Memories of Iberian Identities: Joan Maragall's Catalan Room of his Own

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MEMORIES OF IBERIAN IDENTITIES: JOAN MARAGALL'S CATALAN ROOM OF HIS OWN

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> "It is memory's truth, he insists, and only a madman would prefer someone else's version to his own" (Salman Rushdie)
>
> "Mes, el signe de la pàtria, jo crec que és el llenguatge" (Maragall 1: 741)

Throughout his career Joan Maragall examined Catalonia's situation within Spain and the Iberian Peninsula. In both his poetry and journalistic writings he developed many Catalanist and Iberianist themes and ideas, which evince two opposite tendencies. On the one hand, he affirms Catalonia's growing self-confidence and uncompromising specificity vis-à-vis the Spanish state and the rest of the peninsula. On the other hand, he points out the ineludible historical and linguistic closeness that connects Catalonia with all of Iberia. These concerns show that both particularism and the need for association exerted great influence on Maragall's thought and writings. In reality, Maragall was responding to the conflicts and challenges the peninsular nations were facing at the turn of the century. In Spain, the complex socio-political situation during the 19th century made possible the parallel quests for a national or Spanish identity as part of a nation building project pursued by the centralized government of Madrid, and for ethnonational identities meant to reestablish a sense of nationhood in the peripheral regions of the country after several centuries of almost complete cultural and political stagnation under Castile's dominance.[1] His active contribution to Catalonia's nationalistic revival exposes the socio-political instability, as well as the heterogeneous cultural milieu of 19th-century and early 20th-century Spain. It also reveals the unstable, even contradictory nature of identity —individual, national and supranational— and people's fascinating attempts to define it. Maragall's nonliterary writings, namely his articles for *Diario de Barcelona*, must be examined alongside his poetry to fully appreciate the sociopolitical and cultural impact of his oeuvre. In fact,

1. According to Daniele Conversi "ethnonationalism refers exclusively to movements acting on behalf of stateless nations" (6).

representation through history remained incessantly active during Maragall's lifetime and beyond. In reality, all these roots and identities are not mutually exclusive, for they all have two important characteristics in common: their rejection of Castilian centralism and their determination to fortify Catalonia's specificity within Spain, Iberia, and the world at large. Maragall realized that the conjunction of these roots and connections make up Catalonia's singularity. They were not just unrelated identities, but rather integral elements of the complex identity of the Catalonian people throughout history. In other words, this complexity was what conferred the Catalonia he imagined its uniqueness and strength.

Maragall's imagined community founded on difference (within itself and in relation to other regions) and becoming clearly contravened the Restorations's official monistic version of Spain and Spanishness. Josep R. Llobera's questioning of Benedict Anderson's almost idyllic concept of an imagined nation can shed some light on the nature and the impact of Maragall's nationalistic imagination. According to Llobera "multinational states that engage in historical reconstruction with the view of homogenizing a given population within a dominant national culture and language, may have to compete with alternative ethnonational visions—even if the latter tend to be projected in a weaker light" (332). Competing nationalities within a multinational Spanish State was in Maragall's mind. However, his 19th-century intellectual background precluded him from conceiving a modern notion of "dissemination of histories" (Vattimo 9), to wit, the debasing of the traditional notion of a linear and single history. Conversely, it equipped him to conceive one history, in this case, the history of Spain that needed to be rewritten to include Catalonia's perspectives. In this sense, Maragall's concept of history finds itself closer to what George Orwell calls "palimpsest" (190), where the trace of the previous version of history cannot and should not be completely erased. Maragall's writings were undoubtedly not as fruitless as the rewrites of the official story of Oceania done by the protagonist of *1984*, Winston Smith, (plus the Spanish state during the Restoration hardly qualifies as an almighty Big Brother), nor was it as personal as this Orwellian character's diary. That is not to say Maragall's work has nothing in common with Smith's. The act of remembering and recording the memories in the name of one's own people resemble the personal feel of autobiographical writing, as David Lowenthal points out: "Like personal memory, it is meant to be opaque to outsiders" (18).[23] Opaqueness is not inherent to history

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writing, but a strategic choice, that is, a "strategic manipulation of symbols." This opaqueness, varying in degrees, can be self-absorbed as in the case of some extreme, even racist forms of Catalanism,[24] or it could be fraternal, as in the case of Iberianism. It is not that facts do not matter, but rather they are personal property of the author-protagonist, whose authority resides in his ethnicity. Hence, belonging to the community constitutes the main requirement for addressing and interpreting the facts of its history. Truth becomes a matter of position.

Thus, the issue of historical writing as a tool of identity formation boils down to the question of who does the remembering, the telling, and the community imagining. In Spain's case, it is an integral part of the conflict between hegemonic and counterhegemonic truths and interpretations of the facts. A poem like 'Or de llei," for instance, exemplifies the struggle between historical memory and collective memory. Maragall did not see himself as a scholar writing an official version of history (although the version of Catalonia's history he presented would eventually reach that status in Catalan[ist] lore), but as a Catalan remembering and recording the history of his collectivity for his collectivity. From his vantage point in the present and thinking about the future, he looked back in order to explore the roots and the origin of his *pàtria*, making the geographical and cultural connections he saw fit, and also highlighting the events and names he believed would more adequately and artistically narrate the becoming of Catalonia. His oeuvre, produced against State officialdom, contains a liberating element of subversion. In this sense, it could be said that his discourse "inverts the order of memory and remembers the future, as radical thought has always done. It must recall a future of difference, of particularity exercised in the freedom of equal dignity and access" (Resina, "Introduction" 13).[25] By (re)writing the origin, past, present and future of Catalonia, Maragall (re)wrote the history of Spain and of Iberia. In writing a Catalonian version of history he inscribed Catalonia's own voice in the palimpsest of the history not just of Spain but of the world. Iain Chambers maintains, "roots are forms of narration, literary and cultural constructs, mediated formations, providing routes to the world" (30). The name of the ship on which Maragall's Catalonia would travel was beautifully written in Catalan.

24. Many Catalan intellectuals distinguished between the supposed Europeanness of their people and the Semitic origin of other Spaniards (Marfany, *Cultura* 191-218).

25. This comment is made in relation to the period of transition to democracy (Resina, "Introduction" 13). The fact that the concerns related to identity and nationhood were still debated during the transition attest to the open-ended nature of these endeavors and the persistence of the struggle between the centralist State and the peripheral regions in Spain.

render the work of the "patriarca i oracle del catalanisme," as Joan-Lluís Marfany calls him (*Articles* xvii), invaluable in understanding the difficult national identity formation process in Spain during the 19th century and into the 20th century.

By the late 1800s and early 1900s Maragall's poems and articles show he possessed both a full-fledged Catalanist consciousness and the firm conviction that a profound cultural and political transformation had to take place in the country. From his privileged platform of *Diario de Barcelona* he exercised his "paper de veu de la consciència catalanista" (Marfany, *Articles* xx) and enjoyed an "aureola de noble patricio" (Comas 16). His particular brand of Catalanism did not advocate separatism,[8] but rather imagined a Catalonia that "ha de considerar-se espanyola, però dins una Espanya que encara està per fer" (Terry 191). This meant a new and de-Castilianized Spain: "La d'ells és un fantasma històric: la nostra és la única realitat viventa, suplantada por aquell fantasma [...] Doncs, més Espanya som nosaltres que ells" (1: 769), writes Maragall, declaring both his Spanishness and his opposition to Castile's obsolete centralism.[9] This emotional and intellectual breakup with the Spanish state made it necessary to explore alternative identificatory ties, as particularist and associative ideas and endeavors overlapped and sometimes even converged. That is to say, Maragall examined the characteristics that made Catalonia unique, as well as those that linked his *pàtria* to other peoples, because he understood that no nation came about or could function in a vacuum.

This explains the fact that he felt the need for all peninsular regions to get closer, mainly at a cultural level. In the last two letters he wrote to Unamuno, Maragall mentions "Revista Ibérica", a magazine that would be published in the three major Iberian languages (*Epistolario* 85, 92). His death in 1911 prevented him from seeing this Iberianist project, which he held dearly, come to fruition. The early poem "Or de llei" (1: 193-94) and one of his last articles "Catalunya i avant" (2: 759-61), published shortly before his passing, bespeak of the lasting importance of Iberianism in his thought and writings. A key year in the consolidation of Maragall's Iberianist ideas was 1906, judging by

8. Marfany affirms that Catalanism in general did not advocate separatism but emphasized the concept of autonomy or self-determination instead (*Cultura* 93).

9. Juan José Lahuerta examines the two sides of the relationship between Catalanism and the Restoration: the "españolista" and the "catalanista" (66). According to the critic, this ambivalence is explained by the fact that the plutocracy (mainly the Güell family and Antonio López), which had a leading role in the formation of Catalanism as seen in its ideological connection with artists, poets, and intellectuals of the time (21-22, 29-39, 146, 158), wanted to both protect its economic interests lending its support to the central government and establish a new sense of Catalanness to justify its belated arrival in history (21-23, 66).

the amount of writing he devoted to the topic. A revealing letter to Unamuno (*Epistolario* 42), the article "El ideal ibérico" (2: 723-26), and the poem "Himne ibèric" (1: 173-75) are some of the most obvious examples. "Or de llei" was also made public that year. This poem written earlier in Maragall's career reflects, as Arthur Terry points out, the influence of the patriotic themes of the "tradició floralesca" (109). The Catalanist content, however, is not what made it relevant to the time, but rather the theme of the relationship between Catalonia, Castile, and Portugal, which both presents Verdaguerian echoes and foreshadows later developments in the matter. Iberianism attracted Maragall for its spiritual appeal based on recognizable cultural elements like language, history, and the land. It seemed obvious to him that all Iberian nations shared more than a geographical space, they shared a similar origin, a present of hardships in comparison to the prosperity of the rest of Western Europe, and the possibility of a common destiny. This connection also offered a way to counterbalance Castile's historical predominance within Spain and the peninsula to a man like Maragall who favored harmony and plurality and rejected unilateral impositions, a man who knew communal strength was to be found in respecting differences and not in a forced unity. The Iberian ties were not the only ones he considered in his pursuit of a Catalan identity, for he also looked to the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean for alternatives, but these did not offer him the same affective and practical closeness as Iberianism.

In addition to Iberianist preoccupations Maragall's Catalanism must be understood in relation to *modernisme*, the movement of which he was perhaps the most conspicuous member. *Modernisme* linked the cultural *Renaixença* with the more politically conscious *noucentisme*, yet, instead of being a mere transitional period, it constituted a crucial stage in the formation of Catalanism, in great part thanks to Maragall's contribution. According to Marfany, "el modernisme, en definitiva, és característicament catalanista perquè es confon amb les valors mesocràtiques" (*Cultura* 376). Maragall, an author of conservative middle class extraction, did not hide his class affiliation and his belief in the leading role of the bourgeoisie in relation to other social strata. "Tota idea de novetat brolla en les altures," he maintains (1: 684), expressing a conservative stand,[10] that might be interpreted as elitist, although paternalistic might be a better-suited word for a man who saw himself as a sort of patriarch of his people. The discourse of *modernista* Catalanism, however, was shaped by a series of contradictory influences that rendered it difficult to define. Eduard Valentí, for example, brands *modernisme* as "progre-

10. For more on Maragall's alleged anti-democratic ideas read Valentí (*El primer* 325).

sismo conservador" (*El primer* 341). This paradoxical definition illustrates the conflicting coexistence at the time of a conservative Neo-Romantic diction,[11] manifested in notions like *Volksgeist*, which promoted an unhistorical brand of class immobility, and a more progressive diction, evident in the emphasis on modernization.[12] Modernizing Catalonia implied economic progress and "obrirse a totes les influències foranes" (Marfany, *Articles* IX), which, in the cultural arena propelled the introduction of authors like Nietzsche, Ibsen, Maeterlinck, and Ruskin (Terry 51). In the case of Maragall, a man deeply in tune with the intellectual activity of his epoch, these elements were mixed in a unique and powerful way, making him one of the most representative and influential authors of turn-of the-century Spain. His work embodies the admirable transformation of Catalonia, a nation that rose from almost complete obscurity to a bright and prosperous but still problematic reality, in only a matter of decades.

"Cantem la gran resurrecció / de Catalunya mare nostra" ("Or de llei")

Bonaventura Aribau's publication of his now legendary "Oda a la pàtria" in 1833 is marked as the date when Catalonia awakened from its multi-century stupor, initiating the *Renaixença*. There is no doubt that this apparently inconsequential occurrence had emotional, symbolic and practical repercussions way beyond Aribau's wildest expectations.[13] However, more than initiating a revolution, Aribau's poem reflects the transformations that Spain underwent in the 1800s. The Iberian nation was the site of an intense cultural, political, and economic struggle for hegemony between the center and the periphery, a struggle that intensified during the second half of the century. While the central government in Madrid attempted to homogenize Spanishness or Spain's national identity using the traditional myth of Castile as the creative and unifying force of the Spanish imperial state, the peripheral regions tried to foreground the image of a regionally diverse nation. Although both forces were influenced by the nationalistic revolution that swept 19th-century Europe since the Romantic period,[14] their national projects were in

11. "La posició fonamental de Maragall és la d'un escriptor neoromàntic", (Terry 256).

12. Resina has an opposing opinion for he considers *modernisme* a "huida de la historia," opposed to the "progresismo de la clase media liberal que los circunda" (*Un sueño* 60).

13. Valentí comments on the playfulness of the movement's early years (*Els clàssics* 23).

14. According to Terry the *Renaixença* "perllonga les actituds romàntiques en el seu

opposition. In fact, this struggle reveals the confrontation between the premodern agrarian model of the Old Regime, still prevalent in the central *meseta*, and the modern industrialized model, established in peripheral regions like Catalonia since the 1840s (Balcells 21). The strong process of modernization through industrialization which also helped establish a solidly centralized nation and therefore a relatively homogeneous national identity in the majority of Western European countries did not take root in Spain, which rendered possible the problematic coexistence of premodern and modern socioeconomic systems. As a result of "the nation's imperfect transition to modernity" (Labanyi, "Realism" 389), the gradually weaker centralized government, adamant about perpetuating an atavistic socio-economic system, coupled with the ever-increasing strength of regionalist movements assured that the process of identity formation and nation building in Spain continued throughout the 1800s and beyond.

"We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians," exclaimed M.T. D'Azeglio after the formation of the Italian state in the 1870s (Hobsbawm 267). In this sense, the aforementioned clash between the Spanish State's national project and the regional projects was rendered even stronger, especially during the Restoration, when each side would head in opposite directions. After placating the ideals of the Revolution of 1868 and the *cantonalista* upheaval that ensued, the newly reestablished Bourbon state had a Spain, now it needed Spaniards. However, as Carolyn Boyd suggests, the centralized government did not do a very good job in promoting a sense of "shared identity and solidarity" (91). The conservative high bourgeoisie and the still present rural aristocracy of the Old Regime became allies in an attempt to crush all remnants of the Republic and to keep under control the growing economic power of the peripheral regions, with one of the chief objectives being the imposition of a unified national image.[15]

This alliance was strongly resented in political and intellectual circles in Catalonia.[16] It became obvious to many Catalans that the cultural endeavors of the *Renaixença* were not enough to express let alone satisfy Catalonian needs. Valentí Almirall tried to address these

anhel de renovació nacional." (119) These Romantic attitudes continued in one way or another beyond the Catalan revival and well into the twentieth century.

15. Boyd questions the alleged effectiveness of the Restoration's attempts to present the image of a unified nation in her analysis of the educational system of the period: "Clichés about the excessive centralization of the Spanish state and the cultural hegemony of the ruling elites notwithstanding, historically the weak Spanish state could neither provide a sufficient number of public schools (leaving a deficit filled primarily by private Catholic schools), nor effectively impose standards on its own schools and teachers" (xix).

16. Read Note 9 for a comment on the relationship between the Catalan economic elite and the Restoration's ruling class.

needs in the political arena with his theory of particularism. Even though his most influential works on the topic, *Lo catalanisme* and *L'Espagne telle qu'elle est* were released in the late 1880s, his involvement in the Catalan cause can be traced to as early as 1869, when he was in charge of the newspaper *El Federalista* (Valentí, *El primer* 113). Such publication constituted one of the first examples of a regionalist political consciousness in 19th-century Catalonia, whose growth and strengthening are intrinsically associated to Almirall's endeavors. In fact, critics like Joan Ramon Resina consider this author a point of departure for both *modernisme* and *noucentisme* ("Review" 412). Maragall did not remain oblivious to the growing political aspirations of Catalonians. And although he defended federalism until his latter years, he did not consider himself a political figure. As Pedro Laín Entralgo notes Maragall "no fue y no quiso ser político. Cuando Enric Prat de la Riba y Francesc Cambó quisieron comprometerle en la política activa, supo renunciar con firmeza; la política no era su camino" (30). His brand of federalism had a strong Iberianist feel. It is important to note that the federalist proposition of the 1868 Revolution was welcome not only in Spain and but also in Portugal and rekindled the Iberianist ideals of old, this time, due to the Romantic influence, with a cultural and spiritual dimension in addition to the traditional geopolitical implications. The Catalan Francesc Pi i Margall was one of the most influential political figures of the period who contemplated the idea of an Iberian federal Republic, as it can be seen in his work *Las nacionalidades* published in 1877 (355). The influence of Iberianist federalism can be observed in Maragall's journalistic writings (2: 723-26; 2: 749-51). However, he stayed away from the political implications of Iberianism, as he did in regards to militant Catalanism, and centered his attention on its artistic, spiritual, social, and fraternal aspects.

At the turn of the century the cultural revival had been surpassed in urgency by the process of socio-political strengthening. It was clear Catalonia had Catalans, now needed a more resolute sense of nationhood. Catalonia still had a question to answer in order to achieve this goal: who were the Catalans? The use of history and language as symbols of nationhood would help Maragall to address the crucial issue of ethnic self-consciousness in the process of national identity formation.

"Hi havia un temps [...]" ("Or de llei")

In late 19th-century and early 20th-century Catalonia, *modernistes*, *noucentistes* and even *Renaixença* authors like Jacint Verdaguer had a personal say in the writing of Catalonia's history from its birth to the

present and into the future. It can be said that one of the main goals of national history is the quest for and the grounding of roots and origins even though in cases like Catalonia's, no exact date can be given for the birth of a people or a nation. Maragall was well aware that history and identity are intrinsically connected, so he viewed origin as the foundation on which to erect a group's historical narrative. He also understood that identity is both an individual and a relational matter. His inward look constituted, in fact, a turning his eyes away from the Spanish State toward Iberia, as well as toward the Mediterranean, the Pyrenees and Europe in search of Catalonia's roots. By stressing different roots he set up different identificatory bonds. Hence, to him identities became "points of departure, openings onto the continual elaboration of becoming" (Chambers 29). This notion of identity as becoming in history distanced Maragall from members of the generation of 98 like Unamuno, who represented Spanish identity through the image of Castile and its people unaffected by historical change (Labanyi, "Nation" 133; Resina, "For their own" 238, 257).

In "Or de llei," perhaps more clearly than in any other text, Maragall stages both the departure and the becoming of Catalonia's history, disclosing an uneasy combination of neo-Romantic and historicist elements.[17] On one hand, he relies on Romantic notions in his exploration of Catalonia's birth and essence in order to imbue his *pàtria* with a sense of continuation and connectedness. The timeless land becomes the appropriate symbol for the task. On the other hand, he displays a historicist approach to Catalonia's history. In other words, once the "point of departure" is put in place, he is able to focus on the unraveling, the becoming of the Catalan people in history. Thus, Maragall begins this poem by locating his *pàtria* geographically. The ageless Pyrenees and Mediterranean Sea that surround Catalonia mark both its enclosure within Iberia and its connections to lands beyond the peninsula. They also confer a Herderian sense of continuity and eternity to the country. Catalonia is seen as a naturally sovereign entity, a characteristic mentioned by many Catalanists to underscore what they perceived as the artificiality of the superimposed Spanish State. From the generative timelessness of the first stanza, Maragall takes the crucial step toward historical times. The next few stanzas comprise a succinct chronological overview of his region's history from mediaeval times to the *Renaixença*. This overview mentions the close relationship between Catalonia, Aragon, and Valencia under the Crown of Aragon. King James II of Aragon and Catalonia is presented as a paternal and wise figure, the incarnation of that glorious period during which Catalonia is able to rejoice and

17. Refer to Lahuerta (265-68) for more on this paradoxical combination.

prosper in its difference: "No fóra pas millor un pare / pacient i just i savi encara." Maragall goes on to describe the fall of Catalonia under the spell of the Kingdom of Castile after a long period of glory: "[...] I Catalunya com ullpresa, / sota l'encís dormí altre tant / [...] Restà com morta llargament." During Catalonia's sleep, the world changes. Castile loses her fighting spirit and is now the one that falls asleep. "Cantem la gran resurrecció / de Catalunya mare nostra," exclaims the poet in obvious reference to the Catalan renaissance amidst the decadence of Castilian Spain.

Maragall's examination of these historical ups and downs, contrasted with the agelessness of Catalonia, exemplifies the difficult marriage of essence and evolution, of the permanent and the ever changing. The patriotic theme of "Or de llei" also presents many of the Catalan themes found in and an epic tone reminiscent of Verdaguer's oeuvre. In 1876, the "Catalan Dante," as Maragall called the poet-cleric he so admired (2: 189), published *L'Atlàntida*, a work in which he suggests the existence of a common birth of all Iberian peoples. He presents Iberia as the heroic heiress of the power and the riches of Atlantis. Verdaguer's Iberianist poem preceded by ten years the publication of *Canigó*, a work he intended to be the national epic of Catalonia. *Canigó* tells a mythical story of a group of mediaeval Catalan knights who fight against Moslem invaders. He makes no geographical distinction between Spain and France, thus underlining Catalonia's Pyrenean and trans-Pyrenean connections. Beside the Iberian theme *L'Atlàntida* presents Mediterranean images and myths. *Canigó*, on the other hand, in addition to the Catalan theme, points to a tradition that includes both sides of the Pyrenees.[18] *Noucentistes* embraced both Mediterraneanism and pan-Catalanism. Maragall took these links into account himself, as seen in "Glosa" (1904): "Vosaltres de Tolosa i Narbona / i los del bell parlar provençalès [...] / oh catalans que a l'altra mar sou junts, / alceu els ulls al mur que ara ens separa: / s'acosta el dia que serem tots uns..." (1: 101). However, judging by the amount of work devoted to the matter, Maragall favored the more intimate Iberianist link over the others, in what constitutes one of the many discrepancies between Maragall and the *noucentistes*.[19]

One of the most salient differences is the fact that the *noucentistes* were more politically militant, as evinced in their close connections to the *Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya* (Resina, "Review" 411). As part of their political goals, they envisioned an expansionist role for

18. For information on pan-Catalanism read Antoni Rovira i Virgili, (18-23) and Abellán (5: 532-35).

19. *Noucentistes* like Eugeni d'Ors rejected what they perceived as the irrationalist influence of Romanticism that affected authors like Maragall and focused on the rationalistic Mediterranean/classical heritage (Vallcorba 51-72).

Catalonia.[20] Albert Balcells finds "a basic contradiction between the ideology of imperialism and the aspirations of an oppressed nationality" (59). Although right after the war of 1898 Maragall entertained the possibility of a growing Catalan influence over the rest of Spain in the face of Castile's decline (2: 582), around 1906, an important year as said before, he overcame this contradiction by opposing imperialist implications in favor of an Iberian fraternity (*Epistolario* 42; 2: 725), a notion he would hold until his last days (2: 760). His opposition is motivated by his respect for the sovereignty of all peoples, but mainly by his refusal to reproduce in his own land the loathed tradition of authoritarianism he associated with Castile.

It might seem that Maragall felt closer to the *Renaixença* than to *noucentisme*. After all, there is no doubt Maragall admired Verdaguer's contribution to Catalan language and poetry and had Catalanist and Iberianist interests similar to those of his predecessor. A poem like "Or de llei" certainly seems to owe much to *L'Atlàntida*. However, Maragall did not agree with the *Renaixença*'s obsession with a distant and fabled past. In "Or de llei," although Maragall conceives the essence of Catalonia as eternal, the memory of Catalonia's past he favors does not relay on supernatural occurrences but on historically verifiable events that still had meaning in his time. His main concern was not so much to revisit the past, running the risk of alienating the present (a practice associated with the *Renaixença*'s archaeological and folklorist work), but to underscore its relevance in order to solidify the present. To do so, instead of looking nostalgically to a remote past, he foregrounded symbols of nationhood like geography, language, and, chiefly, history to represent the notions of being rooted in and becoming a nation across time, symbols his contemporary fellow-Catalans could proudly identify themselves with, and, in the case of history, be active participants of.[21] The generational conflict between the *Renaixença*, *modernisme*, and *noucentisme*,[22] as well as the coexistence of Iberianism, pan-Catalanism, and Mediterreanism reflect the unstable, ongoing and plural process of national identity formation. Just as Spanishness can be said to be "a shifting concept, encompassing plurality and contradiction" (Labanyi, *Spanish* 397), so is Catalanness. The search for alternative forms of identification and

20. One of the most influential proponents of these ideas was Prat de la Riba, who in *La nacionalitat catalana* envisions an Iberian Empire, led by Catalonia (85).

21. Even "El Comte Arnau," a much more intellectual creation, embodies recognizable features of Catalanness. Marfany thoroughly explores this figure (*Aspectes* 122-85), which he calls "símbol de la comunitat 'nacional'" (136).

22. Marfany opines that the conflict between *modernistes* and *noucentistes* was not generational but rather "la divisió dels intel·lectuals actius en dos camps" (*Aspectes* 76). Neither was it aesthetic, but rather political (78).

representation through history remained incessantly active during Maragall's lifetime and beyond. In reality, all these roots and identities are not mutually exclusive, for they all have two important characteristics in common: their rejection of Castilian centralism and their determination to fortify Catalonia's specificity within Spain, Iberia, and the world at large. Maragall realized that the conjunction of these roots and connections make up Catalonia's singularity. They were not just unrelated identities, but rather integral elements of the complex identity of the Catalonian people throughout history. In other words, this complexity was what conferred the Catalonia he imagined its uniqueness and strength.

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23. Lowenthal distinguishes between history and heritage: "Historians aim to reduce bias; heritage sanctions and strengthens it" (6). Further down he compares heritage to life history: "Autobiography like heritage defies history's rules" (16).

writing, but a strategic choice, that is, a "strategic manipulation of symbols." This opaqueness, varying in degrees, can be self-absorbed as in the case of some extreme, even racist forms of Catalanism,[24] or it could be fraternal, as in the case of Iberianism. It is not that facts do not matter, but rather they are personal property of the author-protagonist, whose authority resides in his ethnicity. Hence, belonging to the community constitutes the main requirement for addressing and interpreting the facts of its history. Truth becomes a matter of position.

Thus, the issue of historical writing as a tool of identity formation boils down to the question of who does the remembering, the telling, and the community imagining. In Spain's case, it is an integral part of the conflict between hegemonic and counterhegemonic truths and interpretations of the facts. A poem like 'Or de llei," for instance, exemplifies the struggle between historical memory and collective memory. Maragall did not see himself as a scholar writing an official version of history (although the version of Catalonia's history he presented would eventually reach that status in Catalan[ist] lore), but as a Catalan remembering and recording the history of his collectivity for his collectivity. From his vantage point in the present and thinking about the future, he looked back in order to explore the roots and the origin of his *pàtria*, making the geographical and cultural connections he saw fit, and also highlighting the events and names he believed would more adequately and artistically narrate the becoming of Catalonia. His oeuvre, produced against State officialdom, contains a liberating element of subversion. In this sense, it could be said that his discourse "inverts the order of memory and remembers the future, as radical thought has always done. It must recall a future of difference, of particularity exercised in the freedom of equal dignity and access" (Resina, "Introduction" 13).[25] By (re)writing the origin, past, present and future of Catalonia, Maragall (re)wrote the history of Spain and of Iberia. In writing a Catalonian version of history he inscribed Catalonia's own voice in the palimpsest of the history not just of Spain but of the world. Iain Chambers maintains, "roots are forms of narration, literary and cultural constructs, mediated formations, providing routes to the world" (30). The name of the ship on which Maragall's Catalonia would travel was beautifully written in Catalan.

24. Many Catalan intellectuals distinguished between the supposed Europeanness of their people and the Semitic origin of other Spaniards (Marfany, *Cultura* 191-218).

25. This comment is made in relation to the period of transition to democracy (Resina, "Introduction" 13). The fact that the concerns related to identity and nationhood were still debated during the transition attest to the open-ended nature of these endeavors and the persistence of the struggle between the centralist State and the peripheral regions in Spain.

"SERVEM LA LLENGUA CATALANA / PERQUÈ HI HA EN ELLA NOSTRE ESPRIT" ("OR DE LLEI")

The Romantic glorification of language as an impervious symbol of a people's cultural pride and uniqueness, as well as a tool for the expression of its soul accompanied Catalonia's nationalistic revival from the beginning of the *Renaixença*. In his famous ode, Aribau states the essential link between language, history, and identity: "Pláume encara parlar la llengua d'aquells sabis [...] / La llengua d'aquells forts que acataren los Reys [...] / Si quant me trobo sol, parl ab mon esperit / En llemosí li parl, que llengua altra no sent" (36). Joaquim Rubió i Ors, in his prologue to the first edition of his *Lo gayter del Llobregat*, in 1841, goes from the individual to the collective when he urges his people to use their language with pride, particularly in the written form, because a strong literature would allow Catalans to express themselves more intimately and aspire not to political but cultural independence from Castile (1: xvii). Not doing so could mean that the Catalan language "no obstant d' esser com una taula de marbre ahont están grabadas las nostras glorias, la qual perdentse han de desapareixer per precisió los recorts de aquellas" (ix). This poet from the embryonic stages of the *Renaixença* was mindful of the fact that the past, present and future of Catalonia depended on the survival of the Catalan language and that a people's language was a symbol and a tool of identity and fraternity but also a weapon of struggle and resistance.

In the next stage of the *Renaixença*, authors like Manuel Milà i Fontanals, following in the steps of German folklorists and intellectuals, focused their attention on popular poetry, for it was believed that this form of art was the purest expression of a people's soul. Maragall adhered to these notions, which made up the basis of his "Elogi de la paraula" (1903), "Elogi de la poesia" (1907), and "Elogi del poble" (1907). They are found earlier in "Or de llei." "Servem la llengua catalana / perquè hi ha en ella nostre esprit" (194), writes Maragall, clearly linking the language and the soul of a people. Just like history, language can be as opaque or as inclusive an element as the author chooses. For instance, in the fifth stanza Maragall displays the Iberianist and associative side of his thought: "Vegé que Espanya era una en tres, / perquè tres parles hi sentia, / i essent tres feien harmonia, / pro fent-ne una no eran res." "Espanya," as synonym of Iberia, can only be realized when the languages, in fact, the voices of Castile, Portugal and Catalonia are heard. Conversely, closeness should not imply loss of specificity. In the next stanza, Maragall writes in particularist terms: "En allò sol en què ens uní / la mà de Déu, unim's encara, / mes en allò en què ens separa / cadascú faça son camí." These verses bring to mind the paradox "variedad en la unidad" mentioned

by Maragall in "El ideal ibérico" as he envisions a de-Castilianized, decentralized Spain and a plural Iberia (2: 725). All the voices must be heard together in order for harmony to prevail, but they should also be able to say what they want apart from the others, even to confront each other.

The relation between harmony and confrontation though language can be said to be a recurring theme in Maragall's nationalist poetry. As a matter of fact, the specific set of circumstances that prompted him to write many of his best-known poems on the topic determined where he stood in relation to both extremes. A fragile yet dynamic balance predominates in "Or de llei," as a reflection of Maragall's youthful confidence in Catalan as the symbol of and the most powerful tool both to express Catalonia's crescent self-assurance and to state its position within Iberia, echoing both Rubió i Ors and Verdaguer.

In 1900 Maragall published "Els tres cants de guerra" (in *Visions i cants*), three poems Geoffrey Ribbans considers "the most immediate literary reaction I know to the 1898 war itself" (143). "Els adéus" (1896), "Oda a Espanya" (1898) and "Cant del retorn" (1899) reflect the poet's critical perspective on Spain at this time: these are years during which he expressed a "catalanismo a ultranza" (Vilanova 265). Portugal is not even mentioned. Confrontation outweighs harmony and the balance is lost. The "Oda," the better known of the three, presents a clear confrontational tone, symptomatic of the growing dissatisfaction with and opposition to the Restoration's structure and leadership. Moreover, Carles Riba finds this poem to be "el despertar del somni de *L'Atlàntida*" (21), that is, a poem by which Maragall sharply distanced himself from the previous generation of Catalanists. The poem illustrates the increasing strength of Catalonia's awakened voice in the affairs of the nation. Language in "Oda a Espanya" is clearly being used as a weapon to express both counterhegemonic self-awareness and resistance. The Disaster of 1898 did not trigger this oppositional and critical discourse but it exacerbated a concern with the 'problem of Spain' that predated the tragic event, as one can observe in many of Maragall's journalistic writings. An early illustration thereof is "La vida regional" (1893), an article in which he agrees with the Galician Santiago Brañas's criticism of centralism as a "congestión cerebral" (2: 349). Similarly, the Catalan voice in "Els adéus" (1: 171) warns against the centralist state's policies two years before the confrontation: "No vagis pas cap a Ponent." "Oda a Espanya" starts with Catalonia's plea to be heard by Spain, meaning Castilian Spain: "Escolta, Espanya,—la veu d'un fill / que et parla en llengua—no castellana" (1: 171). By the end of the poem, a major change has taken place in that the Catalonian voice speaks to Spain with a thunderous and assertive tone: "No sents

la meva veu atronadora?" Spain does not, but maybe it will in a future of dignity founded in the recognition of difference. In the meantime, Catalonia expresses its crescent confidence with aplomb. The poem ends with an "Adéu Espanya" that foregrounds the ideological and emotional rupture between the Spanish State and Catalonia. In "El cant del retorn," the poet appears "as confident about Catalonia as he is pessimistic about traditional Spanish policies" (Ribbans 146), when describing the defeated returning army. The focus is the unknown soldiers, both the ones who returned and the ones who died. Aware of the uselessness of the suffering, the poet exclaims repeatedly throughout the poem: "Germans que en la platja plorant espereu / ploreu, ploreu" (1: 173). When he asks "digueu-nos si és viva o si és morta / la llengua amb què l'haurem de fer plorar," what he has in mind is not any particular language but the limitations of human language to convey the painful absurdity of the situation. And when he exclaims in the closing verses "germans que en la platja plorant espereu / no ploreu: rieu, canteu!," he does not attempt to mend the "Adéu Espanya" for he is not addressing the State but the Spanish people, the common folk, the real victims of the war.

In 1906 Maragall published "Himne ibèric" (1: 173-75), a poem more reminiscent of "Or de llei" than of "Els tres cants de guerra." "Himne ibèric" consists of six parts, the first five of which describe a different Iberian region, while the last one depicts Iberia as a whole. Of Cantabria, Lusitania, Andalusia, and Catalonia a few geographical and cultural elements are mentioned. The part of Castile diverges from the other four dedicated to specific regions in that a title is given before the brief stanza: "Una veu." The link with the voice that speaks to Castilian Spain in "Oda a Espanya" is obvious. However, this Iberian voice does not want to distance itself from Castile, but rather convince the "sola" and "trista" region to look beyond its landlocked borders. "Parleu-li del mar, germans!," the voice tells the Iberians from other regions. In the last stanza the voice shouts "Ibèria! Ibèria! et ve del mar la vida," affirming the peninsula's intrinsic relationship with the sea as symbol of the origin, the past, the present, and a future of openness and opportunities. In this context, language brings about the possibility of change, closeness, understanding, and harmony in the peninsula. The tone is one of cautious optimism for, after all, Castile still has to be convinced of the fact that no part is greater than the whole and that the integrity of the whole depends on the equal participation of its parts.

Around this time Maragall was also working on the "Elogis," in which he also considers a fraternal notion of language and delves into its spiritual interrelation with the land, the people, history, and the soul, underscoring the importance of all these elements in the process of identity formation and consolidation. In a highly subjective manner

Maragall asserts in "Elogi de la paraula" that a people is the creation of a land, and language is the creation of a people: "Sembla que la terra esmerci totes les seves forces en arribar a produir l'home com a més alt sentit de si mateixa; i que l'home esmerci tota la força del seu ésser en produir la paraula" (1: 664). Poetry, in this Romantic context, constitutes the purest manifestation of a people's soul, making the poet a kind of demiurge, oracle, and prophet in tune with his people, the land, and the world at large, if he spiritually commits to his art:

I vosaltres mateixos que sou anomenats sobre tot poetes, ¿quan serà que entrareu profundament en les vostres ànimes per a no sentir altra cosa que el ritme diví d'elles al vibrar en l'amor de les coses de la terra? ¿Quan serà que menysprearu tot altre ritme i no parlareu sinó en paraules vives? Llavors sereu escoltats en encantament del sentit, i les vostres paraules misterioses crearan la vida veritable, i sereu uns màgics prodigiosos. (1: 664)

The "paraules vives" embody the spontaneous way in which a committed, connected poet fleshes out his people's soul. This notion certainly proves the "convenciment que Maragall tenia del caràcter demiúrgic de la Poesia i de la tasca màgica del Poetes" (Bou 9). In the aforementioned "Catalunya i avant," Maragall explores somewhat more explicitly, that is, less opaquely, the ramifications of this neo-Romantic conception of language, land and soul in terms of national identity formation:

En todo lo demás, nada de intentos de intervención ni de ensayos de imposición mútua, con lo que no lograríamos más que estorbarnos unos a otros en la gran obra nacional, en la única eficaz, que es ir hurgando cada pueblo en su terruño, en su alma particular, hasta llegar a la raíz común, a la raíz ibérica común que indudablemente existe. Allí hemos de encontrarnos, allí hemos de entendernos (y por cierto hablando cada uno en su lengua), allí hemos de unirnos valorando cada uno su elemento y su fuerza en la raíz común. Allí está la unidad; y por cierto más firme y armónica y definitiva que la que pudiéramos lograr—si alguna lográbamos—en la superficie. (2: 761).

According to Maragall, the spiritual and emotional connection found in telluric and linguistic elements was the key to a pluralistic Spain and a pan-Iberian identity. Paradoxically, it was in the spiritual realm of the common Iberian root that Catalonia found its difference, that is, its Catalonian identity. For this reason Maragall defined Catalanism not just as a political or cultural movement that can be contained or imitated, but as unexplainable and uncontrollable emotion, as "una cuestión de sentimiento" (2: 631).[26] There is only one

26. According to Ribbans, Maragall was aware that nationalism in Catalonia depended on "sentiment rather than rational argument" (134).

"pàtria," asserts Maragall, contradicting the belief in the possible coexistence of a "pàtria gran i una pàtria xica" (1: 741). He discards the notion of an unproblematic "gradació de sentiments" that allows one to say: "nosaltres europeus, nosaltres llatins, nosaltres espanyols, nosaltres catalans, barcelonins" (1: 741). Only in one of these levels the individual feels the intense patriotic sentiment. The question of which one of these levels is the one "sols ho defineix exteriormente la consciència col·lectiva del grup d'homes que assenteixen a dir-se: aquesta és la pàtria nostra" (1: 741). Maragall, who relished his role as voice and conscience of Catalanism, attempted to make the Catalan nation feel the patriotic sentiment, to focus their energy on the "nosaltres catalans." It must be reiterated that this patriotic sentiment was not anti-Spain, but it was "un amor a Cataluña, que es desamor a Castilla (en el sentido de España castellana)" (2: 630). In this sense, the Catalan feeling of being different could no longer be explained, but it had to be felt. And it could be felt only by Catalonians, or more specifically, by Catalan-speakers.

"Alcem la flor de la nació" ("Or de llei")

By appealing to notions that cannot be delimited by logic, i.e., intuition, feelings, the soul or the spirit, Maragall voiced the ultimate declaration of difference, personal and collective. He dreamed up a Woolfian space, unreachable for the hegemonic discourse; a space made of these neo-Romantic notions and expressed through more concrete symbols like language, geography, the *ginesta*, "la flor de la nació," and a Catalonian view of history to challenge the dominant Castilianist version of the history of Spain. It was an ironic space of defiance, difference, and change, where identity could thrive, a space always in the making. The highly meaningful strategic "opaqueness" of this counterhegemonic space was meant to baffle and it did baffle non-Catalan Spaniards like Miguel de Unamuno who were unable to naturalize this Catalonian feeling of being different.[27] It might seem odd that Unamuno did not recognize some of the same strategies he and other members of the Generation of 98 used to build a Spanish identity based on the myth of Castile. After all, as Enric Ucelay da Cal points out, movements the likes of Catalanism and Castilianism "were (and are) rivals for the same attention and same resources," and part of "one single social dynamic" (32). This social dynamic was the basis of

27. In "Las campañas catalanistas. Por la cultura" (1907), for example, the Basque author fails to understand Catalonia's attempts to foreground its specificity in relation to the Spanish State (6: 751).

the complex process of identity formation and nation building, to which Unamuno was an active contributor. His unawareness of these commonalities, however, can be explained by zeroing in on the guiding principles of these endeavors: while Castilianism sought to impose unity, Catalanism underscored difference. Unamuno, then, was unable, or unwilling, to grasp the pluralistic aims of Catalanism. These were geared toward a more modern and resolute sense of Catalan nationhood in opposition to the obsolete Spanish state from which Catalans began to drift further and further away politically, emotionally, and culturally as the 19th century progressed, a trend that grew in intensity and effectiveness up until the Civil War.

Maragall's *modernista* movement, as well as the *Renaixença* and *noucentisme* imagined a distinct Catalonia. In more than one way, the main goal of these movements was to invent or reinvent a nation, each one in its own terms and within its limitations. Catalan nationalism in general presented elements of "somni i maniobra" (Marfany, *Aspectes* 109), that is, the irrational, ideal, and affective on one hand, and the rational and practical on the other. But, as explained thus far, "somni" can be seen as a conscious "maniobra," a strategy meant to mystify the non-Catalans, integrating both extremes. It is clearly not the "somni" or spell-induced sleep from which Catalonia had to awake either, but rather the active dreaming of and the dreaming up a new Catalonia. Ernest Gellner asserts that "nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist" (168). With this assertion in mind Paul Gilbert indicates: "If real relations of community do not antecedently exist then the national imagination does fabricate them, and it fabricates them on the basis of a false perception of those relations" (66). The bourgeois roots of Catalanism seem to validate Gilbert's assertion. Maragall himself, while praising the Catalan people, believed the leading role belonged to the educated classes. However, as Gilbert affirms, "if that imagination is potent and has the sort of resilience that stems from clear-sightedness as to the facts, then it may produce relations of a sort that did not previously exist" (67). Maragall's imagined Catalonia, articulated so powerfully in his much respected poetic and journalistic work, certainly helped strengthen the relations of solidarity that enabled many Catalans of different walks of life to exclaim "nosaltres catalans" at a time when Catalans were still trying to define who they were and find their place in the community of nations.[28] Although his

28. "Ja és cosa sabuda entre nosaltres: sempre que uns quants s'ajunten per donar carn a un propòsit [. . .] es procuren o bé proven de procurar-se aquest mot d'encoratjament: Compten amb en Maragall!," writes Eugeni d'Ors (Comas 16), attesting to Maragall's stature in turn-of-the-century Catalonia.

work gained enormous political, intellectual and artistic importance, its influence was somewhat undermined by some of his immediate successors, specifically the *noucentistes*, anxious to carve their own niche beyond the influence of their predecessor.[29] He primarily wrote to his contemporaries but also for posterity. Today, the name and works of the patriarch and oracle of Catalanism, along with many of the ideas he entertained and the words he used are part of Catalan cultural lore and national consciousness, which bespeaks of his enduring legacy. It is true that Maragall did not invent the symbols of Catalanness, but certainly made them more meaningful, beautiful and uniquely Catalan.

The increasing political power of Catalanism within and opposite the State, in addition to the discrepancies between the *Renaixença*, *modernisme* and *noucentisme*, assured that Catalan national identity would prove to be as hotly contested and unstable a site as Spanish national identity during and immediately after Maragall's lifetime. The struggle for hegemony was probably more intense in Spain than in any other Western European country during this time due to the difficult transition to modernity, which rendered the cultural and economic disparities between social classes and between regions more acute. The poetic and journalistic works of Joan Maragall illustrate the conflict between center and periphery, homogeneity and difference, the regional, the national and the supranational, during a period that constitutes a very important chapter in Spain's long and difficult road to modernization and national consolidation. The Catalan nation Maragall envisioned, in largely Romantic terms as most nationalistic movements in 19th-century Europe did, was based on the aforementioned combination or "manipulation" of symbols and ideal notions of nationality and nationhood, namely, language, history, *Volksgeist* and the feeling of being different. The key element of Maragall's uncompromising respect for the particular within the plural is what he called the common Iberian root. In that root Catalonia could find its Catalanness, its Iberianness and even its Spanishness as "routes to the world." In other words, he envisioned this root as the paradoxical source of emancipatory endeavors and conciliation, of uniqueness and fraternity, of particularism and association.

Joan Maragall's contribution is indispensable in comprehending the struggle of Catalanism within a centralizing State that both rejected it and drew strength from it. He died in 1911 convinced mainly of two things. First, he believed in a Spain in the making in which

29. The prominent Eugeni d'Ors, Maragall's acerbic critic, is overlooked by Comas. Instead, this critic focuses on Josep Carner and Carles Riba as representatives of "la verdadera continuidad de la literatura catalana," which bears the influence of the *modernista* poet (48).

Catalonia's difference would be respected and encouraged by Catalans and non-Catalans. Second, he believed in the demiurgic and clairvoyant power of the poet's art. It might seem that the future of difference he remembered while (re)writing the history of Catalonia did not include the fratricidal hecatomb of the Civil War, but one could say it did. The proof of this may be the fact that until his last days Joan Maragall, the poet-prophet, pressed so much urgency on the potential balancing and harmonizing power of the Iberian fraternal ideals to create a lasting space of Catalonia's own. In this sense, the Civil War is the brutal reminder of the fragility of these ideals and of the instability, uncertainty and, ultimately, the resilience of the identity they were meant to forge.

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