberian Peninsula. Competing and Conflicting Identities*, ed. Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith (Washington, D.C.: Berg, 1996), 108.

rulers.” He warned that “it is very dangerous to remain so far behind...in the ambitious and egoistic society of nations.”<sup>87</sup>

Unlike Spain as a whole, Catalonia—and in particular its capital, Barcelona—was undergoing hearty industrialization in the second half of the nineteenth century. By the mid-1850s, Catalonia accounted for more than a quarter of Spain’s industrial gross national product and had spawned a powerful new class of merchants, manufacturers, and bankers.<sup>88</sup> Though the region lacked coal and iron and had to import many of its machine looms, spinning jennies, and locomotives from England, it still managed to cultivate a thriving textile industry that the Spanish government protected with high tariff walls and that, by midcentury, made Catalonia the fourth largest producer of cotton goods after England, France, and the U.S.<sup>89</sup> While Catalonia’s countryside and provincial towns developed more slowly, Barcelona grew rapidly, garnering fame as the ‘Manchester of Spain’ and boasting 272,500 residents by 1887.<sup>90</sup> In *Fortunata y Jacinta*, the honeymooners Juanito and Jacinta, both natives of Madrid, travel to Barcelona in 1871 and marvel at the “animation and prolific hubbub of that great beehive of men,” the “labyrinth of noisy and smoky machines, or of the clacking of looms,” and the “black breath that declares her fiery activity through a thousand chimneys,” all descriptions that bring to mind Chicago in the late nineteenth century as well.<sup>91</sup> The expansion of long-term credit through new banks such as Manuel Girona’s Banco de Barcelona and the formation of joint-stock companies

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<sup>87</sup> Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, “Discurso sobre la nación: inauguración del curso del Ateneo de Madrid, noviembre de 1882,” Biblioteca Virtual: Miguel de Cervantes, <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/67927392103470562565679/index.htm>.

<sup>88</sup> Robert Hughes, *Barcelona* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 254.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 254-256.

Albert Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism: Past and Present*, ed. Geoffrey J. Walker and trans. Jacqueline Hall (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 18.

<sup>90</sup> Raymond Carr, “Liberalism and Reaction 1833-1931,” in *Spain: A History*, ed. Raymond Carr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), Penn Library E-Books Project, <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/ebooks/pdfs/0198206194.pdf>, 210.

Hughes, *Barcelona*, 337.

<sup>91</sup> Galdós, *Fortunata y Jacinta*, 50-51.

spurred the economy along, while entities such as the Banco Hispano-Colonial welded Catalan and Cuban financial, industrial, and commercial interests. Barcelona's wealthy *bones families* (good families) frequently pooled their resources to form more diversified businesses such as Joan Güell's Maquinista Terrestre i Marítima, an ironworking and machine production firm.<sup>92</sup>

Catalan industrialization, though buoyed by the Spanish government's protectionist measures, sowed resentment toward Madrid among some Catalans who felt the Spanish capital was siphoning off Catalonia's resources and hindering the region's development.<sup>93</sup> Since a very small percentage of Catalans served in the Spanish government or army, many of them resorted to lobbying national government officials for higher tariffs to protect the Catalan textile industry within Spain and in Spanish colonies like Cuba and the Philippines. Yet Catalan historian Albert Balcells explains that many people in Madrid were equally resentful of Catalans, since pre-industrial Spain could not sympathize with the social problems engendered by industrialization.<sup>94</sup> In a travel guide to Catalonia published in Madrid in 1887, Emilio Valverde y Álvarez recognized that the Catalan people had a "certain racial spirit that neither time nor the teachings of history have been able to destroy," and a penchant for ceaseless labor and grand enterprises that had allowed Catalonia to become the country's most industrialized region.<sup>95</sup> Yet Valverde y Álvarez chastised Catalans for their stubborn regionalism and unpatriotic pragmatism: "Enthusiasts for their liberties, [Catalans] have had to suffer bloody wars, and have always been prone to submit to whoever can give them the most advantages, even forgetting their nationality, *patria*, and origin."<sup>96</sup> He continued, "They carry to exaggeration their provincial...spirit, they are

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<sup>92</sup> Hughes, *Barcelona*, 235.

<sup>93</sup> Esdaile, *Spain in the Liberal Age*, 170.

<sup>94</sup> Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism*, 19.

<sup>95</sup> Emilio Valverde y Álvarez, *Guía del antiguo reino de Cataluña: provincias de Barcelona, Tarragona, Lérida y Gerona viaje geográfico, artístico y pintoresco* (Madrid: Imprenta de Fernando Cao y Domingo de Val, 1887), 135-136.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.



hardly fans of legendary Spanish dress, and in the countryside they decline the *sombrero redondo*, everyone instead using, with rare exceptions, the famous red cap known as the *barretina*,” adding that the Catalan language was more harsh-sounding than the Valencian dialect.<sup>97</sup>

Valverde y Álvarez’s comments hint that economics was not the only force driving a wedge between Barcelona and Madrid during this period. Influenced by Romanticism, a growing number of Catalans in the early nineteenth century promulgated a brand of nationalism that focused on Catalan language and culture, glorified Catalonia’s medieval past, and found expression in the movement known as the *Renaixença* (Renaissance). Catalan, a Romance language that, at the time, had a distinct but non-standardized grammatical system and lexicon, had first emerged as a written language in the tenth and eleventh centuries and had become an important administrative and literary language in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries by way of figures like Majorcan philosopher Ramon Llull and Valencian author Joanot Martorell. Since then, Catalan had declined as a written language but endured among many Catalans as an oral language and as the language of personal correspondence. Nineteenth-century proponents of a Catalan language and cultural revival began recreating the fourteenth-century literary contests known as the *jocs florals* (floral games), organizing choral concerts of traditional Catalan songs, and adopting the *sardana*—a folk dance from the Empordà region of the Costa Brava—as the national dance.<sup>98</sup> Satiric Catalan-language magazines such as *La Campana de Gràcia* and *L’Esquella de la Torratxa* appeared around 1870, as did the first Catalanist patriotic association, *Jove Catalunya* (Young Catalonia). Cultural nationalism also took the form of *excursionisme*, where Catalans traveled throughout Catalonia to discover or

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>98</sup> Smith and Mar-Molinero, “The Myths and Realities of Nation-Building in the Iberian Peninsula,” 16.

rediscover the land and appreciate its origins. This was often accomplished by visiting Romanesque or Gothic monuments—many of which were restored during this time—such as the monastery Santa Maria de Ripoll.<sup>99</sup> Canadian historian Kenneth McRoberts claims that Catalonia's working classes, who had little knowledge of Castilian Spanish and enjoyed Catalan artists like the playwright Frederic Soler, joined intellectual and cultural elites in fueling the *Renaixença*.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, British historian Charles J. Esdaile argues that ideologies such as Carlism in the case of Catalonia's peasantry and Socialism in the case of Catalonia's urban masses continued to hold sway.<sup>101</sup> Still, Carlism—as practiced under the leadership of Josep Torras i Bages and in cahoots with the Church in rural Catalonia—also vigorously defended Catalan language and culture as the fountainheads of traditional values.<sup>102</sup>

The leaders of the *Renaixença* built upon works by Catalan scholars from the late eighteenth century to establish an historical narrative for Catalonia. They claimed that the region had first become distinctly Catalan when, in 988, Count Borell II severed his ties of vassalage with the French and founded a feudal state that, through a dynastic union with the Kingdom of Aragon and the territorial aggrandizement of leaders like James the Conqueror and Peter the Great, became a powerful trading empire in the western Mediterranean from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries. The nationalists argued that medieval Catalonia had been one of the world's first feudal societies and that it had produced some of the most sophisticated political structures in Europe and certainly in the Iberian Peninsula at the time, with its feudal constitution (the *Usatges de Barcelona*), its parliament (the *Corts*) and standing committee (the *Generalitat*), and its tradition of contractualism (*pactisme*). They pointed out and that Catalonia retained its

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<sup>99</sup> Hughes, *Barcelona*, 348-349.

<sup>100</sup> Kenneth McRoberts, *Catalonia: Nation Building Without a State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 22.

<sup>101</sup> Esdaile, *Spain in the Liberal Age*, 171.

<sup>102</sup> Sebastian Balfour, *El Fin Del Imperio Español (1898-1923)*, trans. Antonio Desmonts (Barcelona: Crítica, 1997), 142.

own currency, customs, tax system, and language even when it fell into the political orbit of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469, and glorified a Catalan peasant revolt in 1640 in which Catalonia had declared its independence, only to lose it again in 1651. Barcelona's submission to the Bourbon monarch Philip V on September 11, 1714 after a revolt that had broken out in Catalonia nine years earlier marked the demise of the region, leading to Philip V abolishing Catalonia's political institutions and liberties and suppressing the Catalan language through his *Decreto de Nueva Planta* in 1716.<sup>103</sup> The leaders of the *Renaixença* interpreted the past according to a conspicuous rise-fall-reawaken motif that, while largely based on the historical record, conveniently ignored certain incongruent details such as the fact that representation in the *Corts* was highly restricted or that Castilian centralization after 1714 actually helped industrialize Catalonia's economy and introduce the region to the world market.<sup>104</sup> In his celebrated introduction to a collection of poems called *Lo gaiter del Llobregat* in 1841, Joaquim Rubió y Ors called on his fellow Catalans to initiate the region's rebirth and achieve independence from the rest of Spain through literature rather than politics,

It was a century and a quarter ago, in the attack on Barcelona (September of 1714), that our forefathers fought for fourteen consecutive hours in defense of their ancient privileges, and their blood flowed copiously from the walls, plazas, and temples of this city, in order to be able to transmit to their grandchildren the heritage and language that their ancestors had left them. And though so little time has passed, not only have their descendents forgotten all of this, but some of them, ungrateful toward their forefathers, are even ashamed to be caught speaking Catalan.<sup>105</sup>

As Halbwachs, Hobsbawm, and Bal suggest would happen, Catalan nationalists idealized a distant 'golden age' when the region had been autonomous, powerful, and Catalan-speaking, and invented traditions like the *sardana* and *excursionisme* to express continuity with their heroic

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<sup>103</sup> McRoberts, *Catalonia*, 9-15.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 10; 16.

<sup>105</sup> Joaquim Rubió y Ors, "The Catalan *Renaixença* (1841)," in *Modern Spain: A Documentary History*, ed. and trans. Jon Cowans (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 41-42.

ancestors. They constructed an historical narrative and replicated it through cultural events like the *jocs florals* and publications like *Lo gaiter del Llobregat*, helping solidify a strong sense of Catalan identity among many Catalans in the process.

As the nineteenth century progressed, Catalanism assumed more political dimensions. The roots of this trend could be traced to the Glorious Revolution of 1868, when a number of Republican deputies from Catalonia who had won seats in the new parliament advocated a federalist political system. While some Catalans championed Federal Republicanism in order to further Catalan ‘particularism,’ others, such as the early leader of the movement Francesc Pi y Margall, were more concerned with Spanish interests than Catalan interests.<sup>106</sup> In 1880, Valentí Almirall convened a Catalanist Congress to interweave the various strands of Catalanism that existed at the time. The Congress established an Acadèmia de la Llengua Catalana to standardize the Catalan language and defended tariff protection against foreign producers in the Spanish market to win over the region’s bourgeoisie. The Second Catalanist Congress, in 1883, boldly recommended that the Catalan language have co-official status with Spanish in Catalonia, that Catalan civil law be defended, and that Catalonia as a political entity trump the Spanish government’s provincial administrative divisions.<sup>107</sup> While Almirall and the *Centre Català*—the first civil Catalanist organization, which Almirall created in 1882—convinced industrialists and literary-leaning men to join together in drafting an ultimately unanswered *Memorial de Greuges* (memorandum of grievances) to Alfonso XII in 1885, they ultimately failed to meet the needs of the more radical or traditionalist supporters of the *Renaixença*, alienated many Federal Republicans, and found that bourgeois participants largely deserted the cause once they learned that Barcelona would host the Universal Exposition of 1888 and that their economic and political

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<sup>106</sup> Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism*, 28.

<sup>107</sup> McRoberts, *Catalonia*, 24.

interests could best be served by backing the Restoration and the main national parties.<sup>108</sup> In 1887, a more conservative group of political Catalan nationalists broke away to form the *Lliga de Catalunya* (Catalan League). As the Catalan cultural revival flourished, political Catalanism faltered.

If anyone dominated politics in Barcelona during the late nineteenth century, it was the Barcelona-born politician Francesc Rius i Taulet. The liberal monarchist and Sagasta loyalist—widely-recognized for his immense muttonchop side-whiskers—served as the city’s mayor from 1872 to 1873, in 1874, from 1881 to 1884, and finally from 1885 until 1890 when Barcelona’s Universal Exposition occurred. Rius i Taulet supported a cultural renewal in the city by subsidizing the *jocs florals* and emphasizing the continuity between Catalonia’s medieval governing institution, the *Consell de Cent*, and the *Ayuntamiento* (municipal government).<sup>109</sup> The Mayor also spurred along ambitious urbanization projects. Soon after the Glorious Revolution, Barcelona’s loathed Citadel, constructed by Philip V in the eighteenth century as an instrument of repression, was converted into the Parc de la Ciutadella (Citadel Park). In addition, the socialist civil engineer Ildefons Cerdà i Sunyer’s 1859 grid layout for the Eixample (extension) of Barcelona was brought to fruition from 1870 until 1910. This large, controversial urban planning project followed the demolition of the city’s Bourbon walls between 1854 and 1865, which symbolized a rejection of Castilian centralism for many Catalans.<sup>110</sup> Though Cerdà intended to promote the coexistence of social classes, the Eixample soon fractured into different sections based on wealth, with the particularly rich constructing mammoth homes on *Passeig de*

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<sup>108</sup> Esdaile, *Spain in the Liberal Age*, 172.

<sup>109</sup> Ramon Grau and Marina López, “La Exposición Universal de 1888 en la historia de Barcelona,” in *Exposición Universal de Barcelona: libro del centenario, 1888-1988*, ed. Ramon Grau and Marina López (Barcelona: Comisión Ciudadana para la Conmemoración del Centenario de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona del Año 1888: L’Avenç, 1988), 279-280; 296.

<sup>110</sup> Hughes, *Barcelona*, 271

*Gràcia*. The poet Victor Balaguer, an active participant in the *jocs florals*, named all of the streets in the Eixample, which recall medieval Catalan conquerors (e.g. Roger de Llúria), countries of Catalonia's former Mediterranean empire (e.g. Sardenya), medieval Catalan poets (e.g. Ausiàs March), and heroes of the *Renaixença* (e.g. Aribau). Barcelona's architectural and cultural scene also provided a means for the city's bourgeoisie to express themselves and fortify civil society. When, for example, a fire destroyed Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu opera house in 1861, the city's civic organizations restored the venue through a subscription fund with no government support.<sup>111</sup> Architecture and urbanization served as a medium for the city's industrial bourgeoisie to affirm its greatness while providing another avenue for practitioners of the *Renaixença* to diffuse their historical narrative.

Like Spain as a whole, Barcelona was also torn by many internal divisions during the late nineteenth century. Industrialization established a Catalan upper middle class and a Catalan proletariat, with the first unions appearing in 1840 in the cotton industry. Many industrial workers lived in crowded garrets and basements, and suffered from epidemics and work-induced disorders.<sup>112</sup> Child labor was rampant, female laborers were often exploited, and public education for the working masses was virtually nonexistent. Members of the city's working classes sporadically demonstrated radical or anticlerical behavior because of the widespread popularity of the anarchosyndicalist and communist doctrines of Bakunin and Marx.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, while the Catalan economy boomed and credit and speculation ran rampant during the period from 1875 to 1882 known as the *febre d'or* (gold fever), the subsequent economic crash impelled many winegrowing peasants in Catalonia to migrate from the countryside to the city, causing the industrial proletariat to balloon to near-unsustainable proportions. The ensuing

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<sup>111</sup> McRoberts, *Catalonia*, 18.

<sup>112</sup> Hughes, *Barcelona*, 258-259.

<sup>113</sup> Jacobson and Luzón, "The political system of the Restoration," 97.

depression in Barcelona provided the scenery for the Universal Exposition and damaged the Catalan economy to such an extent that it did not fully recover until 1890.

Like Barcelona, Chicago, as mentioned above, was hit with an economic depression on the eve of its world's fair in 1893. The similarities between the two cities in the late nineteenth century do not end there. Both Chicago and Barcelona, for example, had robust industrial economies and rapidly-growing populations that included a self-congratulatory bourgeoisie and a radicalized and impoverished working class. Yet the nationalist sentiments coursing through these two cities on the eve of their world's fairs differed in a number of critical ways.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, both the U.S. and Spain confronted the challenge of constructing a compelling national identity over the ruins of civil war. Neither country fully succeeded in doing so before the world's fairs took place. Yet America's tremendous economic achievements, intricate communications and interstate commerce systems, and increasing international prestige provided fertile ground for the flowering of American nationalism, whereas Spain's economic difficulties, poor internal communications, ubiquitous political corruption, and impotence in world affairs hindered the growth of Spanish nationalism and encouraged the rise of regionalism even as the Restoration regime established a degree of political stability and introduced policies to promote national unity.

Chicagoans did exude local and regional pride and a burning desire to outdo New York in energy and enterprise. Nevertheless, these sentiments appear to have arisen from a widespread conviction among Chicagoans that their city—with its rapid rise from humble origins, burgeoning industrial economy, location in the Midwest, and large immigrant population—mirrored American society and therefore deserved recognition as America's 'first city' and guiding light. Barcelona, on the other hand, differed markedly from most of Spain's other

regions. Whereas Spain was mainly rural and impoverished, Barcelona was a relatively flourishing industrial society. Whereas Spain's cultural clout was waning, Barcelona was the headquarters of a cultural revival in the *Renaixença* that strengthened Catalan identity at the expense of Spanish identity. Chicago, moreover, was incorporated as a city in 1837 and was part of a country that had been in existence for just over a century prior to the Columbian Exposition. In searching for the roots of Catalan identity, cultural and political Catalanists could remember as far back as the tenth century, if not earlier. They therefore predicated identity on ancient privileges and deeply-rooted, differentiating customs, whether 'invented' to meet modern exigencies or not. Still, it should be noted that many Catalan industrialists and political Catalanists in the late nineteenth century did not desire independence from Spain. Instead, like many Chicagoans, they were engaged in a fierce rivalry with the country's reigning 'first city,' and demanded a more prominent role for their city in influencing the direction and policy priorities of the national government.

Having analyzed the contexts in which Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and Barcelona's 1888 Universal Exposition emerged, it is now necessary to investigate the world's fairs themselves and the manner in which they have been remembered over time. Chapter 2 will examine Chicago's World's Fair, while Chapter 3 will explore Barcelona's Exposition. The fairs will be described in the most reductive and objective way possible since they constitute the grist of subsequent memory and therefore, ideally, should not be colored by the writer's interpretations.



## Chapter 2: A Spectacle and an Extended Encore, Chicago

*The city's image and reputation depended upon how well it represented the United States to the rest of the world, while the nation, in order to evaluate the success or failure of that symbolic representation, had to consider the basis of its own character.*<sup>114</sup>

- Reid Badger, American historian of Chicago's Columbian Exposition, 1979

The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition may have been Chicago's most elaborate experiment with public fairs, but it was not the city's first. In an effort to enhance Chicago's physical landscape and remedy the city's ailing public image after the Great Fire in 1871, local boosters—mostly businessmen in the textile industry—sponsored a two-week-long Inter-State Industrial Exposition of Chicago in 1873 to showcase the city's industrial goods and fine arts, sprinkling the fairgrounds with attractions like an Inter-State Industrial Exposition Building modeled after the Crystal Palace from London's 1851 Exhibition and an Oriental pagoda. Before 1873, Chicago had hosted a smattering of fair-like events such as a River and Harbor Convention in 1847, two Sanitary Commission fairs during the Civil War, and numerous state and county fairs that often featured manipulative real estate speculators as organizers. In 1873, however, city leaders were not interested in dubious land deals. As the program for the 1873 Inter-State Industrial Exposition proclaimed,

The need of an exposition has long been apparent to the people of Chicago...Now that we have risen to the undisputed point of being the great city of the West—the little twin-sister of the national metropolis in fact—that our stability is unquestioned, that we been weighed in the balance of fire and not found wanting, the importance of having some distinct and emphatic exponent of our wealth and commerce becomes an absolute necessity, and the great 'Inter-State Exposition of Chicago' is the result.<sup>115</sup>

The Exposition, which was repeated every year from 1873 until 1890, pumped money into the local economy during rocky economic times. Yet it proved less successful than anticipated as a

<sup>114</sup> Badger, *The Great American Fair*, 19.

<sup>115</sup> Boehm, *Popular Culture and the Enduring Myth of Chicago*, 36.

public relations tool, drawing fewer than 100,000 visitors a year and failing to attract national attention.<sup>116</sup> As discussed below, Chicago's Columbian Exposition would accomplish what the Inter-State Industrial Exposition never could by attracting tens of millions of visitors and garnering intense national and international scrutiny. In the process, however, it lost much of the Chicago flavor that had characterized the Inter-State Industrial Exposition.

While the Inter-State Industrial Exposition was largely a brainchild of Chicago's business elites, the campaign for a world's fair in Chicago began on a more grassroots level. In a letter to the *Chicago Times* in 1882, a local dentist, A.W. Harlan, suggested an American world's fair to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's discovery of the New World, arguing that Chicago's rapid growth, central location, communications and transportation facilities, and cool summer climate made it the ideal host for such a momentous event.<sup>117</sup> The idea for a Columbian world's fair was not new—it had begun circulating in the 1870s in various parts of the country and was initially championed most energetically by city leaders in Washington, D.C.—but Harlan's letter marked the beginning of a gradual swelling of support in Chicago for such an event that quickened once it became clear that other major American cities would vie for the opportunity to host the fair. In 1889, Chicago Mayor DeWitt C. Cregier empowered a citizen's group of local elites to convey Chicago's fitness for an international exposition to the federal government.

With Chicago, Washington, D.C., New York City, and St. Louis, Missouri emerging as the contenders for the fair, a vitriolic war of words broke out between the frontrunners: New York, the grizzled titan of the East, and Chicago, the brash phoenix of the West. *New York Sun* editor Charles A. Dana ridiculed the “nonsensical claims of that windy city,” while other New

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>117</sup> Badger, *The Great American Fair*, 44.

Yorkers trumpeted their city's status as America's largest commercial center and most distinguished reservoir of cultural refinement.<sup>118</sup> Chicago's leaders, in turn, stressed their city's 'Americanness' and engaged in rough-and-tumble second-city politics. In July of 1889, for example, the *Chicago Tribune* needled, "It is not Chicago versus the rest of the country. It is the West versus the thin fringe of people on the Atlantic seaboard."<sup>119</sup> In an 1890 address to a special committee of the U.S. Senate, Mayor Cregier maintained that his city was both uniquely-gifted and distinctly American: "In the short space of eighteen years, Chicago has grown to this imperial magnificence, and she now stands the highest type of all characteristics which have made this nation what it is, boldly claiming recognition."<sup>120</sup> A congressional act in 1890 declared Chicago the host city for a Columbian world's fair and proclaimed that "it is fit and appropriate that the four-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America be commemorated by an exhibition of the resources of the United States of America, their development and the progress of civilization in the New World."<sup>121</sup> Chicagoans had ample cause for civic pride since they had wrested the world's fair from New York's iron grip. Yet it was equally true that Chicagoans had won a national competition to host an exposition with national origins and a strongly national orientation by emphasizing the city's similarity with America as a whole. The dualism between local and national considerations, born out in this embryonic phase of the Columbian Exposition, would play a critical role in the upcoming world's fair and in the memory of the event thereafter.

Since the concept of a Columbian world's fair had emanated from both local and national levels, Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition developed a hybrid organizational structure

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<sup>118</sup> Muccigrosso, *Celebrating the New World*, 14.

<sup>119</sup> Badger, *The Great American Fair*, 48.

<sup>120</sup> Boehm, *Popular Culture and the Enduring Myth of Chicago*, 43.

<sup>121</sup> Joseph Kirkland, *The Story of Chicago* (Chicago: Dibble Publishing Company, 1892), 418.

that had a profound influence on the planning of the World's Fair and on the two years of frantic construction, which began in January 1891. The Chicago boosters who had lobbied Congress for the opportunity to host an international exposition—such as eventual Columbian Exposition director general George R. Davis—established the Chicago Corporation to oversee the Fair. President Benjamin Harrison, meanwhile, created a national World's Columbian Commission and appointed two commissioners from each state to the organization, with Thomas W. Palmer, a Detroit native and former U.S. senator, as president. The local and national committees frequently quarreled over jurisdictional boundaries and the Fair's location and layout. As landscape architect and New Englander Frederick Law Olmsted vented in a report to exposition directors during the summer of 1890, “It should be better understood than it yet seems to be by some of your fellow citizens, that the Fair is not to be a Chicago Fair. It is a World's Fair, and Chicago is to stand before the world as the chosen standard bearer for the occasion of the United States of America.”<sup>122</sup>

Some Chicagoans labeled the controversial decision by Exposition organizers to solicit the services of architects from Chicago, New York, Boston, and Kansas City as a product of the federal government's excessive meddling and lack of trust in Chicago to realize the Fair by itself. In 1890, the *Chicago Tribune* declared that those architects selected for the Fair would “stand before the world as the best fruit of American civilization.”<sup>123</sup> A year later, however, the Chicago-based *Inland Architect and News Record* wrote that even though the architect and Chicago native John W. Root had died before following through on a design for an art building at the Fair, the structure had to be erected or “its abandonment would show that there is truth in the belief too common in the East, that Chicago has no true art sentiment, but is thoroughly

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<sup>122</sup> Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2003), 54.

<sup>123</sup> De Wit, “Building an Illusion,” 56-57.

commercial in her instincts.’’<sup>124</sup> While Chicago, as required by Congress, secured pledges of \$5 million in public sponsorship and committed \$5 million in bonds for the Exposition, it needed federal government subsidies to meet its projected \$28 million budget.<sup>125</sup> The nationalizing tendencies at work in the run-up to the Fair are encapsulated in Mrs. William Felton speech to the Fair’s Board of Lady Managers after being elected temporary chairwoman in 1890. Twenty-five years after the Civil War, the Georgia native exclaimed, “‘I know no North, South, no East, no West. We are all dear sisters engaged in a work full of patriotism and loyalty under the grand old flag in the home of our fathers.’’’<sup>126</sup> In a lengthy study of the Columbian Exposition shortly before it opened, *Harper’s Weekly*’s Julian Ralph asserted that “‘there will not long remain among well-informed persons a trace of the former belief that Chicago will too strongly impress her individuality upon the Fair, or of the dying doubt that it will be fully and grandly national in its aim and accomplishments.’’’<sup>127</sup> The desire for a world’s fair in Chicago had largely originated with second-city politics, but the Columbian Exposition had nevertheless quickly blossomed into an event with undeniable national connotations. The result: a muddled message.

The similarities between Chicago and the United States as a whole in the late nineteenth century were instrumental in shaping the contours of the Columbian Exposition. Chicagoans wished to prove to the East Coast’s major cities that Chicago’s boundless energy and inventive spirit had allowed it to not only prosper economically, but to also forge a formidable culture that could and would knock the condescending Eastern United States off its high society pedestal. The U.S. was determined to issue a similar message about American civilization to Europe. Chicago, a giant amidst stretches of prairies, felt it played an integral but too often unheralded

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>125</sup> Norman Bolotin and Christine Laing, *The Chicago World’s Fair of 1893: The World’s Columbian Exposition* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1992), 3-4; 20.

<sup>126</sup> Kirkland, *The Story of Chicago*, 429.

<sup>127</sup> Ralph, *Harper’s Chicago and the World’s Fair*, 105.

role in America's effervescence. The U.S. believed Europe's Great Powers too often wrote off the young country as nothing more than a prosperous wilderness, and argued that the Great Powers had not sufficiently welcomed the United States into their inner circle. Thus, Kansas City architect Henry Van Brunt's description of Chicago in *The Atlantic Monthly* prior to the opening of the Fair would hold true for the United States as well: "This nation within a nation is not unconscious of its distance from the long-established centres of the world's highest culture, but it is full of the sleepless enterprise and ambitions of youth."<sup>128</sup> Chicago's affinities with the United States may have helped the city win the right to host a world's fair, but it also ensured that any clear differentiation between the significance of the Exposition for Chicago and the significance of the Exposition for America that may have existed in the early stages of preparation would evaporate, leaving behind a hybrid legacy.

The Columbian Exposition, which opened on May 1, 1893 rather than on the actual anniversary of Columbus's discovery because of construction delays, surged and sputtered for six months along the shores of Lake Michigan. Its headquarters were Jackson Park and a mile-long strip of sideshow amusements known as the Midway Plaisance, the latter featuring everything from a Cairo street with veiled Egyptian dancers to model villages housing natives from countries like Dahomey (Benin) and Algeria. Olmsted, whose previous projects included Washington, D.C.'s capital grounds and New York's Central Park, designed the 633-acre fairgrounds, which dwarfed those of all previous world's fairs including Paris' much-celebrated Exposition Universelle in 1889. The Columbian Exposition boasted nearly 200 Beaux-Arts buildings, massive lagoons, intersecting canals, manicured lawns, elaborate fountains, expansive plazas and promenades, a 'Wooded Island' with a Japanese temple and lush gardens, and even

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<sup>128</sup> Henry Van Brunt, "The Columbian Exposition and American Civilization," *The Atlantic Monthly*. volume 71, issue 427, 577-588 (May 1893), Making of America: Cornell University Library, <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/moa/moa-cgi?notisid=ABK2934-0071-83>, 578.

the world's first Ferris wheel. The Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building became the largest building in the world at a whopping 787 feet by 1,687 feet and boasted a price tag of \$1.7 million.<sup>129</sup> The Grand Basin, which along with the neoclassical buildings that surrounded it constituted the majestic Court of Honor, featured two enormous sculptures on either end of the sprawling body of water: Daniel Chester French's Statue of the Republic and Frederick William MacMonnie's Columbian Fountain.

The Fair's chief of construction, Chicago-based architect Daniel Burnham, demanded that all structures save Louis Sullivan's Transportation Building follow classical European architectural design and have uniform cornice heights and other measurements so as to emphasize order, unity, and symmetry. Nearly all the exteriors of the Fair's buildings were made of staff—a mixture of plaster, cement, and hemp—, which lent the temporary structures a brilliant white gleam as if they were illuminated. This illusion, along with the widespread use of street lights and other forms of electrification such as multi-colored searchlights, incandescent lamps, and arc lights, transformed Chicago's fairgrounds into the legendary 'White City.' Over 27.5 million people (around 40 percent of the U.S. population at the time) attended the Fair, though this figure may have been padded and may have included repeat visitors. The Exposition entertained 51 nations and 39 colonies alongside 47 U.S. states and territories, while generating millions of dollars in revenue. October 9 alone attracted over 750,000 people for Chicago Day, a celebration of the city's ability to rebuild its downtown after the Great Fire of 1871.<sup>130</sup> The Fair also provided the forum for a pivotal moment in American history. During an address to the World's Congress of Historians, University of Wisconsin history professor Frederick Jackson Turner articulated his famous 'frontier thesis.' Turner declared that the frontier had been the

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<sup>129</sup> Bolotin and Laing, *The Chicago World's Fair of 1893*, 44.

Rydell, *Fair America*, 37.

<sup>130</sup> Bolotin and Laing, *The Chicago World's Fair of 1893*, 20; 154.

wellspring of America's democracy, national unity, rugged independence, and individualism but that, based on the 1890 census, the U.S. no longer had an unbroken line of frontier in the American West.<sup>131</sup> A pall was cast over the Fair in late October when, three days before it was to close, a disgruntled office-seeker named Eugene Patrick Prendergast assassinated Chicago Mayor Carter Harrison.

Those observers who wrote about the Fair while it was occurring tended to discuss both the local and national identities of the Columbian Exposition. Newspapers and magazines across the country debated national questions such as whether women and African Americans should participate more actively in the Exposition, whether the Fair should be open on Sundays in a largely Christian nation, and whether the Fair's lavishness jarred with the economic panic that gripped the country in 1893. Still, these publications also analyzed Chicago and Chicagoans, perhaps most deridingly in the New York-based *World's Fair Puck's* assaults on Chicago's materialism and "uncouth and homely" women.<sup>132</sup> In describing President Grover Cleveland's address during the Fair's opening ceremonies, the *Chicago Daily Inter Ocean* rhapsodized, "Never before in any land did any crowned monarch receive such homage of so many nations as was thus bestowed on this plain black-coated American who acted as the representative of the American people."<sup>133</sup> John Brisben Walker echoed this patriotic sentiment in *The Cosmopolitan* when he wrote that the visitors to the Fair on the Fourth of July were "all taking part in the general joy and universal pride that this was the creation of their countrymen."<sup>134</sup> Meanwhile, the French consul general in New York, François Edmond Bruwaert, claimed that "the most

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<sup>131</sup> Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893*, 257-258.

<sup>132</sup> Boehm, *Popular Culture and the Enduring Myth of Chicago*, 64.

<sup>133</sup> Badger, *The Great American Fair*, xii.

<sup>134</sup> Bolotin and Laing, *The Chicago World's Fair of 1893*, 36.



beautiful exhibition will be Chicago itself, its citizens, its business, its institutions, its progress.”<sup>135</sup>

Observers also frequently fused the local and national dimensions of the Fair to such an extent that they became indistinguishable. While the Scottish author James Fullarton Muirhead wrote that “Chicago ought never to be mentioned as Porkopolis without a simultaneous reference to the fact that it was also the creator of the White City...perhaps the most flawless and fairy-like creation...of man’s invention,” he swiftly penned another sentence that essentially replaced ‘Chicago’ with ‘America’ in a similar thought: “We expected that America would produce the largest, most costly, and most gorgeous of all international exhibitions; but who expected that she should produce anything so inexpressibly poetic, chaste, and restrained.”<sup>136</sup> Muirhead noted the stark differences between Chicago’s business and residential districts and explained that “in some respects Chicago deserves the name City of Contrasts, just as the United States is the Land of Contrasts.”<sup>137</sup> In Ohio native William Dean Howells’ satiric novel *Letters of an Altrurian Traveller*—which was published in installments in *The Cosmopolitan* during the Fair—the traveler from the imaginary island of Altruria visits the Columbian Exposition and articulates a conception of the Fair’s power dynamics in which the national government had the upper hand,

It is a curious trait of the American who has made money that he thinks he can make anything; and the Chicago millionaires who found themselves authorized by the nation to spend their money in the creation of the greatest marvel of the competitive world, thought themselves fully competent to work the miracle, or to choose the men who would work it according to their ideals.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> François Edmond Bruwaert, “Chicago and the World’s Columbian Exposition,” in *As Others See Chicago: Impressions of Visitors, 1673-1933*, ed. Bessie Louise Pierce (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1933), 338-339.

<sup>136</sup> James Fullarton Muirhead, “Chicago, the City of Contrasts,” in *As Others See Chicago: Impressions of Visitors, 1673-1933*, ed. Bessie Louise Pierce (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1933), 351-352.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>138</sup> William Dean Howells, *Letters of an Altrurian Traveller* (Gainesville: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1961), 21.

Visitors to the Fair appear to have perceived the event as a partnership between the nation and Chicago and formed opinions, both favorable and unfavorable, of both entities.

The only two buildings that still stand in Chicago from the Columbian Exposition are the Palace of Fine Arts—now the Museum of Science and Industry—and the World’s Congress Auxiliary Building—now the Art Institute of Chicago. Though some organizers suggested refinishing the exteriors of the Fair’s structures in marble or another more permanent material after the event, all plans were scrapped when fires in January and July of 1894 devastated the fairgrounds, which had already been depopulated by the systematic disassembly of many buildings and exhibits immediately after the Fair. Since the July fire occurred during the height of the Pullman Strike—a violent confrontation in Chicago between members of the American Railway Union and the Pullman Palace Car Company that culminated in a clash between strikers and U.S. Marshals and Army troops—, many observers at the time and scholars since have speculated that angry Pullman workers deliberately set fire to the fairgrounds. Whatever the origins of the blaze, the Fair’s physical legacy vanished in a shorter time than it had taken to construct it. Chicago’s Exposition has endured instead in the collective memory, albeit unevenly as time has progressed. While the Fair, partially due to the talents of public relations guru Moses P. Handy, generated a mountain of printed matter while it was open and immediately after it closed, much less material on the Exposition was produced between 1900 and the 1960s. From the 1970s onwards, the Fair again inspired an outpouring of writing.

In his essay, “Memory and the White City,” Neil Harris divides the collective memory of Chicago’s World’s Fair into four phases: an ‘Era of Active Memory’ from the close of the Fair until the 1920s, a period of intellectual hostility to the Exposition in the 1920s, a period marked by indifference to the Exposition from the 1930s until the 1950s, and a wave of renewed interest

in the Exposition from the 1960s to the present day.<sup>139</sup> Harris' periodization, however, focuses on the attitude and output of rememberers rather than on the way in which rememberers viewed the Fair in the context of nationalism. By analyzing Harris' periods according to the latter approach, it will become clear that ever since Chicago's World's Fair closed its doors in 1893, the Exposition has, with one significant exception, increasingly been remembered more as an American event than as an event particular to Chicago. The exception to this trend occurs from the 1930s through the 1950s, when the focus is temporarily recast on Chicago. Not coincidentally, this is also the period that produced Chicago's second and last world's fair, The Century of Progress International Exposition.

During the 'Era of Active Memory,' exposition chroniclers composed exhaustive reports, news outlets debated the Columbian Exposition's legacy, authors composed novels based on the Fair, prominent Americans and foreign visitors drafted memoirs that included reminiscences about their time in the White City, and everyday Exposition visitors reflected upon their experience through souvenirs, scrapbooks, postcards, and photographs. Those who reflected on the World's Fair in the first few years after the event continued to recognize that the Exposition had been and still was important for both Chicago and America. In humorist Marietta Holley's 1893 novel *Samantha at the World's Fair*, Samantha Allen discussed the pride and ambition of Chicagoans while simultaneously framing the Fair as a pivotal American event. As Samantha thinks to herself when admiring a female statue of Liberty at the Fair, "I believe Uncle Sam is a-goin' to turn over a new leaf—anyway, Liberty sot up there, a-lookin' off with a calm mean, and there wuz a smile on her face, as if she see a light in the future that begened to her."<sup>140</sup> An article by Henry B. Fuller in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1897 explained that criticisms of

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<sup>139</sup> Harris, "Memory and the White City," 4.

<sup>140</sup> Marietta Holley, *Samantha at the World's Fair* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1893), 232.

Chicago and Chicagoans by visitors to the Columbian Exposition had motivated the city's businessmen to sponsor reform initiatives and strengthen civil society through organizations like the Chicago Civic Federation.<sup>141</sup> In 1895, Julian Ralph outlined in *Harper's Weekly* how, after the World's Fair,

Chicagoans got confidence in the strength and capabilities which they had boasted without being certain of their extent... Since the closing of the fair they have gone on, putting up scores of super residences and office buildings, a majestic depot, pushing a stupendous drainage work, developing a super palace of art, finishing three splendid libraries, bringing university life to prominence, and satisfying... the demands of the cultivated element in the population.<sup>142</sup>

Even so, Ralph brands the Exposition "a national, an American, triumph of self-restraint and intelligence."<sup>143</sup>

While Chicago's World's Fair may have sparked civic, urban, and cultural renewal in Chicago, it also had a number of immediate and concrete implications for American society. During the Exposition's Dedication Day on October 12, 1892, President Harrison asked Americans to celebrate Columbus Day and public schools to read a Pledge of Allegiance that children's magazine editor and Baptist minister Francis J. Bellamy had written for the occasion. Both Columbus Day and the Pledge of Allegiance quickly became American institutions and fonts of patriotism.<sup>144</sup> Poet Katherine Lee Bates was supposedly so amazed by the Fair that she composed "America the Beautiful," while L. Frank Baum, the author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), was rumored to have received the inspiration for Emerald City from his experiences in the White City. International expositions in Omaha (1898), Buffalo (1901), St.

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<sup>141</sup> Henry B. Fuller, "The Upward Movement in Chicago," *Atlantic Monthly*, volume 80, issue 480, 534-547 (October 1897), Making of America: Cornell University Library, <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/moa/moa-cgi?notisid=ABK2934-0080&byte=295597754>, 534.

<sup>142</sup> Julian Ralph, "A Recent Journey through the West IX—Chicago since the Fair," *Harper's Weekly*, 1088 (November 16, 1895), HarpWeek, <http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:4071/IssueImagesView.asp?titleId=HW&volumeId=1895&issueId=1116&page=1088&imageSize=m>, 1088.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 1088.

<sup>144</sup> Rydell, *Fair America*, 9-10.

Louis (1904), Portland (1905), Seattle (1909), and San Francisco (1915) emulated Chicago's painstaking planning, deliberate grandiosity, and Beaux-Arts design. The original Ferris wheel even made a second appearance in St. Louis, while lagoons and white, neoclassical buildings dotted the fairgrounds in Omaha. The effusively self-confident architectural style at these world's fairs helped fuel an American arts and architectural movement that continued until World War I and that predicated national identity on modernism, technology, and emulating classical and Renaissance-era models. Practitioners of this so-called American Renaissance may have traced the movement back to Philadelphia's 1876 Centennial Exposition, but many agreed that it had received its major impetus from Chicago's World's Fair.<sup>145</sup>

Another offshoot of Chicago's World's Fair was the nationwide City Beautiful movement, an architecture and urban planning movement that stressed Progressive reform and lasted from the 1890s until the end of World War I. The idea that the White City constituted a 'city beautiful' first surfaced in 1895 in Francis Hodgson Burnett's allegory *Two Little Pilgrim's Progress*. Only three years after the Columbian Exposition, Universalist minister John Coleman Adams argued that America could instill social order and moral and civic values in its tumultuous cities by learning from the White City's immaculate streets and absence of visible poverty. As Adams lamented in 1896, "For many years it has been possible to forecast the growth of our cities as certainly as it was possible to predict that the daily population of the White City would be anywhere from 100,000 to 800,000 people. Our mistakes are therefore gratuitous and willful."<sup>146</sup> In 1909, Daniel Burnham elaborated a Plan of Chicago and advocated its use in other American cities. Echoing Adams, Burnham wrote, "The time has come to bring

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<sup>145</sup> Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age*, 47.

<sup>146</sup> John Coleman Adams, "What A Great City Might Be—A Lesson From the White City," *The New England Magazine*, new series 14, 3-13 (March 1896), *Urban Planning, 1794-1918: An International Anthology of Articles, Conference Papers, and Reports*, John W. Reps, professor emeritus, Cornell University, <http://www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/adams.htm>.

order out of the chaos incident to rapid growth, and especially to the influx of people of many nationalities without common traditions or habits of life.”<sup>147</sup> This could shore up American nationalism, since waves of immigration to America in the early twentieth century were raising troubling questions about national identity and threatening the American ideal of the ‘melting pot.’<sup>148</sup> The City Beautiful movement was made possible not only through Burnham’s efforts but also by the fact that architects, landscape planners, sculptors, and painters who had worked on Chicago’s World’s Fair fanned out across the nation after the Exposition. The movement lent legitimacy to America’s governmental and cultural institutions by cloaking them in monumental splendor and begot civic centers, parkways, and railway stations, producing the likes of Pennsylvania and Grand Central Stations in New York, Columbia University’s campus, and the axial plan of the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

With all of the Columbian Exposition’s influences on American society during the ‘Era of Active Memory,’ it is not surprising that one begins to see rememberers subsume the Fair’s association with Chicago into a more nationalistic classification of the event. In a reflection on the Fair in 1894, the writer and Midwestern native Hamlin Garland quoted an imaginary businessman from the West as proclaiming, “‘Henceforth, when men of the Old World speak of America, they will not think of Boston and New York and Philadelphia, they will mean Chicago and the Mississippi valley,’” adding, in a line reminiscent of the Turner thesis, that the West “‘will continually revivify and reinvigorate the East, the extreme North, and the extreme South. It will be the base of food supply; the heart of the nation.”<sup>149</sup> Writing about the Columbian

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<sup>147</sup> Daniel H. Burnham and Edward H. Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, ed. Charles Moore (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 1.

<sup>148</sup> Randolph Bourne, “Trans-National America,” in *The Nationalism Reader*, ed. Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1999), 292.

<sup>149</sup> Hamlin Garland, *Crumbling idols: twelve essays on art, dealing chiefly with literature, painting and the drama* (Chicago: Stone and Kimball, 1894), 145-147.

Exposition in 1896, John Coleman Adams remarked that “there was not another place in America where the American citizen could feel so much of the pride of popular sovereignty as he could after he had paid his half dollar and become a naturalized resident of this municipality.”<sup>150</sup> Similarly, Rossiter Johnson’s authoritative history of the Exposition, published in 1897, described Chicago as the “heart city” of a continent “acknowledging one government and having one destiny.”<sup>151</sup> A year after America whet its imperial appetite by seizing the former Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines in the 1898 Spanish-American War, Ferdinand Peck affirmed that, ever since the Fair, American firms had extended their foreign trade at an unprecedentedly rapid clip.<sup>152</sup> As Americans optimistically contemplated their ascendant industrial and imperial might, memories of the Columbian Exposition—including the famous ‘frontier thesis’ that Frederick Jackson Turner had presented there—became increasingly intertwined with a belief known as ‘American exceptionalism,’ which held that America differed qualitatively from other nations and that it had a right to bring American civilization to the rest of the world, by force if necessary.<sup>153</sup> President Woodrow Wilson emphasized America’s new global role in his “Fourteen Points” address to Congress in 1918, in which he outlined America’s duty to help ethnic groups realize their right to national self-determination.<sup>154</sup> That same year, Henry Adams declared that the Columbian Exposition asked “for the first time the question whether the American people knew where they were driving,” adding that “Chicago was the first

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<sup>150</sup> Adams, “What A Great City Might Be.”

<sup>151</sup> Rossiter Johnson, volume 2 of *A History of the World’s Columbian Exposition Held in Chicago in 1893* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897), 3.

<sup>152</sup> Badger, *The Great American Fair*, 113.

<sup>153</sup> Howard Zinn, “The Power and the Glory: Myths of American Exceptionalism,” *Boston Review: A Political and Literary Forum*, <http://www.bostonreview.net/BR30.3/zinn.html>.

<sup>154</sup> Woodrow Wilson, “Address to a Joint Session of Congress, January 1918,” in *The Nationalism Reader*, ed. Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1999), 310-311.

expression of American thought as a unity.”<sup>155</sup> As the many influences of Chicago’s World’s Fair on American society became more obvious and as American nationalism rallied around the country’s industrialization, imperialism, and newly-acquired stature as an economic and military world power after World War I, those who reflected on Chicago’s World’s Fair generally placed more emphasis on the significance of the Exposition for the nation as a whole.

By the 1920s, the popularity of world’s fairs had waned, Columbian Exposition leaders such as Burnham and the muralist Augustus Saint-Gaudens had passed away, and the modernist movement was sweeping through society, propelled by earlier events such as the Armory Show in 1913. Neil Harris maintains that in this context, many rememberers lambasted Chicago’s World’s Fair as an architectural anachronism and embarrassment.<sup>156</sup> Harris points to Louis Sullivan’s *Autobiography of an Idea* and historian Lewis Mumford’s *Sticks & Stones* as prime examples of his contention. While both writers did criticize the Exposition, they continued to view the event as fundamentally American, for better or for worse. Sullivan declared that the Exposition’s organizers had gravely misinterpreted American culture and led American architecture astray, adding, with his tendency toward hyperbole, that “the damage wrought by the World’s Fair will last for half a century from its date, if not longer. It has penetrated deep into the constitution of the American mind, effecting there lesions significant of dementia.”<sup>157</sup> Meanwhile, Mumford’s appraisal of the “imperial order” at the Fair—which placed the “serene facades” of the Great Buildings ahead of “the barkers, the freaks, and the tricksters,” of the Midway—suggests a connection between the World’s Fair and America’s subsequent foray into

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<sup>155</sup> Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, ed. Ernest Samuels (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 343.

<sup>156</sup> Harris, “Memory and the White City,” 15.

<sup>157</sup> Louis H. Sullivan, *The Autobiography of an Idea* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 318; 325.



imperialism.<sup>158</sup> Mumford also lashed out at the City Beautiful movement's interpretation of national identity. In describing the movement's influence on the Lincoln Memorial, he fumes, "The America that Lincoln was bred in, the homespun and humane and humorous America that he wished to preserve, has nothing in common with the sedulously classic monument that was erected to his memory."<sup>159</sup> As America prospered economically during the 'Roaring Twenties' and witnessed the denouement of the City Beautiful movement, Mumford and Sullivan wondered what American society would look like had the Columbian Exposition organizers used the event's national scope to broadcast a different message about the American character.

The onset of the Great Depression in America after the Wall Street Crash of 1929 not only crushed American morale but also shattered the national framework within which the Columbian Exposition had been interpreted in recent years. Instead, memory of the event became increasingly associated with Chicago. This may have been the case in part because a world's fair that had so ostentatiously glorified American progress appeared less relevant and perhaps even repulsive for Americans losing faith in their country and mooring their identity to local and regional anchors at a time of intense economic hardship. Such a reversal in the collective memory of the Exposition is in keeping with more general writings about American nationalism during this period. As American poet Donald Davidson, a vocal opponent of industrial capitalism, explained in 1934,

We are now a little surprised, and maybe even disconcerted, that our vision of a united nation must allow a place for enormous and highly self-conscious areas of differentiation—a Northeast, a South, a Southwest, a Midwest, a Northwest, a Far

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<sup>158</sup> Lewis Mumford, *Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture and Civilization* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924), 134; 147-148.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

West—that have not after all been levelled into uniformity, even by the powerful agencies of machine production and urban thought.<sup>160</sup>

This era of collective memory yields very little literature on the World's Fair, and most of what does exist was penned by Chicagoans. The idea for another world's fair in Chicago had first been proposed by Chicago minister Myron E. Adams in 1923 to extinguish Chicago's Prohibition-era reputation as a cultureless haven for gangsters like Al Capone. As Adams explained to Chicago Mayor William E. Dever, “Chicago has never lost the spirit of those who generation after generation have built up and rebuilt this city aspiring for something finer and better.”<sup>161</sup> A rebuilding of Chicago became even more necessary after the stock market crash, and business elites soon assumed leadership of the enterprise. The Columbian Exposition was invoked as a largely unfortunate event in Chicago's history that had steered Chicago in the wrong direction with its national pretensions. While studying the Columbian Exposition meticulously, organizers of Chicago's Century of Progress International Exposition—which took place in 1933 and again in 1934—did everything possible to reject the idea that the event, which was realized without federal subsidies and featured science and technology exhibits in modernist buildings and , was trying to “reincarnate the white ghosts of '93.”<sup>162</sup> In fact, Century of Progress more closely resembled Chicago's Inter-State Industrial Exposition of 1873 in that it was promoted exclusively by local businessmen to reinvigorate a struggling local economy and improve the city's image, and in its celebration of a local milestone: Chicago's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Unfortunately for Chicago, Century of Progress mirrored the Inter-State Industrial Exposition in another way: though it was a masterfully-executed economic success, it did little to boost the city's image,

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<sup>160</sup> Donald Davidson, “Where Regionalism and Sectionalism Meet,” *Social Forces*, volume 13, number 1, 23-31 (October 1934), JSTOR, <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0037-7732%28193410%2F193505%2913%3A1%3C23%3AWRASM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U>, 23.

<sup>161</sup> Boehm, *Popular Culture and the Enduring Myth of Chicago*, 112.

<sup>162</sup> Henry Justin Smith, *Chicago's Great Century: 1833-1933* (Chicago: Consolidated Publishers, Inc., 1933), 184-185.

especially after Sally Rand's risqué fan dance gained nationwide notoriety. In an account of the 1893 Columbian Exposition written soon after the Century of Progress, Chicago journalist Henry Justin Smith at once recognized the Columbian Exposition's national significance while sidestepping it enough to muster the enterprising spirit of Chicagoans for revivifying the city in the wake of its second world's fair: "Chicagoans were justified in forgetting, for the moment, that the buildings were the creation largely of out-of-town architects and that the exposition had to do with an event in national, not local, history. 'We did it!' those people felt. And indeed, in the last analysis, it was Chicago that had done it."<sup>163</sup>

It is important to note, however, that there were exceptions to the tone taken up by Smith and others during this period. In 1938, for example, Journalist Oswald Garrison Villard recalled visiting the Columbian Exposition as a young man and wrote, "I know it is the fashion in some quarters now to sneer at it as lacking in originality and in American character and for other reasons. In my judgment it is still to be regarded as one of the great milestones in our national life."<sup>164</sup> Villard fused the Columbian Exposition's local and national dimensions like so many others had done in previous decades when he affirmed, "Although this remarkable enterprise apparently used up for a time almost all of Chicago's limited reservoir of civic pride and achievement, nevertheless it is something for the city to be proud of for all time...In many respects it marked the coming of age of the United States."<sup>165</sup>

The tendency to downplay the Columbian Exposition's importance for America and to discuss the Fair in the context of Chicago's history persisted into the 1940s and 1950s. Historian

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>164</sup> Oswald Garrison Villard, *Fighting Years: Memoirs of a Liberal Editor* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939), 91.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 92.

Dorsha B. Hayes, writing in 1945 near the end of World War II (1939-1945), reverses Smith's negativity about the "Chicago fair" in light of the devastating war she had just experienced:

With all the vast realms of darkness, ignorance and suffering which we know were existent then, and with so much which has since seemed quaint, absurd—the astonishing little stuffiness and the bustles and the corsets, the derbies and the handle-bar mustaches—yet, seen in retrospect and in comparison, what a golden age it was! So fraught with hope, so happy in its progress, so innocent of what the new century could bring in the way of wars such as mankind in all its history had never known! They had enjoyed their Fair—deeply. It thrilled them with wonder and delight. Chicago had done the job nobly.<sup>166</sup>

Yet most rememberers during this period were more likely to discuss the Columbian Exposition in a highly critical manner than they were to idealize the Fair as Hayes did. In an autobiography published in 1945, Ray Stannard Baker recalled reporting on the Fair as a young journalist in Chicago and witnessing the economic depression that battered the city immediately afterwards. As he exclaimed, "“Heights of splendor, pride, exaltation in one month: depths of wretchedness, suffering, hunger, cold, in the next.”"<sup>167</sup> Similarly, historian Ray Ginger's 1950s account of the Columbian Exposition shifts discussion of the Fair's amusements from the carnivalesque atmosphere of the Midway to the widespread gambling and prostitution at the Levee. He mentions the study that Florence Kelly conducted during the summer of the Exposition on living and working conditions in Chicago's 19<sup>th</sup> ward, informing the reader that "“what the investigators found was the diseased underbelly of Chicago's growth, the muck out of which rose the white and gold at Jackson Park...The way to make money was to build factories and warehouses and street-car lines, not homes for people to live in.”"<sup>168</sup> America's experiences with a crushing economic depression and a horrific world war had provided a reality check for the country, and

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<sup>166</sup> Dorsha B. Hayes, *Chicago: Crossroads of American Enterprise* (New York: Julian Messner Inc., Publishers, 1944), 222; 226-227.

<sup>167</sup> Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age*, 360.

<sup>168</sup> Ray Ginger, *Altgeld's America: The Lincoln Ideal Versus Changing Realities* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1958), 25.

those who concerned themselves with the 1893 Fair appear to have engaged in a form of self-flagellation for the way in which the Columbian Exposition had been remembered in the past. Perhaps they could not reconcile their patriotism with a belief in the national significance of a world's fair that had been so gaudy and irrepressibly self-confident, and thus felt obligated to expose the Exposition's hypocrisies as a form of repentance.

In the 1960s, national interest in Chicago's World's Fair surged once more, and the Fair again was framed more often than not in national terms. Neil Harris argues that this was due in part to the fact that the 1960s was a "breeding ground for the nostalgia constituency—collectors, dealers, journalists, curators, historians, and advertising specialists—committed to recovering and publicizing the physical remnants of the American past."<sup>169</sup> Norman Bolotin and Christine Laing reveal themselves to be just these zealous rememberers in the opening to their 1992 study of the Columbian Exposition, in which they explain that their fascination with the Fair began when they purchased an aluminum medal depicting Columbus landing in America at a coin show in 1979.<sup>170</sup> In addition, Harris writes that the Columbian Exposition's "self-confident rhetoric may have seemed reassuring to atomic age pessimists," and that, especially in the 1970s and 80s, "glass towers, huge apartment complexes, invasive road systems...billboarded avenues, and abandoned waterfronts all contrasted with the monumental, symmetrical, sparkling, highly decorated settings that had been the expositions' legacy."<sup>171</sup> In 1979, Richard Guy Wilson composed an influential catalogue for the Brooklyn Museum's American Renaissance Show in which he published many photographs and drawings from Chicago's World's Fair and urged historians to dedicate more attention to the American Renaissance. Reid Badger's groundbreaking study of the Fair that same year proclaimed, "Increasingly...the story of the fair

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<sup>169</sup> Harris, "Memory and the White City," 21-22.

<sup>170</sup> Bolotin and Laing, *The Chicago World's Fair of 1893*, ix.

<sup>171</sup> Harris, "Memory and the White City," 22.

became a kind of triumphant epic of American civic spirit, teamwork, and self-sacrifice...The construction of the White City at the site of what had formerly been a swamp was seen as nothing less than the reenactment of the purpose of American civilization, to bring order out of chaos.”<sup>172</sup> The contemporary rediscovery of the Columbian Exposition had begun, and it had a distinctly national bent.

One major reason that interest in Chicago’s 1893 World’s Fair took off the way that it did at this time was because the period also witnessed the rise of intellectual and cultural historians, who amalgamated disciplines such as anthropology and history and unearthed many previously-ignored aspects of popular culture in history. These historians were fascinated by the seeming audacity of organizers to create an illusory Exposition so as to unify a splintered late-nineteenth-century American civilization still licking its wounds from the Civil War. As Badger explains in the preface to his 1979 study of the Columbian Exposition,

My interest in Chicago’s world’s fair of 1893 developed over the course of several years of studying the various aspects of late nineteenth century American civilization...I became convinced that these unique events might provide the cultural historian with a focal point, a microcosm perhaps, for investigating the general experience of the culture at a particular point in time, and I determined to use the Chicago fair as a test case for the hypothesis.<sup>173</sup>

Later on his book, Badger elaborates on how, for historians like himself, the Fair was not an event whose lessons could be practically applied as John Coleman Adams had believed in the 1890s, but rather a case study frozen in a turn-of-the-century American milieu. As he explains, “The fair was not a major beacon to the future. In keeping with its nature as a Victorian institution, the Columbian Exposition is of greater importance as a reflector of the confusing variety and conflicting cultural patterns that characterized the period that Henry Steele

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<sup>172</sup> Badger, *The Great American Fair*, 125.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, ix-x.

Commager calls the ‘watershed of American history.’”<sup>174</sup> This way of thinking about the Exposition has become widespread among historians. Alan Trachtenberg—who claims that the Fair exemplified the emergence of an “incorporated America” where business interests allied themselves with the state to manipulate culture— contends that cultural historians have focused more on America than on Chicago when studying the Exposition because of “the accidental setting of that gesture” between the financial panic of 1893 and the Pullman Strike of 1894, making the “White City seem a fitting conclusion of an age.”<sup>175</sup> He continues,

In retrospect, the Fair has seemed not only a culmination of the efforts of ruling groups since the Civil War to win hegemony over the emerging national culture but a prophetic symbol of the coming defeat of Populism and its alternative culture, the alternative ‘America’ it proposed. White City expressed the very outlook later manifested by McKinley and the Republican banner of ‘peace, prosperity, progress and patriotism,’ as well as the overseas crusades to spread the blessings of ‘our deeply incorporated civilization.’<sup>176</sup>

Cultural historians during this period increasingly cast the Columbian Exposition as a fulcrum in American history, thus embellishing the national elements of the event while characterizing the Fair as ripe for intellectual gymnastics but not for concrete emulation like that which took place in the early twentieth century with the rash of similar world’s fairs across the country and with the City Beautiful movement.

In an era in which new media like television and the Internet are changing the way that elites communicate with or to the populace, cultural historians have devoted much of their attention to the way in which organizers of the Columbian Exposition exploited popular enthusiasm to disseminate national propaganda. In analyzing a hyper-consumer culture at the Columbian Exposition that produced the likes of Cracker Jacks, Quaker Oats, and Aunt

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>175</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 209.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 231-232.

Jemima's pancake mix, Judith A. Adams maintains that spectacle and display taught Americans to hunger for manufactured products and embrace technology.<sup>177</sup> Around the same time, Peter B. Hales analyzed Exposition photographer Charles Dudley Arnold's panoramic shots of a noble and idyllic fairgrounds. He argued that these photographs reflected the way in which the Fair's "social engineers" marketed officially-sanctioned ideas to millions of people yearning to preserve the memories they had made in the ethereal White City, and to subsequent generations who relied largely on Arnold's pictures to construct narratives about the Fair long after the physical vestiges of the Exposition—and the people who had experienced the Fair firsthand—were gone. Hales states that,

In no uncertain terms, the captions and slipsheet explanations of Arnold's published views trumpeted the three principles of the Fair: American global preeminence as a capitalist presence; American ascendance, as a result, to the pantheon of civilized nations, and her new importance as a producer of high culture; and (subtly) the responsibility of individual American citizens to embrace the new modern economy and accept their place, however humble, in the vast machinery of American destiny.<sup>178</sup>

In a similar line of argumentation, Robert Rydell has emphasized the way in which Columbian Exposition organizers invented traditions such as the Pledge of Allegiance and promulgated a "nationalizing synthesis" so that the general public would accept an elite version of American nationalism that included support of the country's imperial ambitions, which were predicated on a racially-informed interpretation of American superiority.<sup>179</sup>

Yet even with this overwhelming conception of the Columbian Exposition as an American endeavor, today's rememberers continue to recognize and debate the Fair's importance for Chicago. David F. Burg advances the traditional notion of the Exposition solidifying

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<sup>177</sup> Judith A. Adams, "The American Dream Actualized: The Glistening 'White City' and the Lurking Shadows of the World's Columbian Exposition," in *The World's Columbian Exposition: A Centennial Bibliographic Guide*, ed. David J. Bertuca et al. (Greenwood Press: Westport, 1996), xx.

<sup>178</sup> Hales, *Constructing the Fair*, 40.

<sup>179</sup> Rydell, *Fair America*, 8-9.



Chicago's status as a microcosm for late nineteenth-century America: "The West was the new and vital America and Chicago was its heart. For the moment at least Chicago would be the capital city of the New World."<sup>180</sup> Erik Larson is more generous in his 2003 bestselling novel, *The Devil in the White City*, in which the narrator declares that,

The exposition was Chicago's great pride...The sense of ownership was everywhere, not just among the tens of thousands of citizens who had bought exposition stock. Hilda Satt noticed it in the change that came over her father as he showed her the grounds. 'He seemed to take a personal pride in the fair, as if he had helped in the planning,' she said. 'As I look back on those days, most people in Chicago felt that way. Chicago was host to the world at that time and we were part of it all.'<sup>181</sup>

In the same vein, a *Chicago Tribune* editorial in 1993 during the Fair's centennial anniversary posits,

The fair put Chicago on the world map. Previously, to the extent it was thought of at all, Chicago was viewed as a backwoods hub of commerce and industry. The Columbian Exposition launched Chicago into the elite sphere of cities of influence...The centennial observances of the Columbian Exposition can teach us again that this city, any city, should aspire to be a humane and glorious place to be.<sup>182</sup>

Yet other rememberers downplay the Fair's meaning for Chicago. Lisa Krissoff Boehm, for example, maintains that while Chicagoans had hoped to "link their city to the central story of American progress" with the Exposition, the Fair ultimately retained its importance as an American event while failing to provide the Fair's local sponsors with the "cultural capital" they had anticipated.<sup>183</sup>

In the contemporary period, the Columbian Exposition is often treated as a recently-unearthed fossil from late nineteenth-century America that retains little practical relevance in

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<sup>180</sup> Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893*, 43.

<sup>181</sup> Larson, *The Devil in the White City*, 288.

<sup>182</sup> "The Legacy of a Truly World's Fair," *Chicago Tribune* (May 1, 1993), NewsBank.

[http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2322/openurl?ctx\\_ver=z39.88-2004&rft\\_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:NewsBank:CTRB&rft\\_val\\_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft\\_dat=0FFE C979B2EFBE25&svc\\_dat=InfoWeb:aggregated5&req\\_dat=0FA5BD299B01E287](http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2322/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:NewsBank:CTRB&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0FFE C979B2EFBE25&svc_dat=InfoWeb:aggregated5&req_dat=0FA5BD299B01E287) (accessed through the University of Pennsylvania Library February 25, 2008).

<sup>183</sup> Boehm, *Popular Culture and the Enduring Myth of Chicago*, 40.

contemporary society. At the beginning of his novel—which follows the stories of Daniel Burnham and serial killer H.H. Holmes—, Larson notes that it was the stark contrast between the Fair era and present-day society that motivated him to write an account of the event: “The thing that entranced me about Chicago in the Gilded Age was the city’s willingness to take on the impossible in the name of civic honor, a concept so removed from the modern psyche that two wise readers of early drafts of this book wondered why Chicago was so avid to win the world’s fair in the first place.”<sup>184</sup> In a *Chicago Tribune* column this year, Glenn Jeffers recounts his participation in a Chicago Architecture Foundation tour associated with Larson’s book. Brushing off what a tour guide tells him about how the Fair changed the way Americans lived, Jeffers writes that the “tour failed to bring the White City off the page and into the Chicago of today...A lesson in Chicago architectural history is one thing. But a three and a half hour tour of buildings that no longer stand hardly captures the tension and drama Larson depicted.”<sup>185</sup> In a 2006 *Pinky Show* segment on the Columbian Exposition that has received almost 14,000 views and a flurry of comments on YouTube, Pinky touches on how intellectual interest in the Fair nowadays has not translated into popular interest since “even most people who live in Chicago never heard of it.”<sup>186</sup>

Those rememberers who argue that the Chicago World’s Fair continues to resonate with people today often do so in a highly theoretical way, explaining that the Columbian Exposition influences modern life because of its underlying themes, which included classism, controlled urbanism, and the manipulation of culture by elites. As James Gilbert explains,

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<sup>184</sup> Larson, *The Devil in the White City*, 393

<sup>185</sup> Glenn Jeffers, “A little ‘Devil’ might spice up White City tour,” *Chicago Tribune* (February 7, 2008), NewsBank, [http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2322/openurl?ctx\\_ver=z39.88-2004&rft\\_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:NewsBank:CTRB&rft\\_val\\_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft\\_dat=11EABC2CF69E77B8&svc\\_dat=InfoWeb:aggregated5&req\\_dat=0FA5BD299B01E287](http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2322/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:NewsBank:CTRB&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=11EABC2CF69E77B8&svc_dat=InfoWeb:aggregated5&req_dat=0FA5BD299B01E287) (accessed through the University of Pennsylvania Library February 25, 2008).

<sup>186</sup> The Pinky Show, “Fabulous Imperialism!: The 1893 Columbian Exposition,” YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3wzyRepJuvM>.

The American middle class, beleaguered by excessive choice, is still unsure of its identity and location between versions of elite culture like the White City and the raw commerce and cultural mobility of the Midway... Time and again, those solutions proposed in 1893 would be revived as ways to deal with, even to conquer the problems of American diversity.<sup>187</sup>

Writing in the *Chicago Tribune* during the centennial of the Columbian Exposition, architecture critic Blair Kamin expresses a similar sentiment: “Today, as America’s population becomes increasingly diverse and cities battle the flight of jobs and people to the suburbs, panicked mayors and their planners invoke Burnham’s memory as they seek to sweep urban vitality under the rug-or the sidewalk, as it were.”<sup>188</sup> Pinky, meanwhile, comes around to the revelation that the Fair was most important as the launching pad for over a century of American imperialism and exceptionalism that is still evident in endeavors like the Iraq War. She concludes that she hopes the Columbian Exposition,

Would somehow help me to understand how the people of this nation somehow came to give their consent to empire building. I want to understand this because, well, we don’t have world’s fairs anymore, but we do have other institutions that perform similar functions: museums, schools, advertising, Disney Land, stuff like that... We are still living the ramifications of this disappeared place.<sup>189</sup>

The Columbian Exposition is presented as a far-reaching symbol rather than as an event that today’s leaders continuously feel the need to stage.

The Columbian Exposition was the product of close collaboration between local and national officials, and had both local and national elements and goals from the outset. It also occurred during a period of American history when American national identity was beginning to crystallize, albeit with difficulties. The local-national dualism of the Exposition emerged in part

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<sup>187</sup> James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago’s Utopias of 1893* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 227.

<sup>188</sup> Blair Kamin, “The Dream City—This Town Could Learn A Thing Or Two From Burnham’s Bold Utopia,” *Chicago Tribune* (May 2, 1993), NewsBank, [http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2322/openurl?ctx\\_ver=z39.88-2004&rft\\_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:NewsBank:CTRB&rft\\_val\\_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft\\_dat=0FFE C98606033A55&svc\\_dat=InfoWeb:aggregated5&req\\_dat=0FA5BD299B01E287](http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2322/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:NewsBank:CTRB&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0FFE C98606033A55&svc_dat=InfoWeb:aggregated5&req_dat=0FA5BD299B01E287).

<sup>189</sup> “Fabulous Imperialism!”

because of these considerations. Yet it also arose because Chicago's story of progress in the late nineteenth century paralleled America's and because Chicago's leaders presented the situation as such in order to win the right to host the Exposition in the first place. From the 1890s until the 1920s, the World's Fair inspired the American Renaissance and City Beautiful movements—both national in scope—and was increasingly remembered as an American event, although lingering associations with Chicago also led to civic and urban renewal in that city. While hostile rememberers in the 1920s may have exaggerated the influence of the Exposition on the country in order to impress upon people the extent of the damage wrought by its legacy, they had nonetheless seen too much of the American Renaissance and City Beautiful movements to describe the Fair as anything but American. Still, as a result of the Great Depression and World War II, many Americans from the 1930s through the 1950s distanced themselves from the Columbian Exposition, causing the Fair to take on an unprecedentedly-pronounced local dimension. Chicago's business elites turned to the model of the Fair to help extricate the city from financial woes and identity problems, even as they spurned it—at least rhetorically—to conform with the tenor of the age. The result was Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition.

It would seem that, compared to earlier periods, today's collective memory of the Columbian Exposition is overwhelmingly intellectual, largely bereft of the practical implications that spurred American rememberers in the early twentieth century to beautify and monumentalize America's cities, and Chicagoans in the 1930s to construct a second world's fair while employing a scorched earth policy to the trail of memories that the Columbian Exposition had left behind up to that point. To be sure, Judith A. Adams and other scholars have advanced compelling arguments that Walt Disney World, with its ubiquitous consumerism, psychological manipulation, and utopian aspirations (the EPCOT Center, for example, stands for Experimental

Prototype Community Of Tomorrow) drew inspiration from the Columbian Exposition; and indeed, Walt Disney's father worked as a carpenter during the construction of the White City.<sup>190</sup>

Nevertheless, directly associating the White City with Disney World or, as Pinky does, with American museums, schools, and advertising requires an intellectual leap of faith. In the 1980s, Chicago Mayor Jane Byrne did support a local elite-led movement for another Chicago world's fair in 1992 to celebrate the quincentennial of Columbus's discovery of the New World and the centennial of the Columbian Exposition, but the proposal generated fierce divisions among local constituencies while posing potential environmental problems for Chicago and budgetary concerns for Illinois. Seville, Spain hosted the 1992 world's fair instead. In a 1993 speech to Chicagoans, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley introduced the museum exhibits, theatrical performances, and scholarly conferences that constituted the commemoration of the Columbian Exposition's centennial by declaring, "More than merely a celebration of the past, Chicago '93 activities allow visitors to trace Chicago's history from this landmark event to modern day Chicago—a world class city."<sup>191</sup> During the most recent phase of public memory, the Fair has served the same purpose for Americans, allowing them to trace their country's history from this 'watershed' event to contemporary American society. It appears that, today, the collective memory of the Columbian Exposition has reached a kind of stasis in which the event has morphed into an instructive historical landmark rather than a model for concrete replication.

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<sup>190</sup> Adams, "The American Dream Actualized," xxvii.

<sup>191</sup> Stanley K. Hunter, *Footsteps at the American World's Fairs: The International Exhibitions of Chicago, New York & Philadelphia, 1853-1965 Revisited in 1993* (Glasgow: Exhibition Study Group, 1996), 17.

### Chapter 3: A Spectacle and an Extended Encore, Barcelona

*Like [in 1888], we want to muster for this renewed city the creative and innovative energy of the young generations together with all of the experience and knowledge that previous generations have bequeathed to us, so that Barcelona continues to be, like it has since 1888, a unique synthesis of tradition and modernity, experience and creation, identity and universality.*<sup>192</sup>

- Pasquall Maragall, mayor of Barcelona on the city's upcoming Olympic Games, 1988

In the early nineteenth century, Barcelona consistently translated its economic successes and public-spiritedness into exhibitions of Catalan industrial products and art. In fact, the city celebrated 14 such events between 1822 and 1877. All of these fairs coincided with royal visits to Barcelona and therefore provided Catalan elites with the rare opportunity to communicate municipal and regional interests directly to Spain's political authorities. During Barcelona's 1860 fair, for example, Catalan exposition chronicler Francisco José Orellana explained that while the ostensible aim of the exhibition was to pay homage to Queen Isabella, Barcelona also offered her a *muestra* (display) of its industriousness and inventiveness and applied subtle political pressure on the Head of State and her royal retinue by enabling local industrialists and merchants to mingle with the Queen for hours on end.<sup>193</sup> Orellana suggested that the 1860 exposition represented the first step toward staging a world's fair in Barcelona,

Perhaps the day is not far off when, over the ruins of the small industrial palace of the paseo de S. Juan, a larger, permanent palace will be erected...He who brings this to a happy end will achieve no small glory. Until then, we harbor the faith that our work...will be like the small and dark seed, that hides in the earth; but that germinates, and becomes a plant, and in time bears fruit. Many who maybe even now do not understand the transcendence that a well-planned exposition of products can have, will learn that it is one of the best means of driving public wealth.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Pasqual Maragall, "Pórtico," in *Exposición Universal de Barcelona: libro del centenario, 1888-1988*, ed. Ramon Grau and Marina López (Barcelona: Comisión Ciudadana para la Conmemoración del Centenario de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona del año 1888: Barcelona: L' Avenç, 1988), 23.

<sup>193</sup> Orellana, *Reseña Completa Descriptiva y Crítica*, 8-9.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

The chronicler concluded his study by affirming that “our factories should be the arsenals from which Spain should take its weapons to re-conquer its former first-class position, among the great nations of Europe, and perhaps the useful dominion of America.”<sup>195</sup> Orellana appears to be arguing that Spain regain its power and prestige by relying on the non-violent industrial might of Catalonia—symbolized by its recent exposition—rather than on the brute military force that had fueled the tumultuous era of *pronunciamentos* in the nineteenth century and contributed to the country’s demise. By commandeering standard world’s fair rhetoric regarding peaceful industrial progress, Orellana could nominate industrial Barcelona for a leadership role in the regeneration of Spain, in a similar way to how Chicagoans argued that their city merited a place at the vanguard of America’s development because of Chicago’s mounting clout in the Midwest.

Calls for more elaborate industrial fairs in Barcelona multiplied in the 1870s. In 1877, Catalan exposition chronicler Agustín Urgellés de Tovar complained about the foreign contempt that Spain had aroused because of its lackadaisical participation in world’s fairs abroad and its disinterestedness in sponsoring national expositions. He explained that this attitude had prompted the *Sociedad Económica Barcelonesa de Amigos del País* (Barcelona’s Economic Society of Friends of the Country) to take the initiative by planning an exposition of Catalan inventions in the city’s newly-created market, el Mercado del Borne, in 1875. Yet the municipal government, reeling from a budget deficit under Mayor Manuel Girona, refused to subsidize the fair to the chagrin of many local newspapers and, it appears, to Urgellés de Tovar himself.<sup>196</sup> The Catalan-language publication *La Bandera Catalana* linked the proposed fair with second-city politics and argued that Barcelona’s status as Spain’s most industrialized city demanded a grand industrial exhibition,

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>196</sup> Urgellés De Tovar, *Cataluña en Filadelfia*, 36.

What's more beautiful than inaugurating [the Mercado del Borne] with a festival so industrial, so Catalan? Madrid, the land of Ovens and [the restaurant] Lhardy, inaugurated a market by celebrating a banquet in it. Barcelona, the land of work and of activity, inaugurating a grand Mercado del Borne, all of it constructed in Catalonia, according to Madrid's example? Maybe!<sup>197</sup>

In recommending that the proponents of the failed national exposition amplify their efforts to produce a universal exposition in Barcelona, Urgellés de Tovar, like Orellana before him, juxtaposed Castilian war-mongering and Catalan industriousness: "The peaceful struggles of work must replace the armies that squander on the battleground that which is most lacking in Spain, people and money."<sup>198</sup> The national exposition for which Urgellés de Tovar so fervently pined became a reality when Alfonso XII's pending visit to Barcelona provided the necessary pretext for Barcelona Mayor Francesc Rius i Taulet to organize the event through the municipal government rather than through the business corporations that had traditionally organized the city's festivities in the nineteenth century. In the exposition of 1877's aftermath, local leaders established a permanent special commission for fine arts and public acts in the city. The *muestra barcelonesa* had been incorporated into the municipal government and had taken its first official step toward becoming an institution in Barcelona.

Curiously, however, the idea for Barcelona's Universal Exposition of 1888 originated not with Rius i Taulet and the local government but rather with the Galician entrepreneur Eugenio Serrano de Casanova, a former Carlist soldier and promoter of spas in France who had been deeply influenced by his visit to Philadelphia's 1876 Centennial Exposition as a member of the Spanish delegation and by his study of other European world's fairs. In 1885, Serrano de Casanova presented his business proposition to Barcelona's leaders, gaining authorization from the municipal government to build a palace in the Parc de la Ciutadella to celebrate a world's fair

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 40-41.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 103.



in 1887. At a time when Catalonia's banks were devastated and industry enfeebled by the bursting of the *febre d'or*, Serrano de Casanova pledged to forego financial subsidies from the city in exchange for a sizable chunk of gate and concession receipts. Some of Barcelona's most prominent industrialists and conservative politicians—led by Rius i Taulet in his fourth stint as the city's mayor—formed a committee in 1886 to analyze how best to use an international exposition as a platform for establishing stronger commercial relations overseas and especially with the rest of Europe, only to realize that Serrano de Casanova did not have the means to realize his grandiose promises. In the spring of 1887, Rius i Taulet seized the reigns of the initiative, marshalling the support of local business, political, and academic leaders, and traveling to Madrid in May to lobby the national government for two million pesetas-worth of economic support.<sup>199</sup> Indirect accounts suggest that the trip involved tense negotiations, with Rius i Taulet supposedly asking Sagasta at one point, “Do you want your name and the name of the Queen Regent to remain always united to the progress of Barcelona and all of Catalonia?”<sup>200</sup> According to the agreement ironed out in Madrid, the world's fair would open in April of 1888. Rius i Taulet had 11 months to make it happen.

Though Madrid did express concern about its monetary advance being used wisely, it was clear from the start that Barcelona's local organizers and architects would be guiding the enterprise.<sup>201</sup> Rius i Taulet established the so-called *Comitè dels vuit* (Committee of Eight)—featuring local elites such as banker Manuel Girona as royal commissioner, architect Elies Rogent as supervisor of works, and Carles Pirozzini, editor of the Catalan-language publication

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<sup>199</sup> Joaquín López Puigcerver, “Ley de 30 de Junio de 1889 concediendo un anticipo de dos millones de pesetas á la ciudad de Barcelona para hacer frente a los gastos de la Exposición,” in *Exposición Universal de Barcelona, año 1888: Catálogo de la Sección Oficial del Gobierno* (Barcelona: Lopez Robert, 1888), 5.

<sup>200</sup> Josep Tarín Iglesias, *Gent nostra: Rius i Taulet* (Barcelona: Edicions de Nou Art Thor, 1989), 29.

<sup>201</sup> Cárlos Navarro y Rodrigo, “Instrucción de igual fecha, dictada para el regimen de dicha Comisaría,” in *Exposición Universal de Barcelona, año 1888: Catálogo de la Sección Oficial del Gobierno* (Barcelona: Lopez Robert, 1888), 10.

*La Renaixensa*, as secretary—to organize the exposition. The Madrid-based journalist Juan Valero de Tornos pinpointed the primarily local motivations behind the world’s fair as early as November of 1887, writing that “the idea of always being the best, or appearing to be when less than the best, is a powerful stimulus for great efforts of intelligence and work, and this is precisely what is happening in Barcelona.”<sup>202</sup> Exposition organizers determined for both practical and symbolic reasons that the event’s headquarters would be to the east of Barcelona’s old city in the Parc de la Ciutadella, which had housed Philip V’s reviled Citadel from 1716 until 1869. By compelling a swelling labor force to work night and day, architects constructed the towering Monumento a Colón, completed two thoroughfares—the Avinguda del Parallel and the Passeig de Colom—that branched out from the Monument, and erected a massive Arc de Triomf (Triumphal Arch) in Mudéjar style by Catalan architect Josep Vilaseca that served as an entranceway into the fairgrounds. In the park, Rogent oversaw the construction of large, temporary buildings like the semicircular, iron-and-glass Palace of Industry. Nearby, Catalan architect Lluís Domènech i Montaner designed a plain-brick Café-Restaurante that boasted all the trappings of a medieval castle, including blue-and-white ceramic escutcheons that Domènech modeled after shields and armor from medieval Catalonia.<sup>203</sup> Domènech i Montaner also constructed the Exposition’s most celebrated structure—the Hotel Internacional—in well under three months to address a lack of lodging for out-of-town visitors. Situated at the intersection of the Passeig de Colom and the Avinguda de l’Argentera, the hotel boasted an iron-frame structure in brick and terra-cotta and offered guests five stories and 1,600 rooms of lavishness, with each street facade stretching for 500 feet.<sup>204</sup> Popular attractions for visitors included the switchback

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<sup>202</sup> Juan Valero de Tornos, *Barcelona tal cual es: Por un Madrileño (de ninguna academia)* (Barcelona: Tipo-Litografía y Casa Editorial de los Sucesores de N. Ramírez y C.<sup>a</sup>, 1888), 93.

<sup>203</sup> Hughes, *Barcelona*, 397.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

railway, a magic fountain, and a *Globo Cautivo* (Captive Balloon, in which even the Queen Regent would take a lift).

The construction efforts elicited criticisms from various sectors of society. While moderate labor unions generally supported the event, a number of labor leaders and Socialists chastised organizers for working laborers too hard, rounding up beggars, and causing industrial accidents by embarking upon construction projects so quickly. It is no coincidence that the influential trade union *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT) was founded during the Exposition or that the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Spanish Socialist Workers Party) celebrated its first congress in Barcelona that same year. The Federal Republican leader Valentí Almirall became the Exposition's most prominent and vocal detractor, arguing that the enterprise “either will not be finished or else will get done in a way that will bring ridicule on Barcelona and on Catalunya in general, producing the complete ruin of our Municipality.”<sup>205</sup> Almirall led other intellectuals and politicians—mostly Republicans and Catalanists but also some conservatives—in criticizing the city's bourgeoisie and especially Rius i Taulet for collaborating with the Spanish monarchy on the Exposition in a way that they believed was inimical to regional and municipal interests.<sup>206</sup>

Indeed, much of the rhetoric in the months preceding the official opening of the Exposition stressed the national dimensions of the event, perhaps in order to reassure Madrid lest the national government renege on its support of the endeavor. In April of 1888, the Catalan Antonio García Llansó wrote that from the moment the national government bestowed a subsidy upon the city “and gave the event the official character that it lacked, the Exposition's fairgrounds enclosed Barcelona, the city, Catalonia, and Spain...There was no...other purpose

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 364.

<sup>206</sup> Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism*, 37.

than to contribute...to the utmost success of Spain's first Universal Exposition, since the dignity and the honor of our *patria* was intimately connected to it."<sup>207</sup> Around the same time, a publication by the Exposition's royal commission cautioned that if, during the event,

Every [provincial] ministry, direction, or center appears with its own physiognomy, and if the great mechanism that the State has at its disposal to instruct, moralize, promote work, and encourage production does not appear like a machine whose disperse elements give the idea of a whole...it is essential to flee from all separation of parts, grouping together and ordering everything that belongs to the official section by subordinate ministries, directions, and centers.<sup>208</sup>

The assurance essentially indicated that if the products of any one Spanish province outshone the offerings of all others and transmitted the message that Spain was not a unified nation—a concern that many Spaniards most likely harbored in regards to Catalonia's potential performance at the Exposition—the exhibits would be rearranged immediately to avoid giving visitors the wrong impression. Like Orellena and Urgellés De Tovar before him, Rius i Taulet contrasted Spanish bellicosity with Catalan peacefulness in a proclamation issued to Spain's provinces and participating countries shortly before the Exposition, in which he declared that while, ever since the reconquista, Spaniards had fought heroically on the battlefield, “today modern nationalities bring fortune and greatness upon them through struggles of peace and progress,” and Barcelona would usher the Spanish nation into a period of rebirth.<sup>209</sup> During pre-Exposition festivities on April 28, 1888, the conservative, Madrid-based newspaper *El Estandarte* proclaimed, “Today Barcelona is Spain, because the pride, glory, and dignity of the entire *patria* is concentrated in this...industrial city, without there being either divisions or

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<sup>207</sup> Antonio García Llansó, *La Primera Exposición Universal Española* (Barcelona: Luís Tasso Serra, 1888), 13.

<sup>208</sup> Comisaría Regia, “Advertencia Preliminar,” *Exposición Universal de Barcelona, año 1888: Catálogo de la Sección Oficial del Gobierno* (Barcelona: Lopez Robert, 1888), 39.

<sup>209</sup> Conrad Roure, *Memòries de Conrad Roure: Recuerdos de mi larga vida. La Restauració dels Borbons (II). L'Exposició Universal de Barcelona de 1888*, volume IX, ed. Josep Pich i Mitjana (Vic: Eumo Editorial, 1994), 70; 72.

obstacles to prevent anyone from feeling love for the Spanish flag that today floats majestically.”<sup>210</sup>

The frenetic pace of construction enabled the Universal Exposition to officially open nearly on schedule on May 20, 1888, though visitors did shuffle past an Arc de Triomf draped in scaffolding and a Café-Restaurante with neither coffee nor food. On inaugural day, the Queen Regent Maria Christina arrived in Barcelona with the future Alfonso XIII—then a toddler—to the tune of a 21-gun salute from warships of various nations anchored in Barcelona’s harbor. Before Sagasta—then the president of Maria Christina’s council of ministers—declared the Exposition officially open, Rius i Taulet deftly tiptoed between recognizing the local and national dimensions of the Exposition in a speech in the Palace of Fine Arts. Addressing the Queen Regent in particular, the Mayor proclaimed,

Barcelona, the city of work, aspires to occupy a place of honor, be it modest, in the universal manifestations of human activity and progress... V.M., Señora, in whose magnanimous heart one always finds the echo of every lofty idea that contributes to Spain’s splendor and prestige, who has the fortune of sitting on Isabella’s and Ferdinand’s throne, we ask you to dispense your august protection to this patriotic project that today is a reality... in the name of this ancient city of counts, which will always remember with enthusiasm the celebration of this Universal Exposition that has without a doubt filled one of the most beautiful pages in the history of the infancy of our beloved king Alfonso XIII.<sup>211</sup>

According to the model of Barcelona’s nineteenth-century industrial fairs, Rius i Taulet praised the nation and national unity with references to Ferdinand and Isabella and Alfonso XIII, all the while seeking to elevate Barcelona in the Queen’s eyes by alluding to the city’s tireless work ethic and love of progress. Capitalizing on the Queen’s presence, the Mayor urged her to contribute to Spain’s “splendor and prestige” by protecting not only the “patriotic” Exposition

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<sup>210</sup> Lacál, *El libro de honor*, 60.

<sup>211</sup> Manuel Girona, *Memoria Sobre la Exposición Universal de Barcelona de 1888 que presenta al Gobierno el Excmo. Sr. D. Manuel Girona comisario regio de la misma en cumplimiento de lo dispuesto en el artículo 6.<sup>o</sup> del Real Decreto—Instrucción de 11 noviembre de 1888* (Barcelona: Imprenta de Henrich y Comp<sup>A</sup> En Comandita, 1889), 61.

but also the “city of counts” and, implicitly, all the privileges to which that city was entitled because of its rich past and bright future. In describing the ideological dichotomy battling within Rius i Taulet, Valero de Tornos explained during the Exposition that “champagne serves only as a pretext for him to speak highly of Barcelona...He is not a *catalanista*, and he is the man who has surely done the most for Barcelona and for Catalonia in the modern age.”<sup>212</sup>

Rius i Taulet’s formula of obsequiousness mixed with resourcefulness was also evident in the interactions between the Queen Regent and many Catalan elites during the Exposition. Maria Christina was no sooner declared queen of a special session of the *jocs florals* than she was receiving florid addresses applauding her role as a defender of Catalonia’s ancient rights and customs. The prominent Spanish scholar and Catalanophile Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo expounded upon the glories of the Catalan language and its medieval roots before asking the Queen to dispel misunderstandings between Castilians and Catalans. He added that while the display before her might appear “regional and exclusive,” its recognition of regional diversity was instead “one of the most energetic affirmations of the traditional meaning of the Spanish nation.”<sup>213</sup> Similarly, Joan Mañé i Flaquer of the *Diario de Barcelona* informed the Queen that Catalonia was the “most Spanish” of the country’s regions and that “there is no danger for the integrity of the *patria* in the historical revelation of regionalism.”<sup>214</sup> The conservative Lliga de Catalunya shocked more conservative participants like Mañé i Flaquer and more progressive members of the Centre Català by issuing a manifesto in Catalan to the Queen that emphasized the right of the “Catalan nation” to possess an independent parliament along the lines of the

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<sup>212</sup> Juan Valero de Tornos, *Cuarenta cartas: Conato de historia y descripción de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Imp. de Pedro Ortega, 1888), 23.

<sup>213</sup> Josep Faulí, “Els Jocs Florals del 1888, final de l’època de lluita pel prestigi social,” in *L’Exposició del 88 i el nacionalisme català* (Barcelona: Fundació Jaume I, 1988), 90-91.

<sup>214</sup> Joan Solà, “Crònica d’una simetria: Els Jocs Florals i el Congrés Pedagògic de 1888,” *Barcelona Metròpolis Mediterrània*, number 10 (Winter 1988-1989). Arxiu: publicació digital. [http://www.publicacions.bcn.es/bmm/pdf\\_historic/10\\_BCN\\_Metropolis\\_Mediterrania/JOCS\\_F1.PDF](http://www.publicacions.bcn.es/bmm/pdf_historic/10_BCN_Metropolis_Mediterrania/JOCS_F1.PDF), 120-121.

Hungarian parliament created under Franz Joseph I in Austria-Hungary. In this scenario, Catalan would be the official language of Catalonia and Catalonia's schools, thereby frustrating the "artificial union" sought by Castilian centralism.<sup>215</sup> The winner of the Exposition's *jocs florals*, Jaume Collell, uttered the famous lines, "*Poble que mereix ser lliure / si no l'hi donen, s'ho pren*" (a people that deserves to be free / if they do not give it to her, she will take it") to the reported displeasure of Sagasta.<sup>216</sup> Catalan manufacturers, in turn, lavished the Queen Regent with elaborate gifts that included a white corset adorned with shields of Spain and medallions of her late husband Alfonso XII and son Alfonso XIII from the firm of Don J. Cardona Baldrich.<sup>217</sup> In a speech to the Lliga de Catalunya as the Exposition wound down in November of 1888, architect and conservative Catalanist Lluís Domènech i Montaner touched on many of the motivations behind the *jocs florals* and the gift-giving practiced by Catalan industrialists,

They say that what we have done for Catalonia we have done for Spain, and that what we have done for Spain we have done for the civilized world and the planetary system... Only for [Catalonia] have we won this victory, within a Spanish state policy that never understood [Catalonia], that did not understand her only a little while ago and that still does not understand her. Political leaders who have come [to the Exposition] have come to know what we are and what we will be; they have recently discovered us, as if they had advanced to the center of Africa... from the polar regions.<sup>218</sup>

In a lecture during the Exposition, Cánovas del Castillo demonstrated the event's communicative power by declaring that he was "studying this great manifestation of energy from one of Spain's first populations, and without renouncing... my antecedents, my political convictions, or my destiny in the future, the first was the first, the first was Barcelona's Exposition."<sup>219</sup> Barcelona

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<sup>215</sup> Josep M. Ainaud de Lasarte, "El missatge a la reina regent," in *L'Exposició del 88 i el nacionalisme català* (Barcelona: Fundació Jaume I, 1988), 97.

<sup>216</sup> María Pomés and Alicia Sánchez, *Historia de Barcelona: De Los Orígenes a la Actualidad* (Barcelona: Editorial Optima, 2001), 224.

<sup>217</sup> Hughes, *Barcelona*, 371.

<sup>218</sup> Grau, "Bibliografía," 34.

<sup>219</sup> Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, "Discurso pronunciado por el Excmo. Sr. D. Antonio Cánovas del Castillo en la tarde del 16 octubre de 1888," *Estudios Sobre La Exposición Universal de Barcelona inaugurada en 20 de Mayo y*

had skillfully set an important precedent in Spain, and the import of that accomplishment was not lost on Cánovas del Castillo.

Not all Catalans saw the Universal Exposition as a useful medium for communicating with Madrid. A few days before the Exposition's *jocs florals*, for example, Almirall's Centre Català—which was engaged in a power struggle with the Lliga de Catalunya at the time—organized an alternative *jocs florals* session for those who did not wish to perform their art in front of Maria Christina nor link the Catalanist movement to the Exposition.<sup>220</sup> Federal Republican leader Francesc Pi y Margall was not wholly satisfied with the Exposition, either. In a discourse on Barcelona as “the first among Spanish cities” during the Exposition, he asked, “If Barcelona has done this living under the unitary regimen, when so many difficulties and obstacles prevent Municipalities from revealing themselves, what would it not have done if it had been autonomous and therefore the arbiter of its destinies?”<sup>221</sup>

Relative to other world's fairs at the time, the Universal Exposition was not a particularly remarkable achievement. Many accounts indicate that disorganization, whether in the classification of exhibits or in the prevalence of robberies at the fairgrounds, reigned supreme during the eight months that the Exposition remained open. Some of the exhibits, moreover, did not turn out the way that organizers had intended. The Palace of Science, for example, featured heaps of harebrained drawings and models by Catalan inventors, what Narcís Oller called “helpless, gasping, shipwrecked schemes, clinging to flotsam in the hope that some boat will pick them up, shelter them and bring them to safety.”<sup>222</sup> To be sure, foreigners like French

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*Cerrada en 9 de Diciembre de 1888*, ed. José M. Serrate (Barcelona: Establecimiento Tipográfico del Diario Mercantil, 1888), 15.

<sup>220</sup> Faulí, “Els Jocs Florals del 1888,” 87.

<sup>221</sup> Francisco Pí y Margall, “Discurso pronunciado por D. Francisco Pí y Margall,” in *Estudios Sobre La Exposición Universal de Barcelona inaugurada en 20 de Mayo y Cerrada en 9 de Diciembre de 1888*, ed. José M Serrate (Barcelona: Establecimiento Tipográfico del Diario Mercantil, 1888), 5.

<sup>222</sup> Hughes, *Barcelona*, 370.



delegate Mr. Prevet predicted that Barcelona's accomplishments would afford it "an influence every day more predominant in the transactions of the entire world."<sup>223</sup> Since many nations had fixed their gaze on Paris' 1889 Exposition Universelle, however, foreign participation in Barcelona's Exposition was half-hearted and lower than expected, with only a couple hundred thousand foreigners visiting the Exposition.<sup>224</sup> In a cartoon by Ramon Miró for a comic guide to the Exposition, a cluster of men stand in the *Globo Cautivo* three hundred meters in the air, and one says to another, "From this altitude, it seems like no one is entering the Exposition." A companion quips, "Seen from below, it's the pure truth."<sup>225</sup> On the other hand, Valero de Tornos argued that, compared to Barcelona's provincial past, any infusion of cosmopolitanism was a major stride for the city. In satirizing the comments made by the numerous enemies of the Exposition, he wrote sarcastically,

Only wage-earning and insignificant papers like the *Times*, the New York *Herald*, the *Gil Blas*, the *Envenement*, *L'Etoile Belegé*, *El Imparcial*, *La Epoca*, *El Liberal*, *El Globo* and others have talked about the Exposition... That the Exposition has been praised by the Queen Regent, Castelar, Lopez Dominguez, Romero Robledo, Echegaray, the King of Portugal, the King of Sweden and by a great number of men of letters and writers... wage-earners. Those who are truly correct are those that have sustained that the Exposition is going badly.<sup>226</sup>

The Universal Exposition closed on December 9, 1888, having attracted two million people (most of them Spaniards), employed 2,000 workers during the construction phase and 3,000 more during the Exposition itself, and revitalized the construction sector. On the other hand, the Exposition led to price inflation that was much-bemoaned in local newspapers and slapped the city with a deficit of six million pesetas, which became part of a much larger city debt that

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<sup>223</sup> Lacál, *El libro de honor*, 9-10.

<sup>224</sup> Tarín Iglesias, *Gent nostra*, 44.

<sup>225</sup> C. Gumà, *Guía Cómica de la Exposición Universal per C. Gumà Ab un plano general y varios dibuixos de R. Miró* (Barcelona: Llibrería Espanyola de Lopez, 1888), 57; 65; 73.

<sup>226</sup> Valero de Tornos, *Cuarenta cartas*, 19.

mushroomed in the late 1880s.<sup>227</sup> Prior to the closing fireworks, Rius i Taulet issued the following challenge: ““Regardless of which city council followed, they would know how to celebrate another Exposition more wonderful than that which had just taken place.””<sup>228</sup>

While the Hotel Internacional and the majority of the Exposition’s other buildings were razed soon after the event—provoking public outcries in the process—, the Exposition did have a profound influence on Barcelona’s urban landscape. The Café-Restaurante, Monumento a Colón, and Arc de Triomf are still prominent landmarks in Barcelona, with the Café-Restaurante now housing the Museo de Zoología. As a result of the Exposition, the harbor was spruced up, streets such as the Passeig de Colom and La Rambla were electrified for the first time, the Parc de la Ciutadella was finally fully developed, and the neighborhood of el Born, which bordered the fairgrounds, underwent a major transformation. Plaça Catalunya and Passeig de Gràcia became the centers of the cities, as they remain today.

Catalan historian Ramon Grau argues that when it comes to the ways in which the 1888 Universal Exposition has been remembered over time, there are three phases without finite chronological limits: a period from the end of the Exposition through the first quarter of the twentieth century when intellectuals and politicians wrote accounts of their personal experiences at the world’s fair, a second period from the late nineteenth century until Barcelona’s Exposición Internacional in 1929 when rememberers compared the 1888 Exposition to a prospective and later an accomplished second world’s fair in the city, and a third period from the mid-twentieth century to the present day when remembering the 1888 Exposition largely became the domain of professional historians, who adopted a skeptical attitude toward the event and

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<sup>227</sup> Josep M. Garrut, *L’Exposició Universal de Barcelona de 1888* (Barcelona: Ajuntament. Delegació de Cultura, 1976), 49.

Hughes, *Barcelona*, 372.

<sup>228</sup> Màrius Carol, *La Fira: Motor Económico* (Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, S.A., 2001), 196.

deliberately incorporated it or omitted it in the historical narratives they constructed about Barcelona and Catalonia.<sup>229</sup> While Grau sets forth a compelling framework, the periodization of collective memory employed below concerns itself primarily with memory of the Exposition in the context of Catalan nationalism. It will therefore focus on five phases: a phase from the close of the Exposition until the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, a second phase from 1898 until the collapse of Miguel Primo de Rivera's dictatorship in 1930, a third phase from the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic in 1931 until the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939, a fourth phase spanning Francisco Franco's dictatorship from 1939 until 1978, and a fifth phase from 1978 through contemporary times as Spain transitions to democracy.

Those who recalled the Universal Exposition in the years immediately following its closure remembered it in much the same way as it was described during the event itself: Some denounced it, others praised it. For many Catalans grappling with rising city deficits in the late 1880s and 1890s, the Exposition's financial cost appeared exorbitant. In 1889, a cartoon in *La Campana de Gràcia* depicted Rius i Taulet festooned in medals and seated at a table in front of a cake shaped as the Palace of Industry, with city boosters and architects surrounding him and raising their glasses of champagne in celebration. The caption zinged, "A year when nothing solid was done, but lots of liquidity was wasted."<sup>230</sup> When Rius i Taulet died from a cardiac condition in 1890, *El Diluvio*—a paper that was politically opposed to Rius i Taulet's policies—scathingly remarked, "One more corpse and one less spendthrift."<sup>231</sup> *Diario Mercantil* editor José M. Serrate, in an address to the cultural organization Ateneo Barcelonés in 1889, lamented that "none of the peoples who honored [the Exposition] have written even a page [about it] in that great book of wonders and inventions," adding that if not for the Ateneo conferences, the

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<sup>229</sup> Grau, "Bibliografía," 31-32.

<sup>230</sup> Hughes, *Barcelona*, 372.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 373.

Exposition might have “drowned in the obscurity of oblivion.”<sup>232</sup> Yet other rememberers like official Exposition chronicler Saturnino Lacál declared that Spain had reached the top echelon of civilized nations thanks to Rius i Taulet’s indefatigable energy and Barcelona’s industrial and mercantile virility.

Among both those who condemned the Exposition and those who commended it, some believed that the Exposition had been primarily a local endeavor with implications for Barcelona and perhaps Catalonia, others felt it had been national in character with repercussions for all of Spain, and still others labeled it a mix of both. In an 1889 speech to the Ateneo Barcelonés, Pedro Bosch y Labrús linked the Exposition to nationalism by explaining that while many of Spain’s neighbors enjoyed high levels of patriotism, the sensation was dormant in Spain. He continued, “How else would one explain that in the capital of protectionism, in most of the banquets celebrated on the occasion of the Exposition, there was no Spanish wine, not even the much-celebrated Jerez...Spain overflows with many things, but it lacks Spaniards.”<sup>233</sup> Around the same time, Serrate determined that Rius i Taulet’s goals during the Exposition were threefold: to make improvements to the city so that it would not lag behind the times, to organize the event itself, and to do the *honorés de la casa* (honors of the house) when distinguished foreigners and Spanish royalty visited.<sup>234</sup> This prescient tripartite formulation would come to inform every other major international event staged by Barcelona’s local leaders in the ensuing century. Serrate believed that the “political campaign” waged during the Exposition in Spain’s “second capital” was significant for the country’s future direction since, without the Exposition,

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<sup>232</sup> José M. Serrate, “Conferencia 9: Revelaciones Industriales de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona,” in *Ateneo Barcelonés: Conferencias Públicas Relativas Á La Exposición Universal De Barcelona* (Barcelona: Tipo-Litografía de Busquets y Vidal, 1889), 218.

<sup>233</sup> Pedro Bosch y Labrús, “Conferencia 26: La Industria Lanera En La Exposición,” in *Ateneo Barcelonés: Conferencias Públicas Relativas Á La Exposición Universal De Barcelona* (Barcelona: Tipo-Litografía de Busquets y Vidal, 1889), 741-742; 744.

<sup>234</sup> José M. Serrate, *Estudios Sobre La Exposición Universal de Barcelona inaugurada en 20 de Mayo y Cerrada en 9 de Diciembre de 1888* (Barcelona: Establecimiento Tipográfico del Diario Mercantil, 1888), x.

The men of the state and the Spanish political parties would have persisted moving away from the provinces in which they live, they would have persisted, perhaps fatally, in that centralizing mania, that in our judgment has received a mortal wound in these months of life and movement realized in a capital of a province, which has managed to say what it wants, to concentrate all of the national life and movement, with the name of the official center of the nation scarcely resounding...Time will tell if we were correct in predicting a profound transformation in customs and a dislocation in the political forces that aspire to steer the ship of state.<sup>235</sup>

In Serrate's opinion, Barcelona's dazzling performance of the *honorés de la casa* during the Exposition had enabled Catalan elites to communicate with their counterparts in Madrid in a highly effective manner. By undermining centralism as the guiding premise of state policy, the Exposition could render the national government more sensitive to Catalonia's provincial interests. Reflecting on the Exposition in 1890, Josep Yxart revealed the ambiguity surrounding the nationalist dimensions of the event by wrestling with the concepts of "Spain" and "Catalonia" and "*españolismo*" and "regionalism," questioning whether the terms were interchangeable or even compatible.<sup>236</sup>

One of the most striking aspects of this phase of collective memory is that there is very little reflection on the Exposition beyond the confines of Barcelona and Catalonia. It even seems like Madrid attempted to upstage Barcelona's Exposition by sponsoring the *Exposición Histórico-Americana* (Columbian-Historical Exposition) in 1892 to commemorate the fourth centennial of Columbus's discovery of America. In an article in the *North American Review* on the eve of Chicago's Columbian Exposition, the Spanish minister Enrique Dupuy de Lome did not mention Barcelona's Exposition once. Yet he lauded Madrid's Columbian-Historical Exposition in patriotic language, characterizing it as an affair that "will, day by day, bring unity

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., xv; 4.

<sup>236</sup> Josep Yxart, *El Año pasado: letras y artes en Barcelona* (Barcelona: Librería Española de López, 1890), 276.

of thought and purpose to the Spanish race, and give it due weight in the world.”<sup>237</sup> The Madrid-based journalist Juan Valero de Tornos dealt extensively with the 1888 Exposition in his publications *Barcelona tal cual es: Por un Madrileño* and *Cuarenta cartas: Conato de historia y descripción de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona*—both of which he published in Barcelona—, but made no mention of the event in *España en fin de siglo*, a study of Spain that he contributed to and edited in Madrid in 1894. The book’s purpose, according to Valero de Tornos, was to “bring to light all of the energies and all of the human activities in Spain, at the end of the nineteenth century.”<sup>238</sup> Yet the only world’s fair that Valero de Tornos or his colleagues mentioned was Paris’ 1889 Exposition, in the context of how Spain’s performance at the celebrated exhibition helped combat cruel stereotypes that foreigners held about Spaniards.

One begins to see a major shift in the collective memory of Barcelona’s Universal Exposition following Spain’s loss of its last colonies in 1898 after the Spanish-American War. This crisis, which Spaniards referred to as the *desastre del 98* (disaster of 98), not only triggered an economic depression throughout Spain but also seriously undermined national morale, branding Spain in an age of imperialism as a dying nation.<sup>239</sup> The *desastre* rendered the Catalan bourgeoisie more susceptible to the “regionalist and regenerationalist message” of Catalan nationalists and less likely to mobilize for national causes, thereby acting as a catalyst for the crystallization of modern Catalan nationalism in both its political and cultural manifestations.<sup>240</sup> One example of this trend was the rebellious and individualistic fin-de-siècle cultural movement known as *Modernisme*, whose origins could be traced back to the years immediately preceding

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<sup>237</sup> Enrique Dupuy de Lome, “Spain at the World’s Fair,” *The North American Review*, Volume 156, Issue 436, 332-339 (March 1893), Making of America: Cornell University Library, <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/moa/moa-cgi?notisid=ABQ7578-0156-42>, 333.

<sup>238</sup> Juan Valero de Tornos, *España en fin de siglo* (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico ‘Sucesores de Rivadeneyra,’ 1894), 5.

<sup>239</sup> Balfour, “The Lion and the Pig,” 107-108.

<sup>240</sup> Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism*, 43.

the 1888 Exposition and to Exposition works such as Domènech i Montaner's *Café-Restaurante*. *Modernisme* rejected the traditionalism and religiosity of the *Renaixença*, and expressed Catalan identity through artistic channels like an Art Nouveau-style architecture made famous by architects such as Domènech i Montaner and Antoni Gaudí. In 1899, *Moderniste* poet Joan Maragall—who, in his “Oda a Espanya,” had urged Catalonia in the wake of the *desastre* to become more European so as to avoid the cultural and political decadence that had befallen Spain—wrote that the Universal Exposition of 1888 had taught a young generation of Catalans the very same lesson that he hoped to convey in his poem: to think of Barcelona in a new way as a “great modern capital.”<sup>241</sup> *Modernistes* stressed the Exposition's importance as an international event that brought Barcelona in contact with the world's most civilized nations.

A more conservative cultural movement emerging in Barcelona in the early twentieth century was *Noucentisme*, which sought to sever ties with nineteenth-century Catalanists and received a boost when the *Lliga Regionalista* (Regionalist League), a Catalanist coalition political party with close ties to the movement, consolidated power in the general elections of 1901 with a strong showing in Barcelona.<sup>242</sup> Lliga leaders included the lawyer and politician Enric Prat de la Riba, who would publish the groundbreaking study on Catalan identity and its historical antecedents, *La nacionalitat catalana*, in 1906. The Lliga—which vied for power in Barcelona with Republicans during these years—did not seek formal independence for Catalonia but rather an end to *caciquismo* and the *turno pacífico*, and a commitment to regionalism by the monarchy; they believed pragmatic cooperation with Madrid could enhance Catalonia's influence within the Spanish political system. In 1889, for example, the Lliga successfully defended the Catalan Civil Code's customary or ‘foral’ laws governing family and property

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<sup>241</sup> Grau, “Bibliografia,” 34.

<sup>242</sup> Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism*, 44.

when Madrid implemented a new Spanish Civil Code, and in 1891 Catalan industrialists convinced the Spanish government to adopt protectionist measures that bolstered Catalan industry.<sup>243</sup> These developments had a profound impact on the way in which the 1888 Exposition was remembered. Lliga politician Frederic Rahola, writing in 1908, described the Exposition as if it were a prototype of the Lliga's political tactics:

During the period in which the Exposition was open, Spanish politicians, many of whom had never been in Catalonia, passed through its rooms and became convinced of the importance of economic and tariff reforms...Without the Exposition perhaps the tariff reform of 1891, which contributed so much to the perfection of Catalonia's factors of production, would not have prospered. The Cuban and Puerto Rican markets opened completely to our articles...Tariff reform in the Philippines, achieved by Victor Balaguer, offered new horizons for the national market.<sup>244</sup>

Rather than subtly suggest that the national government protect Catalan interests as Rius i Taulet had done in his opening day speech, Rahola unabashedly characterized the Exposition as, above all, an effective means of communication between Catalan businessmen and Spanish government officials. While, in this regard, Rahola appeared to agree with Domènech i Montaner's characterization of the Exposition's utility during the event itself, he diverged from the architect in arguing that the world's fair had indeed conveyed Catalan concerns to Spanish officials and brought about concrete change.

As the Exposition became a major reference point for Catalan nationalists and as many of the criticisms that had once surrounded the event faded into the distance, Barcelona's civic leaders began contemplating the notion of meeting Rius i Taulet's challenge and organizing a second international exposition in the city. After visiting the Exposición of Liège in Belgium in 1905, Francisco de A. Más collaborated with Barcelona's municipal government in organizing a *Comité de estudios* (Committee of Studies) to explore the possibility of staging a second world's

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<sup>243</sup> Jacobson and Luzón, "The political system of the Restoration," 98.

<sup>244</sup> Grau, "Bibliografía," 43.



fair in the city. A committee report in 1909 argued that a second international exhibition would not only physically transform Barcelona and strengthen its economy but would also serve as “an excellent way to overcome the losses suffered [in the *desastre*], and to embark upon the road to our national renaissance with even more intensity and a faster pace.”<sup>245</sup> In his 1910 study *Prat de la Riba i la cultura catalane*, Jaume Bofill i Matas argued that a second world’s fair was necessary to express Catalan nationalism’s maturation: “‘Rius y Taulet, with the Exposition of 1888 introduced Barcelona. With the second Exposition we will introduce Catalonia, we will show her to the world as a testament to our internal national reconstruction.’”<sup>246</sup> The word “reconstruction” implied recovery of a glorious past, and Bofill i Matas’ observation was in keeping with a larger trend at the time of seizing upon historical moments as rallying points for Catalan identity. It was during this period that Catalans became interested in the *Cant dels Segadors* (Song of the Reapers)—a song from a peasant revolt in 1640 that is now Catalonia’s national anthem—and in commemorating Philip V’s occupation of Barcelona on September 11, 1714—a date that is now Catalonia’s national holiday.<sup>247</sup>

Catalan nationalism reached another critical stage in its development with the establishment of the *Mancomunitat de Catalunya* (Commonwealth of Catalonia) in 1914. An early flirtation with partial self-government for Catalonia, the Mancomunitat had jurisdiction over the four Catalan provinces of Barcelona, Lleida, Girona, and Tarragona, and promoted Catalan culture by creating post-secondary and vocational schools and by opening the *Biblioteca de Catalunya* (Library of Catalonia) to the public. These initiatives were designed to continue the task of standardizing the Catalan language that the *Institut d’Estudis Catalans* (Institute of

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<sup>245</sup> *Dictamen del Comité de Estudios de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona* (Barcelona: el comité, 1909), 4.

<sup>246</sup> Grau, “Bibliografía,” 37-38.

<sup>247</sup> Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism*, 47.

Catalan Studies) and the linguist Pompeu Fabra had begun some years earlier.<sup>248</sup> That same year, architect and Catalan nationalist Josep Puig i Cadafalch—later the president of the Mancomunitat—drew up blueprints for an international exposition in the city that would open in 1917. In May of 1914, Barcelona celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1888 Exposition with great pomp. In a speech in Catalan during the festivities, Jaume Collell—the winner of the *jocs florals* in 1888—cloaked the Exposition in religious language and argued that the event had charged Catalans with the responsibility of steering Spanish statecraft in a new direction favorable to Catalonia: “Barcelona showed itself to be...a people...who are conscious of their value and feel called upon for the salvational enterprise of orienting and leading national life toward new paths and for giving a vivifying impulse to the urgent task of regenerating the Iberian peoples.” Collell employed the same seed metaphor that Francisco José Orellana had used in 1860 by explaining that the generation he was addressing would, with a second world’s fair, allow the seed that the men of 1888 had planted to flourish.<sup>249</sup> In dedicating a monument to Rius i Taulet near the Parc de la Ciutadella, Joan Pich—another proponent of a second world’s fair—juxtaposed Spain’s love of war with Catalonia’s love of progress and nearly deified Rius i Taulet by declaring that unlike the typical Spanish *caudillo* (political-military leader), Rius i Taulet had peacefully achieved immortality by sacrificing himself for the sake of the Exposition and prophetically envisioning “a marvelous metropolis, that would stretch from the ocean to the mountains and from the Besós [River] to the Llobregat” river.<sup>250</sup> After one elaborate procession through city streets, the young son of Rius i Taulet harnessed the act of remembering to marshal support for an international exhibition in 1917 by instructing onlookers to “remember this

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>249</sup> *Commemoración del XXV Aniversario de la Exposición Universal de Barcelona celebrada el año 1888* (Barcelona: Tipografía de los Sres. Henrich y Comp<sup>a</sup>, 1914), 55; 61.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

moment when you are ready to open and initiate the ideal of the great City of the future...Do not abandon Barcelona, people. Conserve the memory of this act; do not interrupt our history...Long live Barcelona!” The crowd responded with hearty applause and cries of “long live Rius i Taulet!” and “long live Catalonia!”<sup>251</sup> Nonetheless, the outbreak of World War I stalled preparations for a second world’s fair. Still, the dream did not die. Writing in 1916, Antonio J. Bastinos made the case for another exhibition despite the horrors of World War I. He asserted that Rius i Taulet had also faced innumerable obstacles but still managed to realize a grand “festival of peace” that introduced Barcelona to other countries and even other Spanish provinces by entertaining the Spanish royal court and other world leaders.<sup>252</sup>

Though plans for a world’s fair could not get off the ground, the year 1920 did mark the institutionalization of the *ferias de muestras* (trade fairs) in Barcelona. The First Annual Barcelona Trade Fair, which took place between the Arc de Triomf and the Parc de la Ciutadella, demonstrates how a fair could act as a mode of communication between Barcelona and Madrid even in these more modest exhibitions. After Barcelona mayor and Lliga politician Antoni Martínez Domingo shocked fairgoers by speaking in Catalan about how the national government should pay more attention to Catalan businesses, Spain’s Minister of Work Carlos Cañal told a journalist that he had understood everything the mayor said and that ““Catalan and Castilian are sister languages, just as we who speak them are brothers, and the mayor of Barcelona, with his eloquent and heartfelt words, has reaffirmed this brotherhood.””<sup>253</sup>

Economic difficulties, an influenza epidemic, and a humiliating defeat of the Spanish military in 1921 during the Battle of Annual heightened social unrest in Spain in the years

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 76-77.

<sup>252</sup> Antonio J. Bastinos, *La Exposición Universal de Barcelona de 1888: recuerdo a su benemérito organizador, Excmo. Sr. D. Francisco de P. Rius y Taulet, Marqués de Olérdola, en el XXVIII aniversario de su inauguración* (Barcelona: Imprenta Elzeviriana de Borrás, Mestres y C.<sup>a</sup>, 1916), 9.

<sup>253</sup> Carol, *La Fira*, 197.

immediately after World War I. Though Puig i Cadafalch completed the Alfonso XIII and the Victoria Eugenia pavilions on the hill known as Montjuïc in preparation for a Barcelona world's fair in 1923, military leader Miguel Primo de Rivera launched a coup d'état from Barcelona that same year and overthrew the central government, receiving the title of prime minister from Alfonso XIII. Puig i Cadafalch and other Lliga figures yearning for social order and regionalist reforms initially joined the Catalan industrial bourgeoisie in supporting Primo de Rivera's efforts. Nevertheless, the dictator soon dissolved the Mancomunitat, suppressed the public use of Catalan, and generally promoted policies to strengthen Spanish nationalism.<sup>254</sup> Though Primo de Rivera finally scheduled a world's fair for 1929, he marginalized former planners of an international exhibition like Francesc Cambó and Joan Pich by making them deputies and appointed the Marquis de Foronda of the Basque Country as the head of works and president of the organizing committee.

In this climate, Carlos Costas Álvarez employed the very same seed and fruit metaphor in a 1928 article in *El Diluvio* that Orellana had used in 1860 and Collell had used in 1914: "In thinking about the grandiosity of the future [world's fair]...it is an obligation to remember the past [Exposition]...that which initiated a splendid era for our beloved city, that which sketched an outline and scattered a path of seeds that are now fruit."<sup>255</sup> That same year, Carles Pirozzini, the former secretary of the 1888 Exposition's organizing committee, almost repeated verbatim the words of Joan Pich in 1914 by invoking "the great mayor" Rius i Taulet, "'Who said and demonstrated that by way of two additional Universal Expositions, the city of Barcelona will have become complete, from the Besós to Llobregat and from the ocean to Tibidabo.'"<sup>256</sup> Both Catalan rememberers appear to be ignoring the influence of Primo de Rivera on the upcoming

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<sup>254</sup> Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism*, 83.

<sup>255</sup> Grau, "Bibliografía," 38.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

exhibition and denying him agency in its planning. Instead, they are conveniently situating the event on a blueprint drawn up long before by Rius i Taulet and the *vuitcentistes* (men of the 1800s) for the glory of Barcelona, not Spain.

The finished product—the *Exposición Internacional* (International Exposition) of 1929—occurred when Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship was already in decline. The fairgrounds sprawled across the previously-underdeveloped Montjuïc and featured a number of attractions that expressed the fact that the event had been hijacked by the dictatorship to disseminate propaganda about Spain’s national unity. The Pueblo Español (Spanish Village)—which Michonneau calls the “archetype of invented tradition”—reproduced the country’s diverse architectural styles and famous buildings in miniature, the Palacio de las Misiones (Palace of Missions) celebrated religion, and the massive Palacio Nacional (National Palace), designed in the Spanish Renaissance style, featured art objects from all over Spain and stood opposite an equally elaborate Plaza de España.<sup>257</sup> The International Exposition beautified a hill that had been the perennial site of fortresses and prisons, electrified the city, and begot landmarks like the Palacio Nacional (now the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya), the Fuente Mágica (Magic Fountain), the Estadio de Montjuïc (now Barcelona’s Olympic Stadium), and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s German Pavilion. The event also established a pattern of nationalist spectacle in Barcelona. In his essay, “*L’Art d’ensenyar Barcelona*” (The Art of Showing Barcelona)—which was distributed as a pamphlet during the 1929 World’s Fair—, *noucentiste* writer Carles Soldevila explained how Catalans could use large-scale events like the International Exposition as a pretext for enhancing Barcelona’s prestige among foreigners. As Soldevila explained,

The author has attempted to awaken in the consciousness of those Barcelonese who read him the idea that to show their native city may become a kind of artistic endeavor. Those persons whose hobby or whose social duty it is to serve as guides may...create a city

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<sup>257</sup> Michonneau, *Barcelona*, 287.

much more interesting than the one we see every day in the course of our affairs...The guide's *métier* becomes a noble trade, with some similarities to those of painters and poets, producers and stage directors.<sup>258</sup>

Soldevila's guide offers step-by-step advice about how to entertain a fictitious German family visiting Barcelona for the World's Fair, walking the reader through the all-important arrival, tours of the city including what Soldevila believed to be the embarrassing but eye-catching *moderniste* monuments, a visit to the fairgrounds, excursions to Tibidabo, Vallvidrera, and Montserrat, and the farewell. Meditating on the International Exposition in *La Veu de Catalunya* in 1929, Catalan writer Josep Pla picked up where Álvarez and Pirozzini left off in 1928, once again utilizing the seed and fruit metaphor and casting the World's Fair as a pact on the part of post-*desastre* Catalanists to fulfill Rius i Taulet's mission: "Rius i Taulet planted a tree; the first authentically Catalan generation naturally picked its fruits...It is natural that this generation...would have thought about 'doing another one.'"<sup>259</sup>

While Soldevila may have discussed the International Exposition's communicative capacity relative to the international community, many Catalan rememberers during this period focused on the urban renewal that the World's Fair produced in Barcelona. In *D'ací i D'allà* in 1929, Soldevila himself wrote that the predominant force pervading the 1888 and 1929 world's fairs was "an ideal of *seny* (wisdom) and economy," one that responded to crises of urban growth "without the necessity of wild gestures. Then, the city...would employ...her riches and her genius in solid works of a permanent utility...She would not waste her energies in ephemeral shams or in costly fantasies."<sup>260</sup> Those who study Catalonia often remark that the Catalan character is composed of two dueling but inseparable forces: *seny*—a kind of instinctive,

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<sup>258</sup> Carles Soldevila, "The Art of Showing Barcelona," in *Catalonia, a Self-Portrait*, ed. and trans. Josep Miquel Sobrer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 17.

<sup>259</sup> Grau, "Bibliografia," 36.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

common-sense pragmatism—and *rauxa*—uncontrollable, emotional eruptions of wild creativity or rebellious behavior.<sup>261</sup> It thus appears that Soldevila was arguing that international expositions had allowed Barcelona’s leaders to stifle *rauxa* and employ *seny* even when the event was sponsored by a Spanish nationalist dictator, thereby bringing about durable improvements to the city rather than transient wonders like those that populated the White City. In recalling his efforts to promote a second world’s fair in Barcelona, Cambó recalled in his *Memories* that he harbored little enthusiasm for the International Exposition since “‘world’s fairs were a thing of the past...What I really wanted was to bring about serious improvements in Barcelona which, in normal times and with ordinary budgets, not to mention the bureaucratic red tape in a town hall with 50 councilmen, would have been materially impossible.’”<sup>262</sup> Cambó’s reasoning echoes José M. Serrate’s declaration back in 1888 that, with a world’s fair, “A nation can realize in a few months more progress than it attains during much longer periods in its classrooms and universities, and in its parliaments, with eternal debating and legislating.”<sup>263</sup> This focus on the capacity of world’s fairs to physically develop Barcelona and the characterization of these grand events as tools of political expediency may be largely based on truth, but they perhaps also indicate a desire on the part of Catalan remembers to distance themselves from the messages broadcast to Spain and the international community during the International Exposition—which, after all, were tinged with Primo de Rivera’s Spanish nationalist message.

Faced with domestic economic difficulties and tepid support from military leaders and Alfonso XIII, Primo de Rivera relinquished authority in January of 1930. When municipal elections across Spain in 1931 demonstrated overwhelming support for Republican parties, Alfonso XIII fled the country and the Second Spanish Republic took his place. The Republic

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<sup>261</sup> Hughes, *Barcelona*, 24-25.

<sup>262</sup> Carol, *La Fira*, 200.

<sup>263</sup> Serrate, *Estudios Sobre La Exposición Universal de Barcelona*, \_\_\_\_.

devolved a considerable amount of autonomy to Catalonia by issuing a statute of self-government in 1932, which led to the adoption of Catalan as a language of public instruction, the revival of the *Generalitat* (Catalan regional government), and the growth of the *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (Republican Left of Catalonia) political party. In 1934, Esquerra politician and Catalan President Lluís Companys even declared a Catalan State within a Spanish Federal Republic, though the effort ultimately failed and led to the temporary suspension of Catalonia's self-governing regime.<sup>264</sup> While references to Barcelona's 1888 Exposition are scarce at this time, it is intriguing that after coming to power in the national government in February of 1936, the center-left Popular Front party decided to collaborate with local Catalan politicians and the French government in financing an *Olimpiada Popular* (People's Olympiad) to protest fascism and boycott the 1936 Summer Olympics, hosted by the Nazis in Berlin.<sup>265</sup> Organizers took an unprecedented step by inviting not just national delegations but regional delegations from places such as Alsace and Lorraine or Spanish Morocco and local delegations that essentially represented cities. They also planned on using the 1929 International Exposition's stadium and hotels on Montjuïc to house competitions and visitors. Many of the 6,000 athletes from 23 delegations who attended the event were sponsored by trade unions, workers' associations, or Socialist and Communist parties.<sup>266</sup> Still, continuity between the People's Olympiad and the 1888 and 1929 world's fairs is difficult to verify. There are very few existing primary sources documenting the planning of the event and hardly any scholarly studies on the subject. Moreover, the conservative paper *La Veu de Catalunya* believed the Olympiad might actually hurt Barcelona's chances of staging international events in the future. As an editorial

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<sup>264</sup> Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism*, 92-101; 108-110.

<sup>265</sup> Enrique Asín Fernández, "La Política en las olimpiadas de Berlín 1936," Barcelona: Centre d'Estudis Olímpics UAB, <[http://olympicstudies.uab.es/pdf/wp080\\_spa.pdf](http://olympicstudies.uab.es/pdf/wp080_spa.pdf)>, 19.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.



declared in 1936, ““Because of the leftists and the communists, disgrace will prevail over our city, which will make it forever impossible to be the city of the real Olympics.””<sup>267</sup> On the morning in which the games were to open, a military rising linked to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War reached Barcelona. The People’s Olympiad never took place.

During the Second Spanish Republic, Spain was plagued by fluctuating leadership, economic instability, worker rebellions in regions like Asturias and Catalonia, and a bitter fracturing and polarization of social and political groups. In this atmosphere, General Francisco Franco led Spain’s colonial army in Morocco in an attack on the mainland in July of 1936 to wrest power from the reeling Republic. Pockets of Republican resistance to the Franco-led Nationalists popped up in regions such as Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, and the Basque country. The Nationalists—aided by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Portugal—and the Republic—supported by the USSR and volunteers from various countries—battled on until Franco’s forces subdued Barcelona in early 1939, instituting a regime of occupation there for six months.<sup>268</sup> In the later years of a Civil War that was rife with massacres and claimed over a million lives, Catalan caricaturist Feliu Elies characterized the 1888 Exposition as a paradise lost and the 1929 International Exposition as a harbinger of the evil that had recently descended upon Barcelona. In 1938, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1888 Exposition, he wrote that the event,

Succeeded and had brilliant results, while [the International Exposition] was a noisy failure that ruined us and that invades us with anticatalanism. We will need to strive enormously in order to return to the constructive level of the generation that projected and realized in a shutting and opening of the eyes the great Universal Exposition of 1888.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Gabriel Colomé and Jeroni Sureda, “Sport and international relations (1913-1939): the 1936 Popular Olympiad,” Barcelona: Centre d’Estudis Olímpics UAB, <[http://olympicstudies.uab.es/pdf/wp020\\_eng.pdf](http://olympicstudies.uab.es/pdf/wp020_eng.pdf)>, 13.

<sup>268</sup> Daniel Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain. Alternative Routes to Nationalist Mobilization* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), 111; 115.

<sup>269</sup> Grau, “Bibliografía,” 40.

Once the Civil War ended in April of 1939, Franco fused the country's various right-wing parties under the umbrella of the Falange and declared left-wing parties and trade unions illegal. The dictator executed thousands of Catalans (including Generalitat President Lluís Companys) and forced around 200,000 people from Catalan-speaking areas into exile in 1939 alone, all the while continuing to flood jails with political prisoners.<sup>270</sup> Franco repealed Catalonia's statute of autonomy, abolished its political institutions, centralized the educational system, demolished Catalan monuments, outlawed the Catalan flag and anthem, and censored the Catalan-language press and the use of Catalan in the public sphere.<sup>271</sup>

Franco's vigorous promotion of a strong, unified Spanish *patria* and heavy-handed suppression of regionalism appear to have directly influenced the way in which Catalans at this time depicted the Universal Exposition, with rememberers often couching a discussion of the event in terms of its implications for Spain rather than simply for Barcelona or Catalonia. In a 1943 biography of Rius i Taulet, The Falangist Maximiano García Venero cited Louis Madelín's description of the mayor as one of "the great servants of the Monarchy," adding that Rius i Taulet was a "specimen of the national genius."<sup>272</sup> While mentioning that Barcelona expanded its municipal borders, improved its industrial output, and gained international status as an important Mediterranean city after 1888, Ramón Aliberch complained in his 1944 history of Barcelona that "almost all the biographers [of Rius i Taulet] have seen only a lover of Barcelona, his native city," even though the Exposition represented "the apotheosis of the reign" of Queen Regent Maria Christina and "the Spanish sentiment to which Rius y Taulet gave expression...continued

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<sup>270</sup> Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, 113.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-114.

<sup>272</sup> Maximiano García Venero, *Rius y Taulet: veinte años de Barcelona (1868-1888)* (Barcelona: Editora Nacional, 1943), 9-10.

until the disaster of 1898.”<sup>273</sup> Thus, Aliberch suggested that Rius i Taulet’s intentions were to render a service to the Spanish monarchy but that the loss of Spain’s colonial empire in 1898 caused the Exposition to be misinterpreted by later generations. Similarly, Catalan historian Pedro Voltes Bou argued in 1945 that the Exposition “constituted, as is now known, a demonstration of vigor and optimism with which the Monarchy restored by Martínez Campos wanted to give proof of solidity and fertility.”<sup>274</sup> Yet not all rememberers disregarded the Exposition’s importance for Barcelona. Catalan architect Oriol Bohigas subtly suggests in 1949 that the Exposition was impressive because of the way in which Catalan elites pragmatically harnessed it to advance their political and economic interests. After condemning the 1929 International Exposition for being out of step with the historical period in which it occurred, Bohigas adds that “‘one cannot deny the [Exposition] of 88 the virtue of an opportunism that had repercussions not only on purely economic matters, but also on the very political situation.’”<sup>275</sup>

Like Primo de Rivera, Franco tried collaborating with Catalan elites to continue Barcelona’s pattern of staging large-scale international events. Though Franco generally kept Spain culturally and economically isolated from the rest of the world in the early years of his dictatorship, he did work with the Spanish Church and the Vatican to sponsor a *Congreso Eucarístico Internacional* (International Eucharistic Congress)—a periodic gathering of Catholic clergy and laymen to honor the Holy Eucharist—in Barcelona in 1952. Franco’s speech at the event sought to broadcast an image of Spain as a Catholic country to the international community in a similar way that Rius i Taulet conveyed the notion of Barcelona as a hub of industrial progress in 1888. In the aftermath of the Civil War, Franco assured Pope Pious XII that

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<sup>273</sup> Ramón Aliberch, *Un Siglo de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Editorial Freixinet, 1944), 122-123.

<sup>274</sup> Pedro Voltes Bou, “Las dos grandes exposiciones barcelonesas de 1888 y 1929,” in volume xiv of *Divulgación histórica de Barcelona: páginas de la historia económica de Barcelona*, ed. Pedro Voltes Bou (Barcelona: Caja de Ahorros Provincial de la Diputación de Barcelona, 1945), 258.

<sup>275</sup> Grau, “Bibliografía,” 41.

Spaniards were not bellicose but rather lovers of peace and Catholicism.<sup>276</sup> The Pope urged attendees to remember Barcelona not for its “beautiful location, its classic hospitality, its spirit that is always open to all grand initiatives but, better yet, for its Eucharistic tradition.”<sup>277</sup>

Moreover, as Franco initiated a degree of political and economic liberalization in the 1950s, the official press began emphasized the continuity between Barcelona’s two previous world’s fairs in part to promote a third one, though the idea never gained enough traction to come to fruition.<sup>278</sup>

Spain’s thorny transition to democracy largely occurred between Franco’s death in 1975 and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)’s electoral victory in 1982. The country adopted a democratic constitution in 1978, transforming itself into a ‘state of the autonomies’ in which Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia were recognized as ‘historic nations.’<sup>279</sup> Through a statute of autonomy in 1979, Catalonia regained its Generalitat and again established Catalan as a co-official regional language alongside Spanish. In this more decentralized political climate, rememberers once again focused on the importance of the 1888 Universal Exposition as a catalyst for urban regeneration and as a conduit for the expression of Catalanism to Madrid and the international community. Less than a year after Franco’s death, on the occasion of the major Barcelona festival La Mercé, the cultural wing of Barcelona’s *Ajuntament* (municipal government) published a Catalan-language history of the Exposition by Josep M. Garrut. In a classic construction of historical narrative, the book’s opening pages state that while Barcelona’s defeat at the hands of Philip V in 1714 constituted “the low point” in the city’s history, the

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<sup>276</sup> Francisco Franco, “Oración de S.E. el Jefe del Estado en consagración de España a Jesús Sacramentado,” in *XXXV Congreso Eucarístico Internacional, Barcelona 27 mayo-1 junio, 1952* (Barcelona: Mutua Metalúrgica de Seguros, 1952), 4.

<sup>277</sup> Pope Pious XII, “Mensaje de Su Santidad el Papa Pio XII, en el acto de clausura del XXXV Congreso Eucarístico Internacional,” in *XXXV Congreso Eucarístico Internacional, Barcelona 27 mayo-1 junio, 1952* (Barcelona: Mutua Metalúrgica de Seguros, 1952), 2.

<sup>278</sup> Grau, “Bibliografía,” 40.

<sup>279</sup> Antonio Elorza, “Some Perspectives on the Nation-State and Autonomies in Spain,” in *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction, The Struggle for Modernity*, ed. Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 333.

Exposition represented a period when Barcelona embarked upon a “new road” and morphed into a “progressive, renovated, and cosmopolitan capital.”<sup>280</sup> Garrut concludes that the secret behind the Exposition was that it demonstrated how a city could “liquidate a past and inaugurate a future full of hope”—a possibility for which many Spaniards likely yearned as their country shifted jarringly from Francoism to democracy.<sup>281</sup>

In October of 1986, the International Olympic Committee (IOC)—whose president, Juan Antonio Samaranch, was a Catalan—selected Barcelona to host the 1992 Summer Olympics. Five years earlier, Barcelona Mayor Narcis Serra had first promoted the idea as a way to raise Catalonia’s morale after a failed military coup in 1981 threatened Spain’s fledgling democracy. Organizing the Games involved close and often tense collaboration between the national government, Catalonia’s Generalitat, and Barcelona’s Ajuntament, especially when it came to the extent to which local elites could ‘Catalanize’ the Games.<sup>282</sup> A pact between Generalitat President Jordi Pujol and Barcelona Mayor Pasqual Maragall in June of 1992 included provisions that made Catalan an official language of the Games and allowed both the Catalan and Spanish anthems to be played at the inaugural and closing ceremonies.<sup>283</sup>

The Exposition’s centennial in 1988 inspired a number of written commemorations, including the exhaustive *Exposició Universal de Barcelona: libro del centenario* and the decidedly more nationalistic study *L’Exposició del 88 i el nacionalisme català*. In a prologue to the *libro del centenario*, Catalan businessman Pere Durán Farell quotes Pirozzini’s famous line, “‘And now with two more Universal Expositions, we will make Barcelona,’” before explaining

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<sup>280</sup> Josep M. Garrut, *L’Exposició Universal de Barcelona de 1888* (Barcelona: Ajuntament. Delegació de Cultura, 1976), 7.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>282</sup> John Hargreaves, *Freedom For Catalonia? Catalan Nationalism, Spanish Identity and the Barcelona Olympic Games* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 59-60.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

that “it is necessary with the 1992 Games to make a universal showing par excellence of the great Barcelona of the twenty-first century. 1888 was...tradition and modernity. Now, the basic ferment would be identity and universalism.”<sup>284</sup> Durán Farell appears to be arguing that while the 1888 Exposition reconciled the city’s contending forces of tradition and modernity and fashioned an embryonic form of Catalan national identity in the process, the upcoming Olympic Games would allow Barcelona to incorporate this now-mature identity into a quest for universal recognition. In *L’Exposició del 88 i el nacionalisme català*, Josep M. Ainaud de Lasarte maintains that, like the 1888 Exposition, the Olympic Games would be an “exceptional occasion to explain who we are and what Catalans want to the world.”<sup>285</sup> Later on, Lluís Carulla i Canals asserts that the one hundred years since the Exposition had witnessed “the political and cultural resurrection” of Catalonia, whereupon he encourages Catalans to create “a truly free Catalonia” by the second centennial of the Exposition in 2088.<sup>286</sup> Carulla i Canals adds that while the official acts of the 1888 World’s Fair were conducted in Castilian, one cannot “doubt the profound Catalanism of the men who initiated and realized the Exposition.”<sup>287</sup>

Barcelona’s Summer Olympics proved a mammoth success, attracting the participation of every IOC country except Afghanistan for the first time since the 1972 Munich Games and featuring memorable story lines like U.S.A Basketball’s “Dream Team” wowing spectators with gold-medal-worthy theatrics. One of the theme songs for the 1992 Games was “Barcelona,” written five years earlier by British rock musician Freddie Mercury as part of a duet with the Catalan opera singer Montserrat Caballé. The song begins with Mercury touching on the theme

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<sup>284</sup> Farell, prologue, 25-27.

<sup>285</sup> Josep M. Ainaud de Lasarte, “Barcelona, Capital de Catalunya,” in *L’Exposició del 88 i el nacionalisme català* (Barcelona: Fundació Jaume I, 1988), 22; 24.

<sup>286</sup> Lluís Carulla i Canals, “Cloenda,” in *L’Exposició del 88 i el nacionalisme català* (Barcelona: Fundació Jaume I, 1988), 107.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

of encounter, a central concept throughout Barcelona's long history of large-scale international events: "Barcelona—how can I forget / the moment that you stepped into the room / you took my breath away."<sup>288</sup> Caballé later belts, "*Barcelona—abre tus puertos al mundo*" (Barcelona—open your doors to the world).<sup>289</sup> As the Games drew to a close, the Catalan Eduardo Vivancos giddily wrote in the Toronto-based Catalan newspaper *Flama*, "It seems as if Barcelona was rediscovered. Everyone is talking about her. The press and television have carried images that appear to come from a city of marvels."<sup>290</sup> The Olympics stimulated major urban infrastructure projects like the construction of *rondes* (highway rings), the creation of miles of sandy beaches, the development of pools, tracks and stadiums on Montjuïc, and the expansion of Barcelona's international airport, El Prat. The event also flushed Barcelona with cash, newfound political clout, and widespread international recognition, especially because the city, in the aftermath of the Games, became one of the hottest tourism destinations in Europe and the world's most popular convention site.<sup>291</sup> Catalonia's gross domestic product surged, as did the flow of foreign investment into the region.<sup>292</sup> According to British scholar John Hargreaves, the Games promoted Catalan self-awareness and mobilized Catalan nationalism culturally and politically.<sup>293</sup>

Yet the Olympics also benefitted Spain. British branding expert Wally Olins argues that the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and the 1992 Seville International Exhibition—which celebrated the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America—were highly successful forms of 'national branding' that accompanied other national image-changing initiatives in Spain, which

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<sup>288</sup> "Montserrat Caballe & Freddy Mercury Lyrics: Barcelona Lyrics," Lyrics (On) Demand, <http://www.lyricsondemand.com/m/montserratcaballefreddiemercurylyrics/barcelonalyrics.html>.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Eduardo Vivancos, "Los Otros Juegos Olímpicos de Barcelona," *Flama* (September-October 1992), <http://www.nodo50.org/esperanto/artik33es.htm>.

<sup>291</sup> Melissa Rossi, "The Barcelona Model: It's the coolest city in Europe. Its secret? Sheer Imagination," *Newsweek International* (February 2004), [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_hb3335/is\\_200402/ai\\_n8063618](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3335/is_200402/ai_n8063618).

<sup>292</sup> McRoberts, *Catalonia*, 180.

<sup>293</sup> Hargreaves, *Freedom For Catalonia?*, 160.

included the adoption of the Joan Miró sun symbol as the centerpiece of Spain's tourism materials and the privatization and globalization of Spanish multinationals like Repsol and Telefónica. According to Olins, the international events in 1992 helped convey at least to the rest of Europe if not to other parts of the world that Spain was no longer an "isolated, autarkic, poverty-stricken, authoritarian anachronism" but rather a modern European democracy, thereby stoking tourism, inward investment, and exports.<sup>294</sup> Indeed, Elorza cites the 1992 Games and its "joint public affirmations of Spanish and Catalan national identity" as a prime example of the mutually beneficial cooperation between Madrid and Catalonia that Spain's democratic transition has made possible, if not always workable.<sup>295</sup>

The fanfare associated with the Games motivated a number of non-Spanish historians to turn their attentions to Barcelona and to the 1888 Exposition, with mixed results. Australian native Robert Hughes, writing in 1992, posits that Serrano de Casanova initially proposed a world's fair in Barcelona because he believed "wads of money could be made from a fair that gave Catalans a chance to show themselves off to the world and prove that Barcelona was, indeed, a European city and not merely a Spanish one."<sup>296</sup> American historian Gary W. McDonogh, on the other hand, writes a year later that Serrano de Casanova "wanted a representation of the Spanish state, located in its industrial center, Barcelona," though McDonogh adds in a footnote that Barcelona had a deeply-rooted tradition of industrial expositions.<sup>297</sup> Hughes argues that Rius i Taulet desired a world's fair because Barcelona "lacked self-esteem, and Rius would give it some, even if it meant strapping the patient down. It would be good for foreign investment. It would also strengthen Barcelona's hand against Madrid. All

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<sup>294</sup> Wally Olins, *Wally Olins On Brand* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 162.

<sup>295</sup> Elorza, "Some Perspectives on the Nation-State and Autonomies in Spain," 334-335.

<sup>296</sup> Hughes, *Barcelona*, 363

<sup>297</sup> Gari W. McDonogh, "La casa de los espejos: Las élites de Barcelona y las transiciones alfonsinas," in *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma* (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 1993), 21.



eyes would be on her. She would become the Queen City of the Mediterranean.”<sup>298</sup> McDonogh, in contrast, maintains that Barcelona’s leaders at the time of the Exposition generally reflected the aspirations and concerns of the dynastic regime.<sup>299</sup>

In recent years, Catalonia—currently one of 17 autonomous communities within the constitutional monarchy of Spain—has had an increasing amount of power devolved to its regional and municipal institutions. Since 1980, the Generalitat has made it a priority to ‘normalize’ the Catalan language in daily life, and the effort appears to be working. Catalan is understood by about 95 percent of Catalonia’s over seven million inhabitants and spoken by over 75 percent, most primary education and about half of secondary education is in Catalan, and the Catalan-language press is growing in strength.<sup>300</sup> During the 1990s, a lack of absolute majorities in the Spanish Parliament forced government leaders to court Spain’s various nationalist parties, a situation that the center-right Catalan political party *Convergència i Unió* (Convergence and Unity) exploited to acquire more regional autonomy during the administrations of PSOE politician Felipe González (1993-1996) and conservative *Partido Popular* politician José María Aznar (1996-2000). In 2003, Maragall, the former mayor of Barcelona and organizer of Barcelona’s Olympics, became president of the Generalitat. He soon floated the idea of staging an unprecedented large-scale event: a Universal Forum of the Cultures in Barcelona in which world leaders and everyday people would come together for 141 days to discuss peace, human rights, multiculturalism, and sustainable development. The *Ajuntament*, the Generalitat, the national government, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization co-sponsored the Forum, which took place in 2004.

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<sup>298</sup> Hughes, *Barcelona*, 363-364.

<sup>299</sup> McDonogh, “La casa de los espejos,” 23.

<sup>300</sup> McRoberts, *Catalonia*, 8.

Barcelona Mayor Joan Clos i Matheu's 2003 conference on the upcoming Forum reveals a great deal about the way in which memory of the 1888 Universal Exposition continues to exert a profound influence on the projects of Barcelona's governing elites in a way that Chicago's 1893 World's Fair no longer does for American society. In regards to communicative power, Clos i Matheu describes Barcelona's Universal Exposition of 1888, International Exposition of 1929, and Olympic Games of 1992 as events that motivated Catalan society to "*projectar-se al món*" (project itself to the world). He goes on to affirm that the Forum would be another link in Barcelona's chain of *grans esdeveniments* (great events) and would allow the city to plant *antenes* (antennas) throughout Spain and throughout the world.<sup>301</sup> After explaining that 1888 signified "for Barcelona her European projection in a period of profound economic crisis and the political affirmation of historical reparation with the toppling of the Citadel," Clos i Matheu adds that every one of Barcelona's international events has coincided with an economic crisis and a threat to Catalonia like the attempted coup d'état of 1981 prior to the 1992 Summer Olympics.<sup>302</sup> The mayor echoes the pragmatism regarding world's fairs that Francesc Cambó voiced decades before when he asks, "Why do we want to come back to Barcelona's habit of launching projects that unite us in moving the city forwards? Because it's convenient. Because the city becomes small for us... There are still corners that can be improved."<sup>303</sup> Corners cited in the conference include enlarging the airport, doubling the capacity of the metro, and hastening the arrival in Barcelona of the high-speed Tren d'Alta Velocitat.<sup>304</sup>

The Forum itself was highly controversial, and has generally been regarded as a pricey disappointment. Critics such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International deemed the event's

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<sup>301</sup> Joan Clos i Matheu, *El Fòrum Universal de les Cultures. Barcelona 2004; conferència de: Joan Clos i Matheu* (Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2003), 7.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

nearly \$3 billion price tag extravagant and disliked the commercial sponsorship of multinationals like Endesa, Nestlé, Coca-Cola, Telefónica, and Indra with questionable records in poor countries.<sup>305</sup> Other detractors condemned the gentrification efforts undertaken in the previously underdeveloped and dangerous neighborhoods of La Mina and Sant Adrià de Besòs. Beautifying the area near the Besòs River with a world's fair was not a new concept—back in the first quarter of the twentieth century, a number of groups had proposed doing so to realize Rius i Taulet's urbanizing mission—but constructing the Forum's expansive fairgrounds entailed the destruction of property and dramatic transformations of the coastline.<sup>306</sup> While planners initially projected that seven million people would attend the event, the final attendance figure—around 3.5 million—may even be bloated.<sup>307</sup> Nevertheless, the ambitiousness of the project and the fact that it was conceived at all indicate that Serrate's formulation back in 1888 of the motivations behind the Universal Exposition—staging a large-scale international event to stimulate urban renewal and communicate Catalan identity and interests to the national government and the international community—continue to animate the initiatives of Catalan elites.

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<sup>305</sup> Rossi, "The Barcelona Model."

<sup>306</sup> *El Emplazamiento de la futura Exposición de Barcelona: memoria entregada al Excelentísimo Sr. Alcalde, sobre el emplazamiento de la futura Exposición, por una numerosa representación de la sociedades firmantes* (Barcelona: Imp. J. Bartra Laborde, s.a.), 4.

<sup>307</sup> Clos i Matheu, *El Fòrum Universal de les Cultures*, 23.

## Conclusion: Globalization and Communicative Nationalism

*If the future of world's fairs is unclear, their legacy is not. They teach us much not only about the people who created them, but also about our own time.*<sup>308</sup>

- Russell Lewis, American historian of world's fairs, 1993

It would be disingenuous to suggest that Barcelona's Universal Exposition of 1888 is ever-present or all-important in the collective memory of Catalans. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, many studies of Catalan identity, like Francesc Carreras i Candi's over 1,000-page *Ciutat de Barcelona* (1916) or Carles Pi i Sunyer celebrated *L'aptitud econòmica de Catalunya* (1927-1929), made no mention of the Exposition. The great Catalan historian Agustí Duran i Sanpere hardly referenced the event in his multi-volume *Barcelona i la seva història* in the 1970s.<sup>309</sup> Ramon Grau states that the absence of any allusion to the Exposition in the catalogue of the prominent exhibition *Catalunya, la fàbrica d'Espanya. Un segle d'industrializació catalana, 1833-1936* in Barcelona in 1985 demonstrates that the 1888 World's Fair "still has not truly entered the pages of contemporary history."<sup>310</sup>

Still, the historical record strongly indicates that people have remembered the Exposition differently depending on the developmental phase of Catalan nationalism. While the Exposition was largely forgotten outside Catalonia soon after it closed its doors, it has lent inspiration to a series of elite-sponsored *grans esdeveniments* in Barcelona and a deeply-rooted tendency in the city toward nationalist spectacle. Chicago's Columbian Exposition—more often characterized as an American event than as an event particular to Chicago—directly influenced subsequent American world's fairs and the City Beautiful movement in the early twentieth century,

<sup>308</sup> Russell Lewis, preface to *Grand Illusions: Chicago's World's Fair of 1893*, by Neil Harris et al. (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1993), xvi.

<sup>309</sup> Grau, "Bibliografia," 42.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

indirectly influenced Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition in the 1930s, and, today, is normally recalled by cultural historians for intellectual purposes.

Nationalism has much to do with why the legacies of Barcelona's Universal Exposition and Chicago's World's Fair have diverged. The U.S., as the most powerful country in the world, no longer needs to stage events along the lines of the Columbian Exposition in order to express American nationalism. Moreover, the event is so closely associated with American history that it lacks the local significance to be repeatedly emulated in Chicago. Barcelona, on the other hand, is still the capital of what many scholars characterize as a nation-without-a-state. The city's leaders continue to see the value of imitating an event with so much local resonance and with the proven ability to fuel urban regeneration, fortify Catalan identity, initiate dialogue with Madrid, and encourage communication with the international community. Pedro Voltes Bou, writing in 1945, argued that the fair is "one of Barcelona's most well-known and characteristic platforms" for communicating with the world and a major reason why Barcelona is one of the greatest commercial metropolises in the Mediterranean. As he explained, "Barcelona is galvanized by the pledge to realize a fair that is each time more brilliant and eye-catching and that will enhance the creative genius of the city and involve a rich demonstration of the inventive and productive capacity of the Spanish people."<sup>311</sup> In 1988, during a very different period of Barcelona's history, Pere Durán Farell determines that "the judgment of a mature society like ours permits and in a certain way obliges us toward...the duty of liberating the furiously-creative imagination from time to time."<sup>312</sup> It seems like Durán Farell is inverting Soldevila's assertion in 1929 that fairs afforded Barcelona a chance to subdue *rauxa* in favor of *seny*. Yet Durán Farell adds that these events also involve political pragmatism, since "Barcelona continues thinking...that without

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<sup>311</sup> Pedro Voltes Bou, *Dos Mil Años de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Oficina Municipal de Turismo e Información, 1945).

<sup>312</sup> Durán Farell, prologue, 27.

having the political capital, if it wants to be authentically great—and that it wants to be—it has to support itself with punctual and fundamentally momentous events in order to mobilize to the full extent all possible forces and to obtain, also to the full extent, all that is possible.”<sup>313</sup> Joan Clos i Matheu, in an introduction to a book on the history of the Fira de Barcelona—the city’s annual trade fair—, agrees with Durán Farell, writing that,

Barcelona’s bid for recognition as an international city, which is both a valid and necessary strategy in economic as well as political terms, has had fruitful results. The exterior projection of Barcelona is such that the city is now a member and leader in the principal international organisations set up by and for cities. This has led to the promotion of the city, calling attention to our activities and attracting investment and tourist initiatives.<sup>314</sup>

The president of the Fira de Barcelona’s Board of Administration, Jaume Tomás, adds that the 1888 Exposition gave birth to the Fira and “gave Catalan industry the first great opportunity to introduce itself to the Spanish market and make itself known abroad.”<sup>315</sup>

Of course, it is not just Catalan nationalists who have attempted to stage large-scale events in Barcelona. Reflecting on the 1952 Eucharistic Conference under Franco, Enric Vila Casa writes that during the six-day event, Barcelona was able to “offer a brilliant appearance, like old prostitutes, that in certain moments know how to resort to experience, they perfume themselves, they put on makeup, and they manage to show some shiny eyes and a captivating smile...The whole center of Barcelona was adorned with Eucharistic lights and emblems.”<sup>316</sup>

Josep Maria de Porcioles—the mayor of Barcelona during much of the Franco regime and a lover of ambitious urbanization projects designed to create a ‘*Gran Barcelona*’ (Great Barcelona)—writes in his memoirs that he proposed hosting Olympic Games and universal

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>314</sup> Joan Clos i Matheu, “The Fira, a Catalyst for Catalonia and a Showcase for Barcelona,” in *La Fira: Motor Económico*, ed. Màrius Carol (Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, S.A., 2001), 187.

<sup>315</sup> Carol, *La Fira*, 192.

<sup>316</sup> Enric Vila Casas and Paco Candel, *Memòries d’un burgès i d’un proletari* (Barcelona: Columna, 1996), 201-202.

expositions numerous times as mayor.<sup>317</sup> Furthermore, one cannot call Rius i Taulet, the originator of the *grans esdeveniments*, a Catalan nationalist. Even so, the 1929 World's Fair, the 1992 Olympic Games, and the 2004 Universal Forum of Cultures all originated with Catalan nationalists of various persuasions and received their greatest support from these sectors, even if the 1929 Exposition fell into the hands of Primo de Rivera at the last minute.

Joan Clos i Matheu's 2003 discourse on the Forum, quoted at the end of Chapter 3, not only points to continuity between the planned event and Barcelona's previous *grans esdeveniments*, but also touches on why the Forum will be a different kind of event than a world's fair or an Olympic Games. In the tradition of Orellana in 1860 and so many others afterwards, Clos states that the Forum's goal is to create the world of peace that was promised after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 but that has failed to emerge. He continues, "If you add globalization...the relations between globalization and identity, the crises of identity, you have the program of the 2004 Forum of the Cultures."<sup>318</sup> Clos contends that the Forum will represent a world with,

New political realities of political concordance and coexistence, which are not nation-states, and which constitute post-modern forms. It is something...that we are creating, inventing...without general theory and without a map to see which roads one needs to take...We are creating politics through our own minds, from our free will.<sup>319</sup>

Like the European Union, a groundbreaking "postmodern political reality" that "overcomes the nation-state," the Forum would be an event where nations and nations-without-states, people of different cultures and speaking different languages, could mingle.<sup>320</sup> Hence the Forum's emblem: two different hands reaching for one another. The Palau Moja outside the fairgrounds even housed an exhibit entitled, "Catalonia, land of encounter," which displayed objects like the

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<sup>317</sup> Josep Maria de Porcioles i Colomer, *Mis memorias* (Barcelona: Editorial Prensa Ibérica, 1994), 187-190.

<sup>318</sup> Clos i Matheu, *El Fòrum Universal de les Cultures*, 10.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

medieval lawbook *Usatges de Barcelona* and the oldest existing copy of the eleventh-century Catalan text, “Homílies d’Organyà.” The Forum’s web site described the exhibit as “a multi-faceted presentation of the personality of Catalan society...A vision of a Catalonia open to the world and active on the international scene, a country of confluences, an importer and exporter of ideas and trends, with an entrepreneurial and creative talent in a variety of disciplines.”<sup>321</sup>

In a globalized Information Age where communication across cultures is nearly instantaneous, the ability to broadcast Catalan nationalism to the global community through spectacle—a legacy in part of Barcelona’s *grans esdeveniments* and their practice of doing the *hones de la casa*—has become a major strategy of Catalan elites. Catalan political scientist Montserrat Guibernau explains that globalization can advance the causes and movements of nations-without-states because it provides “to those who can afford it, potent means to promote their own languages and cultures, denounce unfair situations, create virtual resistance networks and organize political action where co-presence is not a necessary condition.”<sup>322</sup> Of course, globalization has also threatened Catalan identity and culture by provoking massive waves of immigration to the region from Africa and Latin America and increasing tourism and international capitalism in Catalonia, which leads to an influx of English, McDonald’s, Hollywood films, and American pop music.

The communicative nationalism of Barcelona’s leaders manifests itself in part through their success in conveying the reigning historical narrative on Catalan nationalism to foreign writers. Christine Spolar of the *Chicago Tribune*, for example, writes in a recent article on Barcelona’s Olympics as a model for “the emotional and economic possibilities of the Games”

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<sup>321</sup> “Catalonia, land of encounter,” Forum Barcelona 2004, <http://www.barcelona2004.org/eng/eventos/exposiciones/ficha.cfm?IdEvento=1443&IdTipoPest=1>.

<sup>322</sup> Montserrat Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism: Francoism, transition and democracy* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 121.



that “Barcelona, once a rich Mediterranean power, had languished for decades under...Franco. The Olympics was a chance, as architects across generations recently explained in interviews, for Barcelona and the Catalonia region to reclaim their glory and lay bare their talents.”<sup>323</sup> In Lonely Planet’s travel guide to Barcelona, Australian author Damien Simonis advances notions that are not entirely historically accurate but that conform to the nationalist narrative:

Barcelona is and isn’t Spain. The second city after Madrid, it is capital of the autonomous region of Catalonia (Catalunya to locals), only fully (and unwillingly) incorporated into the Spanish state after defeat in battle in 1714. The Catalans speak their own language, and not just literally. Barcelona has long been the engine room of the Spanish economy and its people have always run their own race.<sup>324</sup>

Similarly, Canadian historian Kenneth McRoberts tells a story in his *Catalonia: Nation Building Without A State* that is also based on factually-questionable material,

Back in the 1200s, Catalonia may have been closer than any other European society to becoming a nation state...When nation states finally did emerge in Europe, Catalonia remained in the grip of Castile. Indeed, it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that a clear national consciousness finally emerged in Catalonia. However, once established, this national consciousness proved to be inextinguishable. It survived the concerted efforts of the Franco regime to erase not only a Catalan national consciousness but the language and cultural distinctiveness on which this consciousness is based.<sup>325</sup>

Citing this fragment is not meant to call into question McRoberts’ integrity as an historian.

Rather, it simply raises the following question: from what sources is McRoberts getting his information? A glance at McRoberts’ acknowledgments reveals that the book was published with a grant from Ómnium Cultural, a Catalan organization whose goals include financing “the publication and diffusion of works and studies that promote understanding of Catalan social

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<sup>323</sup> Christine Spolar, “Barcelona shows what Olympics can mean – ’92 Games showcased, rejuvenated port city, stoked tourism boom that endures today,” *Chicago Tribune* (August 12, 2007), NewsBank [http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2322/openurl?ctx\\_ver=z39.88-2004&rft\\_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:NewsBank:CTRB&rft\\_val\\_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft\\_dat=11AFB84978B75D08&svc\\_dat=InfoWeb:aggregated5&req\\_dat=0FA5BD299B01E287](http://proxy.library.upenn.edu:2322/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:NewsBank:CTRB&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=11AFB84978B75D08&svc_dat=InfoWeb:aggregated5&req_dat=0FA5BD299B01E287).

<sup>324</sup> Damien Simonis, *Barcelona* (Oakland: Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd., 2006), 5.

<sup>325</sup> McRoberts, *Catalonia*, 179.

realities.”<sup>326</sup> While McRoberts does state that Òmnium allowed him to develop his study as he felt appropriate, it is difficult to completely ignore a monetary sponsor. McRoberts also explains that he was first encouraged to undertake the project at the urging of Josep Garcia Reyes, the former head of North American affairs with the Generalitat, and that of the nearly 90 public officials, scholars, and experts that he interviewed, the majority were in Catalonia.<sup>327</sup>

Yet Catalan elites do not always need to go through middlemen to practice communicative nationalism. In 2006, for example, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley visited Barcelona to inspect the ways in which the 1992 Olympics had transformed the city in light of Chicago’s aspirations to host the 2016 Olympics. After meeting with Catalan politicians and dining with Catalan businessmen, Daley signed a letter of intent with Barcelona Mayor Jordi Hereu to promote cooperation between their cities in matters like economic promotion, culture, tourism, and urban planning, with Daley even suggesting a direct air connection between Chicago and Barcelona.<sup>328</sup> In 2007, Hereu gave a speech in New York City in honor of the “Barcelona and Modernity: Gaudí to Dalí” special exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which was sponsored by the Caixa Catalunya Obra Social and the Generalitat. The display explored the work of Barcelona’s artists, architects, and designers in the years between the Universal Exposition of 1888 and the beginning of Franco’s regime in 1939. In his speech, the mayor set the scene for late nineteenth-century Barcelona before expressing an affinity with the city hosting him,

The city...has become a metropolis, an example of modernity for the whole country. The city, the late Industrial Revolution, with its steam-powered factories, and the bourgeoisie,

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<sup>326</sup> Òmnium Cultural-Llengua Cultural País, “Què És: Òmnium Cultural avui,” Òmnium Cultural, [http://www.omnium.cat/menuViewPage.php?cov\\_ID=1&item=description](http://www.omnium.cat/menuViewPage.php?cov_ID=1&item=description).

<sup>327</sup> McRoberts, acknowledgements in *Catalonia*.

<sup>328</sup> “Barcelona and Chicago Sign a letter of intent,” Ajuntament de Barcelona, [http://w3.bcn.es/V25/Serveis/Noticies/V25NoticiesLlistatNoticiesCtl/0,2138,5004038\\_5184167\\_3\\_173407199,00.html?accio=detall&home=](http://w3.bcn.es/V25/Serveis/Noticies/V25NoticiesLlistatNoticiesCtl/0,2138,5004038_5184167_3_173407199,00.html?accio=detall&home=) .

a new class which would become more prominent in the course of the twentieth century, but also the workers and their powerful organizations, are the signs of our identity, of an autonomous Catalonia, the capital of which is Barcelona...Barcelona and New York are cities, perhaps not accidentally on the same latitude, that share many experiences, that today come together in space and time. Capitals of innovation, creativity and knowledge, which, without being capitals of the State, are 'states' in themselves. Living, plural cities with the capacity to decide, which reinvent themselves on a daily basis.<sup>329</sup>

Catalan leaders also broadcast messages to the world by constructing marketable, instantly recognizable images of Barcelona that supposedly speak to Barcelona's unique social personality. A recent advertisement in *The New Yorker* features a man and woman taking a picture of themselves on the roof of Gaudí's La Pedrera apartment building. The caption reads, "Smile! You are in Catalonia!"<sup>330</sup>

Though there have been exceptions especially during periods of massive immigration to Catalonia, Catalan nationalists generally subscribe to a 'civic nationalism' in which anyone who adopts Catalan language and culture is eligible for membership in the Catalan nation. The premise contrasts with other regional nationalisms in Spain like Basque nationalism, which predicates national identity on ethnicity and common historical descent.<sup>331</sup> These considerations help explain the penchant on the part of Catalan elites for communicative nationalism, since language and culture are more easily communicated than ethnicity and common historical descent. Take, for instance, the Catalan language translator on the Generalitat's web site.

Fashioning an ethnic analogue would prove much more difficult.

According to Michonneau, the "politics of memory" in Catalonia refers to "a double reality: on the one hand, it is the production of a discourse about Catalonia's past; on the other hand...it is a social practice in the form of...concrete realizations...that make possible the

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<sup>329</sup> Jordi Hereu: The Mayor of Barcelona: Articles/Speeches, "Speech by the Mayor of Barcelona, Jordi Hereu. Barcelona and Modernity. Metropolitan Museum of New York. 5/03/2007," Ajuntament de Barcelona, <http://www.bcn.es/alcalde/en/articles06.htm>.

<sup>330</sup> "Special Advertising Section," *The New Yorker*, February 11 and 18, 2008.

<sup>331</sup> McRoberts, *Catalonia*, 2; 183.

incorporation of the idea of the nation in society and in the city space.”<sup>332</sup> Communicative nationalism derives in part from the model Barcelona’s Universal Exposition of 1888 left behind: peacefully engaging in a discourse with Madrid and with the international community through spectacle. Thus, remembering the Exposition not only allows Catalans to cast the late nineteenth century as a golden age that birthed modern Catalan nationalism. It also serves as a social practice that helps raise regional and municipal self-esteem and diffuse the idea of a Catalan nation among Catalans, while having more practical results like economic development, urban renewal, and enhanced political autonomy.

In a 1956 study of Barcelona’s long history of trade fairs, Duran i Sanpere, like Joan Clos in his conference on the Forum, explained, “Now—as always—Barcelona is not only the capital of the Catalan region, but also Spain’s place of first contact with foreign ideas and works and, at the same time, a backwater of old traditions...an antenna of generous communication that is always vibratile.”<sup>333</sup> Jordi Pujol also touches on the curious mix of universalism and provincialism in Catalonia in his *La força serena i constructiva de Catalunya*, where he argues that Catalonia should encapsulate “two very strong trends in the present-day world, one leading to a global lifestyle and the other strengthening one’s own cultural identity.”<sup>334</sup> The ability of Catalan nationalists to communicate their nationalism and interests to others, partially by remembering the 1888 Exposition and staging large-scale international events, gives poet Joan Maragall’s nickname for Barcelona—*la gran encisera* (the great enchantress)—new meaning. It also raises important questions about the ways in which nationalism and spectacle interact in

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<sup>332</sup> Michonneau, *Barcelona*, 15.

<sup>333</sup> Agustí Duran i Sanpere, *Barcelona: sede de la Feria Oficial e Internacional de Muestras* (Barcelona: Favencia, 1956), 26.

<sup>334</sup> Guibernau, *Catalan Nationalism*, 145; 148.

today's globalized world, as the controversial Beijing 2008 Olympic Games loom on the horizon.

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