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The historiography of 'Catalanism'

Ambiguities and consistencies in the imagining of Catalan nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

In an interview in a major 'americano-centric' newsmagazine, a few weeks before the 2004 presidential elections in the United States, George W. Bush, defined in the article title as someone "*who reads history books like a user's manual*", posited an interesting problem, as a consumer, regarding the politization of historical writing. In his own words: "*I'm not going to read the history about it [his term in office] while I'm alive because I don't trust short-term history. Most historians wouldn't have voted for me, so I don't think they can write an objective history.*"¹ Bush's affirmation provokes various interesting reflections, not the least of which is what sort of history he **does** intend to read when he is no longer alive. But his primary question remains valid as a historiographic problem, especially when it is regarded from the opposite point of view: **what happens to historical perception when a crushing majority of historians are engaged, fully armed and combative for a cause which is ideologically indistinguishable from its historiography?** This article will attempt, in essay form, to deal with this open question, applying it to the practice of Catalan historiography and its confusion and/or interaction with Catalan nationalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, up to the present.²

Note concerning the references in this article: In Catalan and in Spanish, it is customary to cite **two** surnames, first the paternal and then the maternal, but, when simplifying, to refer to someone by their paternal (or first) surname, which is considered, with patriarchal intent, as the significant portion of the pairing. It is, therefore, the **exact opposite** of the English language **last name**. Catalan usage, in part to differentiate itself from the Spanish, systematically joins both surnames with "*I*" ("and"). This article follows standard practice in both languages.

1. 'I've Gained Strength': The President who reads history books like a user's manual talks about where he fits himself, in: *Time* (European edition), 6 September 2004, pp. 36-39 (quote p. 39).

2. A. Simon i Tarrés (dir.) with J. Cassassas & E. Pujol, *Diccionari d'Historiografia catalana*, Barcelona, 2003; as a Spanish counterpoint, see I. Peiró Martín & G. Pasamar Alzuría, *Historiadores españoles contemporáneos (1840-1980)*, Madrid, 2002.

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF NATIONALISM, REIFICATION AND THE PURSUIT OF
'HISTORICAL TRUTH'

All social movements – nationalism included – must establish a discourse of legitimation which can point the way to power and, ultimately, to the paradox of realizing idealized goals. It should be stressed, in the face of much recent historiography and political science work which would isolate nationalism as some kind of uniquely dangerous 'case', that all the ideologies of political modernity – successively liberalism, democracy, socialism, communism, and, of course, nationalism (often crossed with any of the above) – share a basic structure: a secularized religious epistemology, founded on exceptionalism and special pleading, which renders allegedly invalid the alternative fictions of rival ideologies, and from which it is easy to derive the right to define collective morality as well as the limits of tolerance toward minority behaviors, and a concept of representation (in both of the meanings of the word, as political articulation and as public theater). In this perspective, legitimation means above all a vision of History which makes the privileged ideological option truly indispensable and therefore exclusive: it becomes a foundational obligation, the only 'realistic' and, at the same time, 'convenient' way to look at the confusion of society and give it 'meaning' in a continuum from the past to the present and, optimistically, on to the future.

The principal problem with historiographic legitimation is a general characteristic of political legitimacy, namely **reification**, the unconscious conversion of an idea or category into a tangible, physical fact. Sadly, historiography is no more than a relatively technified **mannerism**, a technique for organizing information around an imaginary category and, above all, for presenting the data gathered on such a basis in a coherent way. Successful reifications all may be as false as the images of a kaleidoscope, but one can jiggle them, again and again, adjusting them to the ideological mythologies from which they are derived, and the concrete political situations which require the elaboration of such mythologies and form their major demand. Only when political change is sufficiently extreme in its suppositions, and sufficiently long lasting in its implications, can reifications become meaningless, 'out of date', 'passé', useless for both political faith and historical legitimation. The question to explain then becomes, with exquisite pomposity: "How could anyone have believed such an idea?" If we accept Richard Dawkins' concept of "*memes*" (that ideas are like his model of the 'selfish gene', capable of reproducing themselves in us, rather than the other way around), then it can be posited that reifications, as they are passed on, are subtly altered, and can mutate out of existence, replaced by more efficient self-replicators.³

3. R. Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford, 1976, chapter XI; A. Lynch, *Thought Contagion*, New York, 1996; S. Blackmore, *The Meme Machine*, Oxford, 1999.

If the Enlightenment is the seed-bed of ideological conceptualization in European thought, and Romanticism its flowering, then the lengthy period of ripening ideological fruit is the hundred-year period from about 1880 to 1980, with no pretension to any kind of precision on my part. As 'sociology' and 'psychology' and other 'social sciences' were invented and subdivided into disciplines that could be formalized institutionally, both as professional bodies (what Europeans, unlike Americans, like to call 'corporations') and the appropriate educational structure to sustain the specific formation of 'specialists', increasingly sub-specialized in fractional studies, which then in turn could be codified, and become, in turn, fields of 'expertise'.⁴ Such combinations of simultaneous increasingly rigid definition and often vast conceptual ambition pointed implicitly in various directions of expansion at the same time: it is easy to point to the close family relation, almost incestuous, between philology, ethnology, cultural anthropology, linguistics, sociolinguistics, physical anthropology, criminology, and so on.⁵ History, such as it is reformed under the guidelines of textual analysis under German tutelage from the eighteenth century onwards, remained an unwieldy antecedent to such exponential academic and professional growth.⁶ Data-oriented, History tended to become somewhat parasitical on the speculation of the burgeoning societal fields of study, picking an idea here, a term there, without much thought to the implications. Historians thereby became, often without much awareness on their part, the popularizers of 'scientific' terms from the 'social sciences', not so much in rivalry with true mass dissemination of such ideas or terminologies, which came through the press and undefined, often unacademic, essayists, but rather the propagators into the work of political thinkers, always 'rigorous' and therefore academic in the bibliographies, and, ultimately, to politicians and into the world at large, through raw ideology.⁷

This process has dominated the development of mass university education by the mechanism of 'discipline-building' (to appropriate Reinhard Bendix's famous formula), so closely related to 'State-building', to 'Nation-building' (what Bendix was pointing to), and many other unhappy mergers of theory and praxis, that

4. On sociology, see, for example: C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, New York, 1959; S. del Campo (dir.), *La Institucionalización de la sociología (1870-1914)*, Madrid, 2000; G. Bouthoul, *Histoire de la Sociologie*, Paris, 1975⁸; J. Picó, *Los años dorados de la sociología (1945-1975)*, Madrid, 2003; I.L. Horowitz, *The Decomposition of Sociology*, New York, 1993; on political science: D.M. Ricci, *The Tragedy of Political Science: Politics, Scholarship, and Democracy*, New Haven, 1984.

5. Historical descriptions of disciplines are surprisingly hard to come by; for anthropology: B. Rupp-Eisenreich (ed.), *Histoires de l'anthropologie: XVIe-XIXe siècles: Colloque La Pratique de l'anthropologie aujourd'hui, 19-21 novembre 1981*, Sèvres-Paris, 1984; for Spain: Á. Aguirre Baztán (ed.), *Historia de la antropología española*, Barcelona, 1992.

6. E. Breisach, *Historiography. Ancient, Medieval and Modern*, Chicago, 1983.

7. J. Appleby, L. Hunt & M. Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History*, New York, 1994, chapter 2.

have dominated the more or less significant 1880-1980 period, indicated above.⁸ Roughly during this period, 'discipline-building' has been based, nakedly, on the projection of models, which in turn would be divulged to opinion makers, political (including subversive) elites, and would serve to document the creation of a 'genuine public opinion' as the basis of 'mass politics'.⁹

These models, once socialized and interchanged, were **all reifications**. To pick an easy and obvious example: why is a 'century' a unit of measurement with moral meaning?¹⁰ Why can we speak so confidently of 'sixteenth-century religious attitudes', 'seventeenth-century trends', or the 'eighteenth-century revolution'. In point of fact, it means **nothing**. The same is true of **all the terms that historians – as well as much of 'social scientists' – hold dear**. What, to name but a few, is 'society', the 'State', the 'Nation', the 'class'? If there was even a term, for example, that denoted its ascension from mere passive taxonomy to the idealization of reified historical protagonism it is doubtlessly 'class'. Does the 'State' really do things or act meaningfully in any clear way? Then, why do we use these terms? Because we have no choice.

In practice, 'Science' (with a capital 'S') is **little more than measurement, comparison, and the willingness to admit the superiority of newer, more precise forms of appraisal and evaluation**. Such is, without the transcendence and the hoopla, the 'experimental method' that produces 'fact as equivalent to truth'. This, in turn means some degree of standardization, with the loss of data that such treatment implies. Applied to reifications, we can, with some degree of reliability through well-designed polling, establish a probability regarding what living people say they think more or less in public (and this can include the polling of people now dead, as the techniques, perhaps not as refined, have been around since roughly the First World War). So, within the most immediate past, we can ascertain what 'identities' – national, statist, sexual, and so forth – a justifiably representative proportion of the population of a given area, at certain moments, more or less believes (or is willing to say it believes). We therefore can 'know' what percentage is 'nationalist' and to what degree.¹¹ But that does not prove the

8. R. Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship. Studies of Our Changing Social Order*, New York, 1964.

9. For a discussion of 'Discipline-building' as regards nationalist studies: E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *Discussion: Historiography and Methodology in the Study of Nationalism*, in: J.G. Beramendi, R. Maíz & X.M. Núñez (dirs.), *Nationalism in Europe. Past and Present (Actas do Congreso Internacional "Os Nacionalismos in Europa. Pasado e Presente")*, Santiago de Compostela, 1994, vol. I, pp. 59-67.

10. For the idea of a 'Century': H. Schwartz, *Century's End: a Cultural History of the Fin de Siècle from the 1990s through the 1990s*, New York, 1990; A. Briggs & D. Snowman (eds.), *Fins de Siècle: How Centuries End, 1400-2000*, New Haven, 1996; S. Toulmin & J. Goodfield, *El descubrimiento del tiempo*, Barcelona, 1968.

11. M. Bulmer, K. Bales & K. Kish Sklar (eds.), *The Social Survey in Historical Perspective, 1880-1940*, Cambridge, 1991.

existence of the reification 'Nation', which cannot be demonstrated in any reliable way, just like any other similar reification. This would seem to undermine, if not destroy, any use of reifications. Quite the contrary.

The heyday of speculative social concepts came in the twenty-five years before 1914: anybody could put together some categories with the appearance of statistical data in the mid-nineteenth century and then their increase and abundance, and almost everyone did, either for professional fame or for the launching of protest movements of all sorts, most visibly with the rise of the so-called 'working-class movement' and its many – often bitterly competitive – schools. The efforts at planning war production during the 'Great War' brought home -to the 'home front'- the perception that State intervention could complete civil society, fulfill the promise of civil society where this did not exist, as in Lenin's oft cited aphorism that electrification plus socialism might equal communism; Mussolini's affirmation that there would be "nothing outside the State" relayed the same message.¹² Thus, the interwar years made interpretative categories into full-blown instruments of practical politics, both as as tautological legitimation (i.e., to pick one kind of example, "nationalist elements, conscious of the Nation, must nationalize the State so as to nationalize society, thereby finally making the Nation national"), and as effective standpoints for policy-making, from which to readapt socio-economic infrastructures, and, by extension, 'correct' the more practical aspects of daily life. By becoming ideological power tools, social concepts also became officially sanctioned reifications, in both 'totalitarian' and 'liberal' societies, as was evinced as much by the 'Socialist systems' as by the post-1945 'welfare State' in Europe and North America, and in addition, by the model of the 'nationalist State' in the 'less developed world', from Perón's Argentina, to Nasser's Egypt, as well as Israel or Indonesia or South Korea.¹³

Intellectually, reifications survived – and, indeed, were spared, serious criticism – because of **circular justification**, in which a term borrowed from another field carries with it, quite unjustifiably, all the prestige of its original discipline. This functions even when the disciplines in question despise and demean each other, just as it happens between rival ideologies. 'Imperialism', to cite one very

12. J. Williams, *The Home Fronts. Britain, France and Germany, 1914-1918*, London, 1972. There are many versions of Lenin's aphorism regarding electrification; in some, for example, it is socialism that is the result of electricity plus Soviet power; strictly speaking, the quote cannot be clearly sourced, and accordingly should be taken as merely indicative; Mussolini's affirmation that there would be "nothing outside the State" can be found in *The Doctrine of Fascism*, the official English translation of: B. Mussolini, *La dottrina del fascismo*, Firenze, 1937.

13. See the essay of a very acute historical sociologist, already cited for another study, not recognized in his true measure: J. Picó, *Teorías sobre el Estado de Bienestar*, Madrid, 1987; in many ways, the best overall balance on 'populism' remains the collection of essays gathered by G. Ionescu & E. Gellner (eds.), *Populism: its meanings and national characteristics*, London, 1969.

vivid example, which originally meant a form of internal political organization of a State, became codified as a new idea of externality, of 'overseas capital export', when the new Soviet Union (1922) used Lenin's rather weak polemic against Kautsky from a few years before as its founding doctrine of legitimacy.¹⁴ By establishing the concept of a 'good empire' (as a "union of peace-loving peoples united in a collective idea of social progress") versus a 'bad empire' (like the British), an unsubstantiated political formulation became an acceptable cliché, logically transmitted first to leftwing historians and political commentators, but, with time, even to more conservative analysts and interpreters of international politics, so that such a notion of 'imperialism' was unquestioningly taken for granted until the USSR finally collapsed in 1991.¹⁵ By the time of the world-wide academic multiplication of 1960s – externalized in the globalized student protests of 1968 – the consolidation of reifications was absolute: the 'new left' and all the new 'social studies' that accompanied it, were solidly grounded in their use and abuse.¹⁶ In fact, reifications were essential, as the mechanization of information gathering marked by photocopying, together with the ongoing 'information revolution', meant that the amount of raw data generated was evermore difficult to process, without the substantial assistance of 'categories that were factual', like 'class', 'State', 'Nation', 'movements', 'imperialism' (of course), and a vaster, almost unending, list of similar reifications.

The lack of critical acumen was answered and silenced by politization, especially during the Cold War. Historians and 'social scientists' were supposed to be 'committed' to their ideological cause, even if it were 'impartiality' and 'multiple causality' as opposed to 'socialist and feminist history'. Furthermore, reifications seemed 'real', insofar as they were confirmed by political division and the literally hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of publications that repeated, over and over again, their presumptions as facts. Even 'post-modern' thought, in its Franco-American 'deconstruction of discourses' combined with 'political correctness' which began to circulate in the 1980s, relied heavily on reification as a tool both for organizing information into manageable unities, as well as an instrument for

14. V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, New York, 1939 [1916].

15. R.G. Suny & T. Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations. Empire and National-Building in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, New York, 2001; T. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, Ithaca, 2001. In general, also: M. Heller, *El hombre nuevo soviético*, Barcelona, 1985; C. Jelen, *La ceguera voluntaria. Los socialistas y el nacimiento del mito soviético*, Barcelona, 1985; M. Reichhold, *Adiós a la ilusión proletaria. El fin de un mito revolucionario*, Madrid, 1975; as well as the classic from 1955: R. Aron, *L'opium des intellectuels*, Paris, 1968.

16. The problem of reification was not new in marxist studies: the philosopher György Lukacs attempted to solve the dilemma within the confines of dialectical materialism; see his *La reification et la conscience du proletariat*, in: G. Lukacs, *Histoire et Conscience de Classe: essai de dialectique marxiste*, Paris, 1960, pp. 109-256.

massive 'discipline-building', as the success of 'cultural studies' in the English-language academic worlds clearly shows.¹⁷

Nevertheless, the increasingly visible collapse of the basic axioms of the twentieth century – effective globalization as population contact, transfer or interaction, therefore 'political correctness' understood as the awareness of contraries – has brought into doubt the basic working reifications, such as 'State', 'Nation', or 'class', all the while insidiously extending intellectual scruples even to such simple notions as 'individual' (have you ever tried to define what is 'a person'?) or collectivities (how many groups is a given 'group' composed of?).¹⁸ The problem lies in the fact that our limited brains do not allow us to work with notions of excessive complexity, no matter how much artificial computer power we have to back us up. Up against this palpable limitation, reifications are didactic in the extreme; they render the complex simple and clear; they give **anyone access to the possibility of interpretation**. This, in twentieth-century terms, was the **great lesson of Stalin**, as opposed to Lenin (and much less Trotsky, the 'prophet' of nothing): in contrast to Lenin's nasty need to overwhelm the reader with insults and sub-arguments, and Trotsky's very superficial brilliance, a few lessons in 'Stalinthink' could and did turn semi-literates into functional sociologists, and effective propagandists, not to mention competent agents capable of acting politically with the backup of a rudimentary but flexible macro-interpretation.¹⁹ Reifications have this undeniable beauty: 'feudalism' makes impossibly contradictory societies comprehensible, the 'bougeoisie' sums up a vast variety of behaviors and production figures, the 'proletariat' explains all conflict within the premise of an ongoing, everlasting 'modernity'.

But the real point is that reifications, as **containers of data**, no longer work, no longer retain and summarize information in exponential expansion, in the neat way that they seemed to do circa 1920. The rub, of course, is **what to replace them with**. This, in truth, is an old problem: already, in 1765, a certain Madame Deffand complained to the great Voltaire, in the face of his impressive and corrosive conceptual pyrotechnics: "*Mais, M. Voltaire, vous combattez et détruisez toutes les erreurs, mais que mettez-vous à leur place?*"²⁰

17. The reliance of 'Postmodern Cultural Studies' on neomarxist categories as fact, however, did not promote indulgence from the neomarxist side (especially in Hispanic-speaking countries), but rather acrimony: see, as an example: C. Reynoso, *Apogeo y decadencia de los estudios culturales. Una visión antropológica*, Barcelona, 2000.

18. E. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, 1978.

19. The plentiful – and growing – literature on Stalinism is so insistent on demonstrating the inherent evil of the dictator, and either his deviation from Leninism or his perfect expression of Lenin's intentions, that no one (to my knowledge) has bothered to ask the simplest of questions: **why did Stalinism work?** Why it was so much more powerful and **contagious** than Marxism (of the pre-1914 variety), Leninism or Trotskyism?

20. A. Brookner, *Romanticism and Its Discontents*, New York, 2001, p. 7.

If I discuss Marxists here at relative length, it is because of their enormous weight in what Catalans (and Spaniards) call 'Contemporary Historiography', i.e., the study of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, or, if such is preferred, historical time from the American and French Revolutions onwards. And this rather large-scale rumination on the nature and evolution of historical and/or historiographic categories and their credibility has much to do with the development of Catalan historiography. Needless to say, I shall use all the conventional reifications, merely indicating those which – in their inherent fragility – have most significance for the subject of Catalan nationalism.

THE IMPLICIT PERCEPTIONS OF 'CATALANISM'

From its inception in some much-debated point of the shadowy nineteenth century, like so many other analogous movements that coincided with the impact of Romanticism, Catalan nationalism has consistently exhibited an intense preoccupation with the monopolistic possession of historical 'truth'. Such a clear preoccupation, however, does not mean a rich tradition of internal debate, between factions, such as liberals and clericals, but rather an overwhelming tendency towards *synthesis*, i.e., the accretion of elements, however contradictory, into a single eclectic narrative, an ongoing and working consensus which could be accepted by both left and right.

The dominance of such a synthetic consensus, which sanctifies ideological fusion as long as it is 'Catalan', has meant that Catalan historiography has exhibited certain clear traits over time. These, basically, can be summed up as **structural ambiguity** and, simultaneously, the **insistence on internal consistency**. The paper will trace this model of synthetic consensus and ambiguity-consistency in the practice of Catalan historiography and the specific treatment of 'Catalanism' in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, up to the present.

As is logical, most, if not all, of the problems in Catalan historiography derive from very fundamental aspects of Catalan politics in the last two hundred or so years. The key concept that has dominated what may be termed 'identity politics' in Catalonia (as opposed to 'the politics of class') since 1886 is the term *catalanisme*, or 'Catalanism', from the title of a major political essay by an ex-federal republican political leader, Valentí Almirall (1841-1904).²¹ By writing *Lo catalanisme*, Almirall attempted to move from the left to the center, and thereby abandon the more theoretical trend of Catalan federalism, led by Francisco Pi y Margall (1824-1901), an ideological evolution which had its own structural problems. But what is 'Catalanism'?²²

21. J.M. Figueres, *Valentí Almirall. Forjador del catalanisme polític*, Barcelona, 1990; J.J. Trias Vejarano, *Almirall y los orígenes del catalanismo*, Madrid, 1975; the best is clearly J. Pich i Mitjana, *Federalisme i catalanisme: Valentí Almirall i Llozer (1841-1904)*, Vic, 2004.

22. A. Jutglar, *Pi y Margall y el federalismo español*, Madrid, 1976, 2 vols.

The calculated vagueness of 'Catalanism' as a concept is a given, hard to explain to those that do not share the common bonding of a small society. 'Catalanism' takes for granted the almost exclusive use of the Catalan language for all activities, from publishing scientific research to buying bread. Beyond linguistic affirmation, it means a sense of patriotism that is intense enough to dominate other areas of political identification (social, religious, even formally political affiliation, i.e. republican or monarchist), but which does not define itself. Thus 'Catalanism' can be 'nationalist', even 'separatist' (the preferred term for radical nationalists from about 1900 to 1968), 'independentist' (the approved term for radicals after 1968), but also simply 'autonomist'.²³ It was and remains an 'insider' concept, which derives its deepest meaning from the distrust of the 'outsider', understood as all those who do not understand Catalan, as opposed to those who, even if they answer in Castilian, can follow a conversation without interrupting to ask what is the subject. So as to make internal, even unspoken characteristics comprehensible to a foreign audience – however similar in its circumstance and preoccupations – it is necessary to give some general information, condensed and compacted, to establish a frame of reference that can be shared. Otherwise any explanation offered is closed, covered with cloak of 'expertise' and specificity, paradoxically rendered invisible precisely by all its detail. Accordingly, it could not be compared to other analogous phenomena, specifically to Flemish or Walloon attitudes and historiographies, which interest us here. If, as I have argued above, 'Science' in practice amounts to little more than measurement, comparison, and the willingness to admit error, then we must accept some degree of standardization and data loss, or sit still and listen to each of us lecture at each other, having reduced the scholar of another area to a mere student in the face of vastly superior information and even knowledge, as experts in different fields are eager to do as soon as they get the chance.

THE 'DIFFERENTIAL FACT' OF CATALAN SOCIETY

Seen from the inside, every political path seems a *Sonderweg*. It is customary for Catalan nationalists, historians or not, to allude – even to take for granted – what is called 'the differential fact', i.e., the specific character of Catalan society, its distinct patterns of behavior which traditionally have been held to be markedly different from those of the rest of Spain. If, up to the twentieth century, much of Spain was dominated by agrarian virtues, expressed in the social exceptionality of the '*hidalgo*' (literally, the fusion of *hijo de algo*, "son of something", in Castilian) the gentleman or nobleman, by contrast to his social lessers, the 'gull' or stupid

23. F. Rubiralta, *Una història de l'independentisme polític català. De Francesc Macià a Josep Lluís Carod-Rovira*, Lleida, 2004.

peasant, or the 'villain', the sharp and untrustworthy city denizen, Catalonia was marked by a businessman's culture, in which a successful merchant was esteemed as good socially (if not better) as a walking patent of nobility. Such social language and hierarchy should not be underestimated: many Basque historians today, hostile to the racial implications of late nineteenth-century Basque nationalist doctrine, have traced the pretension of ethnic superiority back to the upshot of the fifteenth-century civil wars in the area, which gave the subjects of those 'provinces' or 'lordships' ('*senoríos*') universal status as '*hidalgos*'.²⁴ Catalans were not collective '*hidalgos*', they were hard working, irksomely practical, ignored such worldly vanities, and by the common consensus of other Spaniards, were capable of "squeezing money out of stones", as the saying went. But they also had less businesslike traits which often went unnoticed outside Catalonia (about which more later).

Put in organizational terms, Catalonia had not enjoyed the taste of Statehood (in sum, the pleasure of ordering others about) since the fifteenth century, but it had a unique **civil society**, a network of professional and craft associations that, by clever adaptation and secularization, more or less survived the suppression of guilds by the liberal revolution of the 1830s. Thus Catalan traditional law gave women the rights of property, Catalans knew all about contracts and litigation, and, more important, were used to being led by lawyers and physicians, with an occasional merchant, rather than by soldiers with imposing titles. The only problem was the delicate matter of full access: just who – or what association – was recognized as a party of the first part in the full play of civil society. The ideal of the family business was evident in what amounted to a 'society of families', in which interlocked networks of cousins (it was common, for example, for two brothers to marry two sisters) could rely upon close ties to guarantee loans. Joint stocks were not needed for small factories or for shipping and shipbuilding, and banks were only a medium for family links and family money, but a theatre or an opera house could be 'shared' in common. Thus, leisure or cultural consumption served as model for social organization beyond the family, reaching out to politics. But, in a world of connected individuals and families, was a union of workingmen a recognizable entity to be incorporated into the interplay of civil society, or, on the contrary, was it a sinister defiance of all the rules which were held dear and which kept things working together? While most of Spain – forged in the ideal of centralized government to the degree that '*estadolatria*', the worship of the State – was a potential theological worry to Papist churchmen and theologians, not bruited about until nineteenth-century liberalism, with the ample and systematic use of expropriation of land and real estate, made the Church pay the cost of the

24. J. Juaristi, *Vestigios de Babel: para una arqueología de los nacionalismos españoles*, Madrid, 1992.

social change from collective, 'feudal' notions of property to those juridical concepts that made working capitalism possible, Catalonia was quite the opposite. Catalans, to be sure, idealized the law, but it was civil and mercantile practice that they appreciated, and many ostensibly loathed the model of *raison d'état* (or *razón de Estado*, a central preoccupation of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Castilian political thought).²⁵ Thus Catalonia, as a civil society, was clearly libertarian as regarded behavior, but not as regarded belief, which was understood to be firmly and enthusiastically Roman Catholic. Individualism in practical, personal or sexual matters was tolerated in the extreme, even valued, but always within the limits of mental orthodoxy. Such a contradictory yet exceptional sense of libertarianism and/or individualism would have important intellectual and social implications in the future.

Thus, the idea of the 'differential fact' of civil society was certainly true when 'Catalanism' arose at the end of the nineteenth century, and even at mid-to-late twentieth century, although the rhythm of change was visible. It is no longer true today: Catalans do not have a significantly different work ethic, greater sense of the clock and punctuality, more promptitude and carry-through than most other Spaniards. They do retain, however, a different language, which, as other subtler and more social signs are erased, has become more and more the obsessive reference point of all nationalist longing. There is much unconscious frustration on this subject at present, and the future fortunes of Catalan nationalism will undoubtedly rise or fall on the subject of the market viability of the Catalan language, as other aspects, once so distinct in the alleged Catalan 'national character', fade.

THE STRUCTURAL CONFUSION BETWEEN NOTIONS OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN CATALAN SOCIETY

Late Medieval Catalan society was overwhelmed by the plague in the fourteenth century, followed by intense social violence and dynastic conflict, with brutal internal and local civil wars, especially during the reigns of Joan II and Ferdinand II during much of the fifteenth century. Earlier, Catalan commercial and/or piracy networks had successfully challenged the Pisans, pushed aside the Genoese, and had driven the Angevins from Sicily (the 'Sicilian Vespers' of 1282), to control the insular areas of the western Mediterranean, with a policy of relatively systematic 'ethnic cleansing' of Moslem population, for example in Mallorca (conquered in 1228-1232), or their clear submission, as in Valencia (1233-1238).²⁶ Despite the stellar

25. J. Peña Echevarría, J. Castillo Vegas e.a. (eds.), *La Razón de Estado en España, siglos XVI-XVII: antología de textos*, Madrid, 1998; S. Rus Rufino e.a. *La Razón de Estado en la España moderna*, Valencia, 2000.

26. J.N. Hillgarth, *The Problem of Catalan Mediterranean Empire: 1229-1327*, London, 1975.

aquisition of Naples by the Catalan-Aragonese crown in 1442, already by the end of the previous century, if not before, the county of Barcelona and Principality of Catalonia, the chief territory of the Aragonese crownlands, had clearly lost its lead to its Mediterranean rivals, the expansive French crown and the Italian city-states, as well as its capacity to restrain the pressure of the Castilian kingdom in the Iberian Peninsula. The opening of the Atlantic and the European conquest of the Americas between the end of the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries, notoriously relegated the Mediterranean Basin to a secondary status, which coincided with longterm trends affecting trade across the silk and spice routes, both terrestrial and maritime, in Asia. As the Mediterranean area became an economic backwater, it was dominated by semipermanent warfare, between the thrusting confrontation of the Ottomans, the rearguard action of the coalesced Habsburg crowns led by 'united' Spain (after 1556, Spain and Austria separately), against both the 'Turk' and the threat of renewed French power, as well as the additional intrigues of increasingly minor players, such as the Venetian republic. In this vast maritime and terrestrial struggle, Catalonia was now part of a larger political entity which favored Castile, for its willingness to back absolutist policies and suffer taxation more gladly than other kingdoms. In Castilian crownlands, patrician and aristocratic resistance to centralizing power had largely been broken by the emperor Charles v at the beginning of his reign or later coopted, whereas Catalonia, like the other Aragonese crownlands, stuck to their 'constitutions' and 'liberties', and were far more grudging in their willingness to contribute to the dynastic cause. With power based in Castile, Catalonia no longer could exercise its internally hegemonic role within the crown of Aragon, which had been based on its privileged relation to kings who, after Alfonso v, the conqueror of Naples, either drifted off to endless Italian shadowboxing or played Spanish power politics, like Joan II (king of Aragon, 1458-1479; king consort of Navarre, 1425-1441; effective ruler of Navarre, 1441-1479) in Navarre, or his successor, Ferdinand II (king of Aragon, 1479-1516), by forging the union of crowns between Aragon and Castile by his marriage to queen Isabella (queen of Castile, 1474-1504).

In sum, despite the tendency of Catalan nationalist historians to stress the 'Catalan-Aragonese' nature of the Aragonese crown (a claim bitterly - and probably somewhat inaccurately - disputed by Aragonese regionalist historians), there never existed anything that, in late medieval, much less early Modern times, could be characterized as an embryonic 'Catalan State', except in the most romantic and delusionary of ways. This, quite obviously, was a most unhappy antecedent for the rise, growth, and development of a nationalist historiography, necessarily bent on justifying the past experience as the 'prediction' of future Statehood. What did take form was a distinct 'society', with its own ways and identifiable ways of doing things, of which, perhaps the figure of the 'consul' and the 'consulate' (the *Llibre*

del Consulat de Mar, drawn up in different stages during the fourteenth century), a recognized but semiprivate representative for Catalan merchants abroad (strictly speaking for *corporacions de mercaders*), who could present claims even in distant courts and tribunals against deals not kept, or arrests of persons and seizures of goods without adequate compensation or release.²⁷ **Private institutions thus became public, without however losing their private nature**, a central trend in what would be the Catalan way of doing business and understanding politics.

In the sixteenth century, the chief Mediterranean port of reference – in both productive and cultural terms – on the 'Spanish' coast became Valencia, no longer Barcelona. Catalan society was more and more violent and unstable (the word '*pundonor*' in Castilian, a 'point of honor', the ultimate expression of touchy Hispanic preoccupation with the defense of honor at a swordthrust, is actually a borrowing from the Catalan *punt d'honor*).²⁸ At the same time, the 'Spanish' union between the crowns of Aragon and Castile took on more solidity, as the kingdom of Upper Navarre was added to the Castilian crown by force in 1512, leaving the crown of Lower Navarre and the States of Béarn – on what is today the French side of the Pyrenean border – in the hands of the house of Foix, and eventually of the Bourbons, who then, later, went on to inherit the crowns of France and, later still, Spain.²⁹ The emergence of 'Spain' encouraged the Catalan aristocracy and upper nobility to intermarry with families from elsewhere, i.e., in Castile, as a means of obtaining more visibility and better careers, with the result that the lesser nobility and the urban patriciate took upon themselves the defense of local laws, liberties and privileges regarding particulars, either persons, places or institutions (*furs* in Catalan, *fueros* in Castilian, from the Latin *furis*, meaning outside, exempt), which were a source of intense pride in all the Aragonese crown and which were thought of in Catalonia as the 'Constitutions' which vertebrated the country's institutions.³⁰ Sixteenth century visitors were struck by the peculiar Catalan mix of self-important merchants and arrogant *bravos* or *desperados*, a situation in which banditry was rife, shootings and murders common, but also practical **money-making** in deals (as opposed to rents derived from land or other, even commercial, property) was held in an esteem that was unusual by the standards of much of the rest of Spain, as the whole combination of places was increasingly thought of (especially after the incorporation of Portugal), by foreigners.³¹ Catalan traders were willing to imitate

27. R.S. Smith, *Historia de los Consulados de Mar, 1250-1700*, Barcelona, 1978.

28. X. Torres i Sans, *Els Bandolers: s. XVI-XVII*, Vic, 1991.

29. L. Cadier, *Les États de Béarn depuis leurs origines jusqu'au commencement du XVI siècle: étude sur l'histoire et l'administration d'un pays d'États*, Marseille, 1979 [facsimile edition from: Paris, 1888].

30. P. Molas i Ribalta, *L'Alta noblesa catalana a l'Edat moderna*, Vic, 2004.

31. J. de Gracia, *Cataluña juzgada por escritores no catalanes*, Barcelona, 1906; B. Montsià, *Els catalans jutjats pels altres*, Barcelona, 1927; P. Balañà i Abadía, *Visió cosmopolita de Catalunya*,

the networks that foreign merchants – notably the French and the Maltese – had established throughout the Spanish kingdoms, and elsewhere in nearby areas of the French coast, with close linguistic affinity, or even down the western Italian seaboard, and, of course, the many islands of the Western mediterranean, which largely remained politically accessible.

Towards the middle of the seventeenth century, the Catalan situation exploded, in ways that recovered the bitterness of internal strife in the fifteenth century. Faced with a new struggle with Richelieu since 1635, Philip IV's chief minister, the so-called count-duke of Olivares, attempted to forge a more effective union of the Spanish territories with which to back up Spain's military efforts in all the fronts of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648).³² The initiative provoked not only the 'Restoration' of Portuguese independence but revolution, separation, and war in Catalonia, which was annexed for some years (1640-1652) to France (after all, in their origins, the Bourbons were a Pyrenean dynasty, possessing the crown of Lower Navarre, a formal distinction lasting till 1789; in Spain, the separate kingdom was maintained until 1839). The price to pay was the division of Catalonia along the mountains, the northern counties, the Roussillon, being retained by Louis XIV in the treaty of the Pyrenees (1659).³³ The last decades of the seventeenth century were harsh, in that the military frontier of French and Spanish kingdoms, traditionally located in Flanders, now passed to greater pressure on Barcelona and other fortified places along what had until then **not** been a frontier between enemy kingdoms.

Barcelona was besieged numerous times between 1659 and 1714. The dynastic dead end for the Spanish Habsburgs represented by the sickly and weak Charles II (king of Spain, 1661-1700), incapable of producing an heir, stimulated an intense competition between the major dynasts for the succession to the huge resources of his many kindoms and territories. The apparent solution of a French prince was contested by the Austrian Habsburgs, setting off, as is well-known, a general European conflict (1700-1715, formally ended by the treaties of Utrecht in 1713 and finally of Rastatt and Baden in 1714), but also a vicious civil war, especially in the Aragonese crownlands, which, after 1705, sided, especially Catalonia, with the Austrian pretender, rather than with the French claimant, who nevertheless found extensive support in Castile.³⁴ Abandoned by the English allies that had stimulated the archduke's cause, the pro-Austrian Catalans held out after the Utrecht

Barcelona, 1991, vol. I; C. Bastons i Vivanco & J. Estruch i Tobella, *Cataluña en la literatura castellana*, Barcelona, 1997.

32. J.H. Elliott, *The Revolt of the Catalans: a Study in the Decline of Spain (1598-1640)*, Cambridge, 1963.

33. P. Sahlins, *Boundaries: the Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*, Berkeley, 1989.

34. P. Voltes i Bou, *L'Arxiduc Carles d'Àustria: rei dels catalans*, Barcelona, 1967; H. Kamen, *The War of Succession in Spain, 1700-15*, Bloomington, 1969.

settlement and after their champion had plumped for the Imperial title and the Habsburg monarchy in central Europe, only to be finally crushed by the arms of the new Philip v.

The reforming Bourbon administration chose to improve the ramshackle Spanish system along the new French lines, and this meant both the elimination of particularisms and local 'constitutional liberties' (the Decree of the *Nueva Planta* of 1716) in the name of a necessarily militarized ideal of efficiency (captains-general instead of viceroys in Catalonia, for example). As the holdouts against a Bourbon triumph, the Catalans were collectively punished, forbidden the right to bear arms and other less onerous prohibitions (like the right to fly kites, perhaps for fear of their use as signals), in ways that are markedly reminiscent of the rough methods used by Hannoverian England to put Scotland 'in order' after the 1745 Stuart uprising.³⁵ In a Catalan context, these events were decried, in the eighteenth century, by '*austracista*' exiles in Vienna, who maintained a defense of the old 'composite monarchy' and its alleged 'liberties' in a classic 'lost cause' format.³⁶ When possible, these 'Carlists' (i.e., loyal to the Habsburg 'Charles III' of Spain, became the emperor Charles VI, reigned 1711-1740) relied on arguments already utilized in the conflict of 1640-1653, which were picked up as propaganda themes in the War of Succession. Then, a century later, in the 1830s, at least in a Catalan context, similar ideas were recovered yet again by the new Bourbon 'Carlists' who defended the cause of the legitimist pretender 'Charles V' (the ultra-conservative brother of Ferdinand VII, who who claimed his 'rights' to succeed at the king's death in 1833) and, with him, the primacy of 'traditional' (even pre-Bourbon) institutions. At the same time, Catalan Romantics, who tended to be liberals and anti-'Carlists', wrote ideologically loaded historical novels, in the mode established by Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), about the 'death of Catalan freedom', be that in 1653 or in 1714. Since, in many cases, like Víctor Balaguer (1824-1901) or Antoni de Bofarull (1821-1892), they were also historians and pioneer 'Catalanists', these writers established in this fashion a historiographic truism that has lasted up to the present, especially in nationalist literature.³⁷

35. A. Herman, *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*, London, 2003.

36. E. Lluch, *L'alternativa catalana (1700-1714-1740)*. *Ramon de Vilana Perlas i Juan Amor de Soria: teoria i acció austracistes*, Vic, 2000; also: E. Lluch, *El programa polític de la Catalunya austracista*, in: J. Albareda (ed.), *Del patriotisme al catalanisme*, Vic, 2001, pp. 129-167.

37. Any discussion of Catalan Romantic novels has to immediately confront the problem of whether one is referring to works written in the Catalan language, of which the first is undoubtedly A. de Bofarull, *La Orfaneta de Menargues o Catalunya agonisant*, Madrid-Barcelona, 1862, or novels based on historical themes of the Catalan past, even with something approaching a proto-nationalist sub-text, but written in Castilian. As examples: V. Balaguer, *Don Juan de Serrallonga. Novela original*, Barcelona, 1858; J. Hernández del Mas, *El Último suplicio de las libertades catalanas: segunda parte de Felipe V. el Animoso; novela original*, Barcelona, 1858; R. del Castillo, *Roger de Flor ó la venganza de catalanes. Novela histórica*, Barcelona-Madrid, s.a. [1864].

In many ways, however, the results of pacification and forced hispanization – whatever later nationalists claimed or claim – were strikingly beneficial. The duality of the hardworking merchant, with his airs, and the bravo, with his sword or gun, was reduced to the merchant side, without hired guns or swordsmen, which enforced money-making in a society that had few titles and ranks left to get in the way of profits. There would be no more old-style shoot-outs, dueling and the other violent pursuits habitual in a Mediterranean 'honor society', but rather the Catholic equivalent (*à la* Bernard Groethuysen – 1880-1946 –, and perhaps with a touch of 'Jansenism', whatever that may have been in Spanish circumstances) of Calvinist predetermination or Lutheran pietism: sober businessmen, traders and artesans calculating how best to keep a family firm going on a long-term basis.³⁸ Eventually, by the reign of Charles III (king of Spain, 1759-1788), commerce with the Indies was open to Catalan companies, the Jesuits were expelled and, although there was no real spark (say, like in Edinburgh), and the most outstanding figure, the historian Antonio de Capmany (1742-1813) spent much time in Madrid, there was a very humble 'practical enlightenment' or 'enlightenment by association', marked by good conversation, good business, and little intellectual 'stars', rather like the urbanized social life of the multitude of central German States that enjoyed the formation of a functional civil society with the *Aufklärung*.³⁹ So modernity, such as it was, came privately, through the intimacies of commercial correspondence, personal contacts and trust, rather than through the initiatives of the court parties, with their *afrancesado* (frenchified) pretensions and newfangled ideas of the '*philosophes*' read in smuggled books (while the Inquisition was kept working trying to track down the insidious works of Bolter-Voltaire and Ruso-Rousseau).

CUMULATIVE IDEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND CATALAN TRUISMS

The civil wars of the fifteenth century (both the struggles surrounding Joan II and social conflict of the peasant *remences*), the 1640 'revolt of the Catalans' and the dozen-year-long incorporation into the crown of Louis XIII (king of France, 1610-1643) and Louis XIV (reigned 1643-1715), the constant French military pressures in the second half of the seventeenth century, and, as a climax, the devastating War of Spanish Succession, all provided for the cumulative construction of political discourses, which could be plowed under in times of more or less integration under

38. B. Groethuysen, *The Bourgeois: Catholicism versus Capitalism in Eighteenth-Century France*, New York, 1968 [1927].

39. A. de Capmany (J. Fontana (ed.)), *Memorias históricas sobre la marina, comercio y artes de la antigua ciudad de Barcelona*, Barcelona, 2001, 4 vols.; J. Fontana, *Estudi preliminar*, in: A. de Capmany, *Cuestiones críticas sobre varios puntos de historia económica, política y militar*, Barcelona, 1988, pp. 5-15; R. Grau, *Antoni de Capmany i la renovació de l'historicisme polític català*, Barcelona, 1994; J.A. Pelayo, *Antoni de Capmany (1742-1813): análisis del pasado catalán para un proyecto español*, in: *Obradoiro de Historia Moderna*, vol. 12, 2003, pp. 11-45.

the Spanish crown, but which could be recovered, brought up to date, invented and reinvented, interpreted and reinterpreted, as situations of protest required. This was a true political tradition, hidden from Spanish and/or Castilian eyes, in part by language, but especially because it presented an alternative model of construction of a different, more benign and kinder 'Hispania', allegedly plural instead of rigid, federal and/or confederal instead of centralizing, in which general policy was open to discussion instead of being barked from the top down as order to be obeyed or else.⁴⁰ This included the idealization of *fueros/furs* as the expression of municipal rights, an embodiment of local power and opinion under law, together with the fond notion that government by committee is a paradise in which agreement is easily achieved, if approached with the right spirit, of course. Catalans have always liked to think of themselves as *pactistes*, willing to negotiate, consensus-builders who use any opportunity to take advantage of a *concordia* or a *tréva* (a truce) to work out some eminently practical solution, like one, big and happy family.

So much for formal self-image. Behind this quite self-congratulatory façade, and the fact of *penyes* and the networks of civil society, there remained a fundamental incapacity to establish large-scale consensus across acrimonious cleavages: networking families and friends has necessarily meant, at some point, confronting inherited enmities, as well as mistrusting outsiders (*forasters*) until they were duly married or bonded into the established groups. As the great French student of Catalan history, Pierre Vilar (1906-2003), has insisted, the tenacious continuity of Catalan society from the fourteenth century onwards is perhaps its most striking trait for the historian.⁴¹ But just what did this continuity consist of? Without a clear

40. A. Simon, Patriotisme i nacionalisme a la Catalunya moderna. Mites, tradicions i consciències col·lectives, in: *L'Avenç*, nº 167, 1993, pp. 8-16; also: R. García Cárcel & H. Nicolau Baguer, Enfrentamiento ideológico. La polémica Castilla-Cataluña en 1640, in: *Historia 16*, nº 48, 1980, pp. 55-66; A. Simon i Tarrés, La imagen de Castilla en Cataluña. Guerra de propaganda durante la revuelta de 1640, in: *Historia 16*, nº 193, 1992, pp. 91-102. From a nationalist viewpoint: M. Solé i Sanabre, *El pensament polític en la Catalunya del segle XVII: un estudi ideològic de la revolta catalana de 1640*, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Tesis de licenciatura, 1982-1983; moreover: R. García Cárcel, El concepte d'Espanya als segles XVII i XVIII, in: *L'Avenç*, nº 100, 1987, pp. 38-50; F.X. Burgos & M. Peña Díaz, *Aportaciones sobre el enfrentamiento ideológico entre Castilla y Cataluña en el siglo XVII*, in: *Actes. Primer Congrés d'Història Moderna de Catalunya*, Barcelona, 1984, vol. II, pp. 557-567; R.M. Alabrús i Iglesias, La publicística de la Guerra [de Sucessió], in: *L'Avenç*, nº 206, 1996, pp. 40-45; R.M. Alabrús i Iglesias, Pensamiento y opinión en Cataluña en el siglo XVIII, in: *Historia Social*, nº 24, 1996 (I), pp. 83-94; and, finally: P. Solervicens i Bo, *Els Països Catalans i Espanya: ser o no ser*, Valencia, 1988.

41. See the introduction in volume 1 of the massive P. Vilar, *Catalunya dins l'Espanya moderna: recerques sobre els fonaments econòmics de les estructures nacionals*, Barcelona, 1973-1975, 4 vols. See P. Vilar & R. Congost (ed.), *Pensar històricament. Reflexions i records*, València, 1995; also R. Congost, Pierre Vilar, de la historia raonada a pensar historicament, in: *El Temps*, nº 1107, 2003, secció *El Temps d'Història*, pp. 71-73 (this text can be accessed at: <http://www.xtec.es/recursos/socials/eltemps/des_03.pdf>).

local succession in either dynastic terms (if we believe the nationalist historiographic tradition) or in the stable maintenance of a representative 'constitutional' practice (another nationalist article of faith), then what was inherited was its accumulation of lessons learnt from a succession of civil wars, all of which produced a most extensive literature, rich in heart-rending arguments and bitter denunciations – a repertoire, logically, much increased after 1640 –, which was to prove a reservoir of political arguments, to be repeated time and time again, right up to the present.⁴² The reiteration involved recalls the obsessive nature of another 'lost cause' society: Faulkner's famous quote about the American South, said by a character in his novel *Intruder in the Dust* (1949), which indicated that the past wasn't dead (and certainly not history), because it wasn't even past.⁴³

Such societal fantasies reflect what still is today (though much attenuated) a 'society of families', in which interlocking kinship patterns (including the habit of two brothers to marry two sisters, so that the offspring, though first cousins, have the same set of surnames) have tended to interconnect with family-run businesses in a necessarily small company or small factory system.⁴⁴ Capital was raised within the family and interest duly accounted for and paid; as a result Catalan banking has been marked by famous failures, and, in the twentieth century, the great financial success stories have been savings-and-loans or local banks.⁴⁵ In a highly centralized political system that tended to circulate functionaries throughout all of Spain – although providing openings in the military, the judiciary, the university – promotion was determined outside Catalonia and was hard to influence or control locally. In reply, the favored Catalan argument was the creation of a private system of services which, at least ideally, would rival the scant public offerings: if the State administration was carried out in Spanish, as civil society grew and became increasingly aware of its own potential, it tended to switch over into Catalan. By the turn of the twentieth century, for much of Catalan urban and rural society, catalanization was seen increasingly as a value in itself, the only natural vehicle for self-expression, which the Castilian language and Spanish 'national institutions' could only distort or offend.

42. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *El catalanismo ante Castilla, o el antagonista ignorado*, in: J. Albareda, P. Anguera, M. Duch e.a., *Catalunya en la configuració política d'Espanya*, Reus, 2005, pp. 69-120.

43. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, 'Lost Causes' as a Historical Typology of 'Reaction': a Spanish Perspective, from Jacobites to Neofascists and Spanish Republicans, in: *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, vol. 5, 2004, n° 2, pp. 145-164. Faulkner's famous quote about the American South is said by a character in his novel *Intruder in the Dust* (1949).

44. For the vitality of the 'society of families' up to the present: P. Cullèll & A. Farràs, *L'oasi català. Un recorregut per les bones famílies de Barcelona*, Barcelona, 2001; see also: G. Wray McDonogh, *Good Families of Barcelona: a Social History of power in the Industrial Era*, Princeton, 1986.

45. F. Cabana i Vancells, *Caixes i bancs de Catalunya*, Barcelona, 1996-2000, 4 vols.

At the same time, Barcelona, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, was locked in a demographic race with Madrid for the effective capitality of Spanish modernization. Madrid was fed as much by immigration as Barcelona, but tended to gather from the whole area of the State, while Barcelona tended to receive migrants from relatively nearby regions. As a result of the growing metropolitan rivalry, Barcelona became the effective 'counter-capital' to the official center of power, a 'second city' which seethed with any protest and attracted the discontented of all Spain. Under the weight of rapid urbanization, the 'society of families' was quickly seen by a visitor and even more by an immigrant as a closed 'oligarchy', into which access came only through the regular, traditional channels of linkage, till the habit of contact bred some marriage or other. The reliance on kin, and, by extension, 'mates' or 'chums' produced -as in other parts of Spain- the closed circle of male friends (the *colla*, in Catalan, like the *cuadrilla* in Castilian). *Colles* would meet with other like-minded groups to chat, the Spanish free discussion group or *tertulia*, often called in Northern Spain a *peña*. But, in the new, urbanizing Catalan society, the Catalan *penya* was not the equivalent of the Spanish *peña*= *tertulia*, plus some formal associative rules. Rather, the *penya* was a gathering of *colles* to do something beyond talking, to **organize, and especially to set up and run some kind of grouping or entity, with aspirations. All political parties and syndicates in Catalonia can be traced down to penyes, as well as many cooperatives and even private companies and small manufacturing shops, something not true of Spanish society in the late nineteenth or the early twentieth centuries, where *peñas* merely gave coverage to *tertulias* or, at most, when bullfighting was at its height, to certain matadors (a loyalty later transferred to football clubs).**⁴⁶ Catalan civil society, thus, was a **formal network** of associations, backed up by an **informal network** of family and friendship ties. **Both kinds of bonding – as a simultaneous interaction – gave Catalonia its characteristic tightness, much remarked on by all outsiders, including often unhappy observers from other parts of Spain.**

But this distinctive associative flair of Catalan civil society, in which the private sphere was to challenge public institutions and make them responsive to collective demands, Habermas-style (long before the German thinker was born in 1929), was to face a key problem: instability.⁴⁷ A longterm political tradition of private dealings without much institutional life beyond the municipal level has its cost, especially in the lack of perspective, as well as a certain trend towards solipsism. Futhermore, the stereotype of Catalan practicality shows clear limits: Catalans have always enjoyed – indeed, have been almost afflicted with – a zany,

46. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, Formas grupales masculinas in la sociedad catalana: una hipótesis de trabajo sobre los mecanismos fundamentales del asociacionismo catalán, in: *Boletín de la Sociedad española de Psicoterapia y Técnicas de Grupo*, época IV, nº 10, 1996, pp. 11-44.

47. See J. Habermas (T. McCarthy (ed.)), *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, Boston, 1979.

even wicked sense of humor, simultaneously intensely sarcastic, scatological, and open to nonsensical play. It is an internal Catalan cliché, picked up by some influential Catalan historians, that Catalans are perennially torn between the feelings of *seny* (common sense, expressed in effective association) and *rauxa* (destructive rage, in which 'the street' – like Hannah Arendt's idea of 'the mob' – takes on any institution in its path, until stopped).⁴⁸ Catalan like to admit that they have a dreamy side, beside all their practical, hard-headed compulsions, their work ethic, and their comparative punctuality (ten minutes late, by comparison to Madrid's twenty, with the warmer south, say, the Canary Islands, happily off the clock). Nevertheless, self-destructive *rauxa* and its milder form of *rebertisme* (the willingness to tear down any proposal just because it has been made by someone disliked or envied) is much more common than they like to confess. The result is a society that dreams of accords without conflict, but is in fact a very driven social context, based on cut-throat competition and a positive joy in revenge, if not in actual vendetta. All of this is what might be termed Catalan 'hypocrisy', that is, all those social traits that are virtually invisible to those that live them, but stand out, glaring, to the outsider.

THE CONFUSION BETWEEN ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND POLITICAL POWER

Catalan society, between the late eighteenth (especially after the 1760s) and the early nineteenth centuries was a 'first comer' (in the terminology of W.W. Rostow, 1916-2003) to the so-called 'industrial revolution' (to use the standard image established by Arnold Toynbee 'the elder', 1852-1883).⁴⁹ Networking Catalans busily replaced the French and Maltese webs that had hitherto controlled textile commerce inside the Spanish kingdoms, showing themselves more than willing to go and find customers wherever they might be.⁵⁰ This meant a process of substitution of imports of relatively finished products to using imported raw materials – above all cheap cotton – and working it in Catalonia.⁵¹ Technological adaptation lagged a bit, but not exaggeratedly so: by the 1830s, the switch to steam power was underway, despite labor opposition.⁵²

48. J. Vicens i Vives, *Notícia de Catalunya*, Barcelona, 1954; H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York, 1958² [1951].

49. J. Nadal, *El Fracaso de la revolución industrial en España, 1814-1913*, Barcelona, 1975; W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: a Non-Communist Manifesto*, Cambridge, 1969; the so-called 'industrial revolution' (A. Toynbee, *Lectures on the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century in England; popular addresses, notes, and other fragments, by the late [...], together with a reminiscence by Lord Milner*, London, 1925⁸).

50. J. Torras, *Redes comerciales y auge textil en la España del siglo XVIII*, in: M. Berg (ed.), *Mercados y manufacturas en Europa*, Barcelona, 1995, pp. 111-132.

51. J.K.J. Thomson, *A Distinctive Industrialization: Cotton in Barcelona, 1728-1832*, Cambridge, 1992.

52. J. Nadal Oller & J. Maluquer de Motes, *Catalunya, la fàbrica d'Espanya: un segle d'industrialització catalana: 1833-1936*, Barcelona, 1985; J. Nadal i Oller (dir.), *Història econòmica de la*

Thus, industrial development coincided with the liberal revolution in Spain, i.e., the process of legislating for capitalist production, at the expense of the Church and ecclesiastical property. The combination of urban protest and rural civil war basically established the pattern that would dominate Catalan politics for the next century, until the 1930s. Would Catalonia – and especially its capital, Barcelona – be the focus of a new-style, democratic or even post-democratic and socialist revolution? Or would it define its historic nature, whatever that might be in the light of accumulated political rhetoric, in a transformed Spain, based on some kind of representative government?

The ideological, political impact of romantic ideas gave voice to intellectuals (even if the term itself is from the end of the nineteenth century), such as the novelist and liberal historian Víctor Balaguer, the federal ideologue (also author of historical studies) Francisco Pi y Margall (1824-1901), or more conservative publicists (also responsible for historical pieces), like Juan/Joan Mañé y Flaquer (1823-1901) or Antonio/Antoni de Bofarull.⁵³ Internally, Catalan-speaking areas, both Catalonia and Valencia to the South, were the scene of semi-permanent civil war during much of the nineteenth century (1833-1840, 1846-1849, 1872-1876), between 'Carlists', neo-absolutists and religious fundamentalists (if such a term may be applied to Catholicism), who controlled the mountainous highlands, and the liberal and/or democratic left, who held the cities and the towns. This running violence meant that the left (including the extremists) and the 'moderate' right, despite their mutual dislike, were united against the far right. Therefore, whatever their deeper feelings or motives, all the authors – like those cited above – who gave ideological and historiographic content rather than poetic voice to the '*Renaixença*', the 'Catalan Renaissance', were forced to accept the liberal program in one way or another, or else they would find themselves defending the *mntanya*, its rural past and its hopeless future economy, against the winning pressure of urban progress and industrialization.⁵⁴ A backward-looking *topos* was quite tolerable in poetry – indeed it defined much of the movement to recover Provençal motifs in the *Jocs*

Catalunya contemporània, Barcelona, 1988-1989, 6 vols.; J. Maluquer de Motes, *Història econòmica de Catalunya, segles XIX i XX*, Barcelona, 1998; see also: J. Nadal Oller (dir.), *Atlas de la industrialización de España: 1750-2000*, Bilbao-Barcelona, 2003.

53. On Balaguer: J. Palomas i Moncholí, *Victor Balaguer. Renaixença, Revolució i Progrés*, Vilanova i La Geltrú, 2004; on Pi y Margall, see A. Jutglar, *Pi y Margall [...]*; on Bofarull, see: P. Anguera (ed.), *Sis estudis sobre Antoni de Bofarull*, Reus, 1996; J. Ginebra i Serrabou, *Antoni de Bofarull i la Renaixença*, Reus, 1988; also J. Ginebra, *Antoni de Bofarull en la Renaixença de Catalunya*, Barcelona, 1994; on Mañé i Flaquer: *L'Estat-nació i el conflicte regional: Joan Mañé i Flaquer, un cas paradigmàtic*, 1823-1901, Barcelona, 2004.

54. J.M. Fradera, Rural Traditionalism and Conservative Nationalism in Catalonia, 1865-1900, in: *Critique of Anthropology*, vol. 10, 1990, n°s 2-3, pp. 51-71. See the very interesting model presented by: J.R. McNeill, *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World: an Environmental History*, Cambridge, 1992.

Florals (or Tournaments of Flowers, in which contestants disputed each other in verse), 'recovered' from medieval reminiscence and held annually in Barcelona after 1859 – but such a blatant revindication of the lost past had no place in what purported to be fact (or at least historical fiction), but not lyrical flights of fancy. While they might lead the way also in poetic jousting, writers such as Balaguer, Pi, Mañé or Bofarull, all attempted, each in his own way, as historians or social theoreticians, to present a modern basis for Catalonia out of its historical experience, as the means for a reorganization of Spain in terms of the alleged plurality and representativity of medieval Catalan-Aragonese institutions, as opposed to a unitary Spain as derived from a dynastic absolutism, perhaps foreign in nature (the first Habsburg was, after all, born in the Low Countries, the first Bourbon obviously French), and based on the simultaneous submission of the Crown of Castile to the royal will, and the Castilian tendency towards imposing its traditions on its neighbours, the crownlands of Aragon, Navarre, and Portugal, leading to their outright annexation.⁵⁵

In the mid-seventeenth century, the Portuguese had managed to break away and 'restore' independence, but the Catalans, after a taste of French administration (1640-1653), preferred to return to old habits, at the cost of territorial loss to France (the trans-pyrenean Catalan counties were incorporated, by treaty, to Louis XIV's domains, in 1659). The War of Spanish Succession (1701-1715), which divided the European powers between rival Habsburg and Bourbon contenders for the Spanish Crown was, in the crownlands of Aragon, a civil war, which backed the losing Austrian archduke (who abandoned the fight to become emperor in Vienna). Thus, the Bourbons, both as a war measure and a declaration of intentions, abolished the *fueros/furs* or rights of Valencia and Aragon in 1707, and those of Catalonia in 1714. As the war wound down, after the treaties of Utrecht, Rastatt, and Baden, and full pacification was achieved with the definitive conquest of Barcelona (1714) with the recovery of Mallorca and Ibiza in 1715, Catalonia was made subject to the *Nueva Planta* (1716, with previous applications in the kingdoms of Aragon in 1711 and Mallorca in 1715). This New Groundwork was the new design for an integrated, centralized Monarchy on the new French model, based on then-

55. A. de Bofarull i Brocá, *Hazañas y recuerdos de los catalanes*, Barcelona, 1846; V. Balaguer, *Bellezas de la Historia de Cataluña*, Barcelona, 1853, 2 vols.; V. Balaguer, *Historia de Cataluña y de la Corona de Aragón, escrita para darla a conocer al pueblo*, Barcelona, 1860-1863, 5 vols.; A. de Bofarull y Brocá, *Historia crítica (civil y eclesiástica) de Cataluña*, Barcelona, 1876-1878, 9 vols.; also by Bofarull: A. de Bofarull y Brocá, *La Confederación catalano-aragonesa, realizada en el periodo más notable del gobierno soberano del Conde de Barcelona, Ramón Berenguer IV: estudio histórico, crítico y documentado/por Antonio de Bofarull y Brocá, premiado por unanimidad en el certámen abierto en 15 de diciembre de 1869 por el Ateneo Catalán*, Barcelona, 1872 (facsimile edition: Valencia, 1997).

innovative basis of a modern military, and, by extension, an army bureaucracy, with the navy to hold together the transoceanic empire.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the successive waves of 'Bourbon reformism' that rose and fell with court politics, were preoccupied with maintaining the dynastic entity together, and, in general terms, such efforts were successful. Protest was 'traditionalist', insisting on the validity of old 'liberties' and privileges, territorial, municipal, religious, corporative and personal (i.e. *fueros/furs*), which Bourbon centralism strove to wipe away. Much of the battle was waged in history books, especially in historical studies of jurisprudence, logically a Hispanic specialty. The underlying tension in eighteenth-century Spain was thus more complex than the usual confrontation of forward-looking and backward-looking viewpoints that has so often been repeated; rather it was a complex interaction between '*casticismo*', traditional, 'Spanish' and/or particularist ways of doing things, and imported, foreign, 'Frenchified' (*afrancesado*) impositions, backed by unrepresentative power.⁵⁶

The Catalan authors who rode the wave of romanticism – French-borne, even if it could carry German or British ideas – tended, quite naturally, to draw on the literature of historical and/or legal debate, but with either concessions to the new vocabulary of popular sovereignty, or even its enthusiastic embrace. Still writing in Castilian rather than Catalan, romantic historians rejected the grafting of unitary liberalism on the military tradition of a centralizing dynasty. In doing so, in different ways, they recovered the vast repertoire of arguments that dated back to the 'revolt of the Catalans' in 1640 and its successive pamphlet wars, and even to earlier literature, now being made available in print, that went back to the thirteenth century. Thus, to begin with, a coherent justification could be made for a longterm historical continuity: a thousand years of 'Catalan-ness', especially if one read words such as *natio* and/or *nació* with a modern, nineteenth-century spin. Then came the idea that Medieval representation was, especially in Catalonia and Aragon, as valid an antecedent of modern parliamentarianism as the English *Magna Carta* (1215) was alleged to be: there was, therefore, a 'Catalan Whig interpretation of History', of which more later. Finally, historically justified identity and the strength of a 'liberty-loving citizenry' in Catalonia could be understood as a superior basis for a new kind of liberal constitution, which – in either monarchical or republican form – would go back to the 'natural circumstance' of 'Hispanic' diversity, still clearly visible, even to foreigners, in the early fifteenth century, before the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile in 1469, their

56. I find unsatisfactory the classic formulation by R. Herr, *The Eighteenth-Century Revolution in Spain*, Princeton, 1958; in any case, see the Catalan nationalist perspective: J. Albareda, *Catalunya en un conflicte europeu. Felip V i la pèrdua de les llibertats catalanes (1700-1714)*, Barcelona, 2001.

aggressive policies, and the chance occurrences of their inheritance, distorted the 'natural' development of territories and representation by creating a single dynastic Power, which understood itself to be a 'State' and even a 'Nation'. Lacking in perspective due to the war against Napoleonic invasion, the liberals of 1812 had mistaken a dynastic entity for the 'People', and accepted a single Spain when even the Crown had been of '*Las Españas*', the many and variegated 'Spains'. Liberalism had been grafted on to the dynastic Bourbon State, in the name of 'The Desired One', Ferdinand VII, in Napoleon's safe-keeping in a French château. Upon his 'Restoration', Ferdinand tried to take advantage of the changes wrought, without the inconvenience of constitutionalism, which led to liberal revolts, a 'Liberal Triennium' (1820-1823) which attempted power-sharing with Ferdinand, followed by a new French invasion and occupation, now sanctioned by the European Powers, which reestablished the tricky king, now left without much support, beyond the oppressive capacity of the dynastic State. Seen from the perspective of Catalan liberals of all stripes, the ongoing 'liberal revolution' begun on the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833 had continued down this erroneous path, insisting on splicing the tree of liberty on the trunk of dynastic despotism. But other roads were still open, pointing towards federation or confederacy, as might have happened if any variety of counterfactual developments had taken place, to take 'the Spains' down a Catalan path, rather than a Castilian one.⁵⁷ If a new Spain, were to arise, suddenly capable of recognizing what was truly important in the past and therefore able to accept the variety of Spanish territories, then it might even be possible to lure Portugal to join in some kind of Iberian *Zollverein*, as the first step towards a lasting confederal and/or federal union of the whole Peninsula.⁵⁸

Behind such speculations, however, the idea was basically a bluff: Catalonia – it was asserted – had an identity so strong, and above all, so self-conscious, that it could, by its own collective will, backed by its economic strength, make over the face of Spain. Industrial Catalonia – called 'the factory of Spain' – had evolved 'bourgeois' habits, a strong 'work ethic', and a unique civil society that disdained the aristocratic pretensions of agrarian Spain, where, according to common sayings (the *refranero*), "every peasant saw himself as good as duke", but in which the regular custom of real effort was disdained, with the resulting lack of entrepreneurial talent. Accordingly, whether conservative or revolutionary in outlook, nineteenth and twentieth-century Catalans tended to stress their libertarian character, and outsiders emphasized how effectively they combined individualism with practical know-how and patterns of group association not found with the same depth and

57. N. Ferguson (ed.), *Historia virtual. ¿Qué hubiera pasado si...?*, Madrid, 1998; R. Cowley (ed.), *What If? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*, New York, 1999.

58. J.A. Rocamora, *El nacionalismo ibérico 1792-1936*, Valladolid, 1994.

meaning in the rest of Spain. This vision of the Catalan virtues of modernity in the face of Spanish backwardness merged easily with the argument that Catalan civil society, using better business practice, could remake Spain more effectively than the State and its recourse to coercion. But the central difficulty with such an idealization of private means and particularism against public force and statism was based on delusion: simply put, Catalan 'working-class organizations' were not readily admitted to the interaction of civil society, in all the senses of this expression.⁵⁹ Any push which might upset public power, i.e. the State, might also permit the success in Barcelona of private interests that were expressed through syndicates claiming to be revolutionary, rather than by means of political and cultural organizations or the press. Both 'bourgeois' and 'worker' in Catalonia shared a common habit of individualism within networks, of libertarian values that paradoxically always could be shoved down the throat of whomsoever disagreed with them. **The shared background values, however, never permitted a unity, of whatever kind. This was the decisive weakness of Catalan politics, especially vis-à-vis 'Madrid',** since the State, however liberal it might be (and that includes the Second Republic of 1931-1939) maintained a militarized conception of public order, which was always ready to call out troops if the police (including the militarized "Civil Guards") proved insufficient to quiet any given situation.⁶⁰

But, despite the current insistence – especially in Europe – on the alleged verity of political scientist Joseph S. Nye's formula of the greater strength of 'soft power' as opposed to 'hard power', the truth was that economic networks (especially with family-owned firms) were not as convincing as bayonets, so that Catalan assertion of the superiority of civil society and its 'personal sovereignty' in the face of the State and its forces never could withstand any real test.⁶¹ Nor could cultural affirmation complete the job. Well into the nineteenth century, high culture remained almost exclusively written in Spanish, but poetry, with its strong emotional component, could be expressed in 'the language of the land', and indeed often was used to express feelings of belonging.⁶² Romanticism, as it entered Spanish consciousness and letters through Barcelona, made the city's publishers a major production center for translations and imitation of imported European discourses. Like so many other parts of Spain at that time, Catalonia was clearly a bilingual territory: Spanish for official business and the realm of ideas, and the local Catalan for most social contact (except at the highest level, which usually meant

59. A. Garcia Balañà, *La Fabricació de la fàbrica: treball i política a la Catalunya cotonera, 1784-1884*, Barcelona, 2004.

60. D. López Garrido, *La Guardia Civil y los orígenes del Estado centralista*, Barcelona, 1982.

61. J.S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, 2004.

62. M. de Riquer, A. Comas & J. Molas (eds.), *Història de la literatura catalana*, Barcelona, 1984-1988⁴, 11 vols. (vols 1-4: M. de Riquer (dir.), *Part antiga*; vols. 5-6: A. Comas (dir.), *Part moderna*; vols. 7-11: J. Molas (dir.), *Part moderna*).

with outsiders), for intimacy, privacy, and for self-expression in terms of inward emotions. As revolution progressed after the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833, 'exalted' or 'progressive' liberalism, with its highblown universalist sentiment, was often in Spanish, as was the opposing 'neo-absolutist' theorizing of the Carlists who opposed them, while popular ballads and rhyming illustrated sheets (*alehuyas* in Spanish, *auques* in Catalan), much like comics a century later, mixed Catalan and Castilian, or evoked earthy feelings (with a special fascination for anal lore) and love stories in Catalan.⁶³ By the mid-nineteenth century (in ways that could be compared to the Flemish movement around Hendrik Conscience), the pressure for a literary voice in the Catalan language took on sufficient force to create a market, and, by the late 1880s, became an explicitly political demand for institutionalized recognition of its use in public activities and not merely as some private means of communication.⁶⁴

But, on balance, the result, until some point between the 1880s and the turn of the twentieth century, remained to a large degree, what has been called a 'dual society', split between its Catalan-ness and its Spanish-ness, with these identities still understood as complementary, not fully aware of such identities as rivals for an idealized exclusivity.⁶⁵ The idea of such sentiments as clearly rival, even explicitly opposed, took some time to develop socially, and has never quite achieved dominance, up to today.

THE NEGATION OF SPAIN AND THE PROBLEM OF A FRENCH ALTERNATIVE

Many of the basic, unwritten *reflexes* of a Catalan nationalist stance have been translated into narrative coherency through historical writing, from the end of the nineteenth century onwards. In the underlying assumptions of 'Catalanism', for example, there is a strong undertow of 'either-or thinking', either Catalan or Spanish, with no possible conceptual middle ground. Any questioning of the basic tenets '*catalanisme*', or 'Catalanism', was automatically understood to be '*espanyolisme*', 'Spanishism', the historiographic expression of Spanish nationalism. In fact, '*españolismo*' (in Castilian) is an extremely harsh facet of Spanish nationalism – a sentiment fully as complex as 'Catalanism', although most Catalan nationalists do not like to think so – which first appeared in the only 'separatist' locale to success-

63. D. Blanc & M. Albert-Llorca, *L'Imagerie catalane: lectures et rituels*, Carcassonne, 1988.

64. As is to be expected, the '*Renaixença*' has been little explored conceptually but much studied; the classic nationalist evocation as an 'awakening': A. Rovira i Virgili, *Els Corrents ideològics de la Renaixença catalana*, Barcelona, 1966; as indications of relatively recent research trends: *Actes del col·loqui internacional sobre la Renaixença: 18-22 de desembre de 1984. II*, Barcelona, 1993; *La Renaixença: cicle de conferències fet a la Institució cultural del CIC de Terrassa, curs 1982/1983*, Barcelona, 1986.

65. J.M. Fradera, *Cultura nacional en una societat dividida: patriotisme i cultura a Catalunya (1838-1868)*, Barcelona, 1992.

fully confront and defeat Spanish 'unionism': nineteenth-century Cuba, which then served as an inspiration to all nationalisms in Spain, both centripetal and centrifugal.⁶⁶ But the confrontation of **civil war based on identity** only had taken root in the Caribbean island during a prolonged period of open battle, between 1868 and 1898. Thereafter, such 'ethnic' conflict has been always political, even if partial comparisons can be drawn, a century later, to the prolonged terrorist confrontation in the Basque Country, from the 1960s onwards. In political practice in Catalonia, however, as opposed to historiographic clarity, the choice between 'Catalan-ness' and 'Spanish-ness' has been and remains remarkably vague. In history, as a temporal refuge where past and future can meet without contradiction, Catalan nationalists have found the purity of **strategic perspective**, forever lost in day-to-day political negotiation, in which **tactics** consume all energies.

As can be expected, the 'Spanish' perspective is different, if not quite the reverse. From a 'Spanish' viewpoint – ascribed by Catalans (and other so-called 'peripherals') to a central 'Madrid' of the mind, somewhat different from the real city – Catalans are endlessly whining about nothing, since they have a key role in the economy and virtually (it is alleged, with considerable exaggeration) 'own' much of the whole country anyway.⁶⁷ Catalans are 'catalanocentric' or 'barcelonocentric', ignoring the variety of a Spain that is much more than a mere Catalan-Castilian confrontation, with a few Basques on the side. That said, Spanish nationalist historical writing, liberal or conservative, left-wing or right-wing, with scant difference, has perceived Catalan historiography as a threat, which in some ways it undoubtedly is, but which in others it is most clearly not. This, however, is to the limited extent that Spanish history writing – outside of subjects privileged by ideological sympathies and romantic fantasy, like the anarchosyndicalist labor movement – has shown interest in Catalan affairs, which, it must be admitted, has not been not a major theme (outside of economic historiography, which has understandably shown curiosity for certain economic trends). Fear of separatism – especially Catalan separatism – has been more a passing fear, part of a broader discourse of threats to national unity and collective survival, than a source of massive written production. The Catalan irritant, so to speak, has not produced a Spanish pearl of wisdom on the subject. By habit, Spanish nationalism has insisted **more** on external threats or fears of 'mutilation' (the British presence in Gibraltar, a permanent 'offense', however popular to the Gibraltarese population, or the Moroccan threat of annexation to the small cities of Ceuta and Melilla, on the North African shore), than on internal enemies capable of producing a dismember-

66. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, Cuba y el despertar de los nacionalismos in la España peninsular, in: *Studia Historica/Historia Contemporánea*, n° 15, 1997, pp. 151-192; Self-Fulfilling Prophecies, Propaganda and Political Models between Cuba, Spain and the United States, in: *Illes i Imperis*, n° 2, 1999, pp. 191-219.

ment from the inside out. In sum, beyond the pages of the more scandalous press, there is little serious attention paid – in academic article or in book form – to the danger to Spain from what is sometimes purported to be akin to 'cancerous tumoration'.⁶⁸ In other words, seen from 'Madrid' (and other similar 'radial' standpoints, the design of Spanish communications always thought of as the spokes of a wheel coming out from the capital to 'the provinces'), Catalan nationalism and 'Catalanist' historiography represent a part that confuses itself with the whole. Its complaints, accordingly, never rate the attention that the Catalans think they deserve. "What about the other regions?", is often the more 'sensitive' reply from the center.⁶⁹

"This is nothing more than a diversionary attack", they reply from the ramparts of Catalan nationalism, a trick so as to better lessen the 'Hispania', a 'Nation of Nations' alternative to the centralized 'Spain' of 'Madrid', the Bourbons, and finally Franco, that Barcelona and Catalonia could have invented, and, given the chance, perhaps still could. This view of a different, plural Spain is one of the major strategic options that lie hidden in 'Catalanist historiography', from Balaguer onwards, only to suddenly come out, as if from nowhere, to perfume the Spanish political scene with a hint of its promise, and then (at least so far) recede. The second option is the opposite extreme: if the Catalans cannot reinvent Spain as it should have been, then perhaps they could go it alone, in the Irish mould, be *Nosaltres sols*, "ourselves alone", the literal translation of the Hibernian *Sinn Féin*, which served as the name of a radical nationalist grouping, of the 1930s, vaguely leaning towards 'armed struggle'.⁷⁰ These two extremes represent the recognized duality in Catalan political thinking and, more implicitly, in Catalan historiography, termed, in local code, '*Catalunya enfora*' and '*Catalunya endins*', respectively 'Catalonia looking outwards', towards rethinking a new 'Spain', and 'inwards' towards full self-affirmation, turning the Sapir-Whorf sociolinguistic theory of 'living in a language' into a literal, functional reality.⁷¹

67. J. Caro Baroja, *El Laberinto vasco*, San Sebastián, 1984.

68. J. Alvarez Junco, *Mater Dolorosa: la idea de España en el siglo XIX*, Madrid, 2002.

69. X.-M. Nuñez Seixas, *Regions, Nations, and Nationalities: On the Process of Territorial Identity-Building during Spain's Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, in: C.H. Waisman & R. Rein (eds.), *Spanish and Latin American Transitions to Democracy*, Brighton, 2005, pp. 55-79.

70. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *Daniel Cardona i Civit i l'opció armada del nacionalisme radical català (1890-1943)*, in: D. Cardona i Civit (E. Ucelay-Da Cal (ed.)), *"La Batalla" i altres textos*, Barcelona, 1984, pp. V-LIX.

71. E. Sapir, *Language: an Introduction to the Study of Speech*, New York, 1921; B. Lee Whorf (John B. Carroll (ed.)), *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, Cambridge, 1956. The so-called 'Sapir-Whorf thesis' has become the basis of a considerable production in nationalist sociolinguistics, in large measure through the diffusion given to this formulation by the Valencian Lluís V. Aracil: see L.V. Aracil (Enric Montaner (ed.)), *Papers de sociolingüística*, Barcelona, 1982. Thus, a conceptual anthropological interpretation – the idea

Beyond the persistent contradiction between strategic dreams and practical tactics, the evident difficulty with much of these 'outwards' and 'inwards' projections is that, '*sense Espanya*', there is – or has been – an immediate fall-back choice, somewhat worn by the twenty-first century, but still surprisingly influential: as a Pyrenean entity, Catalonia faces Spain, but is backed up to France; or, more precisely, to French Catalonia, the Département des Pyrénées-Orientales, its prefectural capital in Perpignan (in Catalan, *Perpinyà*), which during the last decades Catalan nationalists have preferred calling '*Catalunya nord*', as part of the '*Països Catalans*', literally the 'Catalan Countries', but which might best be understood as the totality of all the Catalan-speaking territories, in Spain, France and Italy (in theory, one town in northern Sardinia still speaks Catalan).⁷²

In the first four decades of the twentieth century, up to the Civil War of 1936-1939, Catalonia was in many ways an exceptional society, in both Spanish and European terms. Capable of considerable political originality, which a greater panache for applied politics rather than doctrinal speculation, Catalan ideologists invented rather than copied, and when they did copy, their spread was broad and eclectic.⁷³

But Catalans, avid to see what 'Madrid' could not perceive, explored the contemporary world and its varied experiments in translation, through French eyes, through the French press and rich French political commentary in books and reviews. The then special industrial climate of Barcelona, its nature as a unique Mediterranean metropolis (at the time, during the interwar years, one of the largest cities in the entire Basin), its deep diversity from the rest of Spain were well-known, recognized both inside and outside Spanish borders. So is the longevity of anarchosyndicalism, which flourished in Catalonia (and elsewhere in Spain) when it had become a mere testimonial current elsewhere, including France.⁷⁴ Less evident was Catalonia's cultural dependency on transpyrenean dynamics, a partial side-effect of the triumph of conservative 'Catalanism'.

that a given language colors or greatly defines the life and/or 'worldview' of those who share it – to an explicit political demand, expressed literally as the slogan insisting on "The Right To live in Catalan". The general contextualization abroad of current sociolinguistic discourse among Catalan nationalists, rather oriented towards what may be termed 'catastrophism' in recent years: L.A. Grenoble & L.J. Whaley (eds.), *Endangered Languages: Language Loss and Community Response*, Cambridge, 1998; D. Nettle & S. Romaine, *Vanishing Voices: the Extinction of the World's Languages*, New York, 2000.

72. A. Balcells (coord.), *Història dels Països Catalans*, Barcelona, 1980-1982, 2 t. in 3 vols. (J.M. Salrach & E. Duran, *Dels orígens a 1714: 1-1, Dels orígens a 1336 & 1-2, Del regnat de Pere el Cerimoniós a 1714: 2-3*, M. Ardít, A. Balcells & N. Sales, *De 1714 a 1975*).

73. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *El imperialismo catalán. Prat de la Riba, Cambó, D'Ors y la conquista moral de España*, Barcelona, 2003.

74. J. Pablo Fusi, El movimiento obrero en España, 1876-1914, in: *Revista de Occidente*, nº 131, 1974, pp. 204-237; J. Pablo Fusi, Algunas publicaciones recientes sobre el movimiento obrero en España, in: *Revista de Occidente*, nº 123, 1973, pp. 358-368.

Catalan political habits were notoriously more 'French' than Spanish. Catalan intellectual life was in practice an intensely Frenchified culture within Spain, **francophile but not francophone**, which proudly expressed itself in the local language, rather than in French, to the never-ending surprise of Parisian intellectuals.⁷⁵ But such relative dependency never became a *comprador* import culture, as Catalans of all stripes were consistent in their creativity, even eccentricity. The more nationalists could even dream of a 'Greater Catalonia', which not only incorporated the Catalan-speaking areas of Spain, such as Valencia or the Balearic Islands, but encompass all 'Occitania', as far north as the Auvergne, in a vast 'Pan-catalanist' union, in which a revived cultural presence centered on Barcelona would impose itself on the superficialities of the European State system.⁷⁶

At the same time, because of the French link and Barcelona's role as '*le petit Paris du sud*', Catalan models usually led Spanish political fashions. Given its peculiar stance, in many ways, both political and intellectual, Catalonia in the first half of the twentieth century was much more a cultural suburb of France – if in Catalan translation, and with a special link to Italy – than a peculiar province of Spanish letters and ideology. Catalanism in particular represented the filter through which German and Central European concepts or English and North American notions were imported to Hispanic markets, adjusted always to the centrality of Paris as a world capital and to corresponding French political and intellectual fashions, with their characteristic preoccupations. Italian intellectual currents were an exciting alternative, with their taste of the upstart challenge to Francocentrism, but also with the concession of dependancy towards Paris as a cultural hub that was common to Barcelona; but Milanese innovation was never more than a counterpoint to whatever was coming out of the '*ville lumière*'. Madrid was nowhere in this perspective, except as a center of government.⁷⁷

By the 1930s, with Italy under Fascist rule and Germany submerged in Nazism, Catalan ideological experimentation tested limits far beyond what was

75. A. González Salvador (coord.), with R. de Diego & M. Segarra, *Historia de las literaturas francófonas: Bélgica, Canadá, Magreb*, Madrid, 2002; this concept matches the parallel idea in Spanish literary studies: J. M. Díez Borque (ed.), *Historia de las literaturas hispánicas no castellanas*, Madrid, 1980.

76. On Occitania, see works by authors in close connection to 'Catalanist' preoccupations: A. Armengaud & R. Lafont (dirs.), *Histoire d'Occitanie*, Paris, 1979; as well as: R. Lafont, *La Revendication occitane*, Paris, 1974; see, in addition: R. Lafont & C. Anatole, *Història de la literatura occitana*, Barcelona, 1973, 2 vols.

77. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *Llegar a capital: rango urbano, rivalidades interurbanas y la imaginación nacionalista en la España del siglo XX*, in: A. Morales Moya (coord.), *Ideologías y movimientos políticos*, Madrid, 2001, pp. 221-263; a revised version in E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *Llegar a capital: rango urbano, rivalidades interurbanas y la imaginación nacionalista en la España del siglo XX*, in: *Papers de la Fundació Rafael Campalans*, nº 137, 2003, pp. 3-53; E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *Introducció: la crisi de la postguerra*, in: P. Gabriel (dir.), *Història de la cultura catalana*, Barcelona, 1997, vol. VIII (P. Gabriel (dir.), *Primeres avantguardes 1918-1930*), pp. 31-80.

unimaginable elsewhere in Europe, in the willingness to mix ideological alternatives of all sorts, leftist and conservative, revolutionary and rightist, anarchist libertarian and *étatiste*. While in much of Spain, the socialist unions were prominent, in Catalonia the 'working-class movement' was controlled by anarchosyndicalists, a fact which, in and of itself, reflected the specificity of Catalan society and its capital, metropolitan Barcelona. With such structural forces behind him, the separatist leader Francesc Macià (1859-1933) created a small national liberation movement capable of becoming a mass phenomenon by happenstance, the opportune fusion of republicans and radical nationalists, almost coincident with the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic in Barcelona in 1931. Macià's new organization, called Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Catalan Republican Left), became, through the electoral enthusiasm it could muster, a populist-style 'single party', virtually the same as the autonomous government that ruled Catalonia during the 1930s (despite a bumpy ride, with interruptions), a harbinger of slightly later events in Latin America.⁷⁸ This Catalan 'populism' presided the particular Catalan joy in ideological synthesis, of which it itself was proof.⁷⁹

But, precisely due to its eclecticism and its internal contradictions, Catalan politics could seem a key reply to 'fascism' (hence, for example, British essayist George Orwell's famed *Homage to Catalonia*, first published in 1938), but, at the same time, also could remain focussed on a nationalist problem, no matter how revolutionary its anarchosyndicalists or communists.⁸⁰ At heart, **Catalan nationalism had a serious problem with any fascist scheme: it conceived power in terms of civil society rather than the State, and independence as physical guarantee to the full operational freedom of that same civil society.**⁸¹ For this reason, Catalan separatists – no matter how influenced by Italian examples – could always come to some arrangement with the anarchosyndicalists and vice-versa, even if they could also fight bitterly with each other. Similarly, communism seemed attractive because it talked about 'class behavior', syndicates and factories, understood as physical, even tangible, values in civil society, rather than with the idealization of the State and its vast power, which was, in Catalan historical experience, Spanish, distant and nasty. In addition, communism was much further away than fascism,

78. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *La Catalunya populista: Imatge, cultura i política en l'etapa republicana, 1931-1939*, Barcelona, 1982; A. Sallés, *Quan Catalunya era d'Esquerra*, Barcelona, 1986; M.D. Ivern i Salvà, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (1931-1936)*, Barcelona, 1988-1989, 2 vols.

79. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, 'Acerca del concepto del populismo', in: *Historia Social*, n° 2, 1988, pp. 51-74.

80. G. Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, Boston, 1955 [1938]; this can be contrasted with the similarly emotional book by the Liverpool University Hispanist, which is aimed in another ideological direction: E. Allison Peers, *Catalonia Infelix*, London, 1937.

81. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, 'El pueblo contra la clase: populismo legitimador, revoluciones y sustituciones políticas en Cataluña (1936-1939)', in: *Ayer*, n° 50, 2003 (Monographic issue: E. Moradiellos (ed.), *La Guerra Civil*) pp. 143-197.

Russia being unimaginable in real terms from Barcelona, while Italy was a known value, the manifest alternative, across a short stretch of sea, to France, across the border. In Catalan separatism, the familiar forms of Western European politics combined with the unusual circumstances of Spanish politics – and the even more peculiar aspects of Catalan circumstance – to produce an illuminating exception to the usual patterns of ideological polarization. In any case, the Civil War and the triumph of militant 'Spanish-ism' in the Franco régime, a personal dictatorship which had little to hold it together beyond Spanish nationalism (its official title was the *Estado Español*, the "Spanish State", thus avoiding the choice between Monarchy and Republic), permitted the seemingly characteristic tendency of Catalan political and intellectual culture towards the mixing and synthesis of ideological discourses to increase wildly. Everything was clandestine, and there was no link to the 'reality' of '*franquista*' administrative life, hence the imagination was free to roam and bring together the most impossible combinations. To cite a clear example: all the 'new left' of the 1960s – throughout Spain, not just in Catalonia – came to neo-marxism through the Catholic '*aggiornamento*' inspired by Vatican Council II (1962-1965). So new historical 'stories' could be merged.⁸²

Accordingly, up to the 1950s, Catalan politics continued to represent a special circumstance in European political development. Unlike strictly Spanish politics, with its self-indulgent, self-preoccupied tradition of isolationism, Catalan nationalist politics ran on an European rhythm, with the same sort of ideological fascinations common to Western Europe, but with a strongly distorting perception, given the centrifugal, anti-centralist, even anti-statist, trends focused on the Catalan capital. While Catalan radical nationalists were not a significantly intellectual presence (rather, the more conservative 'catalanists' and the moderate nationalists had an effective monopoly there), the ongoing experience of 'separatist' militancy, and the possible models that ultracatalanists would interpret in their own way, serve with hindsight to correct some of the more gratuitous generalizations that abound concerning the relation between fascism and extremist nationalism in twentieth-century European politics. The anomalous nature of Catalan radical nationalism, its exceptional preference for communism – especially stalinism – instead of fascism, warns against the simplifications of interpretative theory.⁸³

Anarchosyndicalism failed, and proved impossible to revive after the Franco régime petered out in the late 1970s.⁸⁴ Catalan communism, with its strongly '*frontpopulista*' component, seemed, at the time of the 'Democratic Transition' to

82. See E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *La llegenda dels tres presidents*, in: *L'Avenç*, n° 50, 1982, pp. 60-66.

83. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *The Shadow of a Doubt: Fascist and Communist Alternatives in Catalan Separatism, 1919-1939*, in: *BCN Political Science Debates*, n° 2, 2003, pp. 123-189.

84. J. Gómez Casas, *Relanzamiento de la C.N.T. 1975-1979, con un epílogo hasta la primavera de 1984*, Paris, 1984.

be the inheritor of the political capital of the 1930s, but its attraction crumbled, given the visible ineptitude of its leadership, and, more important, the internal contradictions it suffered between a traditional stalinist discourse of productivism and the demands of consumerism that characterized its new '*soixante-huitarde*' militancy.⁸⁵ The persistent memory of the Esquerra populism of the 1930s permitted the recovery of autonomy, under the president-in-exile of the Generalitat. This would be the only **formal and explicit** carry-over of Republican institutions from the 1930s integrated into the new Constitutional set-up of 1978, and, somewhat perversely, the Catalan exception forced the creation of an *Estado de las Autonomías*, a generalized autonomic system, neither exactly federal nor composed of subordinate local entities, but rather ambiguous, *sui generis*, which allowed the recognition of other nationalist areas (the Basque Country, Galicia, even Andalusia or the Canary Islands) together with a regionalized and subdivided Castile, within some kind of whole. In Catalonia, somewhat paradoxically, in the end it was not the left, with its claims to incarnate the 1930s experience, but rather a revised and quite eclectic version of populism, sanitized and made moderate in its implications with an important Catholic (or Christian Democrat) admixture, while retaining all the vigour of leftist discourse, which dominated Catalan politics under the long-term leadership of Jordi Pujol (°1930), who managed to govern uninterruptedly from 1980 to 2003, when he retired from politics (and his coalition thereupon lost the elections in that year). To the mythology of the 'once and future' revolutionary experience of the left, 'Pujolism' (as it came to be known) added an intense confusion between **conservationism**, understood as the preservation of the external signs of the past (including a lost landscape and the natural ecology that accompanied it), and **conservatism**, i.e., the extension of the ideal of preservation to a social context, understood as a community, situated both in historical time and outside its deleterious effects.⁸⁶ More clumsily, there was also a nationalist attempt to coopt the autonomous regions of Valencia and the Balearics into some sort of project for a 'unity' of Catalan-speaking lands, which met with fierce resistance, especially from the Valencian right. The heady mix of 'Pujolism' proved basically incomprehensible beyond the borders of Catalonia.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, 'Pujolism' showed itself quite

85. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *La historiografia dels anys 60 i 70: marxisme, nacionalisme i mercat cultural català*, in: J. Nadal, B. Riquer, A. Simón e.a., *La Historiografia catalana. Balanç i perspectives*, Girona, 1990, pp. 53-89; a reduced and translated version of the text: *La historiografia en Catalunya (1960-1980): marxismo, nacionalismo y mercado cultural*, in: *Historia y Crítica*, n° 1, 1991, pp. 131-153. See also E. Ucelay-Da Cal, 'Passaggio in Europa'. La fine della dittatura e la transizione democratica, in: *Storia e Dossier*, vol. IX, 1994, n° 80, pp. 17-25.

86. X. Barral i Altet, *Catalunya desapareguda*, Barcelona, 2005.

87. 'Pujolism', as a political and cultural phenomenon, has not received the attention that it deserves, not the least for the reason that the Pujol government was, during its twenty-three years in office, quite thorough in avoiding analytic discussion of any kind, except in the terms

capable of survival, both as historiography and as extended ideology, although the loss of patronage has left a considerable intellectual vacuum behind it, after its abrupt and unexpected departure from power. The result, for the present (since the November 2003 elections, and the resulting new coalition government formed in December), has been ideological confusion, as the successor government was an unstable trio, balancing the not very common interests of the socialists, the former communists, and the now independentist Esquerra. Catalan historians, always attuned to ideological orientation and support and sustenance from political formations, remain currently expectant, but confused.

To sum up the situation, the 1930s were idealized as a coherent nationalist-revolutionary experience with a defined historiographic viewpoint, all a considerable exaggeration, to put it mildly.⁸⁸ While politics and historiography – especially 'contemporary studies' – should correctly be seen as separate strands, in practice, the link has been very, very close, as the field of *Historia Contemporánea/Història Contemporània* in both Spain and Catalonia was literally **born in the 1960s**, marked from its inception with a sharp sense of anti-Franco militancy, as well as with a strong intellectual dependency on neo-marxism, which supplanted the need, in a relatively isolated cultural ambient, to know much about sociology, anthropology or economics. Given the dynamics of the 'Democratic Transition', of the 1970s and early 1980s, such a synthetic evocation became the official explanation of the past. In Catalonia, the real consensus underlying the relation between ideology and historiography was marred by an unresolved tension between the neo-marxist thrust and the nationalist emphasis on continuity (which explained much of the local battles between historians). The neo-marxist criticism of 'bourgeois' nationalism was launched by the quite critical study of Prat de la Riba, quickly on his way to undisputed patriotic canonization, by Jordi Solé i Tura (°1930), first published in 1967, to howls of protest.⁸⁹ The nationalist reply was led by Josep Termes (°1936), a former marxist, who held that Catalan identity was a sustained characteristic of the 'popular classes', as opposed to the 'bourgeois' tendency to run and hide under the skirts of the Spanish State when faced (as it often was, in industrial Catalonia), by 'working-class' revolutionarism.⁹⁰ Other historians, such as Albert Balcells (°1940), both more empiricist and more productive, attempted unsuccessfully

which preferably excluded any criticism. For a recent overall portrait: F. Martínez & J. Oliveres, *Jordi Pujol. En nom de Catalunya*, Barcelona, 2005.

88. E. Pujol, *Els historiadors republicans d'esquerres. L'equip intel·lectual de la Generalitat republicana (1931-1936)*, in: *El Contemporani*, n° 18, 1999, pp. 29-35.

89. The later Spanish translation has the advantage of being corrected, after the bitter debate set off by the first edition in Catalan: J. Solé i Tura, *Catalanismo y revolución burguesa*, Madrid, 1970.

90. J. Termes, *Les arrels populars del catalanisme*, Barcelona, 1999; J. Termes, *La immigració a Catalunya i altres estudis*, Barcelona, 1984.

to take leadership in nationalist historiography.⁹¹ Despite this ongoing controversy, the Catalan version of the appropriate historiographic synthesis was repeated over and over in classrooms, the press, radio and television, for two decades, without interruption.⁹² The intense public admiration accorded to the French scholar Vilar, an lifelong extreme Stalinist, besides being a warm admirer of Catalonia and its traditions, was one indication of this tacit ideological-historiographic understanding, as was the outstanding career of Josep Fontana (°1931), universally considered the leading Catalan historian, founder of at least two university departments of historical studies which have reflected closely his prejudices.⁹³

The collapse of USSR in 1991, and with it the loss of credibility of Communism as an analytic style, should have had evident repercussions: instead, both Spanish and especially Catalan historiography remained happily oblivious to the intellectual changes, right up to the present. In Catalonia today, under the new 'triparte' coalition of socialists, Esquerra nationalists, and revamped communists, the '*frontpopulista*' historiographic discourse, with its characteristic mix of nationalist and revolutionary clichés from the 1930s, remains functional orthodoxy.

THE STRUCTURAL AMBIGUITIES OF CATALAN AND/OR CATALANIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

The ambiguities – as we have already seen – are multiple, and politically derived, beginning with the core concept of 'Catalanism' itself, which overrides the distinction between nationalism (in the strict 'independentist' sense) and regionalism, within some ideal kind of confederal or even federal rearrangement of Spain. Catalonia, understood as a 'Nation without a State', is therefore, at the same time, a 'nationalism within a State' and a 'nationalism against the State'. By extension, the distinction between what might be 'Catalan' and what is more limitedly 'Catalanist' is quickly and easily lost. This simultaneity of potential interpretations, even potentially contradictory interpretations, is a permanent tactical

91. One can follow the confused frontier between a 'national history of Catalonia' and the 'history of Catalan nationalism' in the works of Balcells: A. Balcells, *Cataluña contemporánea*, Madrid, 1974-1977, 2 vols.; A. Balcells (coord.), *Història dels Països Catalans [...]*, vol. 3; M. Ardít, A. Balcells & N. Sales, *De 1744 a 1975*, Barcelona, 1982; A. Balcells, *El Nacionalismo catalán*, Madrid, 1991 and its successive reelaborations: A. Balcells, *Història del nacionalisme català: dels orígens al nostre temps*, Barcelona, 1992; A. Balcells, *Catalan Nationalism, Past and Present*, London, 1996; A. Balcells, *Breve historia del nacionalismo catalán*, Madrid, 2004.

92. For example: J. Llorens, *Obrerisme i catalanisme (1875-1931)*, Barcelona, 1992.

93. For his writings on historiography, Catalan or otherwise: J. Fontana, *La Historia*, Barcelona, 1973; J. Fontana, *Historia: análisis del pasado y proyecto social*, Barcelona, 1999 [1982]; J. Fontana, *La Historia después del fin de la historia: reflexiones acerca de la situación actual de la ciencia histórica*, Barcelona, 1992; J. Fontana, *Introducció a l'estudi de la història*, Barcelona, 1997; a recent critique: J. Canal, *Admoniciones, mitos y crisis. Reflexiones sobre la influencia francesa en la historiografía contemporánea española a finales del siglo XX*, in: B. Pellistrandi (ed.), *La historiografía francesa del siglo XX y su acogida en España*, Madrid, 2002, pp. 337-362.

advantage, as any 'Catalanist' sector can, at any given time or in any given situation, play the most convenient role. But this multilateral or proteic nature carries a high strategic cost, which can be observed in the corresponding lack of depth that marks so much of Catalan political theory and published political thought, trapped in a fixed succession of alternatives, and tiresomely reiterative. Accordingly, there is also a trend towards blurring the lines between historiography and literature, insofar as 'Catalan History' becomes understood as **only** that which is dedicated to the study of Catalonia in the Catalan language. In historical studies, as in so many other aspects, "*the medium becomes the message*", to use Marshall MacLuhan's famous dictum.⁹⁴

Since Catalan historiography is defined by its social demand, which is highly politicized and scantily market-related (there are few readers for hyper-detailed research, and, for the rest, 'everybody knows' the basics), it remains very consistent with itself, to the point of deadening reiteration. As a discipline, it favors a kind of intimacy (what has been termed its insinuation of the collective past as being '*nostrat*', 'ours-ish' in English, if such a term is possible). The affectation of inwardness has an important and unhappy collateral effect, whereby historiographic value is judged not by criticism, but rather is esteemed to be a reaffirmation of the background consensus through new empirical research. Facts, accordingly, do not alter interpretation, but only can serve to reinforce an explanation already familiar: at heart, the answer is the same to all imaginable questions.

There is accordingly little interest in any **external** criteria (including scientific distance), which might signify a break with the underlying accord. Outsiders however can abound, as long as they adhere to the unwritten rules of the consensus, and do not ask embarrassing questions, in which case they are simply and systematically boycotted, a response easy to sustain as basically only Catalans are interested in the details of Catalan nationalism, and foreign experts in nationalism in general as a field (as opposed to specifically Catalan history or politics) are expected to be hostile, given the dominant prejudice in the social sciences regarding nationalism as a 'bad' ideology. Since the outsiders do not catch all the details, and their contribution to interpretation is not of interest, the result is a two-track market, with internal empiricism and external speculation, basically unconnected.

Furthermore, and perhaps more important, 'Hispanists' in general, including as 'foreign' all Spanish historians, are explicitly understood to be hostile to a 'catalanocentric' viewpoint which is understood to be inherently **correct**, as historical research is an inherent and extremely important component part of the 'national cause'. Even today, leading Catalan historians who understand themselves as

94. W. Terrence Gordon, *Marshall McLuhan. Escape into Understanding. A Biography*, New York, 1997.

'nationalist' consider explicitly and in writing that there are only two possible viewpoints, a 'Catalan national approach' and its opposing 'Spanish national' perspective.⁹⁵ Whoever claims to study the field and does not have a 'Catalan national' attitude is a 'cosmopolitan', i.e., a secret pro-Spaniard.⁹⁶ On the other hand, Spanish historians are increasingly ostentatious in their affirmation of a '*desacomplejado*' ('uninhibited') 'Spanish perspective', which claims to be 'constitutionalist', and above demeaning 'nationalist' prejudices.⁹⁷

How have Catalan historians dealt with these facets of the same problem over the last two-hundred years? By both textual criticism of Medieval sources (which meant idealizing the glories of the 'Catalan-Aragonese crown') and by Romantic mythologizing, at the same time but also with deep disagreements as to the best way to reconstruct a past that would be both politically sensitive and scientifically accurate. The background idea that won out, by the end of the nineteenth century, was a 'Catalanist' version of the English 'Whig interpretation of History' (as analyzed by Sir Herbert Butterfield, 1900-1979), a mixture of both '*austracista*' and nineteenth-century Carlist 'lost cause' reinventions, adapted by Enric Prat de la Riba (1870-1917), the founder of modern nationalist politics, to the exigencies of inventing a modern electoral party.⁹⁸ Turn of the century nationalists built upon the arguments of Balaguer, corrected with empiricist enthusiasm by Antonio de Bofarull, and codified by such historical works as the *Història de Catalunya* (1887) of Antoni Aulestià i Pijoan (1849-1908), later revised by Ernest Moliné i Brasés (1868-1940).⁹⁹ With the twentieth century, the 'Whig interpretation' was subtly reelaborated by adaptation to modern nationalist historiography, by such historians as Antoni Rovira i Virgili (1882-1949) and Ferran Soldevila (1894-1971), who combining justificatory research with a solid background politization (based on the idea of national territory as equal to national population, through

95. A. Balcells, *La Història de Catalunya i la tesi de la neutralitat nacional*, in: *L'Avenç*, n° 172, 1993, pp. 58-65.

96. M. Barceló, J. Casassas, R. Garrabou e.a., *Debat sobre la tasca de l'historiador avui*, in: *L'Avenç*, n° 67, 1984, pp. 70-76, session in which Serra emphasized the duty that all Catalan historians had to be radical nationalists, and therefore denounced what she called 'cosmopolitan' historians.

97. F. García de Cortazar, *Los nacionalismos y el concepto de España en el siglo XX*, in: V. Palacio Atard (ed.), *De Hispania a España. El nombre y el concepto a través de los siglos*, Madrid, 2005, pp. 289-308.

98. H. Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, New York, 1965 [1931]; also H. Butterfield, *Magna Carta in the Historiography of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Reading, 1969; the foremost Catalan nationalist statement of this notion is: E. Prat de la Riba, *Corts catalanes. Proposicions i respostes, amb pròlech i comentaris d' Enrich Prat de la Riba*, Barcelona, 1906.

99. A. Aulestià i Pijoan, *Història de Catalunya*, Barcelona, 1887, 2 vols.; this work was later revised and partially rewritten by Ernest Moliné i Brasés: A. Aulestià y Pijoan, *Història de Catalunya, anotada y continuada per Ernest Moliné y Brasés*, Barcelona, 1922, 2 vols.

history, such an equation being a 'Nation').¹⁰⁰ After the Civil War of 1936-1939, under Franco, 'Catalanist' historiography was successfully mixed with German geopolitics by Jaume Vicens i Vives (1910-1960), which opened the door to a 'materialist' interpretation, first utilizing 'economicism' (and, of course, geography), then moving openly towards neo-marxism after the 1970s.¹⁰¹ Precisely because the discourse of collective historiographic modernity – both as a research method and as an interpretative methodology – was marxist, the consequence has been generalized conceptual confusion in the 1990s, after the collapse of Communism. The rise of *Història Contemporània* had been marked by an exaggerated overconcentration on politics and political parties, at the expense of other subjects or approaches. Any 'linguistic turn' in a 'postmodern' direction is still generally dismissed, as that would mean the end of a teleological axiom behind all interpretations, more or less leftist. In the early 1990s, there was even what was deemed to be a '*katalanische Historikerstreit*', bitter, certainly unresolved, comparable in some ways to the debate and/or squabble which occupied German historians in 1986-1987, and, by extension, similarly marked many other historical or media publications in other countries around those same years.¹⁰² Concessions were made to feminism, which was given a narrow and otherwise ignored space as 'Women's History', but as far as other 'postmodern' trends – such as 'Queer Theory' or 'Postcolonial Studies' – were ostentatiously ignored in academic circles.¹⁰³ Such

100. A. Rovira i Virgili, *Història Nacional de Catalunya*, Barcelona, 1922-1937, 8 vols. The weight of Rovira's antecedent was such that the work was 'completed', with an additional eight volumes, by J. Sobrequés i Callicó (°1943), as: A. Rovira i Virgili & J. Sobrequés i Callicó, *Història de Catalunya*, Bilbao, 1972-1984, 16 vols. See the standard biography of Rovira: A. Bladé i Desumvila, *Antoni Rovira i Virgili i el seu temps*, Barcelona, 1984. For Ferran Soldevila's works: F. Valls i Taberner & F. Soldevila, *Història de Catalunya*, Barcelona, 1968², 2 vols. Also: F. Soldevila, *Resum d'història dels Països Catalans*, Barcelona, 1974; F. Soldevila, *Síntesi d'història de Catalunya*, Barcelona, 1995 [1978]. In addition Soldevila wrote an extensive "History of Spain": F. Soldevila, *Historia de España*, Barcelona, 1952-1959, 8 vols. See: E. Pujol, *Ferran Soldevila. Els fonaments de la historiografia contemporània*, Catarroja-Barcelona, 1995; also by the same author: E. Pujol, *Història i reconstrucció nacional. La historiografia catalana a l'època de Ferran Soldevila (1894-1971)*, Catarroja-Barcelona, 2003; see as well: J. Fontana & L. Duran (curs.), *Per conèixer Ferran Soldevila*, Barcelona, 1994; on Valls i Taberner: J.A. Parpal & J.M. Lladó, *Ferran Valls i Taberner, un polític per a la cultura catalana*, Esplugues del Llobregat, 1970; J.M. Mas Solench, *Ferran Valls i Taberner: jurista, historiador i polític*, Barcelona, 2002.

101. J. Vicens Vives, *España. Geopolítica del Estado y del Imperio*, Barcelona, 1940; J. Vicens i Vives, *Notícia de Catalunya [...]*. For a biography of Vicens: J.M. Muñoz i Lloret, *Jaume Vicens i Vives (1910-1960): Una biografia intel·lectual*, Barcelona, 1997; for the conflict between Vicens and Rovira i Virgili: J. Sobrequés, Un moment crucial de la historiografia catalana: la polèmica entre J. Vicens i Vives i Antoni Rovira i Virgili, in: *Revista de Catalunya*, nº 28, 1989, pp. 70-82.

102. A. Balcells, *La història de Catalunya a debat. Els textos d'una polèmica*, Barcelona, 1994.

103. In general, see: G. Bowles & R. Duelli Klein (eds.), *Theories of Women's Studies*, London, 1983; more specifically: M. Nash, *Identidades, representación cultural y discurso de género en la España Contemporánea*, in: P. Chalmeta, F. Checa Cremades, M. González Portilla e.a., *Cultura y culturas en la historia*, Salamanca, 1995, pp. 191-203.

blindness was reaffirmed even as Barcelona became a homosexual tourist haven, praised for its relaxed attitudes, with the logical increased attention to local sexual minorities, and the link between nineteenth-century Catalan industrialization and the development of Cuba's overheated, sugar-export capitalism became more and more evident to leading, if isolated, investigators.¹⁰⁴ Asking when and how the reifications – 'Nation', 'class', and so forth – took hold, with what sort of exchanges between politics, creative literature and historiography, still remains an interrogation for the future, seemingly beyond the scope of both the leading promotions of Catalan historians and their younger disciples, not much predisposed to challenging 'conventional wisdom'.

To sum up in closing, 'Catalanist historiography' has all the structural instabilities of a *littérature de combat*, forever trapped in its preconceptions and prejudices.¹⁰⁵ If any 'Catalanist' historian abandons the straight and narrow path, and asks the wrong questions – even asks almost any questions outside the ideological scenario approved of or shared by the diverse sectors of the nationalist movement – it is as if he has passed over to the enemy; to explore any of the **contradictions** within Catalan nationalism between differing currents is to side automatically with one against the other, merely by posing such a line of inquiry.¹⁰⁶ This means that the work is **political**, not historical. Clearly, the central issue, brutally put, is: **how does one study the 'national life' of a Nation which has never existed as a Nation in any except the most nationalist understanding of the term?** But, to be as fair as possible, this same question can be formulated in many ways: for example, one could ask **how the sustained politization over time of the historical imagination conditioned the undoubtable, even stubborn persistence of aspects of Catalan social life?** Even the most nationalist Catalan historian could make this query, as could the most anti-nationalist. Perhaps someday they both will.

104. On 'Queer Theory': J. Sáez, *Teoría Queer y psicoanálisis*, Madrid, 2004; on 'Postcolonial Interpretation': J. McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, Manchester, 2000. In a sense, the excellent work of Josep Maria Fradera serves as a clear indication of just how much could be gained by a lucid application of such a focus (which, it should be added, he clearly preceded): J.M. Fradera, *Gobernar colonias*, Barcelona, 1999; J.M. Fradera, *Indústria i mercat: les bases comercials de la indústria catalana moderna (1814-1845)*, Barcelona, 1987.

105. M. Guibernau, *Nacionalisme català. Franquisme, transició i democràcia*, Barcelona, 2003; also M. Guibernau, *Nationalism and Intellectuals in Nations Without States: the Catalan Case*, Barcelona, 2003 (Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials, Working Paper 222).

106. E. Ucelay-Da Cal, *Descriure el que hauria d'haver existit, o com historiar el fracàs particularista català al llarg del segle XX*, in: J.M. Fradera & E. Ucelay-Da Cal (eds.), *Notícia nova de Catalunya. Reflexions crítiques sobre la historiografia als inicis del segle XXI*, Barcelona, 2005, pp. 197-256.

SAMENVATTING

**De historiografie van het 'Catalanisme'.
Dubbelzinnigheden en consistenties bij de
verbeelding van het Catalaans nationalisme
in de 19de en 20ste eeuw**

ENRIC UCELAY-DA CAL

Sociale bewegingen – nationalisme inbegrepen – moeten een legitimerend discours vastleggen dat de weg naar de macht kan wijzen en, uiteindelijk, kan leiden naar de paradox van de realisering van de geïdealiseerde doeleinden. Het moet benadrukt worden, in het licht van vele recente historiografische en politicologische werken waarin het nationalisme geïsoleerd wordt als een soort gevaarlijk 'speciaal geval', dat alle ideologieën van de moderne tijd – achtereenvolgens liberalisme, democratie, socialisme, communisme en, natuurlijk, nationalisme (vaak vermengd met één van de bovenvermelde) – een basisstructuur delen: een gesecculariseerde religieuze epistemologie gebaseerd op uitzonderlijkheid en sofistieke eenzijdigheid, die alternatieve ficties van de rivaliserende ideologieën ongeldig maken en waaruit gemakkelijk het recht kan afgeleid worden om de collectieve moraal te bepalen, net als de grenzen van de verdraagzaamheid ten opzichte van de minderheden, en een concept voor de representatie (in beide betekenissen van het woord, als politieke vertolking en als publiek forum). In dat perspectief betekent representatie vooral een visie op de geschiedenis die de bevoorrechte ideologische optie echt onontbeerlijk maakt en daardoor exclusief: het wordt een fundamentele verplichting, de enige realistische en tegelijk ook gepaste wijze om de verwarrende maatschappij op 'zinnvolle' wijze te beschouwen, in een continuüm van het verleden naar het heden en, optimistisch, verder naar de toekomst.

Vanaf het begin hield het Catalaanse nationalisme, zoals zoveel analoge bewegingen

die samenvielen met de impact van de Romantiek, zich intensief bezig met de monopoliserende toeëigening van de historische 'waarheid'. Dat betekende echter niet dat er een rijke traditie van intern debat was tussen facties, zoals liberalen en klerikalen, maar eerder een verpletterende tendens tot synthese: d.w.z. het bevatten van de aanwas van elementen, hoe contradictorisch ook, in één enkel verhaal, een bestendige en werkconsensus die aanvaardbaar was voor zowel links als rechts. Elke invraagstelling van de basisbeginselen werd automatisch opgevat als een blijk van *espanyolisme* ('Spaansisme'), de historiografische expressie van het Spaans nationalisme. En, zoals te verwachten valt, beschouwde de Spaanse nationalistische geschiedschrijving de Catalaanse historiografie – binnen de beperkte mate dat het belangstelling heeft betoond voor Catalaanse aangelegenheden – als een bedreiging, die het op sommige vlakken ongetwijfeld is, maar op andere vlakken dan weer niet.

Het overwicht van zo'n synthetische consensus, die de ideologische fusie verheerlijkt zolang die maar 'Catalaans' is, betekende dat de Catalaanse historiografie een aantal duidelijke kenmerken doorheen de tijd heeft vertoond. Dat zijn in essentie de structurele dubbelzinnigheid en tegelijk de nadruk op interne samenhang.

De dubbelzinnigheden zijn veelvoudig en afgeleid van de politiek, met om te beginnen het concept 'Catalanisme', dat het onderscheid overstijgt tussen nationalisme (in de strikt independentistische betekenis) en regionalisme, binnen een ideaal soort confederale of zelfs federale herinrichting van Spanje. Catalonië, in de betekenis van 'natie zonder staat', is daarom, tegelijkertijd, een 'nationalisme binnen een staat' en een 'nationalisme tegen de staat'. Bij uitbreiding gaat het verschil tussen wat 'Catalaans' zou

kunnen zijn en wat meer beperkt 'Catalanistisch', snel en gemakkelijk verloren. Overeenkomstig is er tevens een neiging tot het vervagen van de scheidingslijnen tussen historiografie en literatuur, in zoverre dat 'Catalaanse geschiedenis' begrepen wordt als enkel dat wat gewijd is aan de studie van Catalonië in de Catalaanse taal. In historiografische werken, zoals voor zo veel andere aspecten, "*the medium becomes the message*".

Aangezien de Catalaanse geschiedschrijving bepaald wordt door de maatschappelijke vraag, die zeer gepolitiseerd is, en nauwelijks marktgericht (er zijn nauwelijks lezers voor hyper-gedetailleerd onderzoek, en, voor de rest, "kent iedereen de basisgegevens"), blijft ze consequent met zichzelf, tot het punt dat het enkel nog maar dodelijke herhaling wordt. Als discipline verkiest het een zekere intimiteit en inwaarts-gekeerd zijn, waarbij de waarde niet bepaald wordt door de kritiek, maar door de bevestiging van de achterliggende consensus door middel van empirisch onderzoek. Daaraan beantwoordt het gebrek aan belangstelling voor externe criteria (wetenschappelijke afstandelijkheid inbegrepen), die een breuk met de onderliggende consensus zouden kunnen teweegbrengen. Het mag

wemelen van buitenstaanders, zolang zij maar de ongeschreven regels van de consensus onderschrijven, en geen vervelende vragen stellen, waarna zij eenvoudigweg en systematisch geboycot worden. Dat antwoord is daarenboven gemakkelijk vol te houden, aangezien in feite enkel Catalanen geïnteresseerd zijn in de details van het Catalaanse nationalisme en buitenstaanders die gespecialiseerd zijn in de studie van het nationalisme (tegenover specifiek Catalaanse geschiedenis of politiek) verondersteld worden vijandig te zijn, gezien de overheersende vooroordelen in de sociale wetenschappen ten opzichte van het nationalisme als een 'slechte' ideologie. Vermits de buitenstaanders niet alle details kunnen oppikken, en hun bijdrage tot interpretatie van geen belang is, is het resultaat een tweesporen-markt, met intern empiricisme en externe speculatie, die in feite niet met elkaar verbonden zijn.

Deze bijdrage bespreekt dat model van synthetische consensus en dubbelzinnige consistentie in de praktijk van de Catalaanse geschiedschrijving en de specifieke behandeling van 'Catalanisme' in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw.

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