

Historical Memory, Neoliberal Spain, and the Latin American Postcolonial Ghost: On the Politics of Recognition, Apology, and Reparation in Contemporary Spanish Historiography

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Historical Memory, European Fundamentalism, and Colonial Ghosts

To paraphrase the opening of the *Communist Manifesto*, a [new] specter is haunting Europe—the specter of *fundamentalism*.¹ These days the term “fundamentalism” is mostly applied to different forms of resistance to the West, i.e. Muslim fundamentalism. My use of fundamentalism refers to something quite different: legitimations of the West. More specifically, I use “fundamentalism” to refer to the neoliberal turn taken by many European (and American) states which re-imagine themselves in a neonationalist/imperialist fashion. They do so by forgetting their colonial past while turning their internal others into the only racist and fundamentalist subjects. Le Pen’s ultra-right politics in France or the well-documented case of xenophobia surrounding El Ejido in Spain are two clear examples of the kind of ideological processes to which I refer. In this respect I equate fundamentalism with neoliberalism here.²

I will focus on contemporary Spanish historiographical discourse and its central role in articulating this neoliberal, fundamentalist ideology. But before focusing on Spain, I would like to cite several French and German scandals in order to expose the general European scope of this fundamentalist ideology. I have chosen the public form of the “scandal,” because a “scan-



dal” captures the emerging yet non-hegemonic status of any new ideology—a status that the very nature of the scandal reveals and conceals at the same time. The scandal reflects an abject event or discourse that the majority of the population desires but cannot embrace or rejects but cannot renounce. These scandals are ultimately about the past and its memory. They point to the emergence of a new ideology endowed with a very specific historical imagination: a neoliberal, fundamentalist memory.

In November of 2002, Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, the ex-president of the French Republic and head of the Convention for the Future of the European Union, gave an interview to *Le Monde* and made several remarks about the rejection of Turkey’s application to the EU. He noted that Turkey does not belong in the European Union; in his own words, “it would represent the end of Europe” (*Le Monde*, my translation). D’Estaing said that Turkey’s “capital is not in Europe, 95% of its population is outside Europe; it is not a European country” (Schweizerische, my translation). He concluded that admitting Turkey, an official candidate since 1999, would open the European gates for other North African states: “you will have a Moroccan request (for EU membership), the King of Morocco said it long time ago” (Schweizerische, my translation).

One would have to wonder whether French colonial rule in Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was European, and thus, whether the postcolonial effects of France’s imperialism are European as well. Ultimately one could interpret d’Estaing’s remarks to mean that French postcolonial subjects are no longer European let alone French, even if they live

in France or are French citizens. D’Estaing’s latest remarks echo those he made in 1990: “Immigration must be totally stopped” (Huntington 201). D’Estaing’s declarations attest to more generalized European fears towards the uncanny postcolonial return of the colonial subject which is now transformed into the global harbinger of European demise. His remarks show that Le Pen is not an island phenomena and that we are dealing with a larger ideological problem. Very correctly, the Turkish representative to the Convention, Ali Tekin, denounced d’Estaing as a “fundamentalist” (*Le Monde*, my translation). After all, it is French fundamentalism that is at stake.

In Germany, in 1999, the exhibit “War of Extermination: Crimes of the Wehrmacht, 1941-1944” became the focus of a national scandal that forced the authorities to close the exhibit and to cancel its travel to the USA (although it was seen in Austria). This exhibit, organized by experts appointed by the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, displayed a wide array of visual material, mainly photographs, which made clear the involvement of the German regular army or *Wehrmacht* in the Holocaust. Minor mistakes in the labeling of few photographs, whereby some victims killed by the Soviet secret police appeared as murdered by the German army, created the scandal that prompted the authorities to cancel the exhibit. However, and as Omer Bartov explains,

What many Germans found hard to take was that the exhibition demonstrated in the most graphic manner the complicity of Wehrmacht soldiers in the Holocaust and other crimes of the regime, especially in the occupied

parts of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia [...]. The most obvious ramification of such revelations was [...] that the majority of Germans knew about the mass killing perpetrated by the regime and that large numbers of them actually took part in or directly facilitated the implementation of genocidal policies. (xi-xii)

The long debate over a still unbuilt Holocaust memorial shows, as Brian Ladd points out, how a unified Germany can no longer afford not to have one (168-73). Nevertheless, the scandals and debates go on. Similar “scandals” continue to arise in the intellectual circles in Germany. Jürgen Habermas’s debate with historians Andreas Hillgruber, Ernst Nolte, and Michael Stürmer, known as the *Historikerstreit*, seemed to be settled by the late ’80s (Maier), but the new scandal that erupted between Habermas and Peter Stolerdijk, around the latter’s *Rules for the Human Park* (my translation, 1999), a book with authoritarian overtones, proves that German society’s difficult memory with its own violent and racist past continues to be an uncanny moment that is repeatedly repressed but keeps coming back to haunt German society. The impact of D. J. Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (1996) in Germany, because it emphasized the individual and conscious participation of Germans, rather than that of structural societal factors, in the Holocaust, is also another important event in this mapping of Germany’s new fundamentalist refashioning. It demonstrates how Germany’s recollections with its own violent and racist past continues to be an uncanny moment that is repeatedly repressed but keeps coming back to haunt German society. Andreas Huyssen’s

summary of the German situation in 1993 still holds true for the present:

In Germany, the Holocaust signifies an absence of Jews and a traumatic burden on national identity, in which genuine attempts at mourning are hopelessly entangled with narcissistic injury, ritual breast-beating, and repression. (257)

The myriad of Spanish scandals of the same sort underscore this generalized European ideological reorganization. In his address at the 2001 Cervantes Prize awards the King, Juan Carlos I stated that Castilian language was not imposed in Latin America:

Nunca fue la nuestra lengua de imposición, sino de encuentro, a nadie se le obligó nunca a hablar en castellano: fueron los pueblos más diversos quienes hicieron suyos por voluntad libérrima el idioma de Cervantes. (Efe “Premio”)

Later that year the Minister of Culture of the right-wing Partido Popular, Pilar del Castillo, declared that minority languages such as Basque, Galician, or Catalan had not been repressed under the Franco dictatorship. In her words: “habría que ver cuándo se ha prohibido hablar una lengua en España y con qué intensidad” (Efe “Lenguas”). The historical record shows otherwise; thus, we have to question the fundamentalist ideology that permits such perceptions.

All of these “scandals” point to a new climate in Spanish and European politics. These isolated anecdotes reflect an active effort on the part of European states to forget their histories of colonial, racial, and

ethnic violence. Although these scandals are not related or comparable *per se*, they respond, nevertheless, to the same logic. They articulate a new neonationalist/imperialist ideology based on an active historical oblivion of colonialism and racism. To deny the imposition of Castilian in Latin America, for example, is a way to open the gates for other denials, such as the putative disavowal of the holocaust of 70 million natives in Latin America at the hands of Spanish imperialism during the sixteenth century. Actually, the above scandals prompted the majority leader of the Spanish parliament, Luis de Grandes, to state exactly such a thing. He declared that Castilian “no ha sido un idioma de colisión, como *no fue de colisión la conquista española* [in Latin America]” (Efe “España,” my emphasis). The fact that such words went uncontested and did not give rise to a larger scandal proves the strength of this new neoliberal, fundamentalist ideology.

This new Western fundamentalism can be traced to 1992, when Francis Fukuyama expounded the virtues of neoliberalism by claiming that it represented a new world order and, moreover, humankind’s global teleology. This was an early Hegelian attempt to justify this neonationalist/imperialist ideology. However, only five years later, in 1997, Samuel Huntington turned the global table by stating that, rather than a neoliberal common future, we might have a clash of civilizations and a proliferation of irreconcilable fundamentalisms. As he argues,

[T]he forces of integration in the world are real and are precisely what are generating counterforces of cultural assertion and civilizational consciousness [...]. The world is indeed anarchical, rife with tribal and nationality con-

flicts, but the conflicts that pose the greatest dangers for stability are those between states or groups from different civilizations. (36)

Consequently, he concludes his work with the following apocalyptic assertion:

On a worldwide basis Civilization seems in many respects to be yielding to barbarism, generating the image of an unprecedented phenomenon, a global Dark Ages, possibly descending on humanity. (321)

These “civilizational conflicts” are, I contend, nothing but a new, naturalized, neoliberal representation of postcolonial and postnational tensions. As such they are inexorably connected to modern history and cannot be forgotten or dismissed as European fundamentalism is attempting to do through its new neonationalist/imperialist ideological refashioning. In this respect Fukuyama and Huntington simply represent two different moments in the elaboration of the same neoliberal ideology. An initial moment of global hegemonic neoliberalism (Fukuyama) is followed by a reformulation whereby neoliberalism is legitimized as the civilizational harbor haunted by global barbarism (Huntington). Recent European fundamentalism represents a new step in the direction of repressing the global history that haunts neoliberalism, thus disavowing Huntington’s fears and reaffirming the universal endurance of neoliberal Europe à la Fukuyama.

A starting point to counter fundamentalism and its repression of history is a theoretical reconsideration of *ghosts*. Following Derrida, Labanyi (2002) argues that:

ghosts are the traces of those who were not allowed to leave a trace; that is, the victims of history and in particular subaltern groups, whose stories—those of the losers—are excluded from the dominant narratives of the victors [...]. It can in some respects be argued that postmodernism [...] is characterized by the recognition—in the spectral form of the simulacrum—of modernity's ghosts. (1-2)

Following Labanyi's formulation, I analyze the case of a new postmodern twist, ultimately triggered by globalization: Europe's postmodern, neoliberal dismissal of modernity's colonial subjects. Europe is deploying new forms of neonationalist/imperialist fundamentalism so that the latter's postcolonial return is once again repressed—hence their new ghostly reappearance in postmodernity. They are twice ghostly.

In this fundamentalist repression I envision, where racialized, ethnic, and postcolonial subjects are turned into ghosts, it is important to underscore the most notable—and perhaps only—exception: the Jews of the Holocaust. The Holocaust is the only act of mass violence perpetrated by the West, which so far remains immune to European historical oblivion—even slavery is dismissed elegantly from most European thinking.³ This scenario is complex and cannot be reduced to a single historical dimension, as the North American case makes clear. Tim Cole explains in his provocative book, *Selling the Holocaust*, that the USA has become the country of Holocaust memorials and museums:

America has embraced the 'Holocaust.' It is seemingly everywhere, in New York, Detroit, Los Angeles, Tampa Bay,

Houston, Dallas [...]. One writer (L. Weissberg) has noted the irony, that while 'there is no Holocaust museum in Germany,' in the United States there are more than one hundred Holocaust museums and research centres, suggesting that 'the founding of Holocaust museums' is 'a particularly American phenomenon.' (147)

Cole explains America's embrace of the Holocaust as a negative way to emphasize American nationalist ideology rather than actually reflecting on the Holocaust itself. After analyzing the architecture of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., Cole concludes:

Already a framework is established that teaches us to see the 'Holocaust' as an un-American crime. We—like the US troops [that liberated the Jewish prisoners in 1945]—have encountered someone else's crime, and stare—hands-on hips—with a mixture of disgust and fascination. The brutality of the 'Other' is a thing that both horrifies and comforts. (155)

In short, monumentalization does not guarantee historical memory; after all memory is always political. Yet, there is no memory without cultural markers (museums, school curricula, etc.), which must be politically and historically discussed and interpreted alongside different acts of reparation and apology. Even Spain's King Juan Carlos I asked, in 1992, for forgiveness from the Sephardi community for their expulsion from Spain in 1492; yet this gesture was not extended to the Muslim or Andalusí community (Arias, Gibson) or to Latin America. In 2002, Mohammed Ibn Azzuz Hakim, the most important Moroccan Hispanist,

wrote an open letter to the King asking for the same kind of redress for the Andalusí community, which also suffers from immigrational discrimination. As of 2003, that letter remains unanswered (Gibson).

We can draw one important lesson from the Jewish Holocaust: the acts of recognizing the need for apologies and reparations, which also require erecting a material memory (monuments, institutes, etc.), become necessary steps towards avoiding future historical denials or elisions. On a very positive note, Roy L. Brooks, the editor of the most comprehensive compendium on reparations (*When Sorry Isn't Enough*), salutes our times as “The Age of Apology” (3-11). He states that:

[W]hat is happening is more complex than ‘contrition chic,’ or the canonization of sentimentality. The apologies offered today can be described as ‘a matrix of guilt and mourning, atonement and national revival.’ Remorse improves the national spirit and health. It raises the moral threshold of a society. (3)

After which he calls for a “theory of redress” (6) that includes recognition, apology, and reparation. Although, the new European fundamentalist ideology is rendering more difficult to make a case for any form of redress, I would like to underscore that recognition, apology, and reparation are practices that shield us against the future return of fundamentalist violence, even though the difficulties of remembering and witnessing are many and still open to debate (Agamben *Remnants*, Lang). In short, it is important to mark history through acts of recognition,

apology, and reparation, so that ghosts enter history and leave behind a spectral realm.

This article explores the tensions between neoliberal fundamentalism, historical memory, and redress by focusing on a very specific ideological institution: recent Spanish historiography. Official historical writing is one of the main disciplines involved in the refashioning of a neonationalist/imperialist erasure of past violence. More specifically, this article draws attention to the ghost that Spanish historiography is attempting to actively forget: the postcolonial. Nineteenth-century Latin American processes of independence (1810-25) are absent from most Spanish historiography but, at the same time, they haunt the very same fundamentalist refashioning of a contemporary Spain to the point of constituting it.⁴ At this point, Spain is the second largest investor in Latin America (Relea “Inversiones”) and the latter has become the main scenario for Spanish neoimperialist, capitalist fantasies—hence the need to approach Latin America in a ghostly manner. In turn, this new globalized presence of Spain in Latin America is giving rise to anti-Spanish nationalist sentiments among many Latin American nation-states (Relea “Duhalde”). As Manuel Marín already warned in 2001:

Un sentimiento nacionalista contra las inversiones españolas en sectores claves de su economía emerge cada vez con más fuerza. Este fenómeno que ahora se presenta en Argentina puede extenderse a otros países, donde ya se han producido episodios que han creado problemas de imagen al Reino de España. Naturalmente este sentimiento antiespañol será objeto de demagogia y manipulación.

At the same time, Latin America is becoming one of the most important sources of (illegal) immigration to Spain (Ruiz Olabuénaga), thus reenacting a new globalized and ghostly ideology of Spanish imperialism towards Latin American immigrant subjects. In this context, the re-examination of the ghostly status of post-colonial Latin America in Spanish historiography is central.

Juan Sisinio Pérez Garzón, elaborates a (meta)history of neonationalist/imperialist historiography in order to rewrite Spain's historical memory:

Desentrañar, por tanto, los términos de ese [historiographical] nacionalismo no reconocido como españolista, con esa doble fuente de alimentación, la tradicionalista y la liberal democrática, exigiría desmenuzar con detalle las implicaciones de cada concepto que, por supuesto, ni son neutros ni son unidireccionales. Sobre semejante herencia historiográfica se enraíza lógicamente la mayoría de la producción de los historiadores españoles actuales [...]. En definitiva, seguimos atados a los modos nacionalistas de escribir la historia tal y como se fraguaron en el siglo del romanticismo. (108-09)

Following Pérez Garzón, I would like to emphasize that one must also criticize the present, global effects of this neonationalist/imperialist historiographical writing; it is not simply an anachronistic and romantic way of writing Spanish history. Contemporary, Spanish historiography serves in a very calculated way to script the new fundamentalist redeployment of Spain in globalization, so that the new Spanish presence in Latin America is based on and legitimized by an active oblivion of Latin America's independence and

postcolonial history. Conversely the new Latin American immigration to Spain is addressed as a new imperialist phenomenon. Neonationalist/imperialist historiography implies that Spain's presence in Latin America has not changed since 1492 and, furthermore, has never been colonialist and violent but rather "natural" as the life of the "Spanish nation" itself—hence the need to stress, for example, that Spanish language was never imposed in Latin America. In short, Spanish historiography is not only anachronistic or romantic, as Pérez Garzón argues, but also global and neonationalist/imperialist.

Negative Subjects in Nineteenth-Century History

Hayden White's description of nineteenth-century historiography still holds true for its contemporary Spanish counterpart:

in so far as historians of the second half of the nineteenth century continued to see their work as a combination of art and science, they saw it as a combination of romantic art [nationalist] on the one hand and of positivistic science on the other. (42)

From Ramón Tamames's *Una idea de España. Ayer, hoy y mañana* (1984) to the more recent work by Juan Pablo Fusi, *España. La evolución de la identidad nacional* (2000), the factual narrative of a national subject that is essentially political (kings, ministers, parties) continues to be the underlying and undisputed paradigm of historical writing. The widely discussed report of the Academy of History and its other recent publications, such as *España como nación* (2000) also respond to this

historical logic.⁵ Yet this empiricist, nationalist logic is inscribed in a larger discursive structure, which is regulated by a negative or absent subject. In order to analyze this discursive and subjective negativity, I will first examine the left-wing historiography that was hegemonic till the Partido Popular's raise to power in 1996, and then I will proceed to analyze the newer neonationalist/imperialist historiography that emerges in the 1990s and becomes dominant at the turn of the millennium.

If one approaches the Marxist-inspired historiography of Spain—developed by historians such as Miguel Artola, Manuel Tuñón de Lara, Josep Fontana, or Ramón Tamames—not as historiography but rather as narrative discourse (White), one finds an interesting discursive repetition. When presenting the nineteenth century, that is, the beginning of the formation of the so-called modern, Spanish nation-state, these historical accounts turn into negative narratives. They are structured around an absent subject, a missing actant: the bourgeoisie and its modernity. Tom Lewis captures this dilemma when he labels the Spanish nineteenth century “the century that has no name” (7).

According to these histories, modernity and the bourgeoisie are the two sides of the same historical actantial structure that waves and unravels the narrative of Spain as a national subject. At the same time, and following these accounts, the Spanish, historical subject (modernity/bourgeoisie) ultimately appears to be missing or simply fails as historical subject. In turn, this actantial absence turns the above narratives into negative histories—histories of an unaccounted subjective absence. When Tuñón de Lara reflects on the aftermath of the first Carlist War

in his *Estudios sobre el siglo XIX español*, he concludes: “qué suma de facilidades desaprovechadas en 1840: juntas, milicia, municipios, relance industrial tras la guerra, adaptación de fueros [...]” (33). In short, for Tuñón de Lara, the first half of the nineteenth century is a history wasted, “desaprovechada,” for the development of a missing subject: the bourgeoisie and its modern revolution. Similarly Ramón Tamames, discusses the Spanish Restoration in his *Una idea de España* and concludes:

[E]l 98 sellaba, en sus últimos días, el final del imperio español. Y simbólicamente se cerraba la primera parte de la Restauración, que no habiendo resuelto ninguno de los problemas principales internos del país, había perdido las últimas provincias ultramarinas. (127)

Once again Spain's historical lack of solutions to modernization defines the Restoration. Tamames continues his negative account by stressing that:

[L]a Restauración [...] supuso un pacto oligárquico [...] para frenar a otras fuerzas emergentes [...]. Y sin pretender que la Restauración pudiera haber evolucionado con sabiduría hacia un régimen liberal y de democracia considerable, al estilo británico, lo cierto es que sus prohombres no asumieron lo que podría haber sido un programa como el propuesto por los regeracionistas. (131)

In short, the Spanish Restoration is a failed or absent British democracy for Tamames.

To my knowledge, Adrian Shubert is the first historian to reflect on this problem

of a negative narrative of an absent subject in Spanish historiography. As he remarks:

Such interpretations are based on Spain's failure to hold to an already scripted scenario which, it is believed, was successfully acted out elsewhere. Because there was no fully developed industrial society, because large estates remained in place, because the agrarian elite was dominated by the nobility and, allegedly, lacked a certain outlook and because the bourgeoisie made peace with it, Spain did not have a bourgeois revolution. (3)

Schubert, in an attempt to give a positive solution and, thus, remedy the narrative of absences prevalent to that point, shifts the subject of history from the bourgeoisie to the advance of legal gains. Quoting Bartolomé Clavero, Schubert states:

[F]rom this perspective then, the bourgeois revolution is what Clavero has called 'a radical change in the way society is constituted' and one which 'does not imply any change in the groups which dominate.' It is a fundamentally *a legal*, and not an economic, revolution. (5, my emphasis)

After finding a positive, historical presence for a liberal legal framework, Schubert concludes by turning it into the narrative subject of his own history:

For the time being the most convenient solution is to replace the term bourgeois revolution with one less freighted with implications, such as liberal revolution. Such a term is applicable to Spain in the first forty years of the nineteenth century and allows us to resolve the apparent contradic-

tion that revolutionary change was overseen by the 'wrong' social group. (5)

Yet, with this elegant and positive solution, Schubert only displaces the historical problem for, although now there is a revolution, the latter does not have a new historical agent. The ancient regime continues and adapts historically, which shows that the need to narrate a "revolution" and a new "historical subject" derive from Schubert's necessity to conform to hegemonic European historiography rather than from a desire to follow historical accuracy. Furthermore, the advent of the Civil War and Francoism make very questionable the success of this liberal revolution by default. Thus, Schubert's solution remains a displaced negative history.

At the limit of this tendency, we find a whole new array of historical accounts that stress the proximity to and similarity with Europe (Tortella, Ringrose, etc.). Yet, these historical narratives whose aim is "to look like Europe," ultimately remain bound to a foundational absence, which is compensated for with arguments for similarity to other European experiences. As Pérez Garzón concludes:

tal planteamiento se realiza desde la perspectiva de una Europa de tan reciente creación que surgen interrogantes cuya dilucidación [...] tienen un punto de partida sin definir o explicitar. Ante todo, si ese molde europeo que se proyecta hacia el pasado está basado en el modelo francés, el alemán o el polaco, o si la Europa occidental excluye a la Rusia zarista y ortodoxa, o si el Mediterráneo agrario y cristiano se puede comprender sin la otra orilla del Mediterráneo musulmán

[...]. Porque, a juzgar por el tono de la mayoría de las obras citadas, se da por supuesto que Europa es sólo esa Europa del capitalismo triunfante en las regiones de Manchester o de Renania, y de cuyo ritmo, sin embargo, España siempre estuvo unos cuantos pasos por detrás. Por eso el método comparativo [...] se abandona en ciertos momentos para recurrir de modo sorprendente a explicaciones poco fundamentadas. (25-26)

In short, these histories too are determined by an absence—capitalist Europe. They distort Spain's history in behalf of an absent European normalcy. The origin of this European absence, or of its subject (modernity/bourgeoisie), lies in the fact that Spain is determined in the nineteenth century by colonial loss, not by imperialist expansion (Hobsbawn), and thus the postcolonial subject of Latin America haunts the above historical narratives by preventing them from achieving their full Europeaness. The ghostly presence of Latin America as loss ultimately determines and regulates the lack of a full European identity in this type of normalizing Spanish historiography. As a result, previous historical differences, especially racial and ethnic ones, as in the case of Jews and Arabs, amplify this European absence.

This negative narrative of nineteenth-century Spain is further complicated if we examine the other main trend in Spanish historiography. I am referring to the most recent neoliberal, fundamentalist historiography, which has become hegemonic since the late '90s and relies on the essay, rather than on the academic monographic, as a means to reach a wider audience. Neonationalist/imperialist his-

toriography starts from an assumption 180 degrees removed from the one just examined. It assumes Spain's historical "difference" as its *positive* starting point. Allow me to concentrate on one of its most illustrious representatives, Juan Pablo Fusi, and his *España. La evolución de la identidad nacional* (2000). If we read Fusi's factual and empiricist account of the formation of Spain, suddenly modernity or the bourgeoisie are no longer the narrative subjects driving this new history; now it is the "Spanish nation." Ironically enough, once Fusi identifies a new and positive subject at the center of his revisionist history, this subject still evades detection and, once again, slips into yet another narrative of absences.

Because Fusi shifts the subject of Spanish history to the "nation," the framework of his neonationalist narrative extends all the way back to imperial Spain. Now, the Spanish nation is the subject of an uninterrupted history from the Renaissance to our days. As Fusi concludes at the end of his book:

Por lo que hemos visto en este libro, España era desde principios del siglo XVI una nación, aunque hubiese sido—como muchas naciones—una nación problemática y mal vertebrada, en la que coexistirían, junto con la realidad nacional, con la cultura común, culturas y realidades regionales particulares y privativas más o menos acusadas. (280)

Yet, when he narrates nineteenth-century Spanish history, the neonationalist/imperialist subject turns up missing once again. As he summarizes the end of the Ancient Regime, Fusi concludes that the Spanish state dissolves in the nineteenth

century and only the nation remains in some stateless fashion:

Lo que había ocurrido entre 1808 y 1840 era, pues, formidable: España, que era una nación, que había sido [...] incluso el arquetipo de nación moderna desde principios del XVI, se había quedado sin Estado. (161)

However, when Fusi summarizes nineteenth-century history, he concludes that the Spanish nation only comes to life in the twentieth century:

La España del siglo XIX fue un país de centralismo oficial, pero de localismo real. Pese a las tendencias nacionalizadoras que inspiraron la creación del Estado español moderno, la fragmentación económica y geográfica del país siguió siendo considerable hasta que las transformaciones sociales y técnicas terminaron por crear un sistema nacional cohesivo, lo que no culminó hasta las primeras décadas del siglo XX. (165)

This double absence of state and nation points to the recurrent and ghostly history of negativities that define nineteenth-century Spain. Fusi is only one of the most prominent representatives of this new brand of neonationalist/imperialist, Spanish historiography. Elena Delgado has analyzed this new historical discourse in detail and has masterfully pointed out its contradictions and obsessions. As she concludes, neoliberal historical writing has become a narcissistic obsession of sorts in contemporary Spain, precisely at a moment when globalization threatens the very structure of the nation-state. In her own words:

Indeed, it could be argued that the very preeminence of the ‘national debate’ in contemporary Spain reveals precisely that which the contents of the above mentioned works often negate: that the idea of the Spanish Nation or of its cultural identity might even today be problematic. It is significant, for example, that the rhetoric used in the very titles of these works to describe the ‘Spanish non-problem’ is that same which, according to Subirats, had been displaced: labyrinths, tragedies, anguish, struggle. It could be argued, and rightly so, that the focus of many of these books is to re-examine phenomena of the past. But then we are faced with the paradox of a supposedly past problem that is nevertheless re-examined over and over, in the midst of invocations to the present Europeanized and ‘normalized’ status of Spain.

Furthermore, this neonationalist/imperialist wave of historical writing is resorting to the historical reflection of the Generation of 98, which consisted of different historicist attempts to find a “soul” to the Spanish nation—exemplified most notably by Unamuno’s “empty Castile” and *intrahistoria*. Fusi resorts specifically to Ortega y Gasset and rescues some of the latter’s less cited writings, where we find once again absence and negativity as main narrative tropes. Fusi gives this revealing quote from Ortega y Gasset’s *La redención de las provincias* (1931): “la auténtica solución consiste precisamente [...] en forjar, por medio del localismo que hay, un magnífico *nacionalismo que no hay*” (164–65, Fusi’s emphasis).

Yet, in order to demonstrate how the writing of an absent nation, such as Fusi’s,

has to do with a historical oblivion or repression of the postcolonial ghost, allow me to concentrate on Latin America. In Fusi's history of the Spanish nation there is a very notable absence: the episode of the emancipation of the Latin American colonies in early nineteenth century. Yet, the nineteenth century is the period in which Fusi's narrative of nationalist plenitude or fullness originating in Habsburg Spain falters most clearly. The only reference to Latin American emancipation is made precisely at the end of the eighteenth century in order to signify the disintegration of the Spanish empire:

Bonaparte alteró decisivamente el curso de la historia española. Ocupación francesa, levantamiento popular y guerra destruyeron el viejo orden político y social del país, el Antiguo Régimen, y con él, el orden colonial (que España perdió entre 1810 y 1825, tras varios años de guerra, con la excepción de Cuba, Puerto Rico y Filipinas que conservaría hasta 1898). Muchos observadores y protagonistas de los sucesos [...] vieron en todo ello, por analogía con lo sucedido en Francia desde 1789, la materialización de la revolución española. (158)

As soon as Fusi turns the imperialist fragmentation of the Ancient Regime into the nineteenth-century history of nation building, Latin American emancipation disappears from the same narrative two pages later:

En 1808, los primeros liberales españoles vivieron, en realidad, un espejismo revolucionario (que no iba a ser el último). La transición del Antiguo Régimen al régimen liberal [...] fue un proceso largo que se prolongó, como

se acaba de indicar, entre 1808 y 1840, y que constituyó una revolución indefinida, incompleta y discontinua. Fue un proceso que conllevó dos largas guerras (la guerra de Independencia de 1808-1813; la guerra carlista de 1833-1840) y que vio la alternancia de ensayos constitucionales y experiencias contrarrevolucionarias: la revolución gaditana (1814-1820), el Trienio Constitucional (1820-23), la década absolutista (1824-33), régimen liberal—con la Constitución de 1837 como eje—y guerra civil (1833-40). (159-60)

Fusi's retro-active and anachronistic deployment of the concept of nation to imperialist Spain, only works as a discursive strategy to mask Spain's shift from imperial to postimperialist state in the nineteenth century. The Spanish war of "Independence" of 1808-1813 is followed by the Carlist war of 1833-40; no Latin American war of independence is mentioned. The continuity of the "Spanish nation" hides the break from an imperial to a postimperialist state, that is, the break that triggers the conditions themselves for the formation of nationalism. "Forgetting" colonial loss permits the retroactive "nationalization" of imperial Spain. The Disaster (1898) then serves as a simple corrective to the project of a Spanish nation that is well under way in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The Anti-Nationalist Failure to Materialize the Absent Subject

To demonstrate how postcolonial ghosts are rewritten as absences in Spanish history, I will focus now on the most

important and sophisticated essay on Spanish nationalism: José Álvarez Junco's *Mater Dolorosa. La idea de España en el siglo XIX*, decidedly the most anti-nationalist and progressive work in its genre. Unlike most historians of this era of neo-liberal fundamentalism, Álvarez Junco affirms Spanish nationalism in order to study its formation in the nineteenth century. He believes the nation is not a natural reality that historiography must simply represent but, rather, a historical construct that historiography must analyze and explain.

By focusing on the Spanish War of Independence against the Napoleonic invasion (1808-14), Álvarez Junco proves that this war became the cornerstone and reference for early Spanish nationalism, a war that, as he himself explains, was fought at the cry of "death to the French" and not "long live Spain" (121). Furthermore, as he clearly states, this war was fought locally, following regional interests, rather than national ones (125).

The Spanish historian comes to an interesting conclusion: the Spanish war against Napoleon had originally many names ("guerra de la Península, guerra de usurpación, revolución de España"), but only in the 1830s and '40s became known as the "War of Independence," that is, only after the "other wars of independence" were fought and won in Latin America by the Creole elite (127-28). In his own words:

Fue justamente en la fase final del proceso americano de independencia cuando los españoles comenzaron a aplicar el mismo término a los acontecimientos de 1808-1814. (127)

The founding myth of Spanish nationalism is therefore a reaction against a French invasion and a surrogate form of the Latin American war for colonial independence. Anderson's hypothesis takes a more interesting turn in the case of Spain, since the Spanish nationalist model now derives from Latin American nationalism and thus ultimately responds to a (post)colonial imagination and logic: the (post)colony imagines the (post)empire, not the other way around.⁶ Ultimately this also proves that the nation does not imagine itself but is imagined by others and thus Anderson's formulation is Cartesian rather than post-humanist (i.e. does not incorporate the criticism of psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, etc.).

The foundational importance of Latin American postcoloniality in the formation of Spanish nationalism comes hand in hand with another apparently contradictory fact: Latin America's absence in nineteenth-century, nationalist, Spanish discourse. Latin America is central in the Spanish nationalist imaginary when it comes to fashioning the latter's foundations; yet references to Latin America are absent from the Spanish nationalist imaginary throughout the nineteenth century. Álvarez Junco points out that Spain showed indifference towards Latin America and towards the possibility of reunification throughout the nineteenth century:

En conjunto, las iniciativas unificadoras procedieron del Nuevo Mundo más que de España, pues, aunque subsistía la retórica anticolonial, en América la hispanofilia superaba a la hispanofobia. En España, en cambio, do-

minó más bien la indiferencia, y en círculos gubernamentales la inactividad. (530)

As Angel Loureiro demonstrates, Latin America only becomes an object of interest for Spanish nationalist discourse at the end of the nineteenth century when the USA's dominance threatens to marginalize Spain's imperialist ascendancy over independent Latin America (69); after 1898 this interest increases exponentially. Therefore, this Latin American absence in Spanish nationalism has to be understood in the light of another nationalist development.

As Álvarez Junco explains, the Medieval, Christian wars against "the Muslim infidels" become the other founding myth of Spanish nationalism. That is, these religious wars eventually gathered under the label of *Reconquista* become the other central myth of Spanish nationalism, which echo that of the new war of independence against Napoleon. In both cases it becomes a matter of expelling the invading enemy (424). Consequently, the Spanish conquest of Latin America is absent from the two foundational myths of Spanish nationalism.

However, Álvarez Junco does not examine the relationship between these two foundational myths and the central and formative absence of Latin America in nineteenth-century Spanish nationalist discourse. The war of independence par excellence is the war against the Napoleonic invader, but it is imagined after the Latin American colonial wars of independence. The Spanish imperialist invasion of Latin America consequently becomes a rather problematic and self-canceling moment of nationalist Spanish history, one that nineteenth-century Spanish nation-

alism cannot think, although any other nationalist discourse could have appropriated it as a "glorious" moment of expansion, precisely the way Francoism did later in the twentieth century.

Álvarez Junco notes that the Spanish conquest of Latin America is associated by nineteenth-century Spanish nationalist discourse with the imperial rule of the Habsburgs, the foreign monarchs who took away most popular political privileges held by Spaniards in the Middle Ages and also drove Spain into political over-expansion and economic bankruptcy. Álvarez Junco's analysis demonstrates that nineteenth-century Spanish nationalism fashions itself as a colony *vis-à-vis* a European invasion rather than as the empire that was hegemonic both in Europe and the American colonies in early modernity; but he does not explain the origin of this apparent contradiction.

Although more work is necessary, one could conclude that the absence of Latin America in nineteenth-century Spanish nationalist discourse is an ideological necessity, allowing Spain to become "the true colonial subject" of "the true subject of the war of independence," i.e. a positive national subject of modern, European history. Consequently, this nationalist refashioning requires a very important negation: Spain's own imperialist past. Spain must forget its imperialist past in order to then become "the true colonial subject" that emancipates itself from the Napoleonic invasion and, in this way, gains a place in modern Europe.

At the same time, the loss of the last colonies in 1898 represents the catalyst for the consolidation of the new conservative hegemony of Spanish nationalism, which then becomes obsessed with the Spanish imperialist legacy in Latin America. As

several historians have demonstrated, the loss of the last colonies did not represent an economic disaster; Spanish economy grew in the first decade of the twentieth century more than in any previous decade of the nineteenth century (Loureiro 67). Thus, the reason for the new nationalist obsession with Latin America in the aftermath of 1898 is not economic but nationalist or symbolic.

Although the nationalist reorganization of 1898 exceeds the limits of this analysis, I would like to put forward the hypothesis that this second period of colonial loss does not allow Spanish nationalism to model itself as a modern, surrogate subject of colonial independence from a new invader (the USA instead of France). This time, colonial loss marks Spanish nationalism as endemic of a non-modern, decadent imperialist nation. In a ghostly manner, colonial loss overdetermines Spain as a nation at a loss—a loss that retrospectively rewrites Spanish imperialist history as a history of national decadence all the way back to the Renaissance and, thus, also reestablishes its imperialist memory. This postimperialist and decadent nation no longer has a place in Europe; it no longer can be modern. Loureiro's complaint is well founded:

In contemporary discussions about the processes of national construction in Spain, the emphasis falls on the weakness of Spanish nationalism, on Spain's economic backwardness, on the role of Catholicism in the process of national construction, or on the disruptive role that peripheral nationalisms have played in the creation of a strong and unitary sense of nationalism in Spain [...]. Without diminishing the relevance of the above-mentioned fac-

tors in the processes of national construction, one would have to add the part played by the mournful memory of the lost empire, since for over a century, there has not been a single generation of Spanish intellectuals that has not been *haunted by the specter of Latin America*. (68, my emphasis)

While Loureiro does not elaborate the "spectral" presence of Latin America, I would like to join him in his criticism and claim that the postcolonial importance of Latin America in the formation of Spanish nationalism is foundational and ghostly throughout the entire nineteenth century, not only after 1898.⁷

The reason for Álvarez Junco's own dismissal or spectralization of Latin America from his study of Spanish nationalism has to do with the nationalizing effect that this spectral structure has even in the work of the most anti-nationalist historian of Spanish nationalism. Álvarez Junco's story too is overdetermined by the ghostly structure of Spanish nationalism and ends up nationalizing his anti-nationalist historiography. Some of the popularity of Álvarez Junco's work is due to this final nationalist overdetermination.

Memory, Recognition, Reparation

My analysis of recent Spanish historiography advocates that we need to incorporate loss and absence, in short any form of negativity or ghostliness, as a present component of any account of Spanish history. However, if we do so, we have to revise the premise of a national Spanish subject. What is negative is not the absent, national, Spanish subject, but

rather the negative presence of Latin America and Europe, which makes impossible, and thus negative, a separate and self-contained, national, Spanish subject. To employ a Lacanian formulation, Spain is the subject of an Atlantic symbolic order in which the Other is European imperialism. Within this order, Spanish (post)imperialism, rather than nationalism, emerges as subject. Moreover, Spain emerges not as a subject imagined by itself, as Anderson would have it, but imagined by (post)colonial others, hence the necessity to forget them and turn them into ghosts.⁸

The absences analyzed above point to a ghostly dynamic, which in Derrida's and Labanyi's words, must be acknowledged and marked, so that we reconstitute their historical existence; after all, ghosts must be redressed. Furthermore, a discourse of redress (recognition, apology, and reparation) is unthinkable in a contemporary Spain overdetermined by neoliberalism's fundamentalist ideology. As far as I know, to this day, the Spanish state has not issued a public apology to Latin America—or to the Muslim, Arab world. The Sephardi community remains the only Spanish precedent for redress (Gibson). Yet, my own academic analysis reveals that unless we mark and restore these moments of negativity in Spanish history and politics, we are bound to go on living surrounded by ghosts and scandals. Historical oblivion, as Nietzsche or Renan would argue, is necessary for the formation of nationalism; consequently we are witnesses to a neonationalist, fundamentalist Spain that is going to grow even more oblivious of its past in years to come. Conversely, the haunting of ghosts will continue until they are recognized, apologized, and reparations are made.

Scholars like myself, located in North-American academic positions, constitute a minority privileged enough to escape the direct hegemony of the Spanish state and its institutions—although historians such as Pérez Garzón or Álvarez Junco are very meritorious exceptions. I would propose that we engage in a spectral historiography. This would entail several projects. First of all we must dialogue with anti-nationalist historians such as Pérez Garzón or Álvarez Junco, so that our positions, or theirs, are not co-opted as nationally overdetermined (i.e. so that we are not pitted against each other through accusations of being “Yankees” or “*españolistas*”). Secondly we must begin to recuperate alternative, non-nationalist historiography, as in the case of Américo Castro or Adolfo de Castro y Rossi—one of the first modern Spanish writers to vindicate Jews and Arabs as part of Spanish history (Álvarez Junco 402). Finally, we must also begin to talk about recognition, apology, and reparation. This could have wide-range effects, beginning with the reexamination of the second article of the Spanish constitution that states “la indisoluble unidad de la Nación española” and ending with the implementation of a more multicultural curricula across the educational spectrum.

Neonationalist/imperialist political laws such as the one cited above, which are so oblivious of Spanish history, are bound to legitimize fundamentalist Spanish redeployments in Latin America and among Latin American immigrants in Spain. In this respect, the words of Randall Robinson on the issue of reparations to African Americans in the USA are instructive. When reflecting on previous discussions on reparation, he cites Harvard Professor Derrick Bell and concludes that:

[I]f Bell is right that African Americans will not be compensated for the massive wrongs and social injuries inflicted upon them by their government, during and after slavery, then there is *no* chance that America can solve its racial problems. (204)

Similarly, if Spain does not recognize its imperialist past and its violent effects in Latin America and Spain, then the nationalist and postcolonial problems haunting Spain will never be solved. Giorgio Agamben's theory on witnessing (*Remnants*) as well as Berel Lang's ethical elaboration on forgiveness and revenge (*Future*) constitute a good starting point to understand the complexities of remembering the past and acknowledging ghosts.

Moreover, if we opt for discourses of redress, we will be developing a new (meta)historiography that could set the example for the rest of Europe when it comes to assuming both our colonial past and our postimperialist ghostly present. Such (meta)historiography would be politically and ethically involved in a new multiculturalism that could be capable of acknowledging the other. Furthermore, this (meta)historiography would finally bring into history the ghostly absences that endemically haunt Spanish historiography and turn it into a gothic labyrinth of absences.

Notes

¹ I would like to acknowledge the help and counsel given by Elena Delgado, José María Portillo, Simon Doubleday, and Valerie Weinstein. Without their vast historiographic knowledge this article could not have been written.

² I employ the preposition "neo-" in order to emphasize the new, globalized, and fundamentalist nature of liberalism/nationalism/imperialism in

first-world states. Ultimately, once the historical record is settled, I believe we will resort to the traditional use of the terms without the preposition.

³ Even in the case of Giorgio Agamben and his elaboration of the figure of the "homo sacer" and of sovereignty (*Homo Sacer*), he leaps from the Middle Ages to modern times and the Holocaust without making a single reference to slavery. The resulting history re-centers Europe as the epistemological and historical site of universal biopolitics. Agamben's biopolitics, which lack a geopolitical dimension, has the effect of obliterating the Atlantic experience of slavery. Moreover, there are few references to contemporary migration in his work. For a more detailed elaboration of this problem see my forthcoming "Posnacionalismo y biopolítica."

⁴ Obviously the other main geopolitical ghosts of Spanish historiography are peripheral nationalisms and subaltern subjects (rural, anarchist, etc.). Gender/sexuality is a biopolitical ghost. Yet, my emphasis on Latin America is a first attempt to point in a different direction from which these other ghosts can also be addressed.

⁵ As Simon Doubleday argues, British Hispanism, because of its aura of empiricism, might also be complicit in the articulation of a nationalist/empiricist Spanish historiography and, furthermore, might represent the latter's institutional reference ("English Hispanists").

⁶ In a more Lacanian way, we would have to say that Spanish nationalism imagines itself as being imagined by the Latin American (post)colony, which is, in turn, imagined by the Spanish empire. I insert the "(post)" in parenthesis because what is at stake is precisely the shift from colonial to postcolonial. Even though in Latin America, Spanish nationalism imagines itself being imagined by the (deceased) Spanish empire.

⁷ Another important line of inquiry would represent a feminist reconsideration of nationalist history. Although this is a working hypothesis, I would advance the thesis that, in the nineteenth century, the Spanish nationalist discourse shifts from masculinist ideas of "pueblo" as agent of independence to female tropes of "madre patria" as

agent of imperialist loss. The fact that, at that time, women fought for citizenship, reproduction, and freedom of movement across the Atlantic, as testified by the scandals of “trata de blancas,” demands a full feminist reconsideration of my present geopolitical approach.

⁸ As José María Portillo acknowledges, this Atlantic order does not only differentiate Spain from the colonies, but from the state itself. This anecdote is illustrative of a larger historical problem. When discussing the drafting of the liberal constitution of 1812, Portillo explains:

The idea of local and territorial autonomy through the implementation of ‘ayuntamientos’ and ‘diputaciones provinciales’ was introduced in the Spanish constitution of 1812 following the suggestions of a Mexican deputy (Miguel Ramos Arizpe) inspired by the Basque foral institutions—Juntas generales and diputaciones.

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