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"Modern" and "Moderno": Modernist Studies, 1898, and Spain
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Catalan Review, Vol. XIV, number 1-2, (2000), p. 75-116

"MODERN" AND "MODERNO": MODERNIST STUDIES, 1898, AND SPAIN

BRAD EPPS

*For Carme Fernández Mera
For Geoffrey Ribbans, again*

THE STORY OF O: A THEORETICAL EXCURSUS

I shall speak, then, of a letter. Not the first, nor one entirely neutral, though it may at times seem so. The "a" and the "e" whose phonetic similarity is essential to Derrida's conception of *différance*, or *différance*, are not here primarily in question. Rather, the letter of which I shall speak is an "o." Not just any old "o," but the "o" of "modern." And of "moderno." There is a difference here too, but not the one many have come to expect. To most scholars of Spain and its former colonies, whether fans or foes of such linguistic games, whether "Latin Americanists," "Peninsularists," "Generalists," or "Hispanists," the "o" of "modern" and "moderno" rings, I venture to say, a rather well-established way, conjuring up differing, even opposing, images of power, politics, and identity. So much hinges, it seems, on the presence and absence of an "o", so much sense in an ending. English and Spanish, Britain and Spain, Anglo-America and Latin America, one cultural conglomerate and another, in all their tired and not entirely untrue binary force, seem to be once again at work. And many of you may well imagine what is coming: a comparative study of the differences between one place and another, one history and other, one aesthetic movement and another, modernism and *modernismo*. There are important differences between the two, undoubtedly, and worth sounding out. But what if the difference were in a different site? Had a different sound? Were not reducible to a play of presence and absence, of having and having not? What if the difference were not just *between* two terms, "modern" and "moderno", but also *within* one? What if the "o" in question were not at the end, but at the beginning? And its difference a matter of vocalization, of speech, and not just of writing? What if the "modern" I have so scrupulously set in quotation marks alongside "moderno" were not English, but Catalan?

Of course, some of you may have been inclined to read "modern" from the beginning as Catalan. Inclined to utter the "o" of "modern" as if it were a "u," as if the word were "mudern," with its corresponding

syllable duly unstressed. After all, this is the *Catalan Review*, and for all the English in the world, Catalan must somehow, somewhere, lie in waiting. And in Catalan, at least in some regions where it is spoken, the “o” in unstressed syllables, “en sil·labes àtones,” is pronounced the same as the “u.” Or as one manual puts it, “tocant al so vocàlic de la primera sil·laba, entre mots com ara *roser, ploreu, doneu, pometa*, escrits amb o, i mots com *fullam, punxó, ullal, unglada, llunyà*, escrits amb u no existeix, doncs, cap diferència de pronunciació.” [regarding the vocalic sound of the first syllable of words such as *roser, ploreu, doneu, pometa*, written with an “o,” and words such as *fullam, punxó, ullal, unglada, llunyà*, written with a “u,” there is, then, no difference in pronunciation] (Jané, 15). Cap diferència, aucune différence, ninguna diferencia, no difference. This *lack of difference* calls to mind another lack of difference, the so-called “vocal neutra” (neutral vowel) that affects the “a” and the “e,” at least in the area of Barcelona and the Balearic Islands (“el català oriental”). It is this lack of phonetically appreciable difference that leads many a speaker and student of Catalan to confuse, in writing, “cove” and “cova,” “cabra” and “cabre.” In a sense, then, the letter in question is also, in its (non)-differential ramifications, in its vocalic con-fusions, an “a” or an “e.” And also, as indicated, a “u.” “I” alone being, it would appear, absent. But I insist: if *anyone* was inclined to read “modern” as Catalan, in Catalan, maybe even as Catalans, but *did not*, it might not only be because the present text is written in English and is presented in a American academic context, in the *English*-titled *Catalan Review*. For the practice of ceding to the more populous and “international” language that continues to inhabit many Catalans in Catalunya obviously inhabits many of the cultural allies of Catalunya in the United States.¹ The tendency on the part of Catalans to address foreigners in Catalunya in Spanish or in English, noted by any number of sociolinguistic studies, by editorials and letters in *L’Avui*, and by myself from personal experience is not beside the point. And the point here is the implication of the I—the unequal, deceptively (non)-differential implication of the I—in the twists and turns of language and national identity.

1 I deploy the term “Catalunya” rather than either the English “Catalonia”—another play between, among others, an “o” and a “u”—or the more encompassing “Països Catalans.” The “territoriality” of Catalan, its place vis-à-vis Mallorcan, Menorcan, or especially Valencian, is a subject of considerable *political* debate. Most linguists, however, accept “Catalan” as a language spoken in all of the territories (and others) adduced above. That said, I will be limiting myself here to the least contested (yet still quite contested) of the relations between language and territory: Catalan and Catalunya.

Personal experience, the role of the I, is fraught with unjustifiable partialities and given to unjustifiable generalities, and is typically suspect in a work of critical pretensions, even when objectivity is itself among the objects of critique. Suspect, risky even, the role of personal experience in criticism is nonetheless quite real, however much it is bracketed, questioned, or placed in quotation marks.² I take the risk and contend that some of us, even in the context of the *Catalan Review* (not, mind you, *La Revista Catalana*) are inclined, indeed taught or conditioned, to ascribe an uneven value to the quotation marks and to read "moderno" alone as other than English. This says something, I submit, not just about terms or concepts, but also about us, whatever our national origins and our actual place of residence, whatever our "native" tongue. I write this in English, the *lingua franca* of the modern world, and it is not an innocent act. For "modern" is also other than English, and if we do not here read the "o" as sounding like a "u" from the very first, we read in effect the confident linguistic dominance of English and our own participation, perhaps even despite ourselves, in it. And so, I will insist that the "i," in its ostensibly more commanding form as "I," is implicated in this play of vowels as well, implicated as an instance of the subject, in general, but also of a specific, specialized subject, the one supposed to know, as Lacan formulates it. All of this touches at the very institutional heart, if there is one, of Hispanism: its inclusions and exclusions; its often smugly disinterested interests and anxiously objective objects; its varyingly scientific pretensions; its humanist, neo-humanist, and even anti-humanist proclamations; its national and nationalist implications; its ideologies. Richard Cardwell, working on the cultural period in Spain that here concerns me, follows Foucault and advocates an "effective history" that takes into account the ideological differences of the critics who write literary history (86-87, in Mainer/Rico). The task is daunting, dizzyingly self-reflective, and, in principle, unending. It is also critical. For Cardwell, it is inseparable from struggles for power. I agree, but only to the degree that we recognize that such a formulation is itself a strategy in a struggle for power, one that, among other things, enhances the dramatic appeal of the critic.

Needless to say, not all struggles for power are equally powerful, but even within the relatively delimited sphere of literary criticism and cultural studies the possibility of a *truly neutral position* that does not implicate the I in a wider play of power may be all but chimerical. With respect to the far from self-evident status of Catalan in Hispanism, the power plays assume national, even nationalist, dimensions, and by no means only, or even primarily, on the part of

² See Joan Scott's essay on "experience."

"interested" Catalans. A certain Spanish nationalist discourse dodges the nationalist marker—itself so marked by Francoism—and tends to reserve it instead for Galicians, Basques, and Catalans, among others, who do not ascribe to a unified vision of Spain or who remain skeptical of the notion of pluralism as presently *constituted*.³ These are issues of great currency: in the fall of 1997 the Spanish Ministry of Education, headed by Esperanza Aguirre, elaborated a proposal for a "royal decree" aimed at unifying the vision of Spanish history and the humanities taught in schools throughout the country. The decree did not prosper, though it continues to reassert itself declarations of Spanish unity emitted from San Millán de la Cogolla, "glossed" as the "birthplace of Castilian," and, more concertedly, in governmental initiatives aimed at securing more hours of schooling in history, language, and literature. Again, the question of which or what history, language, and literature obtains.⁴ The question ripples in myriad directions, entailing such other sights of representation as translations, dubbings, labels, and teller machines, flags, insignias, national identity cards, passports, and automobile license plates; announcements for royal weddings and the stance to assume during the national anthem. If ever there were a case to be made for dialogue between the more historically established disciplines, including philology, and the increasingly established discipline of cultural studies, it is here.

That said, the debates that punctuate Spanish culture in the modern, or *modernista*, period appear to have had, with some notable exceptions (Geoffrey Ribbans, John Butt, Joan Lluís Marfany, José-Carlos Mainer, among others⁵), relatively little impact on Hispanists in the United States and elsewhere, for whom the vision of Spain, multicultural caveats notwithstanding, seems to be basically quite unified. Despite significant developments, such as a conference on "Multilingual Spain" celebrated in 1999 at the University of Santa Barbara, moderate critical interest in a select number of writers, or various curricular attempts at attending to the "periphery," much remains the same. In fact, the reading lists and course offerings of most programs in Spanish literature in the United States indicate that the unified or unitary vision of Spain is safe and sound: Spanish literature is literature written in the Spanish language, and the Spanish language is Castilian. The anxious defense of Spanish in the United States, its

³ The current Spanish constitution states explicitly that it is every Spaniard's duty (*deber*) to know Castilian and his or her right (*derecho*) to know Catalan, Galician, and/or Euskera.

⁴ See Isidor Cònsul's significantly titled "Sant tornem-hi amb la literatura."

⁵ Butt and Marfany are based in Britain; Ribbans, though long based in the United States, began his career in Britain.

promotion there as an embattled tongue, only strengthens such a vision.⁶ Often, it is a vision that does not see, or hear, the other languages of Spain, that pays only lip service to Spain's disputable plurinationality, and that underestimates or dismisses the investments of individual subjects, however collected or collocated, in the production and transmission of (inter)national culture. It is along these lines that Joan Ramon Resina, writing in 1988, questions the state of Hispanism and insists on the role of individual subjects. "Let us not be vague about it," Resina writes, "it is not by disembodiment the question and referring to the impersonal structures of academia that we will understand the abnormality of the vacuum created around Catalan culture" (225). For Resina, "it is, after all, departments of Iberian languages (known generally as departments of Spanish and Portuguese), and departments of Romance Languages and of Comparative Literature that have a stake in the status of Catalan literature" (225). It is, he asserts, the "specialist's affair," the chore of the professional Hispanist, of the subject supposed to know. Be that as it may, Resina's refusal of impersonal structures entails their reiteration: from "uniformed administrative personnel" to departmental experts, the institutional structure holds firm. The shift is accordingly one of degree rather than order. Resina has subsequently come to stress the impersonal, structural aspects of the situation of Catalan in academic departments, the habits, reflexes, and rewards that punctuate the system in general.⁷ In the process, he indicates ever more clearly what he had suggested earlier: the "abnormal vacuum" around Catalan culture is in fact the *normal* space of these departments and, more generally, of Hispanism.

Resina posits, in his article from 1988, that there is a "rule of silence imposed on Catalan authors in American academia," and that Mercè Rodoreda is the exception that proves the rule. Later developments, as Resina knows, might add the name of Carme Riera to that exceptional list, but on the whole the rule of silence has hardly been

6 In the United States, the rhetoric of linguistic marginalization privileges Spanish and tends to marginalize other languages such as Vietnamese or, more powerfully still, Navajo. The "defensa de la lengua española," for all its anxious twists and turns, plays well the world over. In a panel discussion held in January 2000 at the Casa de las Américas in Havana, Cuba, Puerto Rican writer Ana Lydia Vega launched a passionate defense of the Spanish language that was received, in general, with enthusiasm by the audience. The exception, which led to others, was a member of the audience who protested that there are indeed significant numbers of Cubans whose mother tongue is Creole. Poet Nancy Morejón responded by reasserting the connection between Cuba and the Spanish language. The very idea that a Cuban might not speak Spanish and yet still be a Cuban ruffled more than a few feathers but did get, as it were, a hearing.

7 See Resina's "Hispanism and Its Discontents." Resina extended his structural argument at a conference celebrated at Indiana University in March 2000.

overturned. Indeed, the "rule of silence" is likely to be even more resounding for those writing in Galician and Euskera, let alone such languages as Bable that scarcely merit even a nod of recognition from many a professional of language and literature.⁸ Self-styled new, theoretically informed perspectives are not always any more attentive to linguistic difference, and, in spite of good intentions, may in fact be less so. Many a professional of Spanish cultural studies,⁹ for whom multiculturalism, heterogeneity, and difference frequently appear to have little to do with the actual study of these "other" languages, maintains a bilateral protocol according to which expression in a language other than English is almost invariably in Castilian. Symptomatic of such a state of affairs is a recently published collection titled *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies* in which a brief chapter by Tony Morgan on "devolution and the recovery of diversity" has little room for the articulation of diversity.¹⁰ "Barcelona's Barrio Gótico" (86), "the new Museo de Historia Catalana" (89), and "the 1998 *Ley de Política Lingüística* [sic] (Catalan Language Policy Law)" are proffered, without the slightest hesitation, in Castilian. The same goes for the "fiestas" of "rural Catalonia" that "revived to recover local identity" (88). Obviously, local identity did not revive all that globally, for no "festes," "barris gòtics," "museus d'història," or "lleis de política lingüística" are to be found in this very recent, eminently urbane, and presumably cutting-edge British publication. The impression that the reader of English is also reading difference, or that something uniquely and untranslatably Spanish is being conveyed amid the italics and quotation marks (one could have as easily written "festivals," "Gothic Quarter," or "Museum of Catalan History"), is as deceptive as it is conventional. What is also conventionally deceptive, and more troubling, is the impression that something Catalan is conveyed as uniquely and untranslatably Spanish; or that Catalan "local identity"—rural, gothic, or otherwise—cannot quite dispense with the language of the State if it is to have international currency. The "rule of silence" can hold even when it is presented as being contravened; recovery can take the form of yet another covering over.

As anyone who has taken the Talgo from Barcelona to Montpellier or Paris might know, the internationality of Catalan is indeed vexed: as

⁸ The specter of a potentially expansive, and reductive, hierarchy of marginalization lurks ominously in such assertions and should be acknowledged even as it is questioned.

⁹ Cultural Studies is a field—a field to end all fields—that must yet contend with what many perceive as a decidedly Anglo-American stamp.

¹⁰ Morgan's piece, generally quite informative, does not account for the volume as a whole. And yet, the editors of the volume are implicated therein.

the train moves, there are first announcements in Castilian and then in Catalan, and then, once the border is crossed, first in French and then in Castilian. The trip has thus a highly symbolic roll. Catalan disappears at the border, and history and reality be damned. Or at least any reality and history not backed by a sovereign state can be damned. Little wonder that Andorra's recent entrance in the United Nations should have had such importance for many Catalan speakers, because it was the first time the language had, shall we say, an official hearing there. It is therefore striking that those who are presumably most attuned to symbolism, who study it and make it an integral part of their livelihood, should find nothing amiss with using one and only one language of Spain, *the required language* of the Spanish State, particularly when examining diversity. The aforementioned exercise in Spanish cultural studies, for all its claims to "challenge accepted ideas," seems little committed to studying Spain as other than a thing articulated and disarticulated in Castilian (and obviously, albeit on a different level, English). Accordingly, Resina's argument might be extended to Great Britain and perhaps more specifically to England. Of course, the situation of Catalan Studies in Great Britain is considerably different from what it is in the United States, and is arguably more in line with the situation in Spain, where Catalan Studies, or some variant thereof, constitute a more clearly demarcated, even separate, field. The question of demarcation, division, and separation, of great consequence for any attempt to *include* Catalan as a subject of concern for the departments that Resina cites (there are of course others, most notably departments of Hispanic Studies), complicates matters extraordinarily. For to include Catalan under the rubric of Hispanism, to study it as *part* of Hispanic Studies, is to contend with the resistance of any number of scholars of Spanish, that is to say Castilian, *and* the resistance of any number of scholars of Catalan itself. Nomenclature proves daunting. Spanish, Hispanic, Iberian, Romance, and even Peninsular: each term in use leaves something to be desired (Euskera is not Romance; Tenerife, Mallorca, and Ceuta are not peninsular). Or it leaves something silent, silenced.

To be sure, the "rule of silence" is, in some nagging sense, ineluctable; total expression, expression without reserve, impossible. Resina, of course, does not suggest otherwise, and aims at undoing a specific silence whose effects are still quite general, a silence that is both individually embodied and structural, as in some significant way *beyond the individual body*. For "the rule of silence," even in its presumably most delimited form, precedes and exceeds the individual specialist, department, university and indeed the United States of America as a whole. It is a "rule" that is quite possibly as sharp in Spain as elsewhere, if not indeed sharper, where Catalan literature, as

already noted, tends either to exist as a separate academic field or to not exist at all. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, but the problem, which Resina rightly notes as implicating in powerfully personal ways the specialist in the United States, is also, even primarily, a *problem of Spain*. However innocently, however perversely, Hispanists in the United States may have learned their lesson well: if Catalan scarcely figures as an object of study in Madrid and Huelva, why should it figure in Houston and Seattle? If Galician scarcely figures in Barcelona, and if Euskera scarcely figures in Vigo, why should either figure in Cleveland or Atlanta? And if they do figure there, it may well be as an *accident* of individuality, not as a departmentally structured decision.¹¹ And yet, departmentally structured decisions, projects and programs of study, *are* the work of "embodied individuals," though the effects of alienation, by which a department, university, or nation assumes a curiously impersonal and deadening life of its own, should certainly not be discounted. Resina is right, I believe, to push at the responsibility of the specialist, to insist on the implications of the "I" in the study and relay of culture and, more recently, to insist that some reference to impersonal—or hyperpersonal—structures is unavoidable. Language itself is just such a structure, preceding and exceeding each and every individual, marking and demarcating each and every instance of the "I." I have been playing with this "I" as an inflated version of the "i" that alone, of vowels, seems absent from the chain that I have evoked, in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek manner, in the Catalan "modern." In a certain sense, I can now admit that it is a foolish game, subject to all sorts of inconsistencies and inadequacies, not the least of which is its apparent faith in a conventional vocalic network (a, e, i, o, u) that is nonetheless limited, culturally, from the outset.

Limited, this vocalic network is also contradicted by the reality of its parts: the network may be Western, but it is not without significant internal tensions. For the "i" does not play, "I" do not play, the same in Catalan, or French, or Castilian (or is it Spanish?). "Jo," "Je," and "Yo" do not lend themselves to the same vocalic tricks, to the same con-fusion, to the *same articulation of difference*. And yet, that is precisely the point, dare I say my point. There is no identity, certainly no neat translinguistic identity, by which difference is securely articulated: *aucune identité, ninguna identidad, cap identitat*.¹² And to

¹¹ The limited presence of Catalan at my university is *not* the result of a departmental decision on behalf of Catalan language and culture or even on behalf of Romance Languages and Literatures in general. Rather, it is the result of a decision to retain someone who also *happens* to be interested in Catalan.

¹² Translingualism, or translation, may betray what it would carry over; but it may also be, as Gayatri Spivak maintains, "the most intimate act of reading" (178), so intimate

loop the loop, "no identity" implicates, as a structural necessity, "no difference." If difference holds, it also holds because within a given language there may be no difference, cap *diferència*, between, for instance, the sound of an "o" and a "u," an "a" and an "e." If I can play with "i" (play with myself, as some will surely say) in one linguistic realm and not another, it is not without a drag that is itself a testimony to difference. I might as well say that the same, or something very similar, goes for Derrida's "différance," to which I am obviously in debt. The play between the "a" and the "e" works, so to speak, in French and English, but finds itself in trouble when it comes to Castilian, Italian, or Catalan. Or rather, it works, and plays, in a different way. "Diferancia" and "diferancia" do not allow for the same silences and surprises across speech and writing as "différance" and "différance." One of the reasons is that language entails languages, in the plural, and that part of this plurality is the differing fate of phonetics. Derrida asserts that there is no phonetic writing, no "purely and rigorously phonetic writing" (5), but in so doing he risks an arrogance proper to inductive thought: just because he knows of no "purely and rigorously" phonetic writing does not mean that one does not, could not, exist. But this may be a conundrum better left to Borges. For our purposes, even if there is no "purely and rigorously" phonetic writing, that does not mean that all writings, let alone all languages, are *not* phonetic in the *same* way. The difference between speech and writing that Derrida sounds out in an almost stereotypically universalizing French runs a different course once differing phonetic regimes are admitted, once the linguistic field is recognized, that is, as sociohistorical. Yet, Derrida excludes *particular* problems of history, context, stage, or period in order to advance a "general system" of the "economy" of difference and, interestingly, of an "économie de la mort" [economy of death] (4).

Excluded, these problems return, in my reading of "modern," with something of a vengeance. That does not mean that "différance" is thereby gainsaid, far from it. Put bluntly, the failure of Derrida's "différance" to function always and everywhere the same, its *particular* sociohistorical failure, is the very token of its success, in *general*. Such success may be, however, an effect of an almost

that communication with the other relies on the non-assimilative inference of the other's intimacy. Accordingly, an ethically viable communication accepts and respects a non-communicative reserve, a differential crevice, a locale that does not admit to globalization and that nonetheless admits—or submits—repeatedly to it. As Homi Bhabha, quoting a translated Walter Benjamin, puts it, what is here involved is "the irresolution, or liminality, of 'translation', the *element of resistance* in the process of transformation, 'that element in a translation which does not lend itself to translation'" (224, emphasis original).

laughable play of high philosophy that dances around, and belittles, social history.¹³ More pointedly, it may also be the effect of the standardization or normalization of language that Derrida, for whatever reason, does not acknowledge except, again, in the most general of ways.¹⁴ Here too difference imposes itself. Not all languages have attained the same degree of standardization or normalization, let alone the same "legality," and hence violation, infringement, invention, rebellion, and resistance, so important to a certain critical ethos, are also not of the same sort. I will try to spell things out. The difference that I am invoking around an "o" does not constitute what Derrida calls, in French, "une grosse faute d'orthographe" [a gross spelling mistake] and a "manquement à l'orthodoxie" and "à la loi" [a violation of orthodoxy and the law] of writing (3). I write "modern" and not "mudern" precisely in order to respect a certain law that is, in turn, itself hardly the object of respect by "different," more powerful languages. Unorthodox behavior can assume unorthodox forms, not the least of which is that of a certain orthodoxy. The point is not idle. Derrida is no stranger to the symbolic benefit of contravention (of orthodoxy) or to what Lacan, thinking a bit beyond contravention itself, deftly styles as the narcissistic advantages of reproof and reprobation (398). And indeed Derrida presents "différance" as a virtual, and even virtuous, act of contumacy, one just begging for

¹³ The terms—"play," "laughter," and "dance"—are all Derrida's, via Nietzsche (29).

¹⁴ Derrida protests, over and again, that "différance" is neither a word nor a concept. It is of course both, and Derrida's protestations only drive home the susceptibility of "différance" to the general laws of linguistic thought. His refusal to acknowledge "différance" as a word or concept *tout court* obviously entails a refusal to acknowledge it as a word or concept *en français*. Indeed, Derrida mentions the French language only elliptically through a reference to "le Littré" (8), the dictionary, by which "différance" is endowed with a double etymological support (as deferral—or "temporization"—and as differentiation—or "spacing"). Accordingly, this word that is not a word nonetheless calls forth words that have a *codified history* that involves Latin, Greek, and in an anxious philological and philosophical move, German. The symbolic power of these three "other" languages—the languages of nothing less than "Western philosophy" or "Western thought" writ large—is here as obvious as it is obscure(d). Even as he repeats that "différance" is not a word or concept, Derrida worries about translation—always to an unstated, and indeed all but "naturalized," French, "notre langue" (28). More precisely, he worries about the Latinate legacy of "différance" and, by necessary implication, "différance." The German, via Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, and Freud (and hence as *modern philosophical language par excellence*), *must* come into play and must come into play moreover as *not that different* from a French accented "différance." Derrida's makes much of Hegel's expression "*different Beziehung*," which allows for a neater relay between languages (French and German) than would otherwise have been the case had Hegel used the more common—one is tempted to say, more German—"Unterschied" or *Verschiedenheit* (14). If "différance" were really not a word, it would matter little whether or not some cognate of it appeared in *another* language. To be sure, there is a great deal of play here, but it is a play, for all the shufflings, of a decidedly masterful sort.

correction, for the censorial rebuke of the law or at least of the subject who abides by the law. And although Derrida declares that his "néo-graphisme" [neo-graphism] (3) is not intended "d'abord ni simplement pour le scandale du lecteur ou du grammarien" [first or simply to scandalize the reader or the grammarian], the scandal of invention and inventiveness still obtains. Little wonder that "différance" (note the conservation of the accent) has had such success in academic circles where rebellion can take the highly (in)significant form of a spelling error, *willfully committed*.

I will insist on the willfulness of the mistake, its conscious and conscientious formation, its deliberate inventiveness, its groundbreaking novelty, for Derrida does not seem particularly interested here in ignoring the law, but in recognizing, and perhaps *amplifying*, its power. For in amplifying the power of the law, he amplifies the possibilities and practices of its contravention, its aggravation. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, or certainly no intellectually viable excuse. Derrida's *little* "grosse faute," his *willful* violation of the *law* of writing (not the rules or norms or even the laws, but the law, *la loi*), is perfectly respectful, then, of a vague yet incisive "intellectual law" whose *modern values* are inventiveness, deliberation, and something like scandal and rebellion. It is also perfectly respectful of the law of the French language, a law that has long been constituted, enshrined even, in the heads if not the hearts of all French citizens. Derrida knows what he is doing, or seems to think he does, and his violation of the law, confined to the realm of the letter, can proffer the glamour and drama of rebellion without having to contend with, even as a distant memory, anything so severe as, say, the prohibition, silencing, and real historical "death" of the very language in which he writes. Here, then, is another difference. The violation of the law of the Catalan language is not of the same order as the violation of the law of the French language quite simply because *both* are the products of history, persistently contextualized as *national history*. Internationally, this national history is one of different, even conflicting, processes of standardization and normalization. French has had (and has) its say in the suppression of Catalan as has Castilian. Moreover, both have long been equipped with prestigious academies that keep vigil over their respective languages. In and out of the academies, exasperated French disquiet over Anglicisms and irritated Spanish concern about the fate of the "ñ" in the internet are as serious as they are risible. For even as many French and Spanish speakers signal the "perils" of the dominance of the English language, they disavow the "perils" of a dominance articulated, *the world over*, in their own languages. History, high and low, is not as incidental as Derrida might have us believe. And of beliefs, indeed of

prejudices (such as the “énorme préjugé” that there is a phonetic writing, 5), there are many.

Isabel-Clara Simó notes that one of the “prejudicis més tronats sobre el català i el castellà” is that “el català és espontani, local, fàcil, entranyable” while “el castellà és elaborat, universal, exigent.” [one of the most ragged prejudices regarding Catalan and Castilian is that Catalan is spontaneous, local, easy, and warm while Castilian is elaborate, universal, and demanding]. As Simó intimates, the conventional marks of gender are in full force, especially when we recall another prejudice according to which Catalan is the language of the home and Castilian the language of politics and culture. This prejudice is not unique and affects a number of minoritized languages such as Galician or Corsican. It affects, moreover, the very grammaticality of those languages, or better yet the ethics and politics of grammatically. Indeed, Simó goes on to note that “una falta gramatical en català és un pecadet simpàtic” while “en castellà és mostra d’ignorància inadmissible” [a grammatical mistake in Catalan is an endearing peccadillo while in Castilian it is evidence of unacceptable ignorance]. If Simó is correct, and I believe she is, the same speaking subject can experience different standards of grammatical (in)correctness in different languages. These different grammatical standards in turn speak to the subject, telling her a story and a history—a *historia* or *història*—of unequal power. And for the modern speaker of Catalan, typically a “bilingual” speaker, the story may well be one of division, defeat, and domination. Such division, defeat, and domination are all the more resonant once one reckons with the not entirely sublimated symbolism of domesticity, etymologically tied to domination, to taming, and hence to violence. Sweet and cozy as it may be, the home, long the space of women and of Catalan, is marked by an uncanny history of domination—and of resistance. For Simó, resistance takes the shape of endorsing the recent and highly polemical “law of Catalan,” a law that would respond to and resist another, more powerful law, the law of Spanish that—without going by that name—effectively governs the Spanish State. Such collectives as the so-called *Asociación por la Tolerancia*, or *Association for Tolerance*, and, more famously, the *Foro Babel*, or *Babel Forum*, have sought to defeat legal initiatives such as the “law of Catalan.” “Defeat,” by the way, rings for many Catalans and supporters of Catalan in intricately, yet distinctly, historical ways. Simó, for one, seems to advocate a greater level of grammatical intolerance in Catalan by which said defeat might be, as it were, corrected. And yet, Simó may also be read, somewhat against the grain, as advocating a greater level of tolerance on the part of speakers of Castilian vis-à-vis Castilian. In other words, tolerance may take the

form of no longer tolerating either the idea that a mistake in Castilian is evidence of unacceptable ignorance or the idea that a mistake in Catalan is *not* evidence of unacceptable ignorance. The objective, utopian though it may be, is nothing less than parity. Rebellion, tactically speaking, might even take the form of supporting a law.

Derrida's "différance" courts parity (between the "a" and the "e"), but, in its inattention to historical context, pushes it away on behalf of a general economy of language (and of death) that has little truck with the symbolic life and death of particular languages. In other words, "différance" relies not just on a play between speech and writing in general but also, and more incisively, on a standardized, normalized, national language of universal pretensions. The import (and export) of "modern" relies on something quite different. I am not, however, interested in the success or failure of Derridian deconstruction, nor in the spirals of sameness and difference, nor in the vagaries of vague economies, but rather in the places, sights, and sounds of Catalan and Catalunya in and out of Spanish and Spain. The status of Catalunya (as a nation without a state) necessitates an examination of the interconnections, for better or for worse, with the nation-state that is Spain and, to a lesser degree, to the nation-state that is France, indeed to the nation-state in general. Such an examination is also, as I have been arguing, a self-examination, one that implicates each and every human subject, even, or perhaps especially, when the subject claims to be beyond nationality and nationalism. I, in my troubled individuality, yet also quite generally, am implicated nationally, nationalistically, like it or not. I am implicated, *among other ways*, in and through language, its systems, rules, and institutions, as well as its tones, accents, and emphases, its types and stereotypes. This is the case even when I call myself, "I" calls itself, cosmopolitan, international, transnational, a citizen of the world, even when "I" forms part of the national language—whether *de facto*, *de jure*, or both—of more than one nation, as is the case of both English and Spanish. "I," "Yo," "Je," "Jo," "Io," "Ich," and so much more (so much more that cannot be designated without translation and transcription in the present font) insist, then, in their generalized particularity, their structured individuality. Such callings and formations have a special resonance in the modern period, where the consolidation of nationality appears, somewhat paradoxically, inseparable from the fragmentation, dispersal, deferral, or expansive overcoming of nationality, inseparable, that is, from the rise of international projects, universal endeavors, and cosmopolitan positions. Simply put, the "modern" in Spain; in Catalunya, has been *articulated* in a number of ways, some more nationally and internationally resonant than others.

Accordingly, I would like to turn now to how the "modern" is

both translated and resistant to translation, here not so much within a given linguistic system (in English: modernity, modernization, and modernism) as across linguistic systems. Inasmuch as my limited expertise is in language and literature, I will be giving special attention to the system comprised of modernism, *modernismo*, and *modernisme*, and, more markedly, to the *tired old debate* between *modernismo* and the Generation of 1898, especially as it involves the *tired old problem* of Spain.¹⁵ Catalan *modernisme* and Latin American *modernismo*, both prior to and arguably richer than Spanish *modernismo*, punctuate the debate, though for the aforementioned linguistic reasons (the sound of the "o," among others) I will be attending to the peninsular side, the Spanish State.¹⁶ The debate, I contend, is not as tired and old as it may seem, for it privileges concepts of *relative amplitude*—of a more or less ample, expansive, or encompassing vision—that have interesting ramifications for a "modern" or even "postmodern" world system, so marked by migration. Briefly put, critics now generally hold that *modernismo* is more ample than the Generation of 1898, more accommodating, more in sync with the global drive, more open. And yet, *modernismo*, as critically constructed, tends to have more room for France, Britain, Germany, Italy, and the United States than for, say, Catalunya. It tends to conceive internationality as a function of national sovereignty, of state power, and to perpetuate a vision of Spain that is remarkably similar to the supposedly less ample vision of the Generation of 1898. Moreover, to the degree that it is presented as the dominant cultural manifestation of modernity, *modernismo*, understood "amply," is also a manifestation, however fractured, of dominance and domination. Said situation includes its saying, for *modernismo* does not quite bring itself, again in general, to tarry with

15 Donald Shaw gives an overview of the debate, and of the meaning of the term "modernismo," in his essay, "¿Qué es el modernismo." John Butt, more engaged in critical theory than Shaw, follows the turns of terms in a perceptive way. "In an age when the term 'Generation of 98' did not exist, the word *modernismo* could carry a much wider meaning than it normally does today. In fact it had more or less the same meaning as its counterparts in other European languages—*modernism*, *Modernismus*, *modernizm*, etc. Only later did the term become exclusively restricted to denote a certain Hispanified symbolism and/or Parnassianism full of the Gallicized language and autumnal sunsets of Latin-American *modernismo*" ("Generation of 98," 139). Butt more fully examines the history of the term, and what he considers to be its rather unfortunate consequences for Hispanism, in his insightful and provocative essay, "Modernismo y Modernism."

16 Linguistic hegemony, which may be manifested as univocality, monolingualism, or even as a hierarchically structured bilingualism, multilingualism, or pluralism, obviously obtains throughout Latin America as well. The status of the so-called autochthonous languages in Latin America, though by no means reducible to that of the other languages of Spain, becomes increasingly contested—more vulnerable, but also more resilient—in modernity.

the linguistic particularities of the phenomenon known, in Catalan, as *modernisme*. Indeed, if "modern" may pass in writing as English, "modernisme" may pass as French, both languages being more consistently cited in the bibliography on *modernismo* than Catalan. What is needed, I submit, is a more cautious understanding and a more insistent interrogation of the international directions of *modernismo*, including its resistance to translation, its ideological ballast, its national perimeters, and its languages. "What are, if any, its geographical limitations?" asks Geoffrey Ribbens ("Subversive," 4).¹⁷ What are, I might add, its linguistic limitations? "Modern" is a Catalan word, but it may be, even here, all too easily lost in the flow of English words. The difference may not be readily apparent to everyone, but it sounds, nonetheless, in the "o."

Com més s'esmeni lo particular, més perfecte surt lo general
Jaume BROSSA, "Viure del passat"

NEUTRAL VOWELS, NON-NEUTRAL SUBJECTS: TARRYING WITH THE GAPS OF LITERARY HISTORY

And so, the "o" of "modern," the one that can be no different from the spoken "u;" that is analogous, in its non-differential confusions, to the "neutral vowels" "a" and "e" (the vowels, *toutes proportions gardées*, of *différence*, *différance*); and in which "i" is implicated as "I" (in an international context), is here the sign of something Catalan. It is no easy sign, for this particular "modern" goes often as not unnoticed in Hispanism. Ricardo Gullón's much-cited *Direcciones del modernismo*, instrumental in what José-Carlos Mainer has called "el afianzamiento del término *modernismo* como definición omnicompreensiva de la literatura finisecular" [the consolidation of the term *modernismo* as an omnicomprehensive definition of *fin-de-siècle* literature] (61), is a case in point.¹⁸ While arguing for a more ample and expansive understanding of literary *modernismo* that would subsume, and undo,

¹⁷ Ribbens writes that, given the origins of *modernismo*, "it is logical to start from a Latin American perspective" (4). Butt writes that "the modern use of the word *modernismo*... probably has at least two sources—first Catalonia and later Latin America, and the generic, 'Catalan' meaning no doubt informs the use of the word" in turn-of-the-century writing ("Generation of 98," 140). Cathy Jrade gives an insightful reading of the affinities and differences between Latin American *modernismo* and the Generation of 1898.

¹⁸ Gullón's presentation of *modernismo* as ample and omnicomprehensive has some illustrious forerunners. Both Juan Ramón Jiménez and Federico de Onís affirmed the "generality" of *modernismo* (see, among others, Shaw's "¿Qué es el modernismo?," 11-12).

generational categories hardened into academic truths and that would move in epochal and attitudinal directions, Gullón all but ignores Catalan literature. Gautier and Verlaine, of course; Darío and Casal, to be sure; Baudelaire and Bécquer: writers from other countries and earlier periods figure rather prominently in Gullón's study. But there is no, or virtually no, mention of Català, Casellas, Bertrana, Puig i Ferrater, Pous i Pagès, Iglésias, Gual, Brossa, or even Maragall: writers, that is, from basically the same period and, at least juridically, the same country. Santiago Rusiñol fares a bit better, but, over all, modernism in Spain, "modernismo en España," as Gullón styles it, has little to do with "modernisme a Catalunya." The situation is curious, because even so staunch a defender of the Generation of 1898 as Guillermo Díaz-Plaja had asserted, in an appendix to a study published in the early 1950s, that "cualquier intento de ordenación histórica que se centre en el problema del Modernismo español quedará incompleto sin atender al sector de Cataluña." [any attempt at historical analysis centered on the problem of Spanish *modernismo* will remain incomplete without attending to Catalunya] (317).

The marginalization of Catalan culture that Díaz-Plaja at once signals and attempts to correct endures in more recent works, published in times of democracy, that accept an apparently "omnicomprehensive" definition of *modernismo*.¹⁹ The first supplement to "Modernismo y 98" in Francisco Rico's *Historia y crítica de la literatura española* constitutes a telling and important example. In it, we read that *modernismo* as critical term and epistemological category has been, as noted, secured, "afianzado." And yet, the writers on which the supplement focuses are essentially the same as before: Ganivet, Maeztu, Darío (the one "foreigner"), Manuel Machado, Felipe Trigo, Blasco Ibáñez, and—with each his own chapter—Unamuno, Valle-Inclán, Baroja, Azorín, and Antonio Machado. If *modernismo* has been secured, it is in a way that does little to alter the roster of those studied under the presumably more restrictive rubric of the Generation of 1898. Whatever the play of I in institutions, the situation here may have less to do with the interests of individual critics than with an established academic market.²⁰ The director of the supplement, José Carlos Mainer, complains that the Spanish educational-publishing market, itself a function of the Spanish

19 Germán Gullón's concern—shared by so many other Hispanists—with the "ostracism" of Spanish literature (87) might be compared, and contrasted, with the decidedly more "ostracized" concern for the "ostracism" of Catalan literature.

20 Marfany, in "Algunas consideraciones sobre el modernismo hispanoamericano," also notes the importance of the publishing market in the definition and dissemination of all things *modernista*.

educational system, is reluctant to dispense with such well-entrenched labels. "Una convención escolar inevitable conserva todavía" [an inevitable academic convention still conserves], Mainer claims, "98" alongside *modernismo* in the very title of the supplement under his direction (5). Mainer thus indicates that, were it left to him, the supplement would be titled simply *modernismo*. What he does not indicate is whether the present content of the supplement would be significantly altered. Of course, inasmuch as the convention is *inevitable*, such *personal* indications seem to be neither here nor there.

I do not mean to be dismissive or ungenerous. Mainer himself is by no means unconcerned with Catalan culture and—in a gesture ironically reminiscent of Díaz-Plaja's—warns against considering "el caso catalán" [the Catalan case] as "un mero apéndice de lo español" [a mere appendix of Spanish] (69). His book, *La edad de plata*, adroitly engages Catalan, Galician, and Basque culture within a larger, though contested, Spanish context. More recently, he has contributed an essay to the catalogue of a major exhibition titled *Barcelona-Madrid 1898-1998: Sintomies i Distàncies*, in which he examines the (minimized) similitudes and (maximized) differences between Spanish and Catalan nationalist discourses and cultural productions. For his part, Xavier Bru de Sala, director of the catalogue, laments the paucity of comparative, "intranational" work, "el significatiu desert bibliogràfic" [significant bibliographic desert] that stands in stark contrast to "l'abundància i la riquesa dels materials exposables" [abundance and wealth of materials that can be exhibited] (13). Things may be changing, but it is significant that there should still be such a bibliographic desert and that Mainer's own call to take into account certain bibliographic landmarks in Catalan ("algunos escogidos hitos bibliográficos catalanes," 69) should have no appreciable impact on the *supplement* to Rico's massive project. This says something about the institutionalization, both inside and outside of Spain, of national languages and literatures.²¹ "One of the most enduring defects of assessments of the period," notes Geoffrey Ribbans, "has been the failure to take into account, often completely to ignore, the voices from the periphery" ("No lloreis," 137). The desert that Bru de Sala signals is cultivated by means of divisions and omissions, and is ruled, as it were, by silence.

The silence, omission, or division is odd, because Gullón, so important to Mainer, cites Rubén Darío who, in a chronicle first published in 1899 in the Argentine *La Nación* and later in a collection

²¹ Leonardo Romero provides an impressive overview of Spanish literary history, with special attention to work produced around 1898.

titled *España contemporánea*, stresses that of all of Spain Catalunya alone has a *modernista* movement.²² The exceptionality of Catalunya, in Darío's assessment, entails its *inclusion*, indeed its *preeminence*, in any examination of modernism in Spain, *modernismo en España*. Gullón's reference to Darío includes a lengthy quote that makes explicit reference—by way of a quote from Juan Valera—to an *españolismo* so embedded that “no puede arrancarse <<...ni a veinticinco tirones...>>” [even twenty-five tugs cannot rip it away]. Twenty-five tugs to put it conservatively: for while Gullón at least acknowledges Darío's assessment of Catalunya, others have taken Darío in an entirely different manner. The work of Rafael Gutiérrez Girardot, illuminating as it often is, is on this score exemplary. In an article on Darío in Madrid, Gutiérrez Girardot makes a case for Darío as a sympathizer of Spanish unity. Deploying such terms as “conquista” [conquest] and “apropiación” [appropriation] without any apparent irony (153), Gutiérrez Girardot utterly elides the differences that Darío observes between Madrid and Barcelona, and never even mentions the Catalan capital. Buenos Aires, Paris, London, and Vienna all figure in Gutiérrez Girardot's essay, but it is as if the city to which Darío returns for an extended stay beginning in 1912; the city in which he meets Eugeni d'Ors, Pompeius Gener, Rubió i Lluch, and others; the city that he repeatedly extols, never existed. Whatever sympathetic feelings Darío may have had toward Spain—and he did have them—he also had, and arguably with less ambivalence, sympathetic feelings toward Catalunya and, in particular, Barcelona. Lest his article on Darío in Madrid be taken as a fluke, Gutiérrez Girardot ends a lengthy book on *modernismo* with an extensive “chronology” that does not include a single Catalan, though it does include a vast array of French, German, English, and other European and American thinkers. Clearly, the exceptionality of Catalunya can be taken, less generously, as signifying its exclusion, omission, and silent division from anything and everything *modernista*.

There are doubtless many reasons for these divisions, exclusions, and omissions, corresponded by many scholars of Catalan. For if Gullón, Gutiérrez Girardot, Mainer (under Rico), and others do not tarry with writers in Catalan, Marfany, Jordi Castellanos, and Joaquim Marco do not tend to tarry with writers in Spanish (Maragall and others who wrote in *both* Spanish and Catalan are the exceptions that prove the rule). The correspondence is, however, uneven because power itself is uneven. And, needless to say, the implications of such a

²² I am using the adjective “modernista” deliberately, for, in writing, it is both Catalan and Spanish, just as “modernisme” is both Catalan and French, and “modern,” Catalan and English.

situation are uneven as well. After all, the dearth of references to Spanish literature in Catalan literary studies does *not* contradict a certain national conception of Catalunya that would remove Catalunya from Spain or that would secure its autonomy or independence. In contrast, the lack of references to Catalan literature in Spanish literary studies *does* contradict a national conception of Spain that would include Catalunya, that would hold on to it (though perhaps only as Cataluña). It is along these lines that the present study does not *necessarily* do a service to Catalan separatism or independence, but it does even less a service to a Castilian-inflected unitarism. In fact, it is more easily linked to a pluralist conception of the nation, though this conception too is shot through with all sorts of problems, not the least of which is the language, or languages, in which it is articulated. Put rather laconically, pluralism has its own conventions, and they are not always exactly pluralist.

The recognition of the conventions of *modernismo* (and of the pluralist rhetoric that many scholars employ in relation to it) brings me back to that other academic convention, however embattled, known as the Generation of 1898. Indeed, although many of the proponents of *modernismo* criticize the concept of the Generation of 1898 as narrow and particularist, they continue to engage it, sometimes in calm resignation to the "inevitable," sometimes even with an explicit tone of exasperation or distaste. As indicated, many of the proponents of an ample *modernismo* do *not* engage Catalan culture, or not nearly as often, and reveal thereby a narrowness and particularism of their own. This makes for some rather complicated ironies in as much as Catalan culture has had to contend with the perception (but whose perception?) that *it* is particularist, that *it* is regional, localist, minor, and intrinsically nationalist. Such a perception is slanted, to say the least, because in many respects "modern" Catalan culture evinces a greater degree of international awareness, more amplitude and openness, than its Castilian counterpart. And yet, internationality is hard pressed to dispense with nationality, the "modern" hard pressed to elude its involvement in (inter)national projects. Particularism, in one form or another, may be ineluctable, on all sides, *in general*. A general particularism, then, presents itself, one that involves the "I" and institutions, subjects and systems, or as the "moderns" themselves might have put it, the conflictive imbrication of individuals, masses, classes, races, spirits, and so on. Now, a general particularism does not mean that all particularities are equally generalized, but rather that *modernismo* can be as particularist as its putatively less general Catalan counterpart. If the national implications of the international moves of Catalan *modernisme* seem only all too clear, the national implications of the international moves of Spanish *modernismo* have managed to

remain a bit murkier. It is here that the concept of the Generation of 1898, functioning as a sort of concave mirror to *modernismo*, can help clear things up. And the image that it casts back is indeed uncannily familiar, if not grotesque. Though amplified, *modernismo* finds itself reflected in a presumably smaller, tighter, meaner Generation of 1898. The terms may of course be inverted, and indeed usually are, with *modernismo* functioning as a sort of concave mirror to the Generation of 1898. At any rate, Spanish *modernismo*, as critically constituted, seems to have more in common with the Generation of 1898 than with Catalan *modernisme*, which is, as Ribbans again remarks, "frequently ignored, alluded to in passing, treated in isolation, or simply misunderstood" ("Subversive," 8).

Whatever the reasons for the omission of *modernisme* from his reflections on *modernismo*, Gullón does not tarry with them. Instead, he sets his sights on bringing together, under the omnicomprehensive rubric of *modernismo*, not only Valle-Inclán and Darío, but also Azorín, Baroja, Antonio Machado, and Unamuno.²³ Language seems to be an essential structuring principle, though Gautier, Poe, Verlaine, Ibsen, Kierkegaard, and other writers—neither in Spain nor in Spanish—do punctuate, and even prominently, Gullón's work. Disregarding other self-proclaimed "moderns" in Spain (self-proclaimed, it is true, often as not in Catalan), Gullón takes aim at the Generation of 1898, effectively dissolving it in a more ample *modernismo*. This bothers Donald Shaw, for whom the Generation of 1898 is—or rather at one time was—not only an indisputable fact, but also one whose integrity is worth defending; hence Shaw's reluctance, if not refusal, to consider Valle-Inclán and particularly Darío as belonging to it.²⁴ Although as early as 1913 Azorín had effected a similar grouping under a generational heading, Shaw, following Pedro Salinas and Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, is adamant about the distinction.²⁵ One thing is the Generation of 1898 and another is *modernismo*, a

²³ Geoffrey Ribbans has noticed how the "debate" takes the form of a "vigorous recruiting campaign" or "competition" over "membership" (3). The result is frequently reductive, with internal differences, for instance, in the poetic production of Antonio Machado minimized or elided.

²⁴ More recently, Shaw seems to have modified his position. He ends "Classifying *Camino de perfección*" by signaling "the difficulty of separating" decadentism and *modernismo* "from *noventayochismo* in the early years of the century" (359). In "¿Qué es el modernismo?", he acknowledges, via the work of Cardwell, E. Inman Fox, Blanco Aguinaga, and others, the difficulty of maintaining a division between the Generation of 98 and *modernismo*.

²⁵ Ribbans reminds us of the hesitancy surrounding the date, noting that Azorín refers to 1896, "which takes away all validity from the concept of the overwhelming impact of 'el desastre'" ("Subversive," 12).

"foreign movement" (20) born, as Shaw puts it, in Latin America.²⁶ And what the foreigners bring to Spain is a preference for form over substance, aesthetics over morality, beauty over truth.²⁷ So presented, *modernismo* is a Hispanic variation of *l'art pour l'art*, fundamentally devoid of social content, prone to exalting fantasy and the imagination to the detriment of historical reality, and preoccupied with an autonomy that would have nothing to do with politics. Accordingly, the renovations of *modernismo* are, in contrast to those of the Generation of 1898, of a purely artistic sort. As disputable as such a divisive reading is, and as much as Shaw himself subsequently refines his reading of *modernismo* along spiritual and existential lines,²⁸ it is nevertheless telling that, over and again, the debate over *modernismo* and the Generation of 1898 turns around questions of provenance and purview. "In contrast to the writers of the '98 group in Spain, who were basically preoccupied with the national problem," writes Shaw, "the *modernistas* were self-consciously cosmopolitan in outlook" (5). For Shaw, but also for Gullón, the Generation of 1898 and *modernismo* are (inter)nationally coded.

For all their disagreements, Shaw and Gullón concur that *modernismo* is cosmopolitan and international. "Sus límites son amplios, fluidos, y dentro de ellos caben personalidades muy variadas" [Its limits are wide, fluid, and embrace a wide variety of personalities] (22), asserts Gullón. Such amplitude and fluidity are, however, precisely what Shaw resists as destructive of a certain critical difference: "to take up such a position [Gullón's] is to overlook or

²⁶ Shaw's concerns are double: on the one hand, he is concerned with the validity and integrity of the Generation of 98 (a localizing, exclusive move) and, on the other hand, with its visibility outside Spain (a "universalizing," or rather "Europeanizing," inclusive move). In the prologue to the Spanish translation of his study, he reaffirms his conviction that the Generation of 1898 existed as a unified group different from the *modernistas* (13). But he also insists that what is important is not so much what the Generation can teach us about Spain as the fact that is, for him, the Spanish expression of the European *Weltanschauung* of the period (12). However specific and unified a group it is, the Generation of 1898 seems to need validation in a wider, European sphere. In this too, interestingly, Shaw approximates the putatively opposing position of Gullón.

²⁷ The belief that *modernismo* is concerned with beautiful form and the Generation of 1898 with truthful content is as extensive as spurious. As Ribbans notes, "critical criteria are too often swayed, unfortunately, by national considerations. Thus things have normally looked very different when viewed from a distinct geographical standpoint of Spain or Spanish America" (2). And, as Ribbans further indicates, things have looked very different when viewed from a distinct geographical standpoint *within* Spain.

²⁸ Interestingly, in his essay, "¿Qué es el modernismo?" Shaw belittles those critics who understand *modernismo* in terms of aesthetic autonomy instead of what he calls—in a manner similar to that employed in the presentation of the Generation of 1898 in his book—the changes in the *Weltanschauung* (12–13).

minimize differences which elsewhere in literary criticism would be regarded as fundamentally important" (3).²⁹ Against the "extreme heterogeneity" of the modernist group, a group that is thus not one, Shaw holds on to the relative homogeneity of a coherent, clearly demarcated national group whose "members," whatever *their* differences, share basically the same concerns. Countering a minimization of difference with a maximization of sameness, Shaw indicates that critical difference entails critical sameness, but not just in any way. He posits, and defends, an internal identity by externalizing difference, by making difference the effect of an outer limit, a mark of foreign contact. If he values difference it is because it is fundamental, structurally speaking, to identity, here that of a group and, more amply (but not too amply), that of a nation. There is nothing either new or idiosyncratic in this gesture, quite the contrary; which is why it is important. In fact, it is a gesture that is difficult to avoid. It can be found in many, if not all, of the writers that Shaw studies and in many that he does not: in Almirall and Prat de la Riba, Rusiñol and Brossa, Maragall and d'Ors (the latter, despite his early affiliations, typically categorized as *noucentista*). Whatever *their* differences, these Catalan writers also engage in a play of difference and sameness. They too grapple with tensions between aesthetics and politics, form and substance, beauty, truth, and duty; they too take Spain as an object, and subject, of reflection and critique; they too fret about their place in Europe and the rest of the world.

The debate over *modernismo* and the Generation of 1898 is largely a matter of distinctions, divisions, classifications, and categorizations, inclusions and exclusions, a debate that many critics would leave behind as outdated and resolved. For if at one time Shaw could assert that the distinction between the two is generally accepted and hence that the Generation of 1898 is a separate and coherent entity, at a later time Mainer can assert that the distinction is generally accepted as a thing of the past. "Modernismo" is, he writes, "el indiscutible vencedor de la mal avenida pareja modernismo-noventayocho" [the indisputable victor of the star-crossed pair *modernismo-98*] (5). Time is a great factor in what is generally accepted and, not surprisingly, makes and unmakes literary history. If one present passes into and away as another (and a critical part of the "modern" is *always*, as Baudelaire affirms, *what is just now passing*), it might be wise to proceed with

29. Marfany, focusing on *modernisme*, also takes exception to the idea that the period is confusing, and argues that confusion is the effect of criticism (13). In so doing, he suggests that there is an underlying coherence which is either left undiscovered or covered up by critics, and yet even he, limiting himself to Catalan *modernisme*, admits that there is no simple clarity.

caution before declaring victory. For if *modernismo* is victorious, it is just possibly because *postmodernismo*, or maybe postmodernism, is more victorious still.³⁰ Whatever the case, Mainer's bellicose rhetoric is itself intriguing. If *modernismo* is, as Mainer claims, the indisputable victor, it follows that the Generation of 1898 is "el perdedor," the loser. The irony of defeating, or declaring as defeated, a category whose principal historical coordinate is defeat should not be lost.³¹ It is perhaps not entirely unconnected to an alternative vision that, without being necessarily triumphalist, is certainly not defeatist and would make a case, and a place, for Spanish literature among the "world's great literatures."³² This is not to say that a defense of the Generation of 1898, as category, is a defense of defeatism or, more specifically, of the (continued) marginalization of Spanish literature. Critics can argue, after all, that defeat of some sort (of God, of received ideas, of revealed truth, of scientific certainty) suffuses the modern condition in general and that it is not perforce negative. For their part, the authors most consistently associated with the Generation of 1898 typically take defeat as the condition of possibility for renovation, and degeneration as an opportunity, albeit *in extremis*, for renewal. In ways at once innovative and traditional, an acceptance of defeat, an assumption of disaster, implies its refusal, its undoing, its overcoming, just as an admission of guilt can imply atonement. The introspective turns of Unamuno and company, the morose fixation on agony, the expressions of *abulia* and *ataraxia*, the tragic sense of life, can all be given, with varying degrees of critical violence, a redemptive spin. Melancholy, from this perspective, is no match for mourning, for an eventual "getting on" and "going ahead" by which defeat is made good. Such getting on and going ahead involve, it is true, turning back to the putative soul, spirit, or essence of Spain. Renovation is thus a return to tradition, a re-newal of the old. As such, it is, as Shaw rightly notes, tellingly at odds with modernity, at least with any modernity that is understood as a *progressive* historical unfolding, let alone as a

30 A certain reading of postmodernism solidifies modernism by representing it in terms of what Andreas Huyssen calls a great divide (high vs. low, elite vs. mass, man vs. woman, and so on). Even when postmodernism would dissolve modernism by dissolving chronology and notions of progression and regression, it is obviously not done with modernism. In its very designation, postmodernism carries modernism along, and it does so in an array of linguistic and cultural spheres, for example, as (post)modernismo and (post)modernisme.

31 Defeat is also an important Catalan sign. The Catalan national holiday, or *Diada*, commemorates the fall of Barcelona to Bourbon forces on September 11, 1714.

32 Germán Gullón is explicit about making a case for the visible and recognized "universality" of Spanish literature. The same, or quite similar, objective may be found in the work of Butt ("Modernismo y Modernism"), Gutiérrez Girardot, Ricardo Gullón, and even Shaw (with his insistence on a general European *Weltanschauung*).

rush of the ephemeral. Arising in and out of defeat, the Generation of 1898 entails the defeat of the trends, fashions, or modes of the modern and the sober victory of "eternal truths."

A certain mode of defeatism therefore imposes itself *in* and *against* the Generation of 1898, constituting an impasse, as Gullón and Mainer suggest, to its more amplified deployment. The point is crucial to the triumph or victory of *modernismo*. To repeat: an ample, fluid, and even confusing international *modernismo* contrasts with a more nationally bound Generation of 1898. For Shaw the contrast is firm and fast, or at least worth entertaining; for Gullón and Mainer it is but a mirage, though they too need it if they are to make such ample claims for *modernismo*. If *modernismo* would subsume and dissolve the Generation of 1898 as not *that* different (and certainly not, as Shaw asserts, as more profound), the Generation of 1898 would hold out against *modernismo* as being *profoundly* different. This does not mean that the defenders of the Generation of 1898 defend it without hesitation. Shaw himself criticizes the tendency on the part of many of the supposed members of the Generation of 1898 to employ theories of historical and racial determinism and to seek abstract, philosophical solutions to concrete social and political problems. Shaw finds it "natural" that José Antonio Primo de Rivera was attracted to *En torno al casticismo*, *Idearium español*, and *Defensa de la Hispanidad*, works whose positions Shaw is quick to qualify as reactionary and anti-modern (208). The modern, of course, can also be quite reactionary or certainly ambivalent, as the variegated interpretations of Valle-Inclán's politics indicate. With respect to the Generation of 1898, it must also be said that not all of its defenders find its positions so problematic or mistaken. Laín Entralgo, Díaz-Plaja, Shaw, and others are not interchangeable. Still, it is intriguing the extremes to which Shaw and others go to defend the Generation, errors and all, from dissolution. For the Generation of 1898, as an epistemological category, an academic object, an ideological construct, a philosophical abstraction, a heuristic tool, tends toward solidification. It tends to be solid, that is, or not be at all.

Indeed, if the Generation of 1898 is a "movement" it is one that resists movement, that strangely anchors itself in essences and spirits, and that appeals to a fetishized sense of the land, specifically the Castilian landscape.³³ This is what the proponents of *modernismo* as attitude and epoch at once recognize and reject. For *modernismo*, while arguably a movement, seems to be inclined to movements, in the

³³ Much has been written on the function of land in the Generation of 1898. Jo Labanyi provides a particularly engaging reading of the "centrality" and "centralism" of Castile.

plural, to multiple directions and omnicomprehensive definitions, to all sorts of mobilizations. If *modernismo* still invokes 1898, needs it even, it is as an uncomfortable obstacle that it can set in motion (move or remove) or by which, indeed, it can set itself in motion. If the postmodern is not done with the modern, *modernismo* is not done with the Generation of 1898, however ghostly, or ghastly, it has rendered it. It is important to reflect, I believe, on the rhetoric of criticism by which 1898 tends to solidify and *modernismo* to move. To move, and, in moving, to dissolve 1898: this is the *victory* of an expanded *modernismo*, itself ironically solidified as a multifaceted movement. Critical language, my own most definitely included, tends to reiterate the language of its object. The *bellicose metaphors* of victory and defeat that fleck Mainer's assessment of the debate are matched and arguably surpassed by metaphors of stasis and movement, solidity and dissolution. It is no accident that these metaphors—physical, geological, and yet ever so moral—are common to turn-of-the-century letters. Symbolism and decadence, for instance, are awash with figures of dissolution, dissipation, vagueness, ambiguity, ambivalence, imprecision, and so on. Parnassianism, that other "source" of *modernismo*, with its well established preference for sculpture over music, marble over watercolor, comes closer to a certain figurative solidity, but is altogether too artistic, too cold, too superficial for the almost proto-existential pain that characterizes, for many, the Generation of 1898. These and other traditional sources of *modernismo* are among those that many critics adduce to separate Valle-Inclán—the "prodigal son of 98" in Salinas's appraisal—from his presumably more profound, or more meditative, or simply more boring, contemporaries.

Those who defend an ample vision of *modernismo* convincingly note that such divisions are arbitrary and inconsistent, that the aestheticism of the *Sonatas*, and not merely the *esperpento* of *Luces de Bohemia*, can have profound political, social, and philosophical implications. In Catalunya, a similar difference, at once critically suspect and historically understandable, obtains between the politically committed essays of Jaume Brossa and Alexandre Cortada and more artistically absorbed theatrical pieces such as *El jardí abandonat* of Santiago Rusiñol. If it is not especially difficult to argue that a truly ample and multidirectional understanding of *modernismo* in Spain should engage *modernisme*, it is much more difficult, maybe even pointless, to argue that the Generation of 1898 should do the same. And yet, it may not be pointless to ask why this should be so. The absence of Catalan writers and Catalan writing in the formulation of the Generation of 1898 indicates that, among other things, the temporal coordinates privileged therein are insufficient, even

deceptive; the articulation of the date, indeed its pronunciation, in a Castilian-inflected Spanish is no less important. What Shaw considers fundamental to defining the Generation of 1898—the “problem of Spain;”³⁴ the notion of literature and art as instrumental to an adequate examination of said problem; and the importance of the individual to the project of collective regeneration—holds for Brossa and Cortada as well. Neither Catalan merits a mention in Shaw’s work, perhaps because to do so would be to tamper with the established “unity of the Generation.”³⁵ Of course, insofar as Shaw has impatiently dismissed the work of José-Carlos Mainer as “discrepante” and “intemperante” [discrepant and intemperate] and, apparently more damningly, as based on “una excéntrica historia del modernismo catalán” [an eccentric history of Catalan *modernisme*] (“¿Qué es el modernismo?” 20), he can hardly be expected to push in multicultural, or rather multilingual, directions in the first place. If Spanish *modernismo* has, in Shaw’s view, virtually no room for Catalan, the Generation of 1898 has, all too understandably, even less.³⁶ In the light of such omissions and exclusions, unity appears to run more along the path of language than of moment, of ethnicity than of method. The generational marker is thus, as Ribbans, Butt, and others have insisted, profoundly misleading, for it does not embrace just anyone born at a certain time,

³⁴ Shaw is, however, quite skeptical of the explanatory potential of the “problem of Spain.” In the prologue to the Spanish edition, he underscores “la insuficiencia de enfocar la Generación en relación con el problema de España. Cuanto más se enjuicia el grupo con este criterio, tanto más su reformismo cultural tiene que parecer confuso, pequeño burgués, y en todo caso totalmente ineficaz” [the insufficiency of focusing on the Generation in relation to the problem of Spain. The more one judges the group with this criterion the more its cultural reformism is bound to seem confusing, petty bourgeois, and at any rate totally ineffective] (12). Indeed, Insufficient such a focus may be, but so is the implied judgment that the Generation of 1898 is *not* “confusing,” “petty bourgeois” and “ineffective.” Regardless, Shaw continues to deploy the “problem of Spain” in his study of the Generation.

³⁵ The emphasis on (group) unity in the critical formulation of the Generation of 1898 is overdetermined. It replicates, with various degrees of irony, discourses of political wholeness and moral integrity, of the proper body politic and the proper sexual body. If it has little room for the decadent Marqués de Bradomín, it has even less room for many an upstanding bourgeois Catalanista. Cortada’s criticisms of some Catalanistas as being more concerned with unity than freedom, his call for breaking “l’ideal mesquí de la pàtria i de la nació que fins ara havia predominat” [the petty ideal of the fatherland or nation dominant until now] (38–39), sadly appear here almost beside the point.

³⁶ With his typical fairness and thoroughness, Geoffrey Ribbans ponders a Catalan equivalent to the Generation of 1898. He is not the first to do so, and he notes that Lluís Enríquez had made a case for Maragall, and Díaz-Plaia for d’Ors, as in one way or another belonging to the Generation. Ribbans concludes, however, that the “traditional attitude associated with the Generation of ‘98” leaves little room for Catalunya and, moreover, that “the distinct cultural evolution of Catalonia is... one of the clearest indications of the inadequacy of the prevailing dichotomy, particularly when it is applied to Spain as a whole” (“Subversive,” 11).

publishing at a certain time, and sharing certain concerns from, in, or about Spain.³⁷ In the once influential terms of Taine, *race* and *milieu* here appear more consequential than *temps*. Land and blood, insistently invoked in the discourse of the day, lurk in the generational understanding of a defeat measured in terms of territorial loss.

In the words of José Ortega y Gasset, "el desprendimiento de la últimas posesiones ultramarinas parece ser la señal para el comienzo de la dispersión intrapeninsular" [the undoing of the last overseas possessions seems to be the signal for the start of intrapeninsular dispersion (45)]. Though Ortega's reference to intrapeninsular dispersion presupposes an intrapeninsular unity whose existence, as anything other than juridical fact, is questionable, it correctly points to the centrality of territory. The Generation of 1898, misleading as it may be, is a *post-colonial* construction that necessarily implicates Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, and the United States, at the very least. Necessarily, but, then again, apparently not: for the fact that the Generation of 1898 is so fixated on Spain as to ignore virtually anything and anyone outside it and its dominant language ironically reveals to what degree an appreciation of internationality has indeed been defeated and lost. Over a hundred years later things are changing, as an increasing number of "peninsular" scholars (re)turn to such figures as Rizal and Martí, both dead *before* 1898. Regardless, Spanish educational (and) market conventions, to recall Mainer's affirmation, endure. After all, as Mainer admits, "[p]ermanece, por supuesto, el poder evocador del año 1898, aunque ... palidece en la proximidad del más rotundo y más internacional concepto de fin de siglo" [the evocative power of the year 1898 of course remains, although it pales in comparison with the rounder, more international concept of 'fin de siglo'] or of *modernismo* (10). But if the evocative power of the year 1898 still hangs on, it might not be out of place to ask, why? What does 1898 evoke? And for whom?³⁸

One of the problems with 1898 and "the problem of Spain" is the obstinate or, as Geoffrey Ribbans puts it, "obsessive" focus on the defeat as defeat ("No lloréis," 131). 1898 also evokes victory, whether actual (for the United States) or potential (for an independent Cuba, Puerto Rico, or even Catalunya). The Catalan reaction to the events of

³⁷ Ribbans is here as emphatic as he is terse: "the so-called generation of '98 is not a generation, nor is the date more than a symbolic one" ("Subversive," 14).

³⁸ Once again, Ribbans asks the same question. "For whom was it [the war of 1898] a disaster? For one group, little thought about in official circles, it unequivocally deserved this designation. These were the unfortunate soldiers and sailors who were conscripted into a hopeless war" ("No lloréis," 131). Ribbans is on unshakable ground here. As his reference to the conscripted combatants surely indicates, Ribbans goes on to note that the "disaster" was not unequivocally so for all concerned. Far from it.

1898 is complex, fraught with contradiction, but certainly not reducible to an unswerving sense of defeat. I am referring not to the spiritual renewal that the debacle makes possible, the austere regeneration that might issue from the wreck of imperial power, but to the ostensible confirmation of an elaborate and variegated discourse of Catalanism. The defeat, "el desastre," had indisputably disastrous repercussions for many in (and of course out of) Catalunya, but it also fortified resolve among many others to continue on a *modern* path that had more to do with Europe and the United States than with the rest of Spain. Writing in 1880, Valentí Almirall contends that "la distància de Madrid a Barcelona augmenta cada dia, al mateix temps que la que va de la nostra ciutat a les civilitzades d'Europa disminueix contínuament. Per acabar-la d'eixamplar nos hem donat fins a parlar la nostra llengua, distinta de la de Madrid." [the distance between Madrid and Barcelona increases every day even as the distance between our city and the civilized cities of Europe continually decreases. And as if to make the distance still greater, we have even taken to speaking our language, different from that of Madrid] (*Articles*, 58). The distance is not merely psychological, for Almirall notes how technological advances have shortened the time it takes to travel the considerably longer distance from Barcelona to Paris to more or less the time it takes to go from Barcelona to Madrid. Critical as he is, Almirall nonetheless seeks to lessen the distance between Barcelona and Madrid, and ends his essay with a call for Spain to act as a sister rather than a stepmother to Catalunya. The exasperation and frustration that fleck Almirall's essay become at once more acute and more extensive as time passes. A year before the defeat, Joan Maragall, in article that was not published until after his death, pens what might be described as the obituary of Spanish thought. Declaring Spain to be a dead thing, "una cosa morta," Maragall urges Catalans to rid themselves of it as quickly as possible (*Articles*, 33). The events of 1898 would only heighten the sense of something irredeemably rotten.

The defeat thus entails the victory, or at least the invigoration, of various Catalanist proposals, including independence. While acknowledging the efficacy of Spanish patriotic rhetoric during the war (many Catalans did indeed rally around the Spanish flag), Josep Benet presents the reaction to the defeat as one of excitement and hope. According to Benet "després, davant el desastre, la reacció fou immediata i vigorosa, combativa i esperançada i, alhora, constructiva; és a dir molt distinta de la reacció espanyola del 98." [later, when faced with the Disaster, reaction was immediate and energetic, combative and hopeful and, at the same time, constructive, very different from the Spanish reaction of 98] (16). Benet's rendition of the Catalan reaction may be a bit too rosy, but he seems on sure ground when it

comes to the recognition of significantly different reactions, *within Spain*, to the defeat.³⁹ Interestingly, Benet contrasts the Catalan reaction to that of the Generation of 1898, whose existence he, like Shaw, takes as a given. More interestingly still, Shaw's insistence on unity (itself bound up in a formulation of difference) finds curious corroboration in Benet's insistence on difference. In other words, both critics affirm that the Generation of 1898 exists and that it does so in a relatively self-contained manner: once again, it tends to be solid or to not be at all. It should come as little surprise, however, that Benet's comments are aimed at diminishing the relevance of the Generation of 1898 or of revealing it to be a most *partial* phenomenon, one that is *not* representative of Spain as a (contested) whole. Even if Benet overstates the opposition between a pessimistic Spanish reaction and an optimistic Catalan reaction; even if he appears to offer virtually the same reading of the Generation of 1898 as Shaw; he offers an alternative reading of 1898 itself, of the varying significance of "loss," "defeat," and "disaster." And of "dissolution."

The varying significance of presumably key terms bears on the very situation, or "problem," that supposedly manifests itself in the wake of the events of 1898. Much ink has been spilt over the proverbial problem of Spain. And yet, the problem of Spain, *in its dominant formulation*, is in many respects a false problem, for it does not seriously entertain the dissolution of Spain as a solution. At that time, but perhaps even more now, many of those who examine the problem cannot bring themselves to imagine dissolution (so morally charged a term) as anything other than decadence and defeat, or an accentuation of defeat, first abroad and then "at home." The very thought of dissolution seems saturated with violence, an abominable breaking of a quasi-natural, quasi-divine, entity. Today, those fearful of dissolution tend to refer, over and again, to Yugoslavia rather than Czechoslovakia, revealing not just a penchant for catastrophe but also a penchant for the inviolability of the sovereign state, the status quo.⁴⁰ Earlier, when "imperialism" was not quite the dirty word it has become, those fearful of dissolution tended to be more forthright in their defense of powerful states and employed an array of organic

39 Ángeles Cardona also calls attention to the diverse reactions to the "desastre," most notably the growing prestige of Catalan and Basque nationalism (180-181). Ribbens has also underscored the relative optimism of Catalan doctrine as well ("No lloréis," 140).

40 Rubert de Ventós criticizes the "Western democracies" for their refusal to see Kosovo as anything more than an "autonomous" region or province of Yugoslavia. Rubert cites Galbraith who frets openly about setting a precedent for those European states—Spain, France, and Britain, most notably—where the "national question" is far from resolved (38-39).

metaphors that equated dissolution—or worse yet “dismemberment”—to death. Despite the force of such arguments, others *did* imagine (dis)solution as a solution to the problem of Spain. Cortada, writing in 1893, explicitly mentions Ireland as entailing the *partial* dissolution of Britain, but he also refers to the situation of Norway and Sweden as well as Austria and Hungary (39). For Cortada, the situation of Catalunya vis-à-vis Spain is analogous; Catalunya too has a place among the *modern* nations of Europe. Modernity is an explicit concern of other Catalan thinkers as well. Almirall, in *Lo catalanisme* (1886), criticizes the “decrepitude” and “backwardness” of Spain (23) and examines Austria-Hungary, Sweden and Norway as providing “monarchical solutions,” by which partial dissolution is the guarantee of a union of another sort, imperfect but open to improvement (227). There are obviously other models, and Almirall also considers the various federal and republican options of Switzerland, Mexico, Argentina, and especially the United States. Almirall himself, without ever advocating independence, did propose the dissolution of the *centralized* Spanish State in favor of a more equitable configuration.

The aforementioned works by Almirall and Cortada date from before the Spanish-American War, though by no means—and this is all too often forgotten—before armed conflict in Cuba, most notably the “Ten Year War” of 1868 to 1878. Anti-colonial strife in Puerto Rico (most famously, the “Grito de Lares”) and the Philippines (rebellions in 1854, 1872, etc.) has a long history too. A more expansive vision of history is fundamental to understanding, among other things, why 1898 has been so studiously fetishized, why it has become an “academic inevitability.” As Isidre Molas succinctly puts it, “la reflexió sobre la decadència d’Espanya i la seva regeneració no fou producte de la pèrdua de les colònies el 1898” [reflection on the decadence of Spain was not a product of the loss of the colonies in 1898] (17). With respect to Catalunya, other dates are arguably no less important: Memorial de Greuges (1885); Bases de Manresa (1892); La Lliga Regionalista (1901); I Congrés Internacional de la Llengua Catalana (1906); victory of Solidaritat Catalana (1907); foundation of the Institut d’Estudis Catalans (1907), the “Setmana Tràgica” (1909). Then again, the events that these dates designate do not have the resonance of an oceanic war between two Empires, one fading and the other fresh. That is most important, because the Generation of 1898, even though it is loath to give up a particular version and vision of Spain, can give the impression of being quite general. Of course, when it comes to such general plays, the advantage of *modernismo* is even more pronounced. What comprises the “defeat” of the Generation of 1898 is not that Spain has dissolved, but rather that Spain is now figured in an expanded, international context, the very one by which, in which, *modernismo* is

victorious. Multidirectional and omnicomprehensive, *modernismo* calls forth a cosmopolitanism that is, when pressed, nonetheless quite provincial. Once again, *modernismo*, so figured, is not that different from its allegedly more benighted cousin, the Generation of 1898. And once again, both, albeit to varying degrees, maintain a vision of Spanish unity overwhelmingly articulated, for all the foreign imports, in Spanish, that is to say Castilian.

The unity in question, or rather *not* in question, is that of Spain as "patria," not as "pàtria." The accent, or its absence, is important. And it is important in writing as well as in speech. "Escolta, Espanya— / la veu d'un fill / que 'et parla en llengua—no castellana; / parlo en la llengua—que m'ha donat / la terra aspra: / en'questa llengua—pocs t'han parlat; / en l'altra, massa" [Listen, Spain, to the voice of a son who speaks to you in a language that is not Castilian. I speak in the language that this rough land has given me. In this language, few have spoken to you; in the other, too many] (*Obra*, 163). Joan Maragall's "Oda a Espanya" directly confronts the significance of the signifying process itself, the *language* in which the question is raised, the problem posed, the solution sought—or not. A dozen years before the "Disaster," Valenti Almirall also describes what many still do not want to hear. The need, obligation, or *duty* to use Castilian—as many a current critic of *Catalan* linguistic policy demonstrates—can generate various modes of resistance, from silence to violence.

si no fos qüestió de dignitat, la usaríem [la llengua castellana] molt més sovint, i sobretot amb molt més carinyo que no la fem servir avui. Mes, al punt que agafem la ploma i posem en ella les primeres paraules, no podem deixar de recordar que és la marca de l'esclavitud i l'estigma de la nostra degeneració, i si no és per pura necessitat, fem cent bocins lo paper, com si volguéssim que no en quedés ni rastre (*Catalanisme*, 82).

If it were not a matter of dignity, we would use [Castilian] much more often, and certainly with much more affection than at the present time. But as soon as we take up the pen and jot down the first words in it [Castilian] we cannot but recall that it is the mark of slavery and the stigma of our degeneration. So much so that unless it is entirely necessary, we rip the paper up into a hundred pieces as if we did not want the slightest trace of it to remain.

The image of an act of writing so shameful that it cannot be endured, a writing whose every materialization stimulates its eradication, is extraordinarily powerful.⁴¹ Indeed, the destruction of a

41. A man of strong principles, Almirall refused to pursue a doctorate in Madrid as a passive criticism of academic centralism and rejected a proposal that he be mayor of Barcelona so as not to swear an oath of allegiance to the established order (Figueres, VI-VIII).

page written in Spanish dovetails the destruction—whether intended or not, realized or not—of entire languages.

The naturalization of Castilian as *the* Spanish language obviously affected not only the languages of the peninsula. José Rizal's defense, in Castilian, of Tagalo is a case in point: "La lengua tagala es también como la latina,/ la inglesa, la castellana: lengua de ángeles,/ porque Dios que vela por todos,/ es el que de ella nos hizo merced" [The Tagalo language is also like Latin, English, and Castilian: a language of angels, because God, who watches over us all, gave us this gift] (quoted in Llorens, 177). Rizal, arrested upon disembarking in Barcelona in 1896, incarcerated in Montjuïc, and returned to Manila where he was executed for anti-Spanish activities, has the status of a hero in his country. His aura and, possibly even more, the geographic distance that separates the Philippines from Catalunya typically relegate Rizal, at least for most Peninsularists, to a sphere as exotic as it is inconsequential. Yet Rizal's concerns for self-determination are shared by many in the peninsula, and Rizal himself can hardly be said to have had no contacts or impact there. The linguistic question that Rizal addresses runs in compelling "cosmopolitan" directions that have, often as not, a vindictory end. In Catalunya, the renovation and regeneration so important to both the Generation of 1898 and *modernisme* are profoundly bound to the recuperation and normalization of the Catalan language. Writers such as Víctor Català, Prudenci Bertrana, and Raimon Casellas not only wrote extraordinarily engaging narratives, but also endeavored to record the lexical richness of Catalan. Their somewhat idiosyncratic endeavors feed, however, more concerted efforts associated with *noucentisme*. The differences between *modernisme* and *noucentisme* are a mainstay of Catalan literary history and are certainly remarkable; but both movements are characterized by a profound preoccupation with the Catalan language. Whatever renovations and innovations are undertaken in Castilian (even, or especially, on the part of many Latin Americans), they are not as far-reaching as those bearing on Catalan, whose syntax, lexicon, orthography, and morphology are all subjects of intense study and debate.

The work of Pompeu Fabra is here fundamental. Gabriel Bibiloni, summarizing the critical perception of Fabra, observes that "l'objectiu del codificador (Fabra) era aconseguir una llengua nacional dotada, com tota llengua nacional, de dues característiques essencials: la unitat interior i la genuïnitat, la màxima cohesió de portes endins i la màxima diferenciació de portes enfora." [Fabra's objective as codifier was to achieve a national language endowed, as all national languages are, with two essential characteristics: internal unity and genuineness, la greatest possible cohesion of what is inside and the greatest possible

differentiation from what is outside] (115). Bibiloni underscores the importance of "internal unity"—a matter of contention still today, especially vis-à-vis Valencia—and of "genuineness" in a way that renders unity with the "internal unity" of the Generation of 1898 virtually impossible. The fact that the writers of the Generation write in Castilian, articulate the problem of Spain in Spanish, is, as I have been arguing, as important as it is taken for granted. The confusion of Castilian with Spanish, the unity of one with the other, has been *naturalized and lexicalized* to the point that it ceases to be confusing, particularly *outside* Spain, in Latin America, the United States, and elsewhere.⁴² I submit, however, that we might do well to revisit or retain a certain confusion, to question, even to the point of appearing impertinent, what is involved in taking Castilian for Spanish, Spanish for Castilian, and either, or rather both, as the national language of Spain. What is involved in taking literature written in Spanish, or rather Castilian, as Spanish literature *tout court*? What is involved in having the directions of *modernismo* dodge the directions of *modernisme*? What is involved in questioning, let alone refuting, the unity of the Generation of 1898 without pondering the unity of *modernismo*? Ortega was not the only one to articulate Spain as articulable in Castilian alone. For if Castile can be said to make and unmake Spain, it can also be said to say and unsay it. The "vertebrae" of Spain are not just geopolitical but, as Ortega himself indicates, sociolinguistic as well.

The current Spanish constitution, with its distinctions between duty (*deber*) and right (*derecho*), is proof enough that language, a particular language, is crucial to the construction of the nation, a particular nation, however pluralist its rhetoric may be. The situation, for all its democratic trappings, is not new. At the turn of the century, during the time of *modernistas*, *modernistes*, and *noventayochistas*, language is a far from incidental factor. Enric Prat de la Riba, writing less than a decade after the events of 1898, refers to the aforementioned confusion of Castile and Spain, Castilian and Spanish, in a manner most intriguing.

42 Romero refers to "la habitual vacilación en la denominación de la lengua" [the habitual vacillation in the designation of the language] and maintains that it is not always the sign of "la hipertrofia interpretativa de la tesis castellanista" [the interpretative hypertrophy of Castilianism] (33-34). Indeed, it is not, though even the "preferencias lingüísticas locales del autor del libro o del lugar en el que éste se imprime" [the local linguistic preferences of the author or of the place in which the book is published] (34) are not free from larger structural conditions. Such "preferences," in other words, might also be understood as "orientations." Accordingly, Geoffrey Ribbans's acknowledgement, by way of the general theoretical work of Hugh Seton-Watson, of the naturalization of an official nationalism in which, as Ribbans glosses it, Castile stands (in) for Spain merits greater attention ("No lloréis," 136).

A l'Estat espanyol li corresponia una política espanyola. Però les coses van passar d'altra manera. Els governants varen seguir obertament la política d'una sola de les nacionalitats unides, i és que en el fons, disfressat amb el nom d'espanyol, va governar, com segueix governant. Espanya l'Estat castellà, aqueix Estat que, seguint la mateixa ficció, amb el nom d'espanyol ens imposa el dret de Castella amb nom d'espanyola la llengua castellana" (66-67, emphasis original).

The Spanish State should have had a Spanish political system. But things turned out differently. Governmental officials openly followed the politics (or policy) of only one of the united nationalities, so that, at bottom, disguised under the name "Spanish," only one of the nationalities governed and continues to govern. Spain the Castilian State, this State that, following the same fiction, under the name "Spanish" imposes upon us Castilian law and under the name "Spanish" the Castilian language.

Prat signals what today we might call the performative nature of nationhood, the fictions, disguises, and ploys by which one identity is empowered and another is not, by which one identity passes as another or indeed as all.⁴³ This is not to say that Prat abandons what, again today, we would call essentialist postures, but rather that he signals the construction, and hence possible deconstruction, of Spain, the Spanish state, as an *essentially* univocal enterprise.

Univocality is hardly one of the much-touted values of modernity or, for that matter, of *modernismo*; and yet univocality most definitely obtains. It should come as no surprise that my sympathies lie with a more polyvocal understanding of *modernismo*, which is why Gullón's move, seconded by Mainer, is for me as promising as it is frustrating. For in going beyond the Generation of 1898, they do not go far enough. Inman Fox, referring to Mainer, writes of expanding the definition of *modernismo* by following the lead of Latin American critics "en términos de lo que pasaba allende los pirineos" [in terms of what was happening beyond the Pyrenees] (25, in Mainer/Rico). *Allende los pirineos*: the topographical precision, in its very vagueness, is revealing. If *modernismo* expands, it is by moving *outside* of Spain, to Latin America or France, to Britain, Germany, or the United States, as if inside there were no other directions to be taken, no other "modern" modes to be had. Such an expansive move seems overdetermined, for modernism, *modernismo*, and *modernisme* have an international ring that "the Generation of 1898," quite simply, does

43 As Riquer i Permanyer puts it in a recent study, "Espanya era un fals estat nació, ja que no reconeixia ni valorava la riquesa que suposava l'existència d'altres cultures, llengües i sentiments identitaris" [Spain was a false nation-state because it did not recognize or value the wealth that the existence of other cultures, languages, and identificatory sentiments entailed] (51)

not. A common Latin root, *modus*, allows for the semblance of mobility, a mode of passing from one language to another. Translation is here treacherous for the very reason that the words seem so familiarly related, part of a larger, deeper European project. Some of these ever so modern variants, as should now be clear, have *more* of an international ring than others do. Internationality may cover the earth, but it does so unevenly. Whatever Catalunya's economic power at the turn of the century, whatever its glitter and glamour, it does not enjoy the relatively self-sure movement of the sovereign state. It has to struggle with the central government, the Spanish government, on matters ranging from taxes to trade to war to telegrams.⁴⁴ Words, or variations on a word, are obviously not the only "things" to move (or to be kept from moving); state sovereignty and economic power are, after all, two of the pillars of modernity, and both are given to some often notoriously expansive moves.

The moves of modernity are, in strong measure, those of capitalism and colonialism.⁴⁵ Modernism, the cultural movement that most incisively cites modernity, is caught up in capitalist, colonialist expansion. If the early work of Brossa, Ignasi Iglésias, and Pere Coromines engages notions of anti-bourgeois rebellion that tend toward revolution, such work is not long-lived because, as Joan Lluís Marfany remarks, "[l]a burguesia catalana posava un límit a l'esquerranisme dels seus intel·lectuals" [the Catalan bourgeoisie put a limit to the leftist positions of its intellectuals] (26). The internationalism of revolution confronts the internationality of exchange and finds itself hard pressed to compete. As Raymond Williams states, modernism, understood generally, "quickly lost its anti-bourgeois stance, and achieved comfortable integration into the new international capitalism. Its attempt at a universal market, transfrontier and transclass, turned out to be spurious" (35). Which is not to say that the market fails, far from it. The "universal market" succeeds, as Williams suggests, in reinforcing classes and frontiers even

⁴⁴ In 1896, the conservative government of Cánovas del Castillo prohibited the use of Catalan in telegrams and telephone calls. Despite protest, the prohibition was not removed until 1904 (Ferrer i Gironès, 182-183).

⁴⁵ Even though the integration of modernism into capitalism is not unique to Catalunya, for some it nonetheless appears to be so. I am alluding, of course, to the perception that, in Spain, Catalunya is *particularly* bourgeois, *especially* capitalist, that its industrial development is the manifestation of its mercantile essence (as if the bourgeoisie could be so without the proletariat, as if Barcelona were not a proletarian city too). As Joan Lluís Marfany remarks, one of the principal problems facing writers and speakers of Catalan at the turn of the century was the idea that Catalan was not, indeed could not be, an "international" language and was unsuited to the revolutionary project known as internationalism (26). The paradox of an internationalism that could only be articulated in some national languages is not always appreciated.

as it *appears* to overcome them. For the much-discussed directions of modernismo, modernism, *modernisme*, and so on, are also the directions of capital. All of the exquisitely morose pleasures of des Esseintes, Dorian Gray, and the Marqués de Bradomín; the subtleties of poetic expression and the refinements of art; the delicate porcelains and carefully crafted marbles; the stained glass and precious metals; the array of fabrics, jewels, liqueurs, and perfumes; the ornate façades and sumptuous entry halls; the Chinese dragons, Japanese silks, Persian rugs, Philippine robes, African masks, and Polynesian totems; all of the by now stereotypical trappings of the "modern" call forth, if only to push away, an ever-expanding, yet profoundly restricted, economy. If there is something omnicomprehensive here it is the capitalist-colonialist system, a system that manages to promote itself as fundamental to modern progress and freedom. Williams's suggestion that advertising may be modernism's final home is, in this respect, as compelling as it is sobering. Its argumentative force can be appreciated in many of the most visible signs by which the aforementioned objects gain a certain currency: the store fronts, shop windows, posters, placards, announcements, labels, packaging, newspapers, reviews, blurbs, banners, and decorative motifs of various and sundry sorts. But here too, for Catalunya, something else is at issue.

What is also at issue is the visibility, the public presence, of a particular language. Joan Fuster describes a visit of King Alfonso XIII to Barcelona, in the times of Antonio Maura, in terms that still resonate today:

Barcelona va rebre el rei amb una quantitat de senyeres fabulosa. Tot eren quatre barres, i pels quatre costats. Fins i tot alguna coral postclaveriana entonà Els Segadors... El cas és que don Toni Maura, personatge tremendament espavilat, li va fer una escolteta al monarca: 'Ya veis, Majestad, muchas banderas catalanas y pocos letreros en catalán.' Prácticament cap, aleshores. Els botiguers catalanistes sempre han tingut unes idees molt clares sobre l'idioma: els rètols, en castellà" (103).

[Barcelona received the king with a fabulous number of Catalan flags. The "four bars" were everywhere. There was even a choir that sang "Els Segadors." The fact of the matter is that Toni Maura, a tremendously sharp character, sidled up to the monarch and said: 'You can see for yourself, your Majesty, many Catalan flags but few signs in Catalan.' Hardly any, at that time. Catalanist shopkeepers have always had very clear ideas about language: signs, in Castilian].

Fuster's ironic depiction of a particularly interested Catalanism (the shopkeepers are "catalanistes," not "catalans") dovetails earlier assessments by Almirall, Brossa, and others who resisted the idea that Catalanism had to be, so to speak, of a particular class. It also dovetails more recent assessments from politically progressive sectors of

Catalanism—which is not, contrary to what some would like to believe, reducible to one particular political party. At any rate, though the signs in the streets may have changed since the days of Alfonso XIII and Maura, much, as Fuster suggests, remains the same. What sells, what catches the eye and sells, what announces a presumably profitable (inter)national transaction, is the Castilian language, the Spanish language, the language of the sovereign state. The sign, the image, has its limits, and one of them, an important one, seems to be something like the nationality of language itself. The current King of Spain might indeed see more signs in Catalan when he comes to Barcelona, but should he go to the cinema, for example, he will find that a couple of languages—say, English and Spanish—have cornered the market quite comfortably. Hollywood can be rendered promptly in the language of the state, but it is not as inclined—for “obvious reasons”—to be rendered in Catalan.

And as with Hollywood, so too, in a less flashy sense, with Hispanism. For all the rhetoric of difference; for all the interest in multiculturalism and marginality; for all the sophistication and sensitivity in the study of signs, Catalan remains strikingly invisible, tellingly silent. This holds for the “modern” moment as it does for the “postmodern.” The “o” that is a letter that can sound a lot like “u” is also a hole, gap, or cipher, the measure of something that, all too often, goes unheard, unread, perhaps even for “native” speakers of Catalan. There is an educational challenge here, and it consists in considering that we see and hear, even in reading, not necessarily what we want (or do not want) to see and hear, but what we are wont to see and hear. And conventionally, Hispanists, on the whole, appear more inclined to see and hear English than Catalan, no matter how conscientiously words are placed in quotation marks (“modern” and “moderno” alike). It is as if to see and hear Catalan within Hispanism or indeed within Spanish Cultural Studies required a special, specific effort, somewhat like that once required, still required, to see and hear “woman” in the putatively universal signifier “man.” Or conversely, it is as if to see or hear Catalan were to attend to a mark whose specificity, again not unlike “woman,” seems incontrovertible.⁴⁶ According to this convention, Castilian, as

46 The preceding analogy, employed by Rubert de Ventós (43–45) among others, is obviously flawed: women account for over half the world’s population; around six million people speak Catalan. Given the power of numbers (understandable in a so-called democratic age), the precise tally of Catalan speakers can be a source of passionate debate. According to Corano, in 1994 there were 4,154, 812 Catalan speakers in Catalunya; 493,250 in the Balearic Islands; some 2,000,000 in the Valencian Community; 260,000 in North Catalunya (in France); 48,000 in Aragon, and between 22,000 and 30,000 in l’Alguer, Sardinia (32–33). The question of minorities and minoritization (including, of course, non Catalan-speaking minorities in Catalunya) is thorny indeed.

Spanish, is general; Catalan, as Catalan, is specific. The tension between the general and the specific inflects *modernismo* and *modernisme* too, the former being ostensibly more open and omnicomprehensive, more cosmopolitan and universal, than the latter. But the expansiveness of *modernismo*, as figured in Peninsular Studies, still has quite a bit in common with the closeness of the embattled Generation of 1898. In fact, as Rubén Darío himself indicates, *modernisme* might well be more open and omnicomprehensive than its Castilian, or Spanish, counterpart. "Modern" culture, that is, may find its most global measure in something presumably quite local.

Again, the word "modern," the "modern" word. Attentive as many of us are to language, we often seem in a hurry to put languages and the letters of languages behind us. Inasmuch as the image currently reigns supreme, it is not surprising that more and more Hispanists are setting their sights on cinema and video and that some are virtually abandoning the letter—except, of course, as the means by which their studies still take shape. The attention to the visual, the opening of the field to the variety of cultural production, is certainly rewarding and even long over due. And yet, the rush from one medium to another, the sense that what is long overdo (visual studies) means that something else is long overdone (literary studies), has its price. In missing the letter; in assuming it to be a known, tedious, or even insignificant subject; in expecting nothing (different) from it; in taking it to be a given, a virtual cipher, a zero (o), we may miss a great deal. More pointedly, if we assume, *for whatever reason*, that it is not *really* necessary to know Catalan or Euskera to know Catalunya or Euskadi, we might push even further and ask ourselves if it is *really* necessary to know Castilian to know Spain (or something about something called Spain). Few, I think, would go so far as to claim that knowledge of Castilian is not necessary to the study of Spain, and yet, once again, to assume that Castilian and Castilian alone is sufficient compromises from the outset any project that would be truly respectful of difference and diversity. Many of us, I submit, have become too content with our knowledge, too comfortable in the amplitude of Spanish and English, too impatient with the nagging rigors of philology, too quick to charge the call to learn (other) languages with essentialism. Some of us, moreover, have become too enamoured of getting on with the business of publishing and of making a name for ourselves to take the time and to make the effort to learn: "L'escriure mata el llegir," writing kills reading, as the Catalan saying goes. I know of what I write, and still I do not know and cannot write, or read, or speak, or understand so much. And lest my words—here, in English—take the unbearable form of an imperative in which I am not implicated (as if I did not write to have a name, or face), I will insist that my ignorance of Eus-

kera and Galician cannot but affect my (mis)understanding of Spain and Spanish literature.⁴⁷ Total knowledge is, of course, impossible, but a knowledge that does not recognize that its limits may be of critical significance performs a totalizing little dance of its own. However powerful the image may be, the letter, in all its differences, in all its sounds and silences, insists.

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⁴⁷ See, for example, Joseba Arregi's personal history about alienation, Castilian, and Euskera (66-70).

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