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***Autochthonous Conflicts, Foreign Fictions: The Capital as Metaphor for the Nation***  
**Elisa Martí-López**

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AUTOCHTHONOUS CONFLICTS,  
FOREIGN FICTIONS:  
THE CAPITAL AS METAPHOR FOR THE NATION

ELISA MARTÍ-LÓPEZ

In the December 1999 issue of *Revista de Libros* Pablo Fernández Albadalejo (full professor of Modern History at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) criticized the nationalistic historiography that, according to him, sustains Ernest Lluch's latest book, *Las Españas vencidas del siglo XVIII* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1999). According to Fernández Albadalejo, Lluch's reconstruction of the legacy and collective memory of the Habsburg monarchy during the eighteenth century in the regions that once constituted the Kingdom of Aragon implies an anachronistic and autoreferential historiography whose only justification is the Catalans' current "obsesión" with "la diferencia" (17). Curiously enough, and against Fernández Albadalejo's reading of his book, Lluch—in an article he wrote on the *foralista* roots of some forms of nineteenth-century Spanish liberalism—affirms that his assertion of the political strength of *foralismo* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the territories of the old Kingdom of Aragon and the Basque Country is foreign to—and hard to assimilate by—the historiography that sustains not only the Spanish nationalism, but also that of Catalans and Basques.<sup>1</sup>

The contradictory comments made by Lluch and Fernández Albadalejo on historiography and nationalism force us to pause—to stop our hectic production of articles and papers—and reconsider, one more time, the nationalistic roots of literary history. In particular, their comments bring forward the question of how our awareness of the nationalistic foundations of literary history has actually and effectively changed the way we approach literature and culture. In my view, such change falls short of its mark. The popularity of works that analyze the historical, that is, invented character of both the modern nation-state and the nationalism that legitimates it (such as, among others, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and Eric Hobsbawm's *Nation and Nationalism since 1780*) has contributed relatively little to the revision

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<sup>1</sup> "La història realitzada substancialment des de la perspectiva de l'espanyolisme unitarista (però també del nacionalisme català o base) ha amagat, ignorat o subvalorat els fets que aquí apuntem" ["The history written from the perspective of the Spanish unitarian nationalism (but also from that of the Catalan and Basque nationalisms) has hidden, ignored, or undervalued the facts pointed out here"] (20).

of the critical apparatuses that sustain the study of history and culture in Spain and Catalonia. In particular, awareness of literary history as one of those imaginary communities created by the new bourgeois state seems to have had little impact on the way we approach the study of cultural processes in Spain. Thus, recent critical studies on nineteenth-century Spain and Catalonia continue to reproduce —often by the mere implicit repetition of established frames of discussion— either the invisibility of the nationalism of the state (or *españolismo*) or the highly visible nationalisms of Catalans and Basques.<sup>2</sup> The invisible (and, consequently, supposedly natural) *españolismo* that characterizes the historiography of many scholars, and the highly visible (and supposedly contrived) *catalanisme* of Catalan Studies is clearly exemplified in Fernández Albadalejo's open indictment of Lluch's work. Fernández accuses Lluch of forgetting that the nation is "una realidad contingente y variable" ["a contingent and variable reality"] (17), while the nationalistic alliance of his own historiography is safely kept from scrutiny. The fact is, however, that often studies on the history and culture of Spain and Catalonia share the same epistemological praxis and serve a similar nationalistic purpose.

The main task ahead for Hispanists is the production of both a literary history that, while taking up the fundamental issue of identity, is not engaged (not even implicitly) in nationalistic alliances, and a criticism that suspects all signifiers and, more particularly, that of the nation. In this article I shall attempt to unmask one critical paradigm —or frame of discussion— that, in my opinion, helps perpetuate a nationalistic approach to the study of the literary and cultural processes of Spain and Catalonia: the metaphorical value assigned to the *capital* city (of a state) —and, specifically, to the literature written about and from the capital— as privileged referent for the nation. The capital as metaphor for the nation becomes the referential field of that which is not directly accessible —the nation.<sup>3</sup> According to this notion, the cultural and literary processes that define the social existence of the capital replace those of the nation, contain them, and

2 As Josep M. Sobrer has pointed out, under the term "cultura mayoritaria" lies "una falacia común": "que la cultura minoritaria está políticamente determinada mientras que la mayoritaria no... La distinción real entre los dos tipos de cultura es el hecho que la minoritaria no puede permitirse guardar silencio sobre sus lazos políticos, mientras que la mayoritaria sí que puede hacerlo y a menudo lo hace. Lo que define una cultura minoritaria, pues, es la necesidad e incluso la inevitabilidad de su conciencia política" ["the minority culture is politically determined while the majority culture is not... The real distinction between the two types of culture is the fact that the minority culture cannot afford to keep silent about its political ties, while the majority culture can and often does it. What defines a minority culture, thus, is the need, and even, the inevitability of its political consciousness"] (42).

3 See Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor* (298–99).

keep them under control. Here I will focus exclusively on the use of the capital as metaphor that still dominates studies of nineteenth-century Spain, the century when the sense of individual and collective self—nationalism—was constituted.

A lot has been said about the uneven (both temporally and geographically) modernization of Spain during the nineteenth-century. For the many and different reasons that historians give us, neither Spain nor Catalonia developed full forms of nationalism.<sup>4</sup> The incapacity shown by the liberal Spanish state to integrate the contradictory interests of the industrial bourgeoisie and those of the rural oligarchies—its political instability and impotence, epitomized in the loss of all the colonies and the Carlist wars—resulted, among other things, in a fragmentary and incomplete centralization of the socio-economic structures in Spain and the lack of a cultural policy that would sustain and spread the new nationalism of the state. As Borja de Riquer and Enric Ucelay-Da Cal point out, a precarious centralization characterized the policies of the state during the last decade of the nineteenth-century:

The political system after the Bourbon restoration of December 1874 was too much a poised balance of parliamentary groupings to risk encouraging civic consciousness through high participation. As a result, the maturation of Spanish "institutional nationalism" proved a failure, incapable of impelling a common official culture and a common language as effectively as was done in the last decades of the XIXth century in France or Italy. Spain was (and, as a result of what we are commenting, still is) a highly heterogenous society. (291)

Furthermore, the dependence of the Catalan industry on the larger market of Spain, and that of the Catalan bourgeoisie on the repressive forces of the state to control social unrest, produced the political and ideological ambiguity that characterizes nineteenth-century Catalan nationalism. The Catalan bourgeoisie was committed to the creation of a national (Spanish) market and, consequently, was deeply involved in the foundation of the Spanish state. The conviction that the size of Catalonia prevented the creation of a successful Catalan state effectively limited the political ambitions of Catalanism until the *desastre* of 1898 made evident the failure of the modern Spanish nation-state. The French historian Pierre Vilar recounts this moment of awareness when the Catalan ruling classes realized that the nation that was not *viable* was Spain rather than Catalonia: "aquesta consciència de 'pesar poc' obsedeix els catalans cultivats, que s'adonaren tard del

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, the excellent analysis by Borja de Riquer and Enric Ucelay-Da Cal.

fet que aquest 'poc pes' és sobretot el d'Espanya en el món" ["this consciousness of 'having little weight' obsessed the educated Catalans, who realized too late that 'little weight' was what Spain had in the world"] (42).<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, the modernization of Catalonia (its industrialization) was also peculiar and quite limited with respect to the model of the hegemonic industrial nations. Vilar, who has a gift to find anecdotes that capture the form and content of historical processes, summarizes the particularities of the Catalan modernization as follows:

"Una mica abans de 1900, J. M. Nadal ens mostra un Eusebi Güell, un don 'Manel' Girona baixant al seu despatx en el tren de Sarrià! ¿Heu vist mai un Rotschild, un Morgan, agafar el metro? El model del 'senyor Esteve' era un industrial. I que ningú no ens parli de 'temperament'! Es tracta d'un retard en les dimensions. La Catalunya que, a la cúspide, vol ésser 'noucentista', és 'vuitcentista' a la base." (48)

[A little before 1900, J. M. Nadal shows us Eusebi Güell and *don* 'Manel' Girona taking the Sarrià train to go to their offices downtown! Have you ever seen the likes of Rotschild or Morgan taking the subway? The model for the '*senyor Esteve*' was an industrialist. Do not let anyone tell you that it is a question of 'character'! It is an underdevelopment in dimensions. The Catalonia that, at the top, wants to be '*noucentista*', is '*vuitcentista*' at the bottom].

The limitations and contradictory interests of the Catalan bourgeoisie actively contributed to prevent the total dissociation of the Catalan identity from that of Spain. The *Renaixença* and the cultural Catalanism of the last decades of the nineteenth century, product of those timid Catalan ruling classes, articulated Catalan identity ambiguously and never in open opposition to that of Spain. Popular Catalanism and its own formulation of national sovereignty—which culminated in Francesc Macià's proclamation of the Independent Republic of Catalonia in 1931—developed only after the introduction of male universal suffrage brought about the new phenomenon of mass politics.

The simultaneity and relative weakness that characterizes the constitution of both *Españolismo* and *Catalanisme* testify to the peculiar processes of identity formation in nineteenth-century Spain. As Vilar has pointed out, these processes are different from those of France, and similar to those of Austria or Turkey, where the conjunction of culture and politics contributed decisively to the emergence of a national consciousness among ethnic groups or old historical formations integrated within modern and larger states (39-40). Indeed, in Spain the

<sup>5</sup> For the notion of "viable" nations in nineteenth-century liberal thought, see Hobsbawm 30-42.



emergence of Catalanism and the persistence of other forms of political and cultural regionalism and localism are coetaneous with the construction of the liberal and centralist state: they are the result of both the inefficiency of the state (which fueled opposition to its centralist policies) and the strength of regional protonational bonds. In this sense, Borja de Riquer and Enric Uçelay-Da Cal have remarked that the processes of national formation in nineteenth-century Spain “became associated to any possible solution of political problems, both long-standing or immediate,” and that the creation of a collective identification, that is, the construction of national cultures, “led to contradictory impulses” (289).

The contemporaneity of the development of both the nationalism of the state and that of Catalonia can be observed in some significant dates and events. I will mention just a few. To start just from the very beginning in the history of the Spanish liberal state, a year before the proclamation of the Estatuto Real in 1833, Bonaventura Carles Aribau published “Oda a la pàtria.” Just two years later, the *Juntas* that were formed to coordinate the social uprisings that shook mid-nineteenth-century Spain against the conservative policies of the new “liberal” regime (what in Catalonia was known as *bullangues* and lasted until 1843) often reproduced the territorial structures of the old Kingdoms. In 1859, two years after the promulgation of the *Ley Moyano*—that made primary education in Spanish obligatory and, consequently, instruction in Catalan, Galician, and Basque illegal—the first Jocs Florals were celebrated, marking the official beginning of *La Renaixença*. The late 1860s and early 1870s witnessed the effects of the contradictory forces that both sustained and undermined the First Republic: its double purpose of strengthening the state and its federalism. Finally, and right after the restoration of the Monarchy, the definition of the political and cultural doctrines of Catalan nationalism—symbolized in the *Bases de Manresa* and the artistic movement of *Modernisme*—achieved its crucial stage. Moreover, the simultaneity that characterizes the processes of nation(s) building in Spain can be easily perceived in the numerous philological, folklorist, and historical studies that occupied both *catalanistes* and *españolistas* during most of the nineteenth-century and that resulted in the creation—invention—of two uniform and continuous cultural nations that are contiguous to each other: Catalonia and Spain.

The shared “non-viability” as nation-states of both Spain and Catalonia, and their complementary and, at the same time, oppositional nationalisms, clearly distinguish their processes of national formation from those of France and other hegemonic European nations. Yet, the epistemological implications of this peculiarity for the study of the literary and cultural processes of Spain

and Catalonia are rarely acknowledged. On the contrary, we often observe the application of foreign critical models to Spain's particular conditions. The capital as metaphor of the nation is one of those imported paradigms. Thus, scholars often assign to Madrid the same metaphorical value as the privileged space of the nation that France or Great Britain attribute to their capitals. As a consequence, Madrid becomes "espacio nuclear de la nación" ["the nuclear space of the nation"] and "representación simbólica de la historia y cultura nacionales" ["a symbolic representation of the nation's history and culture"] (Baker 61, 79), or "the cradle of literature and culture" (the subtitle Michael Ugarte gives to his book *Madrid 1900*). It is true that the government of Isabel II and the Restoration wanted Madrid to be for Spain what Paris was to France: the political and cultural referent of a successful centralist state —as Baker put it, the "belleza" ["beauty"] and "magnificencia" ["magnificence"] of Madrid "debían ser espejo de una grandeza que, desde el punto de mira del poder, se suponía generalizable a toda una colectividad" ["were supposed to be the mirror of a greatness that, from the point of view of the government, could be spread to a whole community"] (70). But, as we all know, the "greatness" of Madrid as capital city was highly problematic during the nineteenth century. Madrid was *villa y corte* of a timid liberalism controlled by the interests of an aristocratic and rural oligarchy. Between the poor and rundown Madrid of Isabel II described by Mesonero Romanos and the Madrid of the Restoration there are, certainly, deep and fundamental differences. But the fact is that Madrid, as capital, struggled throughout the nineteenth century in an attempt to transform itself from seat of the Monarchy to capital city of a bourgeois and national state. Madrid, as Juan Pablo Fusi puts it, was just another province among many other provinces:

Era la capital que correspondía —como bien insistiera reiteradamente Mesonero Romanos— a aquel Estado débil, pobre e ineficiente que, como se ha indicado, era el Estado español del siglo XIX. Madrid estaba, también, sumida en su propio localismo: hasta 1864 no tuvo comunicación por ferrocarril ni con la frontera de Irún ni con Barcelona. Además, pese a que la capitalidad le impregnó de un cierto cosmopolitismo, Madrid, como observó Ortega y Gasset ... , no tuvo una cultura creadora. El propio Ortega dejó dicho ... que en el XIX se produjo precisamente lo contrario: el triunfo de la chulería o ... del casticismo popular.

Ortega llevaba razón. La influencia cultural de Madrid terminaba a los seis kilómetros de distancia. España era —hay que insistir con el filósofo madrileño— pura provincia. (89-90)

[Madrid was the capital that corresponded —as Mesonero Romanos insisted repeatedly— to that weak State, poor and inefficient that, as it has been said, was the nineteenth-century Spanish state. Madrid was, also, submerged in its

own localism: until 1864 there was no railroad communication with the border at Irun or with Barcelona. Besides, in spite of the fact that the capitality brought to the city some cosmopolitanism, Madrid, as Ortega y Gasset pointed out... , did not have a creative culture. Ortega himself declared... that in the nineteenth century exactly the opposite happened: the triumph of *chulería* or... popular *casticismo*.

Ortega was right. Madrid's cultural influence did not extend beyond six kilometers. Spain was —we need to insist together with the philosopher from Madrid— pure province].<sup>6</sup>

Spain was no France and its capital was no Paris. Here I disagree with María Teresa Zubiaurre's opinion that "la capital de España cumple, pues, una función parecida a la de otras capitales europeas" ["the capital of Spain did have a similar function to that of other European capitals"] (280). In the nineteenth century Paris —and not Madrid— was the main cultural referent for the Spanish urban and middle classes. Similarly, Madrid was not the only site of autochthonous cultural production and recognition.

The notion of the capital as metaphor for the nation originates from the particular form of modernization that characterizes countries such as France and Great Britain, and may not be universally applied to other areas. In fact, I contend that it is a foreign fiction wrongly applied to Spain's cultural processes. The metaphorical value often assigned to the capital as privileged space of the nation forces a foreign critical notion upon the study of modern Spain, misrepresents its cultural and literary processes, and sustains the fiction of a successful construction of a Spanish nation. Hazel Gold, always attentive to processes of canonization and their relation to critical practices, has pointed out the antithetical relation the capital as metaphor maintains with respect to Spain's historical conditions, and the political intention that sustained the adoption of this foreign notion by Spanish cultural institutions: "At a moment when Spaniards faced a redrawn political map owing to the loss of empire and the challenges of the periphery to a unified nation-state, representations that made Madrid synchronous with national identity were ideologically advantageous" (199). Furthermore, Gold, observing that the writers canonized by literary historians were those that represented Madrid as dominant center, has stressed the inadequacy of the notion to explain Spain's cultural processes. Commenting on Ugarte's *Madrid 1900*, she concludes: "the label of 'artificial' that Ugarte uses to describe Madrid's status as capital must

<sup>6</sup> In this sense, it is interesting to remember that the *Pla Cerdà* for the urban renewal of Barcelona was approved in 1860, a year before that of Madrid.



also be applied to representations of Madrid that present it as the exclusive locus of a homogenous Spanish modernity<sup>7</sup> (199).

The notion of the capital as metaphor for the nation is also problematic for other reasons. As Franco Moretti has pointed out, it is in the historical novels that have as a setting internal borders (their plot always being that of treason) and not in urban fictions where the struggle between national and local loyalties are played out and, normally, abolished.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Luis F. Cifuentes has rightly observed that the Madrid created by its greatest nineteenth-century narrator, Benito Pérez Galdós, is both a space of identity and otherness and, consequently, that Galdós' representation of the social existence of Madrid lacks strategies of nation building: the Madrid of *La desheredada* and *El doctor Centeno* "es a la vez espacio propio y ajeno, y esto tanto para el Otro como el yo; es, sobre todo, ... el espacio de una historia que condiciona su encuentro y/o separación, su estar y su devenir, pero que en ningún momento les permite fijarse para siempre en un ser esencial y definitivo" ["is both one's own and someone else's space, and it is so for the Other and for the self; it is, first of all, ... the space of a story that conditions their encounter and/or separation, their being and their becoming, but without ever allowing them to achieve an essential and definitive self"] (22). Finally, the primacy given to the capital over other social spaces is suspicious because it privileges the political project and cultural processes of the urban and male bourgeoisies: it reproduces their strategies of social differentiation (specifically, their construction of high and low forms of culture) while obliterating those of other social groups, such as women and, in general, the mostly illiterate populace —*poble/pueblo*— whose sense of identity has always existed. The study of what Hobsbawm calls "protonational bonds" (48) are, therefore, often left to historians, anthropologists or sociologists, as if the social existence of the urban proletariat and rural communities had no distinctive cultural and literary forms other than those of a corrupted or practically forgotten folklore.

The simultaneity and complexity of nation(s) building in nineteenth-century Spain —what we could refer to as the *disperse* identity of Catalans and Spaniards— is better captured if we approach, as Riquer and Ucelay-Da Cal propose, the study of the cultural processes of identity formation from an "integrated" perspective: "one neither can explain peripheral nationalisms as a deviation from a

<sup>7</sup> Historical novels "represent internal unevenness... and then... *abolish* it. [They] are not just stories 'of' the border, but of its erasure, and of the incorporation of the internal periphery into the larger unit of the state: a process that mixes consent and coercion —Love, and War; Nation, and State" (40). See also 33-40.

central Spanish 'reality,' nor explain Spain as a false imposition on peripheral 'realities'" (299).<sup>8</sup> In my view, this is precisely the road taken by Luis F. Cifuentes in his illuminating analysis of the novels of Palacio Valdés. In his introduction to *Los majos de Madrid*, Cifuentes poses the question of the "vigencia" ["validity"] of studying a work — and author — "difícilmente familiar" ["hardly familiar anymore"] (9) to bring up the issue of the multiplicity of imagined nations — and the literary writings that sustained them — that can be found in nineteenth-century Spain. He calls our attention to the diversity of strategies of cultural recognition and differentiation that supports the representation of Spain (or the inability to do so) in the work of some well-known novelists (14). In particular, and in contrast to Galdós's strategies of representation of Madrid, Cifuentes traces in "la escritura etnográfica" ["the "ethnographic writing"] of *Los majos de Cádiz* by Palacio Valdés "la poderosa dicotomía entre el Norte y el Sur [de España]" ["the powerful dichotomy between the North and the South"] that dictates not only Palacio Valdés's literary imagination, but also some of the processes of identity formation in Spain (19).<sup>9</sup> To study Palacio Valdés's ethnographic writing, Cifuentes tells us, is "enfrentarse al ejercicio de una poderosa posición intelectual que tuvo en aquel momento extraordinaria vigencia" ["to confront the practice of a powerful intellectual position that had in that time extraordinary validity"] (24). In Cifuentes's "integrated" perspective, the study of identity formation becomes the analysis of the strength — or the absence — of protonational bounds and the writing strategies that support them, and the examination of nation(s) building supposes the scrutiny of the diverse political intentions that transformed (or failed to transform) the existing localisms and regionalisms into specific political and ethnical rivalries.

It is only from this "integrated" perspective that we can start asking the questions and explore the issues that should definitively replace the critical paradigm of the capital as metaphor for the nation

<sup>8</sup> I see a conceptual relation between the *disperse* national bonds that characterized nineteenth-century Spain and Ernest Lluch's description of the experience of Spaniards in America as that of "ser extranjero sin serlo" ["being a foreigner without actually being one"] ("El liberalisme foralista" 15).

<sup>9</sup> Cifuentes opposes Palacio Valdés's strategies of identity formation to those used by Galdós: "Galdós y Palacio Valdés proponían así dos modos opuestos de representar la cuestión de la identidad. Para Galdós la identidad no es esencial sino coyuntural... Galdós contempla la formación de la identidad como un proceso inclusivo, resultado de encuentros entre el yo y el Otro; Palacio Valdés, como condición exclusiva, una esencia inalterable, al margen de la historia" ["Galdós and Palacio Valdés proposed two opposite ways of representing the question of identity. For Galdós identity is conjunctural rather than essential... Galdós understands the formation of identity as an inclusive process, the result of encounters between the self and the Other; Palacio Valdés, as an exclusive condition, an unalterable essence, on the fringes of history"] (23).

in the study of nineteenth-century Spain. In this direction Joan Ramon Resina has already pointed out some of the issues that should be addressed. First, the centralizing forces that explain the “most peculiar literary distribution” in the cultural geography of Spain: the fact that “Madrid’s most relevant literary figures came from Spain’s periphery” (424). Secondly, the “politically loaded nineteenth-century opposition between a normative Madrid literature and the market subcategory of regional literature” (424). Thirdly, the “dependent mechanism of cultural production (the economically dependent capital politically creating cultural dependence and ‘regionalization’)” characteristic of modern Spain (424).

Finally, I would like to contribute to the critical effort of rethinking the cultural processes of nineteenth-century Spain described above by proposing a new line of inquiry. Following the integrated model of analysis presented by Riquer and Ucelay-Da Cal and by Cifuentes’s approach to the strategies of differentiation that sustained both the literary imagination and the processes of identity in nineteenth-century Spain, I propose to replace the notion of the *capital* as metaphor—that is, the capital as (identical to) the nation—with that of *cities and towns* as metonymic—that is, contiguous—representations of the state. The city or town, as metonymic or synecdochical representations of the state—wherein the part is substituted for the whole, or sometimes the whole for the part—permits to explore the processes of nation(s) building in Spain as both complementary and resistant to the centralist efforts of the state—and, in the case of Catalonia, to the centralist pull also of Barcelona. Moreover, the representation of the city or town as contiguous but not identical to the state, captures the processes of nation(s) building as a series of fragmented and often mutually alien historical conditions, cultural alliances, and political intentions. “The ‘urban revolution’ and the ‘state revolution,’” say Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guatari, “may coincide, but are not one” (313). Michael Ugarte’s reading of Emilia Pardo Bazán’s novel *La Tribuna* is a case in point. In Ugarte’s analysis of the evolution of the protagonist, Amparo (a young working class woman living in the industrial Galician city of La Coruña before the 1868 Revolution) we perceive the weak identification of the protagonist with Spain as nation-state, the faltering of the centralist policies of the state, and the manifestation of the multiple and centrifugal centers that dictated the processes of national formation in those years:

[At the beginning of the novel] for the young woman, the factory commanded veneration in its uncanny association with a powerful institution: the state... Yet even at the early stage of the novel, the narrator suggests the vulnerability of the factory and the state, by mentioning the building’s pretentious beauty

and the lack of grandeur in its appearances. And as the novel develops, Amparo's veneration ... turns into a political posture: nebulous republican sentiments. (45)

In this novel on La Coruña, protonational bonds, gender, and class consciousness find expression in the hopes raised by a Republic whose hazy federalism (that of provinces) tried to compensate for the vulnerability of the state and its unsuccessful policies of nation building. Under the pressure of localism, class, and gender, the pretentious building of Spain as nation is revealed, to be substituted only by also vague but different forms of nation-state recognition—those encompassed by the federalism of the First Republic.

Thus, this is what I propose: the nation(s) not in the fragment (capital), but rather as fragments (cities and towns). The city, not as the space modelled on the centralist state, but rather, as the bridges, roads, viaducts, railways—the city of engineers conceived by Foucault (371)—that sustains the dispersion and confluence of diverse cultural processes and national identities. The city, content and form of disperse identities and cultures. The city as fragments dictating the aesthetic diversity of the nineteenth-century novel (the symbolic—and privileged—figuration of the nation-state). No more, then, the capital as metaphor for the nation. No more foreign fictions.

ELISA MARTÍ LÓPEZ  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

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