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The essay

Enric Bou and Ángel Otero-Blanco

The essay as a literary form, as we know it today, starts with the development of the press and the spread of public instruction. This genre developed tremendously thanks to the presence of an avid readership and a new set of problems introduced by the fall of the *Ancien Régime*. The Enlightenment introduced new moral and political issues which quickly won the minds and hearts of intellectuals. Thus, when Zola published his notorious “J'accuse,” he articulated a common feeling of outrage, which was very vivid throughout Europe. This combination of developments — new ways of distributing information, the rise of newspapers and reviews, new readership, new set of preoccupations — did much to start a splendid period for this genre. In the Iberian Peninsula this was a moment of particular turmoil. In the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, contact with French culture created a need for both freedom and constitutional solutions, in line with recent events in the US and France. At the same time, writers like Mariano José de Larra spread a generalized ambivalent sentiment towards ideas on modernity as expressed by French values. If we combine this attitude with the ideology of Romanticism and the Industrial Revolution, we can explain more easily why certain issues — debates about the definition of nations, social struggle, and the ideological separation between secular and religious views of society — were placed at the top of the agenda of Iberian thinkers. In the case of Spain it sparked, among others, debates about the Republic and the Monarchy. In Portugal there were many conflicting views about how to solve an imperial destiny.

The essay develops dramatically in time of political strife and social upheaval. As José-Carlos Mainer puts it, “the essay lives better in the intersection of beliefs” (1996, 16). It finds its place beyond rigid and outdated conceptions of history. That is why the so-called 1898 national crisis was a golden age for this genre in Spain. In a situation of linguistic conflict, recent books (Lodares, Lozano) exploit in a demagogical way an unresolved issue in Spain — linguistic conflict — paying little or no attention to years of more scientifically oriented publications (Aracil 1982, Nadal 1992, Vallverdú 1998). In other cases the essay is a channel for expressing a challenge to the official order. The essay then subverts ideological repression under Franco by rewriting the official version of history and collective memory from a personal, subjective perspective. In Martín Gaité's *Usos amorosos de la postguerra española* (Love in post-civil war Spain, 1987), personal experience sets the narrative focus and presents a vivid and lucid portrayal of daily life in Spain under a situation of dictatorship. In the case of Portugal, this role has been adopted partially by fiction, as in some novels by António Lobo Antunes, particularly in *Manual dos Inquisidores* (The inquisitors' manual, 1996).

Essays are extremely fruitful when revising the past, present, and future of nations. With all their limitations, both Martín Gaité's and Lozano's works are placed within historical periods of political transition, from dictatorship to democracy (Gaité), or from Aznar's centralistic move to Zapatero's decentralization of national politics and turn towards the European Union (Lozano). The essay thus serves as a redefinition tool of national and international politics. It also explores the dynamics between the social and the individual, the impact of worldwide politics on everyday life; and as a personal, subjective critique of the nation, it creates new venues for

discussion, introducing dissident views. It also has a sort of transhistorical, transnational, and conversational nature. The writer's "I" is very present and helps develop the essay into an open and very subjective genre.

In this light, the essay is an open literary mode with much emphasis on subjectivism and dialogue with readers. As Pilar San Juan puts it in a classical approach to the genre, "the essay is the most personalized, half poetic and half didactic form of literary expression. It is hard to define, it is subtle and evasive; it almost eludes the limits within which one attempts to place it [...] It is this lack of limits that gives the essay its flexibility" (San Juan 1954, 11). It develops an aesthetics of the "I," in which content is often controlled by the writer's personality (style), which becomes a personal mark on the text. Due to its open nature it is difficult to subordinate it to prescriptive literary conventions. The essay follows no institutional rules, no official rhetoric, or as Miguel de Unamuno said, it is written in an "a lo que salga" (whatever-comes-up) mode. This kind of text generates a free creative impulse in search of an active communication with the reader. Its conversational form allows a much less formal way of communication and enables writers to freely express their thoughts. Therefore controversy, provocation, intuition, are the names of the game. Many authors explicitly seek the reader's participation in this dialogue (Gómez-Martínez 1981, 50–51). Moreover, the essay is, generally, not conclusive, "a non-systematical reflection, without any total or scientific purpose, written in very personal terms, with a tendency to collateral digression" (Gracia 1996, 9). It is situated, one could say, between two literary realms: didacticism and poetry, and between two views of the world, scientific and artistic. Under the notion "essay" one may consider many different "géneros ensayísticos" (Aullón de Haro 1992, 105–113). As recently indicated by Pozuelo, the essay can be related to "escrituras del yo" (writing of the I), because of "its capacity to transform the contemplation of objects into an enlightening experience for the individual self" (Pozuelo Yvancos 2005, 190; see also Arenas Cruz 1997).

Iberian problems

The five main national cultures coexisting in Spain and Portugal have been aware for years of their special position in a European context. This difference has been voiced in many ways through art and literature, but the essay has been the literary genre of choice to express dreams and realities, utopias and disenchantments. The difference between Europe and the Iberian Peninsula began in the Middle Ages with the occupation of the Peninsula by Arabs and the "Reconquest." A second element of difference was the military and religious expansion in Africa, the Americas, and parts of Asia, pursued by both Spanish and Portuguese warriors and priests. Having been an imperial power for three centuries, Peninsular decline coincided with the Enlightenment, thus sparking a period of crisis and resentment, which lasted until both countries joined the European Union in 1986 (see D. Franco 1980 and Marichal 1984).

Due to its many differences with Europe and its secondary role in European politics and economy after 1800, many pages have been devoted to the problem of backwardness in relationship with neighboring countries. This was a main point of interest for philosophers, politicians, and economists alike. In Portugal, Antero de Quental's *Causas da Decadência dos Povos Peninsulares nos Últimos Três Séculos* (Causes of Peninsular decadence over the last three centuries, 1871) is a very good example of this kind of concern. A second group of essays would

fall into the category of sociopolitical thought. Both Spain and Portugal had a difficult integration into modernity. However, an interest in the new revolutionary ideas of socialism and anarchism, as well as other ways to change society, found fertile ground. Quental participated in many literary polemics against Romanticism. He is famous for his *Bom Senso e Bom Gosto* (Good sense and good taste, 1865) and *A Dignidade das Letras e as Literaturas Oficiais* (Dignity of letters and official literatures, 1865), in which he attacked romantic lyricism by defending the idea that literature was supposed to have a social role. With José Fontana, he was instrumental in the diffusion in Portugal of workers' associations and new revolutionary ideas. Like other intellectuals in the Iberian Peninsula he used the press regularly to discuss his ideals. He did so in *Diário Popular* (Popular newspaper), *Jornal do Comércio* (Journal of commerce), and *O Primeiro de Janeiro* (January the first). Quental was a journalist in the socialist newspapers *A República* (The republic) and *Pensamento Social* (Social thought). An active politician, he founded the Associação Fraternidade Operária (Workers' Brotherhood Association) (1872), and was a representative in Portugal for the First International. He was one of the organizers of a very influential lecture series, "Conferências do Casino" (Casino lectures), and was the author of a significant contribution to that series: *Causas da Decadência dos Povos Peninsulares nos Últimos Três Séculos*. In 1890, Quental was chairman of the Liga patriótica do Norte (Northern Patriotic League), against a British ultimatum that would make Portugal leave occupied lands between Angola and Mozambique. As many other intellectuals of the time he was chronically inclined to depression (apparently an emotional and psychological reaction to the declining situation of Portugal). Similarly, Catalan philosopher Eugeni d'Ors would include in his writings many reflections on social issues, and through the years between 1906 and 1940, he defended several contradictory positions: social conservatism, Catalan nationalism, and anarchism, which he finally incorporated in a very personal version of fascism (Ors 1946, 1947 & 1982; Jardí 1967; Cacho Viu 1997).

Antero de Quental gives three main reasons to explain the Portuguese and Spanish backward condition. The first is religious counter-reform, which was assumed in the Trento Council and carried out by Jesuits. Secondly, he ascertains that a centralized political life controlled at all cost by the kings — and which went against medieval freedoms — had created a corrupt political system. Finally, he points to the economic system shaped by the colonies, which was based on military robbery and economic submission and did not allow a bourgeoisie to develop. Quental's thesis summarizes some of the earlier findings by Alexandre Herculano, one of the founders of Portuguese Romanticism. Many liberal thinkers in the Peninsula would agree with these opinions.

The past: National myths, reinvention of the past

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger have distinguished between three types of invented traditions with distinctive functions. One of them — which establishes or symbolizes social cohesion and collective identities — has been most fruitful in the Iberian Peninsula. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983, 1–2) defined "invented tradition" as follows:

“Invented tradition” is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past [...]. However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of “invented” traditions is that the continuity with it is largely fictitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition.

Reconstruction and recovery of history becomes one of the dialectic weapons of choice in order to redefine the nation. In light of a situation of decadence, and with the help of romantic revival of the past and national myths, all cultural areas of the Peninsula developed an interest in old mythology and the idealization of medieval past.

In Portugal it was *Sebastianismo* (Sebastianism), in Catalonia the literary competition Jocs Florals (Floral games), which echoed a similar festival in Tolosa (present day Toulouse) as an expression of a splendid medieval time. They also vindicated a Catalan Mediterranean empire with a powerful fleet of warriors (*almogàvers*) and merchants, in competition with Genoa and Venice. Castile recreated the myth of Reconquest against Muslims, America’s discovery, and the natives’ massive christening. Similarly, in Galicia or the Basque country, there was a tendency to revive glories from the past. Castelao, for example, writes: “I can imagine an immense parade of the sainted company of immortal Galicians. There I see noble dignitaries and strong characters produced by Galicia through its history.”¹ The Galician writer also mentions a long parade of names, to prove his assertion. The list starts with Roman emperor Theodosius, Pope Damasus I, and includes other names such as Bernardo de Bonaval, Airas Nunes, Afonso Eanes de Coton, Pero da Ponte, Pero Meogo, Xohán de Guillade, Meendiño, Xohán Airas, Martín Codax, Paio Gomes Charino, Macías, and goes all the way to more contemporary personalities, such as Concepción Arenal and Pardo Bazán. In the case of the Basque Country, two chapters in Jon Juaristi’s *El bucle melancólico* (The melancholy curl, 1988), “Vascomanía” (Basquephilia; 1997, 51–79) and “Tartarin en Vizcaya” (Tartarin in Biscay; 1997, 157–201) are illuminating. As Juaristi puts it: “Sabino Arana’s use of history is always metaphorical” (“El uso de la historia por Sabino Arana es siempre metafórico”; 178). Most thinkers of the Iberian Peninsula in the late nineteenth century and much of the twentieth century devoted much energy to the task of rethinking their community in the light of a recreated past. They would all provide wonderful examples of an “invention of tradition.”

In Portugal there was an ongoing discussion about the country’s “destiny.” A good example of this is Fernando Pessoa’s *Mensagem* (Message, 1934), a major work for his theory of Sebastianism. Actually, the myth of Sebastianism has been alive for many decades. It is founded on the mysterious death of King Sebastian in the midst of a battle in Morocco against Muslims in 1578. This event took place at a time when Portuguese colonial expansion in Africa, Asia, and Brazil was at its height, and also while Luis de Camões wrote *Os Luisadas* (The Lusians, 1572) in his honor. Pessoa’s Sebastianism proposes a reinvention of history as the key to recover a golden

1. “podo eu maxinar unha Santa Compañía de immortaes galegos, en interminable procesión. Alí vexo as nobres dinidades e os fortes caracteres que dou Galiza no decorrer da súa hestoria” (Castelao 1994, 428).

past that will revitalize the nation (Serrão 1978). His project is mixed with a personal obsession with Portugal. He considers history as a dialogue between past, present, and future. Indeed, this dialectic of time is the source of his Sebastianism. In Pessoa, the reinvention of the Sebastian myth will trigger Portugal's regeneration. More specifically, Sebastianism means the rewriting (the recreation) of a national hero that will lead the country to the Fifth Empire. Pessoa's main epic on Sebastianism is *Mensagem*. Another Portuguese author, Teixeira de Pascoaes, introduced the topic of *saudade* (melancholy, sadness) connected to a certain view of Portuguese history. A contemporary author, Eduardo Lourenço, has significantly written on Portugal's "destiny" in *O Labirinto da saudade* (Labyrinth of longing, 2000).

In Spain, Juaristi views Basque nationalism as a collection of mythical stories. In his controversial *El bucle melancólico*, he approaches nationalism from a mythological perspective. It is a mythology based on the ideas of collective melancholy and loss. Andrés de Blas Guerrero highlights Juaristi's notion of the Spanish political disaster of 1898 as one of the social and ideological origins of all historical and cultural nationalisms in Spain (De Blas Guerrero 1998, 108). In fact Juaristi asserts without much ground that "without '98 there are not peripheral nationalisms to speak of" (1998, 49).

Finally, Ángel Ganivet in *Idearium español* (Spain, an interpretation; 1897) proposes that Spain's power abroad is not material any more. Spaniards must awake from the illusion of imperialism. Ganivet explains that Spain — like Segismundo in Calderón de la Barca's *La vida es sueño* (Life is a dream) — no longer distinguishes between reality (the end of the Empire) and dream (the memory of a glorious past that has become a fiction; Ganivet 2003, 238–43).

Progress, modernity, industry, capitalism

Due to historical reasons, all linguistic and cultural communities in the Iberian Peninsula had to face the problem of how to enroll in modernity. In Portugal, groups such as that of "Lusitanian Integralism" produced significant — although marginalized — writings with perhaps less vigor but with regular quality. António Sardinha collaborated in reviews like *Alma Portuguesa* (Portuguese soul), *Nação Portuguesa* (Portuguese nation, 1913–38), and *Seara Nova* (New party), with António Sérgio and Raúl Proença. Raúl Proença was one of the most active and influential Portuguese intellectuals of the early decades of the twentieth century. He was moved by an unshakeable democratic spirit, but was simultaneously deeply critical of the shortcomings of the Republican regime. In his writings he confronted Portugal's moral weakness — an issue that led him to feel deeply concerned by and dramatically aware of the decadence from which the country was suffering. The underlying principles that give coherence to all his work are thus democratic socialism and a criticism of both bourgeois morals and all dictatorial solutions. He was very critical of three centuries of Jesuit education that had killed off the living energies and the intimate forces which centuries earlier had placed Portugal as a world power (J. Baptista 1990). On the contrary, Fernando Pessoa's economic thought was very liberal and progressive. Pessoa's project for national reform was concerned not only with the mythic recreation of the past but also with the economic development of the here and now (Margarido 1987, 107). The transformation and reconstruction of Portugal should involve both a systematic industrialization of the country and a strengthening of the middle class (Serrão 1978, 35–36). In his analysis he pointed out that one

of the reasons for Portugal's decadence is what he calls the "provincialism syndrome" (Pessoa 1986b, 115–22). Pessoa believed that Portugal was, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a provincial country because it admired European and American progress when in fact it should create modernity instead of just admiring it.

In Spain, philosophers such as Ganivet would propose a detachment from capitalism (Gallego Morell 1997, 125). He rejected materialism and the corrupting power of money. For Ganivet, capitalism and greed lead to the formation of the self-centered individuals of modern life. He considered spiritual alienation and lack of solidarity as one of the materialistic sources of human reification (Santiáñez-Tió 1994, 41–43).

Galicia was aware of being a backward and traditional society not experiencing the challenges of modernization or industrialization that were taking place in Catalonia and the Basque Country. It was also geographically very isolated, a feature that has always helped shape Galician history. The *Irmandades da Fala* (Brotherhoods of Language) was a group of writers and intellectuals that viewed the Galician language and literature as cultural unifying sources of regional nationalism. The *Irmandades da Fala* edited and published its own journal, *A Nosa Terra* (Our land). Some outstanding names were: Vicente Risco, Ramón Cabanillas, Ramón Otero Pedrayo, and Alfonso Rodríguez Castelao. Particularly, Vicente Risco's cultural approach to nationalism is considered to be the starting point of the so-called generation "Nós" (Us).

During the nineteenth century, in the context of *Renaixença* and Romanticism, most Catalan thinkers put forward the idea that the Spanish state was authoritarian, backward, and chaotic, subject to civil wars and constant political upheavals. It had proved incapable of solving the most pressing internal problems and would ultimately lead the country to the disaster of 1898: the war with the United States and the loss of the only significant portions left in the old and magnificent Empire (Durán & Kluback 1994, 5). Among the most illustrious names one could count Joan Maragall, Eugenio D'Ors, and the father of Catalan nationalism, Valentí Almirall. Following Pi i Margall's example, Almirall urged a regionalist form of federalism. In the late 1800s, he published the newspaper *El Estado Catalán* (The Catalan state); directed the cultural association *La Jove Catalunya* (Young Catalonia), which focused both on the literary renaissance and on federalist politics; and in 1880 founded the first Catalan-language daily newspaper, *El Diari Català* (The Catalan newspaper), to support a provincial administrative autonomy for a federation of the four Catalan provinces. In 1886, having given up on federalism in favor of Catalan regionalism, he published *Lo Catalanisme*, "the first categorical expression of political Catalanism," in which he detailed the "Catalan problem" (Payne 1971). According to Stanley Payne, four major influences made the 1880s–1890s the period of gestation for political Catalanism: (a) the expansion of the *Renaixença* across almost the whole region; (b) a concern for Catalan industry, especially in the wake of a temporary decline that began in 1886; (c) the influence of federalism among the Catalan middle class; and (d) the residues of Catalan Carlism, which was important among pro-traditionalist and anti-centralist groups (Payne 1971, 20).

In Euskadi, the essay has had less importance than in other Iberian literatures until very recently. Its main focus has been didacticism and scholarly research. Most contributions have been published in newspapers and journals rather than in book form (see Altzibar 2000, 589–627). Recent Basque nationalism has been driven by disputes over the nature of industrialization and class differentiation. At the outset of the movement, however, nationalism in Euskadi was very different. According to Sabino Arana (1865–1903), the founder of Basque nationalist doctrine, it

was important to distinguish between the “Basque and Latin races” and to argue for the political independence of the former. In 1897 Arana called for the establishment of a union of Basques in order to protect the common fatherland and the race itself. He coined a new term, “Euskadi,” to denote a Basque nation comprising territories in which history had taken rather different courses. Breaking with the vocabulary of the *Ancien Régime*, Arana spoke of a “war of conquest” against Euskadi, of “Basque laws” rather than *fueros*, and of “independence.” Spain was depicted for the first time as a “foreign power” from which it was necessary to be separated. The contradiction is that Arana’s nationalist ideals were proposed against the background of rapid industrialization in Biscay, the main center of the Spanish steel industry, which gave rise to a wave of immigration from other regions of the Iberian Peninsula. Arana referred to this as “an invasion by Spanish socialists and atheists.” At the outset then, Basque nationalism was thus a racist, extreme-Catholic, separatist doctrine that postulated the existence of an ethnic community distinct from the Spanish and French, and portrayed the Basque problem as a conflict between nations (Juaristi 1997, 184–201).

Iberism, federalism

It is noticeable that some of these initiatives of reflection on the moral state of the Peninsula resulted in collaborations between some of those communities. Catalan philologist and liberal politician Antoni Puigblanch (1795–1840), who lived in exile in London, was the first to present the idea of a federation of Iberian communities. In general terms, however, Portuguese thinkers have not been interested in Iberism, due to the obvious danger of being assimilated into a bigger Spain. The most significant initiative was the unsuccessful alliance between Portuguese and Catalan intellectuals, or Galician, Basque, and Catalan politicians and intellectuals. Many of these efforts were built against the dominant power in the Peninsula: Spanish-Castilian dominated politics in Madrid. In many instances, central economic and political power in Madrid was feared in the periphery. Two good examples are the political alliance of Portugal-Catalonia in the first third of the twentieth century and the political and cultural alliance “Galeusca.” Interestingly enough, what in the 1920s and 1930s was considered the cradle for a wide political alliance against centralism became just a cultural festival in the years of the so-called “transition” to democracy (Martínez Gil 1997a).

Contrary to Sá-Carneiro Europeist naivité, Fernando Pessoa had a clear consciousness of what role Catalonia could play in the creation of a new imperial Portugal with Iberian ambitions. Ignasi Ribera i Rovira — editor of a Barcelona newspaper, *El Poble Català* (Catalan people) — contributed to define a new Iberism based upon three main zones: Galician-Portuguese, Castilian, and Catalan. He was the author of essays such as *Iberisme* (Iberism, 1907), *Portugal y Galicia: Nación* (Portugal and Galicia: Nation, 1911) and *Atlántiques* (Atlantics, 1913), and lectured extensively in Portugal defending an Atlantic option, that is, the union of Galicia and Portugal in the context of a new Iberian map. Ribera i Rovira contributed to the movement of *saudosismo*, which was formed in 1912 around the journal *A Águia* (The eagle). In the introduction to his book *Atlántiques*, Ribera i Rovira spoke about the need for a republican Catalan *saudosismo*, which would be called *enyorantisme* (longing), and quoted from Pessoa’s article “A Nova Poesia Portuguesa Sociologicamente Considerada” (New Portuguese poetry from a sociological perspective). The tragic and disquieting events of World War I convinced Fernando Pessoa about

the need for a New Iberia. Between 1916 and 1918 he wrote several texts in favor of creating an Iberian Confederation, presenting France, Germany, and Castile as the biggest enemies of Iberia. At the same time, he considered that to include Portugal and Spain as countries of Latin heritage was an aberration, because of their common Arab heritage. Pessoa, inspired by Catalan imperialism, proposed a new Iberian nation, because “Iberian spirit was a fusion of Mediterranean and Atlantic spirit; that is why its two columns are Catalonia and a natural Galician-Portuguese state.”² In a way, Pessoa’s position was similar to that of Catalan nationalists, particularly in relation to imperialism as conceived by Noucentisme intellectuals like Eugeni d’Ors, whose *arbitrarisme* (arbitrarism) designated social, political, and cultural interventionism to intercede against limitations of bourgeois rationality. Pessoa combined this dream with *Sebastianism* — the return of a hidden (*encoberto*) monarch — and his prophecies of a Fifth Empire (Martínez-Gil 2005). What for Spanish Iberism was a way to unify the Peninsula, for others in the periphery meant a federation (Sánchez Cervelló 2004).

At the turn of the century, Catalan political nationalism was reinforced by a cultural, artistic, and literary renaissance known as *Modernisme* (similar to French *Art Nouveau*; German *Jugend Stil*; British *Arts & Crafts*; Spanish *Modernismo*; or Italian *Liberty*). Catalonia emerged from a period of crisis and exhaustion with the impetus provided by the industrial revolution and the dynamic nature of its society, which already had close ties with Europe. Together with the Basque Country, Catalonia became the economic driving force of the Iberian Peninsula. In 1906, Enric Prat de la Riba (1870–1917), one of the most notable members of *Solidaritat Catalana* (Catalan solidarity), published *La nacionalitat catalana* (Catalan nationhood), in which he expounded a philosophical justification of Catalan nationalism, calling for the establishment of a Catalan state within a Spanish federation. He was also the creator of the *Mancomunitat de Catalunya* (Commonwealth of Catalonia) in 1914. *Solidaritat Catalana*, also founded in 1906, was a pro-autonomy movement which brought together the *Lliga Regionalista*, the *Unió Republicana*, the *Unió Catalanista*, the Republican nationalists, the Federalists, the Carlists, and the Independents. This movement emerged as a protest against the military repression of the Catalan press of the time, and also to oppose a law on jurisdiction proposed by the central government, which was clearly an attack on democracy and autonomy. Prat presented the idea that Catalan law was a “live entity, spontaneously produced by a national consciousness and evolving constantly.” Recent readings of Prat’s national-imperialist operation proposed that the so-called “Catalan Imperialism” would take a leading position in Spanish politics and economic activities, thus leading the country out of decadence, after the defeat of 1898, in a movement of regeneration towards democratic civilization. The Catalan nationalist political party, *Lliga* (League), pushed for this takeover of government by civil society, which, according to them, did not exist in Madrid (Ucelay da Cal 2003). Catalan imperialism, in Prat de la Riba, meant the appropriation of leftist concepts by Valentí Almirall, reelaborated by Prat in his pamphlet *Per Catalunya i l’Espanya Gran* (For Catalonia and the Great Spain), which Francesc Cambó as a politician and Eugeni d’Ors in his *Glosari* (Lexicon) translated into a proposal to conquer the Spanish state.

A harsh reaction to these proposals can be read in José Ortega y Gasset’s work, especially in *España invertebrada* (Invertebrate Spain, 1922) and *La rebelión de las masas* (The revolt of the

2. “uma fusão do espírito mediterrânico com o espírito atlântico; por isso as suas duas colunas são a Catalunha e o estado natural galaico-português” (quoted in Martínez-Gil 1997b).

masses, 1930). The founder of modern and influential journals such as *España* (Spain, 1915) and *Revista de Occidente* (Western review, 1923) wrote his reflection in the midst of the Restoration regime crisis. *España invertebrada* is divided in two parts, “Particularismo y acción directa” (Particularism and direct action) and “La ausencia de los mejores” (The absence of the best). He analyzes the *males de España* (Spain’s maladies) and proposes a way to organize the state, thus updating *regeneracionismo*’s (regenerationism) intellectual heritage. Nevertheless, the radical political shifts of the 1920s and 1930s (Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship) and other regime changes (Second Republic, Civil War, Francoism, Transition to Democracy) left his writings out of date. In his text he points to three kinds of mistakes that do not allow Spain to function as a cohesive nation: political abuses, wrong kind of government, religious fanaticism; secondly, the malady of *particularismo* (particularism) and its effect, *acción directa* “direct action”; finally, the origin of all problems: the Spanish people’s soul, dominated by *espíritu de valentía* (heroic spirit) and *fuerza bruta* (brute force).

Ortega y Gasset’s ideological agenda to strengthen national cohesion is based on the political renewal of Castile’s “will to rule and command” (1975, 41). More specifically, Ortega suggests that Spain needs to restore Castile’s historical inclination to worldwide expansion. In his own words, “[l]as grandes naciones no se han hecho desde dentro, sino desde afuera” (powerful nations are built from the outside, not from the inside; Ortega y Gasset 1975, 53). Consequently, the rebirth of old Castile’s international policies is, according to Ortega, the key to frustrating Catalan and Basque nationalistic movements. In his view, these regionalisms — which threaten and weaken Spain’s national identity — are cultural inventions sponsored by “just some people with economic ambitions and business interests” (Ortega y Gasset 1975, 49). In order to control these political “particularisms,” Ortega y Gasset proposes the creation of a major intellectual class that leads the country towards an organized community founded on an ideal cooperation among social classes. In fact, Ortega says, national regeneration is only possible if Spaniards are willing to accept what he calls “imperativo de selección” (necessary selection), which involves, on the one hand, the economic re-connection of clear-cut social classes, and, on the other, the political supremacy of Castile and Madrid.

On the contrary, Castelao’s notion of the Iberian Peninsula focuses on the fruitful dialogue between different histories and national traditions. One of Castelao’s main concerns is the role of Galicia in a multicultural and plural Spain. Castelao’s political preference is an “Iberian Federal Republic” or “Iberian Union” based on historical and cultural nationalities including Portugal (Maceira Fernández 1995, 150). Castelao’s *Sempre en Galiza* (Always in Galicia; published in Buenos Aires, 1944; written between 1935 and the early 1940s) is one of the masterpieces of Galician essay. Written in Barcelona, Valencia, New York, Buenos Aires, and Badajoz — where Castelao was exiled by the right-wing government of Lerroux, *Sempre en Galiza* demands social commitment and men of action (Rei Romeu 2000, 97), rather than “library intellectuals” (Rodríguez Castelao 1994, 20). The concept of “periphery” is critical in this groundbreaking essay on Galician culture. In the section entitled “Adro” (Field), Castelao compares Extremadura’s everyday life, class divisions, and land property with Galician politics and social structures (Monteagudo 1998, 455). This parallelism between Extremadura and Galicia underlines the conflict of “marginal regions” versus “political centralism.”

In Unamuno, Iberism is understood from a cultural and spiritual perspective. According to Ángel Marcos de Dios “Spiritual Iberism” can be defined as “an ensemble — not a mixture — of

peoples, which have lived a similar life under similar conditions, and therefore must think their projection at the same time” (Marcos de Dios 1985, 28). In Unamuno, Iberism transcends Peninsular borders. Unamuno’s Iberism lies in putting together all peoples in the Peninsula, including those from the former colonies in Latin America (or *Ultramar* as he calls it), where Portugal and Spain’s intervention can be felt. According to García Morejón, his notion of Iberism is a singular and noteworthy one. It respects diversity and pays attention to what unifies them from a spiritual perspective that presided in the past and is still present in artistic creativity (García Morejón 1971, 352). As a matter of fact, Unamuno and Portuguese writer Oliveira Martins believed that Spain and Portugal shared a common historical and cultural project. According to Oliveira Martins “there is neither a Portuguese civilization, nor a Spanish one, but a Peninsular civilization” (García Morejón 1971, 342).

Europe, internationalism, cosmopolitanism

For many authors the main obsession in their writings has been the definition of a national community within the boundaries of the Spanish state. Juaristi has located between 1895 and 1905 the split between two different communities in the Basque Country. The controversy between Unamuno and Arana at the turn of the century expresses the problem in very clear terms. Miguel de Unamuno stated in the summer of 1901 his opinion that Basque language should be left behind and that Basques should embrace Spanish culture. Ramiro Maeztu was of the same opinion. In his best examination of the problem, *El bucle melancólico*, Juaristi provides a personal, excruciating account of Basque nationalism configuration.

Ramón Otero Pedrayo in his 1939 *Ensaio histórico sobre a cultura galega* (Historical essay on Galician culture) introduces the idea that Galicia’s future depends not only on preserving its cultural roots but also on considering itself as a historical nation within Europe. For another Galician author, Vicente Risco, nationalism derives from an “ideological syncretism” based on different European concepts of the “nation.” For Risco, nationalism is simultaneously regional and international. As in Otero Pedrayo, nationalism for him includes not only the preservation of regional traditions but also a cultural interaction with other European nations. As stated by Francisco Bobillo, “Risco’s nationalist doctrine is a syncretic reading of ideas and issues very present in Europe at this time” (1981, 217). Risco defines the concept of “nation” as a natural community, which has come together through material and spiritual interests (2000, 18). In Risco’s words, Galicia as a nation is a fact. There is no need to even discuss whether Galicia is a nation or not. It is a nation in terms of history, culture, geography, and language: “Galicia is already a nation; Galician nationality is a geographical and historical fact that nobody can deny [...] Galicia is a living organism, and has the right to live.”³

On the other hand, Risco views true Spain as a plural state, which is being threatened by political centralisms in Castile and Madrid (Risco 2000, 5). He demands from the Spanish central government a political, economic, and spiritual reconstruction in Galicia (2000, 6). Risco

3. “Galicia é xa unha nación; a nacionalidade galega é un feito xeográfico e histórico que non se pode negar. Galicia é un organismo vivo, e polo feito de selo, ten dereito á vida” (Risco 2000, 27).

considers federalism as the political alternative in Spain. He mentions Switzerland and the United States as democracies that care for multiculturalism and regional diversity. He also emphasizes that the Iberian nations must work together to undermine what he calls “Castilian Imperialism” (2000, 8–13). Moreover, one could add that Risco and Otero Pedrayo’s view of a more European Galicia parallels Feijoo, Jovellanos, Cadalso, and Larra’s notion of a more European Spain.

In Spain, Ganivet also believed that Spaniards should expand their political and economic interests towards Europe, but the country should go first and foremost through a process of self-examination in search of a common spirituality. In Judith Ginsberg’s words “[in his *Idearium español* (1897)], Ganivet presents a comprehensive and eminently flattering interpretation of the Spanish *Volksggeist* and uncompromising advice on how to achieve national regeneration by turning inward, cultivating spirituality” (1985, 70). Ganivet considers national character as a product of the environment. This deterministic view of society accounts for his notion of “territorial spirit,” which has allowed one critic to assert that “[i]n [Ganivet], geography becomes destiny, radiating a national spirit in which culture and territory coincide” (Resina 2001a, 172). Ganivet’s position is very influential and coincides with those of other Spanish intellectuals of the time: Unamuno’s *En torno al casticismo* (About purism, 1902), José Martínez Ruiz’s *El alma castellana* (Spanish soul, 1899), Rafael Altamira’s *Psicología del pueblo español* (Psychology of the Spanish people, 1902).

Atlantismo might be considered Galicia’s version of Catalan *Imperialisme* or Portuguese *Sebastianismo*. “Atlantism” has to do with Galicia’s role in the world. Risco summarizes Galicia’s main features as a nation by highlighting: the ethnic hybridism of the Galician people (originated by Celts, Romans, Suevs); the singularity of the Galician language; Galicia’s own social order; and the Galician “mentality” as a synthesis of self-criticism, lyricism, romanticism, and passion (Risco 2000, 18–25). But Galicia, he says, also has a universal responsibility. Galicia is not only a nation in Spain but also a nation in Europe and the rest of the world. Risco thus encourages Galicians to create literature and visual arts, and to expand Galicia’s political and philosophical thought. In fact, Galicia must be different in order to exist as a nation: “To be different is to exist” (Risco 2000, 28). According to Risco, the Mediterranean civilization, the Iberian centralism, and the European ideals are exhausted. Atlantism is the new alternative, since it overcomes the past and the present, and creates the future. Atlantism involves “the seven Celtic nations: the Highlands in Scotland, Isle of Man, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany, and Galicia” (Risco 2000, 32). Galicia’s historical mission is to reveal Atlantism as a new cultural and political source for future generations in Europe and America. Atlantism must substitute for what Risco calls “Mediterraneism” (brought into Spain by Roman imperialism). The spirit of the legendary Atlantida must become the symbol of the new Atlantic civilization (Risco 2000, 32–34).

Spain and Portugal have not had a strong tradition of philosophers. Essay writing, in any case, provides a fascinating showcase of how intellectuals faced the many problems created by historical evolution and isolation. Their awareness of the differences between Europe and Peninsular nations has plagued intellectual life for decades, and has provoked a solid tradition of reflections about the nature of the Peninsula’s specificity with regard to the continent. These reflections have informed aesthetics, political, and moral issues. Essay writing has even created a trend to explain, from a scholarly perspective, these differences.