

Spain between Decolonizations

History against the Currents of History

We have to begin by asking ourselves what it meant to be Spanish, or French, or British, which brings us to the imperial experience. . . . It is in the moment of loss when the imperial metropolis begins to ponder its identity. No one thinks about these things in the moments of triumph. Only afterwards does the crisis of introspection come: who are we? Why have we lost? . . . The loss of a sense of mission in the world is dramatic.

—John H. Elliott in Manuel Lucena Giraldo, “Una entrevista con Sir John Elliott sobre el pasado imperial europeo”

Rafael María de Labra y Cadrana (1841–1918) was involved in acts of commemoration on both sides of the Atlantic in 1915. In Madrid, Labra attended the inauguration of a monument, for which he had helped to raise funds, to the Spanish heroes of El Caney, one of the battles between Spanish and North American forces fought in Cuba in 1898. His recollection of the inauguration led him to reflect on how intimately he was connected to both Spain and Cuba: “Two or three regiments marched before the monument and the column of honor. At their head was General Orozco, captain general of New Castile. The first of these was the regiment of the Constitution, which was in the heroic action of El Caney in Cuba. My father had commanded that regiment in the Peninsula, before leaving for Ultramar.”¹

While his parents were in Ultramar—Cuba, to be more precise—Rafael was born. He lived there until the age of nine. The family returned at midcentury to the peninsula, where the son eventually embarked upon a brilliant career as a lawyer, politician, abolitionist, and educational reformer. Between the 1860s and the end of the century, he devoted much

of his energy to reforming various aspects of the Spanish colonial regime, especially in Cuba and Puerto Rico. He was active in the Spanish Abolitionist Society from its founding in 1865, helping to bring slavery to an end in Puerto Rico in 1873 and in Cuba in 1886. Labra was so identified with the abolitionist movement that one of his biographers reported, perhaps apocryphally, that the Havana planters placed a bounty on his head with a scale for the severity of the injuries inflicted. He represented both colonies in the Spanish Cortes and Senate over the years. Though a staunch defender of Spanish sovereignty, Labra allied himself with the Antillean autonomist parties and advocated increased political and economic self-rule for the colonies. The metropolitan government eventually enacted such reforms only in 1897, on the eve of decolonization. Spain's defeat by the United States a year later and loss of sovereignty in the Caribbean brought more than three decades of Labra's efforts to a rapid and bitter end.²

However, the other act of commemoration in 1915 indicated that Labra's ties to the former colony persisted. In Cuba, the city of Havana renamed the Calle de Aguila after Labra in recognition of his role as a representative for Cuba in the Spanish Cortes during the later nineteenth century and for his efforts on behalf of Spanish-Cuban relations after 1898. The act received enthusiastic attention back in Spain. It inspired the Sociedad Colombina Onubense of Huelva, an association founded in the later nineteenth century to promote commemorations of Christopher Columbus, to publish a book entitled *El poder de las ideas*, a collection of essays dedicated to strengthening Spain's relations with Cuba and other Latin American countries. The society's periodical, *La Rábida*, named for the Andalusian monastery where Columbus was first received in Spain, published a lengthy interview with Labra devoted to his views on Spain, Cuba, and Latin America.

In setting the stage for the reader, the reporter for *La Rábida* described the artifacts of colonialism that decorated Labra's office in the Barrio Salamanca of Madrid, where the interview took place. Among the awards, collections, and memorabilia were two monuments from Cuba, one from before, the other from after 1898. The former was given to Labra in 1894 by the Directorio Central de las Sociedades de la Raza de Color de la Isla de Cuba, an organization dedicated to furthering the rights of Cubans of color after the abolition of slavery. The reporter described the statue as a representation of "the spirit of liberty breaking a slave's chains. Its inscription says: "To the apostle of the liberty of the blacks, Don Rafael María de Labra."³ The latter was a prominently displayed album that bore the

following dedication: "An homage of admiration and appreciation, with which, through the initiative of the Casino Español of Havana, the educational and social organizations of the Republic of Cuba pay tribute to the noted publicist, distinguished son of Cuba, and illustrious Spanish parliamentarian Don Rafael María de Labra, for his constant dedication to the prestige and aggrandizement of the Race and his apostolic work on behalf of Hispanic-American concord and solidarity."⁴

Labra admitted to his interviewer that of all the tributes he had received in Spain and Cuba over the years, the ceremony renaming the Calle de Aguila was the most important and touching. Not only did it reaffirm Spanish and Cuban solidarity, it also demonstrated how profoundly Spain had implanted its institutions and values in the Americas. Though many individuals and organizations were involved in renaming the street, Labra observed: "one must take into consideration that it was the colored race, elevated and dignified by our abolitionist laws and by the admirable cooperation of all the black and white Spaniards and Cubans in *la grande Antilla*, that took the initiative. The blacks of another time, now in full possession of their social and political rights, are Senators, Deputies, Councilmen, orators, soldiers, teachers, publicists, and journalists."⁵ The participation of Cubans of color in the commemoration and their steady progress in post-1898 Cuba demonstrated to Labra "the truly astounding success in abolishing slavery and the moving intimacy between Spaniards and Americans."⁶

The interviewer also noted that Labra had turned to history after 1898 as a way of fostering better relations between Spain and its former colonies. Labra wrote frequently about his work as an abolitionist and as an autonomist politician. He was deeply involved in the commemoration of the centennial of the Constitution of Cádiz (1812), crafted by the provisional government that met between 1810 and 1814 during the French occupation of Spain. For Labra, the constitution represented the high mark of Spanish and American collaboration, as deputies from both sides of the Atlantic worked together to define a new regime based on equality of political and civil rights in a transatlantic Spanish nation. Along with other prominent Spanish and Latin American figures, Labra helped organize meetings and propose monuments to the heroes of the era.⁷

That Labra should dedicate so much energy to commemorating Cádiz was telling. In the early to mid nineteenth century, Spaniards had also turned to history in a search for exemplars, precedents, and palliatives in the aftermath of Spain's first moment of decolonization, the Spanish American revolutions (1809–1826) that led to the independence of most of

the colonies and the crisis of the Cádiz project. In nineteenth- and twentieth-century Spain, decolonization produced reappraisals of the colonial past and what it meant for the metropolis, a process, as J. H. Elliott has indicated, that was not exceptional in the broader history of European empires. Labra thus carried on the work of historical reconstruction and commemoration of several generations of Spanish intellectuals. His choice of Cádiz was especially significant, for it was during that period that the idea of a Spanish nation that encompassed the colonies first gained traction. Though the wars of independence dealt a serious blow to the ideals of Cádiz, the retrenchment of Spanish rule in the remaining colonies—Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines—drew upon this vision of metropolitan and colonial unity.

By locating the origins of Labra's vision of history, colonialism, and nationality deep in the nineteenth century, I am questioning predominant interpretations of Spanish responses to the colonial crisis of 1898. Historians have typically interpreted events like the inauguration of the El Caney monument and sentiments like Labra's ironically, the irony being that Spanish intellectuals and politicians turned their interest toward the Americas only after Spain was definitively expelled from the New World in 1898. They see twentieth-century *hispanismo*, the affirmation of Spain's cultural legacy in the Americas and the Philippines, as a rearguard justification for the failure of Spanish liberalism to keep Spain among the first, or even second, rank of imperial powers. *Hispanistas* like Labra hoped that if Spain were unable to compete with France, England, Germany, and the United States in the age of empire, it could at least claim to have created new civilizations in the Americas that would always be linked to the former metropolis by language, religion, institutions, race, and, ideally, economic interest.⁸

For example, the historian Carlos Serrano, in his brilliant collection of essays on national symbols and commemorations in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Spain, argues that the Americas were part of the forging of Spanish national identity only after 1898. He focuses on episodes like the construction of war monuments and the creation of a national holiday to commemorate Columbus's first landing in the Caribbean. Serrano consciously couches these post-1898 acts of commemoration ironically as the "rediscovery of America" after a century of slumber and indifference.⁹

I would propose another interpretation of these vignettes. Rather than a faintly ridiculous post-1898 "rediscovery," Labra's reflections on Spain, Cuba, and Cádiz represented a strong continuity with the nineteenth-century patriotic imagination and the real sense of trauma experienced by

many Spaniards in the wake of defeat. After the Spanish American revolutions Spaniards sought to incorporate the remaining colonies—Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines—into the imagined community of the Spanish state. However, whether this state was imperial and/or national was not as clear-cut as historians of nineteenth-century nationalism, such as Serrano and José Álvarez Junco, have argued.¹⁰ Spain did not abandon its imperial ambitions after defeat in South America in the 1820s. More to the point, there was a constant tension, for which there was no easy resolution, between governing Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, especially the first two, as subordinated colonies or as equal members of the national state.

I would like to explore throughout this chapter how Spaniards of different regional and political orientations understood the relation between empire and nation. Subsequent chapters will examine how this relation was understood and debated in the colonies themselves. Here, I will raise the question by examining the connections between national and imperial histories in nineteenth-century Spain and the political, institutional, and discursive forces that shaped the writing of history in the metropolis. The chapter will begin by discussing how patriots crafted national histories after the fall of the absolutist monarchy, the breakup of the American empire, and the consolidation of colonial rule in the Caribbean and Pacific. It will also explore the dialogue, largely defensive, struck up by Spanish historians with other European and American theorists of empire who used Spain as the preeminent model of imperial decline. In seeking to justify an emerging national state and the persistence of colonial rule, Spaniards constantly borrowed from imperial histories written during the early modern era. Such borrowings included sources, archives, narratives, and rhetorical strategies forged over the centuries in defense of conquest and colonization in the New World. An important consequence of this process of historiographical confusion and cannibalizing was the mapping of the nation onto the empire: historians in the nineteenth century focused upon the peculiarities of Spanish colonialism and explained why this form of colonization supposedly bound colonies and metropolis so closely together, not as hostile colonizers and colonized but as members of the same nation. History, in other words, potentially bestowed both legitimacy and possibility upon the reduced Spanish colonial regime. Finally, this chapter will discuss the uses of history as this regime entered a phase of renewed crisis after 1868, brought on by the outbreak of rebellion in Cuba and the dismantling of the Antillean slave systems.

The First Decolonization and the Idea of Spain

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, the idea of the Spanish nation was meant to encompass a much grander overseas empire. This idea of Spain was born amidst a political crisis of unprecedented proportions. The French invasion of Spain in 1808 and the capitulation of the Bourbon monarchy opened a political and ideological vacuum in the peninsula and the overseas colonies. In response, Spanish liberals invoked the nation, its sovereignty expressed through a written constitution (1812), as the dominant paradigm of political legitimacy and community. In the view of patriots gathered at Cádiz between 1810 and 1814, the nation encompassed not only the Iberian Peninsula but also the Americas and the Philippines. The colonies would no longer be “*las Indias*,” subordinate possessions of the monarchy, but “*provincias de Ultramar*” with rights more or less equal to their European counterparts. The war against the French occupation and the revolutions sparked in Spanish America by the ensuing political crisis forced, and allowed, Spaniards to reconceptualize the Spanish monarchy and its colonial possessions as a broad nation made up not of subjects but of citizens with prescribed rights and duties. The colonies were therefore pivotal in the crisis of the Spanish old regime and the construction of the new.¹¹

Emphasizing the centrality of the colonial empire to the transformations of the revolutionary era runs counter to histories of Spanish nationalism that have assumed the marginality of colonialism to modern Spanish state and nation formation. For example, José Álvarez Junco and Martin Blinkhorn have argued that Spaniards were indifferent to the colossal colonial losses of the Spanish American revolutions because they saw the “*Indies*” as the personal possessions of the Spanish monarch, not as integral parts of Spain.¹² There is an important grain of truth in this view. In the immediate context of the early nineteenth century, Spanish revolutionaries ultimately decided that it was more important to square accounts with absolutism in the peninsula rather than to continue fighting brutal wars against colonial patriots in the Americas. The bitterly reactionary policies of Ferdinand VII toward his European and New World possessions alike made reconciliation between the metropolis and colonies virtually impossible. It was no coincidence that the army that rose against Ferdinand VII and forced him to accept constitutional rule in 1820 was poised to depart Cádiz for combat in South America.¹³

Nonetheless, recent studies have shown that many Spaniards were

greatly preoccupied with the colonial question during the Spanish American revolutions. For merchants and producers throughout the peninsula, the Americas were not the king's patrimony but their market for their flour, wheat, oil, wine, and textiles, all of which were transported in their ships on voyages financed with their capital. Michael Costeloe has demonstrated that the *consulado* of Cádiz, the most important merchant guild in Spain in the early nineteenth century, responded energetically to the colonial wars by taking upon itself the task of raising troops and transporting them to the Americas. Indeed, the *consulado* was more efficient and active than the government, in some instances.¹⁴

Not only did Spaniards fight to retain the colonies, they also worked to incorporate them into the new political community, though in such a way as to reinforce the supremacy of the metropolis. During the Cortes of Cádiz (1810–1814) and the Liberal Triennium (1820–1823), constitutional periods separated by the restoration of Bourbon absolutism in the person of Ferdinand VII, the colonies elected and sent representatives to the Spanish Cortes as equal parts of the nation. However, to ensure peninsular supremacy, the drafters of the 1812 constitution elaborated a formula that would guarantee more active Spanish citizens in Spain itself, and thus more representatives in the Cortes, than in the overseas possessions. Though the colonial population outweighed the metropolitan by an estimated three-to-two ratio, the marginalization of slaves and free *castas* righted the imbalance in the peninsula's favor and ensured more representatives for Spain in the Cortes. While the constitution defined all free inhabitants of Spain and the colonies as "Spaniards," it banned certain classes of free people in the colonies from active citizenship, including women (as in the peninsula) and the *castas pardas*, people of African ancestry, though the latter could be given citizenship in the event of extraordinary service to the nation, leaving, as the constitution stated, "the door of virtue and merit open to them to become citizens."¹⁵ The Cortes of Cádiz also shied away from abolishing slavery or the slave trade to the Americas, thus maintaining a significant bonded population that not only was excluded from citizenship but from the community of Spaniards altogether.

Discrimination against slaves and free people of color was not simply a question of political necessity (from the metropolitan point of view); it was rooted deeply in Spanish governance of colonial societies under the old regime and the blend of rights and handicaps with which slaves and freedmen lived in the New World. Throughout the colonial period, slaves and free people of color actively served the Crown in various capacities, most

notably through the colonial militias. Service in the militias was highly coveted because of the special prerogatives granted troops through the *fuero militar*, such as exemption from certain kinds of taxes or, in the case of slaves, freedom, an offer that Spain would extend to raise troops against colonial patriots during the Spanish American revolutions, as well as later in the century in Cuba during the Ten Years' War (1868–1878). In some cases, the Crown was able to win considerable loyalty among the *castas* through such policies. For example, in her study of Spanish Florida in the eighteenth century, Jane Landers recounts the history of Gracia Real de Santa María de Mose, a town of free blacks who helped defend the colony against repeated British invasions from Georgia. One of the black officers of Mose, Francisco Menéndez, petitioned the Crown in 1740 in search of recompense for his defense of the “Holy Gospel and the sovereignty of the Crown.”¹⁶

The liberals at Cádiz therefore adapted old regime practices and ideologies to the new order, defining the *castas* as members of the political community yet as ones who could exercise the rights of citizens only under exceptional circumstances. In the immediate context of French occupation, colonial uprisings, and revolutionary state formation, this strategy ensured peninsular supremacy in the Cortes before the separation of most of the American colonies. After the effective independence of most of Spanish America by the end of the 1820s, this measure became unnecessary in terms of creating more representatives for Spain. However, it would have serious consequences for how the metropolis would govern Cuba and Puerto Rico, large slave societies, and the Philippines, which Spaniards considered racially and culturally unassimilated.¹⁷

This tension came back to haunt the next Spanish Cortes during the definitive transition to constitutional rule after the death of Ferdinand VII in 1833. In the midst of a bitter peninsular civil war with defenders of the old regime—the Carlists, so called because of their allegiance to Ferdinand's brother Carlos—Spanish revolutionaries acted to exclude the remaining colonies from the representative body, arguing that because of the complexity of Antillean and Philippine societies, the Cortes would have to enact “special laws” to govern the *provincias de Ultramar*. Several factors besides the political uncertainty created by the Carlist War contributed to what was an unprecedented step. To some degree, colonial deputies had unwittingly set the stage for this decision when they agreed with discrimination against the *castas* and the defense of slavery in the earlier phase of Spanish constitutionalism. For instance, a representative from Caracas stated to the

Cortes of Cádiz: "As a lover of humanity, I approve the abolition of slavery; but as a lover of political order, I disapprove it."¹⁸ Antillean deputies and officials expressed the same sentiments and would continue to do so for most of the nineteenth century. They were wary of the growing number of slaves in the colonies and increasingly distrustful of the free colored population, especially in the context of the Caribbean after the revolution of St. Domingue. The fear of the dominant classes in the Antilles, and their subsequent political quiescence, played right into the hands of Spanish politicians for the time being. Spain would not extend full constitutional rule to the Antilles until the closing decades of the nineteenth century and would never do so in the Philippines.¹⁹

Two other factors were also at play by the 1830s. After two earlier constitutional periods and years of war against creoles in the Americas, Spanish distrust of local elites in the remaining colonies ran high.²⁰ Such distrust would generally win out over the course of the nineteenth century despite the concerted Spanish efforts to explain why history proved that there were no grounds for discord between colonies and metropolis. Writing about the Philippines at the tail end of the revolutionary process, the diplomat Sinibaldo de Mas warned Madrid that the greatest threat to its sovereignty was the Filipino population (Spaniards born in the Philippines): "among the whites born in the colony, there arise local interests opposed to those of the mother country, which begin by creating discontent and end by arousing the desire for independence. . . . When [a Filipino] hears in Manila of tobacco or money being sent to the government of Madrid, he experiences the same disgust that a Spaniard would feel if Spanish liquor or moneys were sent to Russia or England as tribute."²¹ A similar attitude of distrust prevailed among officials in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Indeed, several of Cuba's governors in the mid-nineteenth century were veterans of the wars in Spanish America.

Moreover, the 1830s were a nervous decade in the Caribbean, as planters and officials wrung their hands over the consequences of slave emancipation undertaken in the British colonies between 1834 and 1838. For instance, in 1837 the Spanish consul in Kingston, Jamaica, reported to Madrid that antislavery activists "are trying to send some agents from their seat here to the province of Cuba (I fear that some might already be there) with the end of trying to induce the blacks to stage an uprising." Similarly ominous reports about British and North American antislavery societies and provocateurs came from Cuba's captain general and from the Spanish representative in Washington, D.C.²² Thus, despite the language of the nation

augured at Cádiz, Spain decided to exclude the remaining colonies from the new political community in the 1830s in the context of a peninsular civil war, distrust of the creole elite, and fear of Anglo-American and Haitian intentions in the Caribbean.

Nonetheless, the spatial contours and racial uncertainty of the new regime imagined at Cádiz persisted throughout the century. While the exclusion of the colonies from the Cortes was politically expedient in the war-torn 1830s, Spaniards did seriously wrestle with the question of how Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines fit into the Spanish nation, and with the related question of whether all Spaniards would enjoy the same rights. This process involved not only legislative debates but also a broad reckoning with Spain's colonial history and how it had shaped the nation in the present day. Inevitably, it also forced Spanish officials and intellectuals to understand this history in relationship to other European colonialisms; for the question was not only how to govern the *provincias de Ultramar* and the diverse Spaniards in them, but also to explain how Spain was going to maintain those colonies that the currents of history seemed inevitably to be carrying away from the metropolis.

In reconsidering the history of colonization and its consequences, Spanish commentators were entering a dense field of controversy. The conflicts unleashed during the Atlantic world's age of revolution that devastated Spain's American empire appeared to confirm the views held by some of Spain's most caustic foreign and colonial critics who condemned Spanish absolutism as wasteful, violent, and obscurantist. In the early twentieth century, the Spanish historian Julián Juderías reflected on this body of foreign writings and representations—starting with the period of Spain's European and American hegemony in the sixteenth century and continuing to the present—and dubbed them collectively the *leyenda negra* (Black Legend), a term that has captured the imagination of scholars ever since. In its origins, the Black Legend told of Spanish cruelty in Europe and the Americas, but eventually it became a tale of Spanish backwardness that over the centuries helped to explain the rise to dominance of Protestant powers, especially Great Britain, on a global scale and the eclipse of Spain. That large body of knowledge about Spanish religion, monarchy, and colonialism—all serving in one way or another as explanations for Spain's decline—thus formed an inevitable subtext for anyone who wished to reflect on Spanish history. For a Spanish intellectual authoring a critical examination of colonial slavery or trade policy in the nineteenth century, that sense of failure, decline, and archaism prefigured subject and argument.²³

In the early to mid nineteenth century, the counterpoint to Spanish colonial decline was English colonial ascendancy. England was more than an abstract model of colonialism. It was the rival that had hammered Spain into submission over the eighteenth century from the War of the Spanish Succession to Trafalgar and beyond. England, too, suffered setbacks in this contest, most notably during the American Revolution, which Spain effectively supported by defeating its rival in the Gulf of Mexico. Nonetheless, the balance sheet was decidedly in Albion's favor. In the early eighteenth century, England forced the Spanish monarchy to concede the *asiento*, a virtual monopoly on slave trading to Spanish America that also facilitated English smuggling into the colonies. During the Seven Years' War, England briefly took Manila and Havana, sending shock waves throughout the empire. At Trafalgar in 1805, Nelson decimated the Spanish fleet, eliminating Spain as a serious military power. Throughout the eighteenth century, while Spanish royal officials laboriously reformed the unwieldy fiscal and military machinery inherited from the Habsburgs, English merchants and entrepreneurs flooded the world with their goods and capital. While the Spanish monarchy capitulated to Bonaparte, the English defeated him.²⁴

As Spanish historians wrestled with the causes and consequences of Spanish decline, they did so in conscious dialogue with other European and New World writers and with the awareness of their country's competitive weakness. The writings of Adam Smith, for instance, were an inescapable reference for any history of European colonialisms and one of the most cogent representations of Spain's shortcomings and England's relative advantages. At the dawn of revolutionary upheaval in the Americas and Europe, Smith spelled out an interpretation of European colonialisms and their effects on the various metropolises that would hold sway in Europe for at least a century (in theory, if not always in practice).²⁵ While Smith was categorically critical of the mercantilism defended by all the European powers, he identified major differences in the actual practice. Where the state was least heavy-handed and where trade could develop most freely, Smith saw the greatest benefits accrue both to the colonies and the metropolis. On one end of the scale was the Spanish monarchy, the empire most wedded to the pursuit of bullion, regulation of trade, high taxes and tithes, and political and religious control of its subjects. On the other was British colonization, which encouraged staple production, approximated free trade, and devolved considerable political, religious, and fiscal liberty onto the colonies. Indeed, the British experience led him to propose the following maxim regarding the success of colonial enterprises:

There are no colonies of which the progress has been more rapid than that of the English in North America.

Plenty of good land, and liberty to manage their own affairs their own way, seem to be the two great causes of the prosperity of all new colonies.²⁶

Colonial liberties, often resulting unintentionally from metropolitan neglect, were thus the wellspring of wealth. In contrast, the vigor of Spanish colonialism in its foundational moments was, in Smith's view, the ironic source of Spanish and Spanish American decadence:

The Crown of Spain, by its share of the gold and silver, derived some revenue from its colonies, from the moment of their first establishment. It was a revenue too, of a nature to excite in human avidity the most extravagant expectations of still greater riches. The Spanish colonies, therefore, from the moment of their first establishment, attracted very much the attention of their mother country; while those of the other European nations were for a long time in a great measure neglected. The former did not, perhaps, thrive the better in consequence of this attention; nor the latter the worse in consequence of this neglect.²⁷

In Anthony Pagden's view, Smith's analysis of European empires led to the conclusion that the settler communities of the Americas must inevitably crave independence: "By 1800 most of enlightened Europe had been persuaded that large-scale overseas settlement of the kind pursued, in their different ways, by Spain, Britain and France in the Americas could ultimately be only destructive to the metropolis itself. They had shown that every immigrant community . . . will one day come to demand economic self-sufficiency and political autonomy."²⁸

Such were precisely the conclusions that many Spaniards feared as they undertook imperial reconstruction in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Over the course of the nineteenth century, several prominent economists, such as Álvaro Flórez Estrada or Laureano Figuerola and the group around him known as the Economistas, concurred with Smith and his popularizer, Jean-Baptiste Say, that free trade, light taxes, and a much-reduced government would rejuvenate Spain and its empire. Writing during the early phase of the Spanish American revolutions and the French occupation of Spain, Flórez Estrada almost directly echoed Smith by arguing that both Spain and the Americas suffered under the traditional practices of the colonial regime and that the Americans were fully justi-

fied in demanding independence should the status quo remain unchanged. Spain, too, would ultimately benefit by jettisoning an unreformed empire inherited from the old regime: "If America were still to be ruled under such a ruinous system, then it would be fully justified in trying to separate itself from the metropolis. If Spain were unable to benefit more from America than it has until now, then it probably would be well for the Spaniards not to have undertaken the conquest, nor to conserve any longer its possession."²⁹

At midcentury during the process of retrenchment in the Caribbean and the Pacific, there was strong disagreement within the Spanish political classes over how best to govern the remaining colonies. For most of the era, the metropolis governed through a state of exception, inscribed in the Spanish constitutions of 1837 and 1845, which concentrated political authority in the captain general's office. But throughout the century parties from the center to the left such as the Progressives, the Radicals, the Liberal Fusionist Party, and numerous small republican parties, argued that only through the complete implantation of the constitution could Spain maintain the loyalty of the colonies. In other words, they believed that the era of crisis in the European American empires had amply demonstrated that the metropolis must assuage the demands of creole populations for some voice in government if independence were to be averted. Political reformers also generally called for substantial economic and social changes, most notably the abolition of Antillean slavery and the liberalization of commercial policies, which severely penalized foreign trade to benefit peninsular producers and merchants. In the later nineteenth century, the Cuban and Puerto Rican autonomist parties and their liberal and republican allies in Spain demanded increased self-rule, as opposed to assimilation into the Spanish constitution.³⁰

In contrast to these reformist trends, advocates for coercive and protectionist strategies usually carried the day in the making of colonial policies. This tendency was evident in the development of a protectionist, indeed prohibitionist, political economy and ideology in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially in Catalonia, Spain's first major manufacturing region. Catalan economists argued vigorously that free trade would be ruinous for Catalonia and Spain. Thus, it was the duty of the Spanish monarchy and government to foment Catalan industry through prohibitionist trade policies and to rationalize the division of labor within Spain and, tellingly, within the broader empire. The colonies were not separate countries or societies that required their own division of labor and economic

development but integral parts of Spain's own "national" market whose interests must be bent to the needs of metropolitan producers, farmers, and merchants, a conclusion that Smith would obviously find odious.³¹

Debates over how to govern the colonies were therefore contentious in the metropolis. The outbreak of separatist rebellions in Cuba and Puerto Rico in 1868 accentuated these differences: liberals and republicans insisted that only a broad array of reforms, such as the immediate abolition of slavery, the introduction of constitutional rule, and the deregulation of trade, would regain the loyalty of the insurgent forces. Conservatives, in contrast, demanded military solutions and resisted fiercely any alteration of the reigning colonial order as a threat to what they called Spain's national integrity. They also feared the loss of one of the most important markets for peninsular manufactures and agriculture, one regulated to their benefit by Madrid.³²

Imperial Origins of National Historiography

Where liberals and conservatives might converge, however, was in their visions of the history of colonization and how it shaped the present. In approaching the past, Spanish intellectuals, officials, and economists from varied political and regional backgrounds sought to mount a stinging rebuke to the Smithian interpretation of colonialism by inverting its propositions. In fact, the justification of Spain's colonial history, which Smith so sharply criticized, was the discursive space where Spanish patriots could most effectively defend not only the empire but also the nation.

The rhetoric and sources of imperial history provided invaluable tools for the construction of Spain's national history in the nineteenth century. That the colonization of the New World forced Spaniards to reorder their conceptual universe is well understood for the early modern period, but this ongoing process has been little explored in the historiography of modern Spain.³³ Colonialism, however, continued to play a key role in the forging of the ideologies of Spanish modernity. This nexus encompassed the discussion of the territorial, and biological, contours of the nation, as we will see. It also included the retrieval and celebration of heroes and predecessors, such as Columbus. Perhaps more fundamentally, as Spanish patriots sought to construct a new political imaginary from the wreckage of the old regime, they made use of narrative and rhetorical strategies and documentary sources developed to comprehend and justify the empire under the Habsburgs and Bourbons. The Royal Academies and archives

established between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries remained the privileged sites of historical authority in the nineteenth century and were central to this process.

The range of topics treated by Spanish historians in the nineteenth century was broad, but one study shows that histories of the revolutionary efforts to overthrow the old regime attracted wide attention as scholars of differing political perspectives sought to justify their views about the present regime through their vision of the proximate past. The politicized nature of historical scholarship was unsurprising, as few, if any, historians were disinterested professionals. Advanced training in historical scholarship was not institutionalized in the Spanish university system until the early twentieth century. Most historians were trained as military officials, engineers, lawyers, archivists, and priests. Martín Fernández de Navarrete's background was not untypical. The director of the Real Academia de la Historia Española (Royal Academy of Spanish History) until his death in 1844, Navarrete was an officer in the Spanish navy trained in nautical and mathematical sciences. After seeing action against the British and the French in the later eighteenth century, he dedicated himself to writing Spain's maritime history and became a leading authority on the early phase of Spanish exploration and colonization, following through on eighteenth-century efforts to create the foundations for comprehensive histories penned by Spanish authorities.³⁴

More to the point, many authors were directly involved in politics as functionaries, diplomats, ministers, elected representatives, and senators. The most notable was Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, author of the 1876 constitution, prime minister on several occasions between 1875 and his assassination in 1897, and the guiding spirit of Spanish conservatism in the second half of the nineteenth century. As a young man Cánovas studied law but embarked quickly upon a political career while always writing prolifically. His oeuvre included historical novels of medieval Spain and studies of Habsburg absolutism. Like many of his contemporaries he located the cause of Spanish decline in the creation of the absolutist monarchy, which stifled the vigorous local liberties characteristic of the Middle Ages. Unlike liberals and republicans, who believed that the revolutions of the early nineteenth century had rekindled the spirit of liberty, Cánovas held that centuries of autocratic rule had incapacitated Spaniards as political subjects, justifying the centralized regime advocated by conservatives and his party's distrust of mass politics.³⁵

In addition to defending contemporary political positions through the

use of the past, Spanish historians were also preoccupied with refuting the contemptuous histories of Spain authored by foreigners like Smith that filled a gap left by Spaniards themselves. José Álvarez Junco notes in his recent study of the “idea of Spain” in the nineteenth century that one cause of the proliferation of histories of Spain was the dearth of historiographic precedents. Spanish authors had to rely on the works of foreign historians or the *Historia general de España* written during the Habsburg dynasty by the Jesuit Juan de Mariana (1536–1624). The stirrings of a national historiography in the mid-nineteenth century thus arose not only from the need to justify political views after the revolutions of the early part of the century but also from the desire to counter the “orientalism” of French and British historians.³⁶

I agree with Álvarez Junco’s characterization of the anxieties of patriotic historians in the nineteenth century and their desire to defend Spain against foreign histories and historians. However, I would also argue that these anxieties and responses had a longer history, especially if we look at the rivalry between Spaniards, Spanish Americans, and other Europeans over writing the history of the New World, a subject carefully explored by Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra. Historians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries bequeathed to the nineteenth century a dense thicket of historical works written to comprehend, describe, justify, and criticize Spanish deeds in the New World. Oviedo, Las Casas, Gómara, and Herrera were historical giants upon whose shoulders their nineteenth-century acolytes could build a new historiography, though one constructed in the name of the nation rather than the monarchy. Moreover, patriots could turn to an extremely rich eighteenth-century revival of histories of Spanish exploration and colonization, epitomized by Juan Bautista Muñoz’s *Historia del Nuevo Mundo* (1793), often written in response to foreign critics who elaborated the Black Legend in its various guises. Patriots like Muñoz and his fellow Valencian Gregorio Mayans called for an intellectual revival that built on the geniuses of the Spanish Renaissance, such as Nebrija, Vives, and Cervantes, rather than borrowing wholesale from French and English intellectual trends, as some *ilustrados* advocated.³⁷

For a historian like Muñoz, that meant rejecting foreign histories of Spanish colonialism, such as William Robertson’s widely admired *The History of America* (1777), and crafting a definitive history of the New World with the use of Spanish sources. That ambition drove Muñoz to place Spanish historiography on firm national foundations. In preparing his *Historia del Nuevo Mundo*, of which he was able to publish only one volume,

Muñoz scoured Spanish archives and libraries for sources that shed light on the age of Spanish exploration and colonization. In doing so, he not only created the rich manuscript collection that still bears his name at the Royal Academy of Spanish History in Madrid but also organized Spain's major colonial archive, the General Archive of the Indies in Seville, a standard reference point to this day for any historian of early Spanish colonialism.³⁸

Though Muñoz expressed skepticism about the accuracy of sixteenth-century Spanish chronicles, skepticism he shared with the Northern European critics he generally scorned, his contemporaries busily edited and published historical accounts that had languished in archives for centuries. For instance, Andrés González de Barcia, one of the founders of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, published works by Fernando Colón, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, and Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca among others.³⁹ His fellow academician, Juan de Iriarte, also explicitly linked the retrieval of Spain's historical and literary tradition to a rejuvenated patriotism: "[Foreigners] affirm that all Spanish science can be reduced to two verses and four syllogisms." The patriot's response should be to "praise the great men of our nation by resurrecting their memories."⁴⁰

Historians in the nineteenth century carried on these innovations but with greater efficacy. Institutional and court rivalries hindered the publication of numerous histories in the eighteenth century. In contrast, historians in the following century published voluminous collections of documents, monographs, and new editions of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century histories. Documents from Spanish archives proliferated in print under sponsorship of academic and administrative institutions. One such example is the forty-two-volume *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de Indias*, primary documents from the era of conquest and colonization published by order of the newly created Ministry of Ultramar (overseas provinces) between 1864 and 1884. The Royal Academy of Spanish History would publish another twenty-five-volume series beginning in 1885. The series editors stated in the introduction to the initial volume that the history of exploration and conquest was essential to any understanding of the Spanish, and Spanish American, present:

Our Royal Archive of the Indies holds, as it should, the most abundant treasure concerning the History of the New World. . . . The depository of all that was done, of all that was written, of all that was thought from the dawn of the discovery. . . . Located in that Archive are the necessary

antecedents regarding the life of a hundred peoples that today occupy the surface of the New World. Without exploiting that mine, without bringing to light those riches, we will never know with certainty what we have been nor what we are yet to this day. Nor will one be able to calculate with good data the potential of those other peoples whose conditions of birth, growth, and education are deposited in those files.⁴¹

Earlier in the century, Fernández de Navarrete undertook the publication of his foundational *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los españoles desde fines del siglo XV*, which included heretofore unknown sources such as Las Casas's transcription and summary of Columbus's logbook from the first voyage. He also laid out and evaluated a canon of sources to be used and published in the writing of the history of exploration and conquest, including the works of Las Casas, Oviedo, and Fernando Colón. The initial volume appeared in 1825, fully twenty-five years before the first volume of Modesto Lafuente's *Historia General de España*, which Álvarez Junco recognizes as the first effective step in the crafting of a patriotic peninsular historiography.⁴² Navarrete's ambitions in publishing his work during the dying days of Spanish rule in most of Latin America were clearly patriotic. One biographer has observed that Navarrete "was seeking to throw up theoretical dikes against the torrent unleashed in America."⁴³ Indeed, his lengthy introduction to the first volume exemplified the intertwined defense of empire and nation that would persist throughout the nineteenth century, dwelling upon major topoi such as the benevolence of Spain's treatment of the Indians, the vainglory of Columbus and his family, the injustice of Bartolomé de las Casas's criticisms of the conquistadors, the ingratitude of creole revolutionaries, and the bias and ignorance of other European historians who pilloried Spain for its conduct in the New World: "These new-fangled philosophers portray the conquests by the first Spaniards as the work of fanaticism, ambition, tyranny, and unchecked greed, when Spain was then the most cultured and powerful nation in the world."⁴⁴

These scholarly undertakings bore some fruit in the contest for interpretive authority. In the nineteenth century, foreign historians relied heavily on Spanish collections, colleagues, and archives. The U.S. Hispanists Washington Irving and William Hickling Prescott and the German scholar of the New World Alexander von Humboldt recognized the authority of Spanish institutions and perspectives when crafting their histories of colonization and American prehistory (though as will be discussed in chapter

4, foreign scholars often reached conclusions sharply at odds with those of their Spanish colleagues). For instance, Irving's popular *Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828) was a synthesis of Navarrete's *Colección de los viages*, while Prescott consulted the Royal Academy of Spanish History's manuscript collections and Spanish historiography to write his histories of Isabel and Ferdinand and the conquests of Mexico and Peru.⁴⁵ In a letter to the Spanish politician and man of letters, Francisco de Paula Martínez de la Rosa, Prescott acknowledged his debt to Spanish scholarship:

The kindness which I have experienced from your countrymen, and especially from the venerable Navarrete, in facilitating the historical investigations on which I am now occupied, binds me still closer to the nation whose glorious achievements have so long been my study and the object of my admiration. I have fully endeavoured in my history of the Catholic Kings to pay the full tribute of respect which I owe to the scholars who have gone before me in my researches—honored names—Clemencín, Navarrete, Llorente, Marina, Sempere . . .⁴⁶

Humboldt, meanwhile, praised the labors of Muñoz and Navarrete as major additions to knowledge of the New World's history and vindicated the sixteenth-century chronicles and histories of Oviedo, Acosta, and others as invaluable works on prequest American civilizations.⁴⁷

Finally, as will be shown more carefully in the following chapter on the uses of Christopher Columbus, the iconography of colonization impressed itself upon the historical consciousness of nineteenth-century Spaniards. Though many blamed Spain's decline on the absolutism of Charles V and Philip II, they also admired the grandeur of the sixteenth-century monarchy, as it projected what they anachronistically called "Spain" to the heights of its power in Europe and the Americas. Undertaking the decoration of the Spanish Senate in the 1880s, a stronghold of conservatism in the later nineteenth century, the marquis of Barzanallana incorporated several scenes associated with Spain's expanding global power under the Catholic Kings and the Habsburgs, including Columbus's discovery of America, Cortés's conquest of the Aztec empire, and the victory over the Ottomans at Lepanto, the inclusion of which Barzanallana compared to the renderings of the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo in the British House of Lords.⁴⁸

Thus, rather than argue that historians had to create a patriotic historiography practically from scratch and always in response to foreign perspectives, I would suggest that many of these apprehensions and the strategies for resolving them were already present in the histories of *la España ultra-*

marina; by looking at the interaction between metropolis and colonies, we can see that the empire bequeathed to nineteenth-century patriots a deep layer of scholarly authority, historical sources, glorious heroes and events, and pointed responses to foreign critics of Spain.

Against Adam Smith: The Peculiarities of Spanish History

In turning to these precedents, Spanish patriots rejected the very foundation of Smith's vision of colonialism, and in turn of the nation. That is to say, rather than measure the success of Europe's colonial ventures by "the wealth of nations," they rejected the economic rationale of empire altogether. In departing from a supposed norm, they were resorting to a strategy of imperial self-fashioning that was unexceptional in its insistence on exceptionality. As Ann Stoler and David Bond have recently observed, all modern empires have represented themselves as exceptional as a way of distinguishing and justifying their techniques of rule.⁴⁹ The question to explore, then, is not whether Spanish colonization was unique, for better or worse, but why and how imperial advocates, critics, and commentators sought to demonstrate and interpret this putative exceptionality. In the view of nineteenth-century Spaniards, what distinguished Spanish rule was not economic exploitation and liberty but the effort to incorporate colonial subjects into the march of European civilization. If the English created new markets, the Spanish created new civilizations. Thus, the implantation of language, Christianity, and law, and, in some renderings, the prevalence of miscegenation, were the lasting triumphs of Spanish colonialism in the Americas and elsewhere. Even if Spain had declined as a colonial power after the Spanish American revolutions, it could nonetheless exalt in the permanence of Spanish civilization in the former colonies. Advocates of the Spanish imperial tradition explicitly rejected the vision of capitalist modernity articulated by Smith and others—one based on individual liberty, initiative, and accumulation of wealth—in favor of the broader cultural impact of Spain on conquered lands and peoples.

This construction of exceptionality, what José del Perojo called "political" (as opposed to "mercantile") colonialism, indicated the interplay between imperial and national projects in Spain after the Spanish American revolutions and how a deep historical vision of Spain in the New World might justify the colonial order in the Caribbean and Pacific. Perojo was a Cuban who served in the Spanish Senate in the later nineteenth century. Like many Cubans of his class, he was interested in the history of

European colonialisms and their impact upon the colonies.⁵⁰ Unlike most Cubans of his class, who preferred self-rule (British rule in Canada was a widely admired model) or independence, he was an ardent defender of Spanish governance through the centuries. He argued that Spain's colonialism differed from the British in that it was based on the assimilation of the conquered Indians and enslaved Africans into the civilization of the conquerors, whereas the British was based purely on mercantile interests, the marginalization of conquered peoples, and the ruthless exploitation of African slaves and their descendants. Perojo's conclusion was not uncommon in nineteenth-century Spain: "The intention of the one is purely individual; that of the other political and, in consequence, civilizing and humanitarian. Sir Stamford Raffles liked to say: 'Our object is not territory but trade.' . . . Such is the English colonial system. We say: our object is not interest but civilization, the progress of humanity. Such is the Spanish system."⁵¹ Where Adam Smith and other political economists and historians saw Spain's colonizing mission as wasteful and economically counterproductive, Spain's defenders tried to invert the terms of the debate and demonstrate "the superiority of Spain's colonial system" because of its putative inclusiveness that transcended questions of economic interest.⁵²

The dichotomy between Spanish and English forms of colonization and the emphasis on Spain's genius for mixture and assimilation framed discussions over how best to govern *la España ultramarina* in the nineteenth century; in fact, the terms could be adopted both by Spaniards and colonial patriots for their own ends. For example, the Afro-Cuban journalist and civil rights leader Juan Gualberto Gómez drew upon just this formulation of the virtues of Spanish colonialism in his implicit advocacy of Cuban independence. In the midst of a diplomatic showdown between Spain and the German Empire over control of the Caroline Islands in 1885, Gómez published a short pamphlet, possibly at the behest of his colleague and patron Rafael María de Labra, intended to clarify for Spanish readers what was at stake. In the pamphlet, he contrasted the unfinished work of Spanish colonization in the Pacific with its completion in the Caribbean. Regarding the Antilles, Gómez clearly implied that the islands were ripe for independence by observing: "If Spain lost Cuba and Puerto Rico, it would lose much. But in the end, these losses would not be fatal because in those territories one could say that [Spain's] colonizing power is exhausted, that it has already given them all that it can and has received from them all that it can."⁵³ In contrast Spain had to defend its Pacific colonies, including the Philippines, against German aggression because the colonizing mission

there was incomplete: "In Cuba and Puerto Rico, no matter their destiny, the Spaniard will always be at home. But the same would not be true in the Asian possessions if they were to fall into foreign hands. The prudent and capable [foreigner] would undertake to erase the light traces that Spain has so far left on most of those territories."⁵⁴

These observations on the shortcomings of Spanish rule in the Pacific were often repeated and drew upon the contrast with the Americas, where Spanish colonization had supposedly reached its most perfect state. Such was the case in the demands for reform made by a group of Filipino intellectuals who in 1889 began publishing the newspaper *La Solidaridad* in Barcelona. They dedicated it to the discussion of the Spanish regime in the Philippines and the need for major reforms, such as the teaching of Spanish to the majority of the population, a policy vigorously opposed by the regular orders that dominated education in the archipelago. One of the contributors who spoke in favor of language education was the Austro-Hungarian Orientalist Ferdinand Blumentritt, an expert in the history and religion of the Philippines. In an article intended as a response to the Spanish writer "Quioquiap" (the pseudonym of the journalist and bureaucrat Pablo Feced), Blumentritt rebutted the widely held belief among Spanish colonial officials that the *indios* of the Philippines were simply unable to learn a European language. In doing so, he not only pointed out the nefarious role played by the regular orders in the management of the colony, the chief concern of *La Solidaridad* and its collaborators, but also argued that Spain was violating the spirit of its own colonial history by denying the *indios* access to Spanish civilization. Blumentritt drew a stark contrast between English (and Dutch) colonialism and Spanish, a contrast that neatly harmonized with Spaniards' own view of their colonial history. The segregation currently practiced in the Philippines was more worthy of other European powers: "English and Dutch colonial policy never forgets for one moment that its only object is to exploit the country. To this end, it impedes the *dominated race* from assimilating with the *dominant race*. For this reason, the Dutch ensure that the natives remain fixed in their primitive culture and ignorant of the dominant race's language."⁵⁵

By implementing and defending a system that denied education in the Spanish language to the *indios* of the Philippines, Spain was betraying its own history, which was one of assimilation of conquered peoples:

Spain must comply with its great mission, its duties, its promises, which date from the moment it conquered the Philippines. Spanish legislation

abhors and despises the distinction between a dominant and dominated race. The benevolent and noble motherland recognizes only Spaniards. The Philippines are not a possession, but an integral part of the motherland, united by the same religion, the same civilization, the same desires, the same aspirations, identical patriotism; they lack only the same language.⁵⁶

If we turn to Spanish discussions of the small outposts in Africa, we find the same emphasis on Spain's civilizing mission, one derived from a particular understanding of Spain's history as a colonial power. For most of the nineteenth century, the outposts in Morocco and the Gulf of Guinea were underdeveloped but attracted interest from the political and intellectual classes, as well as from the military during the Moroccan War of 1859–1860, an event that apparently aroused popular patriotic sentiment, as several historians have recently suggested.⁵⁷ A veteran of the campaign noted how the war against Islam in Morocco inevitably fused the colonial past and present: "Today, Europe, by means of its military representatives, has been able to judge the organization of our army . . . and it has seen that we have adopted all of the advances that military science has provided the art of war, proving that if Spain is valiant as in the fourteenth century it is also enlightened in the nineteenth."⁵⁸

For other defenders of the war, Spain's need to fulfill its historic role across the Straits of Gibraltar was the justification for military action. Emilio Castelar wrote in 1859 that "the necessity of civilizing these peoples is evident, and that necessity can be satisfied only by the Spanish nation."⁵⁹ His fellow republican, Francisco de Paula Canalejas, was even more blunt when he commented that "Spain needs to civilize Africa" in an article that also attacked England for impeding Spain's historic role through its possession of Gibraltar, the logical starting point for Spain's civilizing mission in Morocco.⁶⁰

Colonial experts expressed the same opinions regarding Spain's possessions in the Gulf of Guinea, the most settled being the island of Fernando Póo. Rafael María de Labra wrote extensively on the promise of the African colonies but in a tone similar to observations on the Philippines. Here was a potentially rich land neglected, primarily because Spain had failed to follow its own history of colonization. Labra argued that: "The fundamental problem in Fernando Poó is colonization to the full extent. First, the colonization of that land, the real possession of it, the exploitation of that country, both in terms of agriculture and commerce. Next, the reduction,

the submission of the peoples who live away from the coast in groups or tribes more or less dependent upon Spain so that they can truly enter into the Spanish nationality.”⁶¹

The authors cited above invoked Spain’s civilizing mission and suggested that it had been or would be carried out by the implantation of Spanish institutions, especially language and religion. A related rendering of this history went a step further by recommending miscegenation as part of the fulfillment of Spain’s colonizing genius. The discourse on miscegenation implied that Spain had recreated itself overseas by reproducing the patterns of national and racial formation in the peninsula before the conquests of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. A recent study of racial ideologies in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Spain has shown that anthropologists and historians generally agreed that Spaniards were not a pure racial stock but rather were an “alloy” of the different races that traversed the peninsula over the centuries. Mixture was thus the essence of the Spanish race and nationality: “Spain’s geographical and historical position as crossroads between Europe and Africa became the basis for Spanish racial uniqueness among European nations and the source of its racial strength. Visible both in behaviors and in physical appearance, the uniqueness of the Spanish race again lay in its fusion of different races and temperaments.” Thus, in mixing with conquered and enslaved subjects in the Americas and elsewhere, Spaniards were continuing the process of national and racial formation undertaken centuries ago in Europe.⁶²

I would suggest that this emphasis on the “racial alloy” and miscegenation was also an inflection of old regime attitudes toward phenotypic, cultural, and religious differences in the overseas empire. Under the old monarchy, bureaucrats closely categorized the proliferation of differences brought about by the interactions among Indians, Africans, and Europeans. They sought to police the peculiar rights, duties, and putative characteristics of distinct groups in colonial society, an extension of similar attitudes and strategies of rule used to govern the multireligious and multiethnic communities of the peninsula in the Middle Ages. As numerous authors have argued, the Spanish monarchy was a composite of heterogeneous polities and societies; the monarchy explicitly recognized and defined differences across its multiple jurisdictions.⁶³

Spanish state builders in the nineteenth century, in contrast, endeavored to create legal and institutional homogeneity across the “national” territory. The attempt to codify civil law and to abolish distinct legal regimes in regions like Catalonia was one such example.⁶⁴ They also sought to

construct a polity of male citizens possessed of uniform civil, if not political, rights. The idea of miscegenation, I believe, mirrored this drive toward homogeneity; historians of racial mixture in the colonies hoped for the eradication of physical and cultural difference, one of the pillars of absolutist social and political organization, and the formation of a increasingly uniform population beholden to Spain.

Victor Balaguer was a major, and powerful, representative of this perspective. Balaguer was a prominent Catalan man of letters who served three times as minister of Ultramar in the later nineteenth century, an indication of how deeply implicated Catalonia was in the Spanish colonial project in the period between decolonizations. During his time in office, Balaguer paid particular attention to the Philippines, for instance organizing the Philippine Exhibition in Madrid in 1887. Not only was he personally fascinated by the history and ethnography of the archipelago and convinced of its importance for Spanish scholars and spectators—the 1887 exhibit served as the basis for the collections of Madrid’s Ethnological Museum and Museo-Biblioteca of Ultramar, as well as Balaguer’s own library/museum in Vilanova i la Geltrú south of Barcelona—but he was also sensitive to Catalonia’s growing economic interests in the archipelago. In his words: “The Philippines are the market of the future.”⁶⁵ To facilitate this interest, Balaguer argued that the Philippines must be ruled as Spain had always ruled in the Americas. To the solutions proposed by *La Solidaridad*, Balaguer added that Spain should spread not only its language through the archipelago, but its “race” as well. In other words, Balaguer advocated miscegenation between Spaniards and *indios* as a method of perfecting colonization in the Philippines: “to hispanize the country by the extension of the peninsular race, which in its mixture with the indigenous race gives rise . . . to an energetic and industrious *mestizo* people from whom one can expect much.”⁶⁶ The end result of this process would be the creation of a new Spanish civilization in the Philippines that would tightly link peninsula and archipelago:

This colonization should not be based on racial superiority so as to reduce the indigenous race to virtual slavery. To the contrary; it should harmonize the interests of all and benefit all by following the healthy precept of our wise laws. These always hold that the colony should be the continuation of the metropolis by the extension of the race. This race, upon mixing with the indigenous one, transmits to it the indispensable elements for its ethnological transformation, giving it the means and

condition by which it can claim its proper place among the civilized peoples.⁶⁷

Balaguer almost directly echoed one of his successors as minister of Ultramar, the historian Antonio María Fabié, who in a speech before the Congreso Internacional de Americanistas held in Madrid in 1881 had also emphasized miscegenation as one of the virtues of Spanish colonization, a characteristic Fabié traced to the work of Bartolomé de las Casas. In Fabié's view, miscegenation was the outcome of the compassion preached by Las Casas and enforced by the Spanish Crown in the sixteenth century: "the Spaniards have the honor . . . of being the only conquering people in America to have conserved the indigenous races in its dominions, fusing with them and creating a new race. A new race in which the spirit, the tendency, and the loftiness of its thoughts are those of the superior race, one called upon to carry the generous idea of progress to every corner of the world."⁶⁸

Balaguer and Fabié spoke from the heights of the Spanish colonial regime. Their rendering of colonial history and Balaguer's vision of reformed rule in the Philippines epitomized how Spaniards sought to weld colonial history to the retelling of Spain's national history. Balaguer was interested in questions of economic growth—as a representative of Catalonia, a Spanish region with powerful interests in the Antilles and the Pacific, he could do no less—but in his view the precondition of that growth was the implantation of a more typical Spanish regime, one that sought to assimilate, culturally and biologically, the conquered peoples, rather than marginalize or segregate them. Thus, unity created through mixture would fully "hispanize" the Philippines and assure Spanish success in the Pacific.⁶⁹

Historians have noted recently that Spanish colonial exploitation varied from place to place in the nineteenth century; there was no uniformity of political and economic institutions and interests. In Cuba and Puerto Rico, the colonial state formed a pact with slaveholders to create a productive plantation zone, while in the Philippines, the state relied heavily on the continuity offered by the Catholic Church, especially the regular orders, a set of institutions that Spanish liberals were rapidly smashing in the metropolis itself. In contrast, I believe that the defense of Spanish rule did contain constant themes—centered on the construction, celebration, and even the criticism of exceptionality—that cut across the distinctive forms of domination.⁷⁰ Building upon their understanding of Spanish history's peculiarities, politicians and intellectuals argued that inclusiveness and assimilation were the unique features of Spanish colonization. Whether

through the miscegenation praised by Balaguer and Fabié or the implantation of Spanish civilization advocated by Castelar, Canalejas, and Labra, all agreed that Spain traditionally brought conquered peoples into the fold of the Spanish nationality. In this rendering of conquest and colonization, the apparent conflicts created through war, slavery, despotic rule, and racial heterogeneity were harmonized into a coherent whole by language, religion, laws, and racial mixture. The negative models built into this White Legend were rival European regimes because they were putatively based on either the displacement of conquered peoples or their naked exploitation without the promise of assimilation and civilization. José del Perojo described English colonization: "For the Englishman in America, in Australia, in every part of world, the native is not only not an element of fusion for his race, but actually an impediment, an obstacle to his colonizing plans."⁷¹ Such a view was the antithesis of Spanish goals in the colonizing process.

In short, for Spanish patriots, the consequence of the peculiarities of Spanish history was that there was no division between colonizer and colonized or colony and metropolis, as in other European empires. Colonial history was a chapter of national history. Colonization was a crucial aspect of Spain's *national* peculiarities that distinguished it from other European nations. Moreover, these peculiarities were not proof of Spanish shortcomings and backwardness but evidence of its enlightenment and distinctive approach to modernity. Thus, in contrast to recent historians of Spanish national identity who have remained silent on the role of colonialism or have ironically puzzled over the apparent indifference of nineteenth-century Spanish intellectuals and politicians, I would argue that the diminished colonial regime played a central role in the construction of Spanish national identity and symbols, indeed the very "idea of Spain."⁷²

This idea of Spain facilitated the dual patriotism that historians are coming to see as characteristic of the liberal era, smoothing over the political and regional rifts in the metropolis.⁷³ Historians from across the political spectrum tacitly agreed that Spain had recreated itself overseas. There was considerable difference between the historical visions of a republican like Emilio Castelar, who emphasized the implantation of liberal institutions in the Americas, and a conservative like Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, who emphasized the unity, within Spain and between Spain and the Americas, created through Catholicism. But when seen in dialogue and contention with patriotic Antillean or Philippine histories of Spanish colonization, these works displayed telling similarities. The same is true not

only across politics but methods as well, from Menéndez y Pelayo's study of Spanish American poetry to Miguel Rodríguez-Ferrer's anthropological study of Cuba.⁷⁴ Colonial patriots like the Puerto Rican Agustín Stahl or the Filipino José Rizal crafted histories that emphasized the pre-conquest, indigenous roots of their nations. In both Cuba and Puerto Rico, the African contribution to the nation also became part of the conversation, though generally in muted tones.⁷⁵ The impact of Indians and Africans on the Americas and the peculiarities of national cultures were of relatively little interest to Spaniards. Rather, they pursued the two overlapping versions of a Spanish national historical narrative seen in the writings of Balaguer, Fabié, and Labra. On the one hand, Spain had implanted its institutions in the New World and created a more perfect civilization. On the other, Spain had assimilated conquered and enslaved peoples into the Spanish nationality, both culturally and biologically, a facet of the Spanish "race," itself an "alloy," even before the conquest of the Americas.⁷⁶ In any case, the colonies did not have distinct national histories; their history began with the Spanish conquest.

The republican politician and scholar Emilio Castelar, for instance, vacillated between the two versions of Spain's impact upon its colonies. At times he emphasized the emptiness and pristine quality of the Americas before the conquest. That emptiness allowed the Spaniards to recreate a more perfect Spanish civilization in virgin territory, in which a more refined spirit of liberty ultimately inspired the Spanish American wars of independence in the early nineteenth century. The war between creoles and *peninsulares* was not one between the colonized and the colonizer but between son and father: "Look at the names of those who fought for American independence . . . and you will see that the Bolívars, the Itúrbides, the Egañas, the Hídalgos belonged to our Spain's most conservative classes and regions, children of our magistrates and governors."⁷⁷

Castelar did, however, have to admit that more than Spaniards lived in the Americas. There were indeed Indian civilizations that the Spanish had conquered over the course of the sixteenth century. In his historical rendering, Spain built over these flawed civilizations and assimilated the Indians into the laws and customs of Spain and Europe. Castelar compared Spain to Greece and Rome in its historical role. Like its predecessors, Spain eradicated the barbaric rites, such as human sacrifice, of conquered peoples and welcomed them into a superior civilization.⁷⁸ Unlike its contemporary European rivals, especially England, Spain based its colonizing mission

on assimilation and benevolent treatment of the Indians, a mission most clearly expressed by the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas. Though many patriotic historians in the nineteenth century recoiled from Las Casas because of his fierce criticisms of the conquistadors, Castelar and many other scholars embraced him as the avatar of Spain's civilizing mission. The lesson to be learned from Las Casas was not Spanish brutality but Spanish benevolence and belief in human equality. As Castelar argued: "instead of exterminating the Indians and pushing them into the wilds, as our proud Saxon rivals did, we accepted them into our society."⁷⁹ Thus, whether representing the colonies, past or present, as an empty Eden or as lands peopled by benighted barbarians, Castelar implied that the colonies had no history before 1492. In the blunt words of W. E. Retana, Spain's leading historian of the Philippines in the nineteenth century: "the history of the Philippines is little more than the history of its conquerors."⁸⁰

"You are Spaniards and Christians"

Spaniards from politically and regionally diverse perspectives could agree on the contours of this history in the nineteenth century and the explanations it offered for Spain's apparent historical contrariness when compared to other European colonial empires. Such was far from the case in the colonies, even among those classes that otherwise collaborated with the restructured colonial regime. The most potent and persistent challenge to this metropolitan vision of national history and justification of continued colonial rule came from Cuban patriots who fought for independence between 1868 and 1898. The Cuban separatist leader José Martí urged Cubans and other Latin Americans to cast off the influence of Europe and to build nations and governments with "native elements."⁸¹ Recent works on the separatist movement have argued that leaders like Martí sought to articulate a Cuban nationality that effaced class, racial, and ethnic divisions in colonial society to create a broad front against Spain and to accommodate the disparate supporters of independence, "a sincere brotherhood of Cubans of the most diverse origins."⁸² Martí and the patriotic leadership responded in part to the active participation of Cubans of color, both slave and free, in the wars against Spain. They were also countering Spain's efforts to paint the rebellion as a race war that pitted uncivilized blacks against white Cubans and Spaniards in the hope of winning adherents and dividing the separatist movement itself. While there is disagreement about

the extent to which Cuban patriots were able to defeat racism in their own ranks, there is little doubt that they succeeded in forging the ideal of a raceless nation as they battled Spain.⁸³

That the Spanish colonial state used the specter of race war in Cuba as a tool against the separatist movement seems clear. Yet this tactic is in need of further explanation because, as we have seen, over the course of the nineteenth century, Spanish patriots fashioned their own vision of the raceless nation. Indeed, in contemplating the reform of Spanish colonization in the Philippines through miscegenation, Balaguer had spoken of the need to “harmonize the interests of all and benefit all,” a phrase reminiscent of Martí’s exhortation to Cubans to fight for independence “with all and for the good of all.”⁸⁴ If Spain’s peculiarity as a colonizing power was its ability to incorporate the colonized into its culture and nationality through a variety of means, then people of African descent clearly had a place in the Spanish nation regardless of racial difference. During the process of Antillean slave emancipation between 1868 and 1886, Spanish policymakers and commentators made precisely this argument: that through the process of enslavement, Africans had been educated in the ways of Spanish civilization and become Spaniards.

However, as I will show, this discourse on nationality carried within itself the suspicion of African barbarism and foreignness, already apparent at the Cortes of Cádiz when African-descended people were defined as Spaniards yet barred from active citizenship, while slaves were excluded from the imagined national community altogether. Tamar Herzog has recently reminded historians that under the old regime Africans were defined as foreigners, even when freed from slavery, unlike Indians, whom the Crown treated as natives of the conquered lands. These uneven forms of political membership inherited from the old regime came to the surface of the new as slave emancipation intersected with the struggle for Cuban independence.⁸⁵

Slave emancipation in the Antilles was a protracted process. As a first step, the Spanish government banned the slave trade to Cuba in 1867 after fifty years of British pressure to do so (the treaty brought the trade to a close in 1870). It then responded to the outbreak of rebellions in Cuba and Puerto Rico in 1868 and the radicalization of antislavery sentiment in Spain itself. Puerto Rican slavery was abolished in 1873. In Cuba, the Spanish state sought to safeguard the interests of the major sugar planters by delaying emancipation for as long as possible. Slavery was dismantled by a confluence of separatist rebellion in the eastern end of the island (the

separatist leadership declared slavery abolished in the zones it controlled) and gradualist laws passed by Spain in 1870 and 1880 before final abolition in 1886. Thus, beginning in the 1860s and lasting well beyond the end of slavery in the 1880s, discussion of slavery, emancipation, separatism, and the place of ex-slaves in post-emancipation societies raged through Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. For Spaniards, the emancipation process was a test not only for the colonial economy but also for the Spanish nationality.⁸⁶

Many commentators argued that assimilation into the Spanish nationality had begun with the very act of enslavement. Rescuing Africans from cannibalism and barbarism had introduced them to Christianity and Spanish civilization. Moreover, the Spanish meted out far better treatment to their slaves than did other European powers, especially the English. For instance, in an essay first published in 1811 while the Cortes of Cádiz was debating the place of slavery in the new regime, Isidro de Antillón justified its continuation in Spanish America by demonstrating that slaves preferred Spanish masters to British: "That Spain treats its slaves better is confirmed by the blacks of Georgia who continuously escape to the Floridas where they experience greater humanity and consideration for their unfortunate condition."⁸⁷

An especially tortuous rendering of this thesis was to be found in the polemical essays of the Spanish official José Ferrer de Couto. Ferrer de Couto was an army officer and colonial bureaucrat who gained some notoriety in the 1860s for his vociferous defense of Spain against creole patriots as well as his gruesomely racist rationalizations of African slavery.⁸⁸ As an intransigent defender of the colonial status quo, Ferrer de Couto based his vindication of the current regime on a glowing history of Spanish accomplishments in the New World. In his essays, he dedicated a considerable amount of space to criticizing the most polemical figure in Spanish colonial history, Bartolomé de las Casas, who demanded a reckoning, positive or negative, from every historian of Spain in America in the nineteenth century.⁸⁹ Las Casas, in his view, was "a foreigner by origin, vehement in his discourses, exclusive in his opinions, audacious in his calumnies, constant in his rancor, and impious in his revenge."⁹⁰ Ferrer de Couto was particularly blunt in his sentiments against Las Casas, going a step further than most of his critics by explicitly denying Las Casas's Spanish birth.

Nonetheless, he did admit that Las Casas deserved credit for one major accomplishment, the introduction of African slavery into the Americas. This charge was an oft-repeated canard put forth by detractors such as Fernández de Navarrete, who sought to diminish Las Casas's defense

of the Indians by laying squarely upon him the responsibility for the origin of the African slave trade. Ferrer de Couto, however, gave his version a peculiar twist by using this charge to praise, rather than denigrate, Las Casas. Through this policy, Las Casas was not only saving Africans from a horrible fate in Africa but also establishing the foundations of Spain's just government over the American Indians: "[Las Casas] hit upon the truly humanitarian and redemptive idea of rescuing black prisoners from being devoured, like exquisite delicacies, by their captors. This achieved the double effect of extinguishing that abominable practice and of alleviating the poor Indians of America of the abuses [*vejámenes*] that they suffered because they were not accustomed to the hard work on their land and the active exploitation of their wealth."⁹¹ The end result of the African slave trade (or the rescue of prisoners, in Ferrer de Couto's words) was that "much human blood was saved by this rescue and many ferocious peoples stopped eating their own flesh with which they nourished themselves, becoming, without knowing it, rational."⁹² Thus, African slavery in the Americas, far from being the moral outrage condemned by nineteenth-century abolitionists, was a humane institution that brought cannibalism in Africa to an end while also incorporating slaves into Spanish and European civilization.

Ferrer de Couto's defense of slavery posited African barbarism and Spanish civility, an opposition that girded other histories of slavery's origins, effects, and abolition. For instance, a Spanish textbook on world geography approved for use in Cuba during the final stages of slave emancipation employed similar images of Africans:

The habits and customs of the inhabitants of central Africa in particular are repugnant. For instance, their dress, if any, is usually made up of woven, tattered grass worn around the waist. Among them, there are tribes that eat the prisoners they take in their constant wars. Others put a similar end to sick members of their own families and to the elderly. They force their women to serve from their knees and sell even their own children into slavery.⁹³

Spanish observations on the course of slave emancipation made similar references to Africa and the civilizing effects of enslavement. In a pamphlet addressed to the *Honrados Bomberos*, a colored militia that had served on the Spanish side in the 'Ten Years' War, the Spanish priest José Pla cajoled the former slaves, urging them to remember the debt of gratitude they owed their Spanish masters not only for freeing them but also for enslaving them in the first place:

It is now incumbent upon you *libertos* [freed slaves] to express your gratitude to the Spanish government. . . . In Africa you would be idiots and you would be submerged in the most stupid ignorance. In Cuba, under the Spanish flag, you have acquired the habits of honest labor and you have become Christians. Comply faithfully with the duties imposed upon you by the name you have received from religion and the homeland [*patria*]. Do not allow yourselves to be fascinated by false theories that seduce the imagination and are opposed to good sense. You are Spaniards and Christians . . .⁹⁴

The emphasis of his message to the thousands of slaves gaining their freedom was one of inclusion and submission; through enslavement, Africans had become “Spaniards and Christians,” incorporated into the dominant civilization by their obedience to the state and the church, also implied in the midst of the Ten Years’ War by a photograph of a black Cuban soldier serving alongside the different Spanish services in defense of Spain’s “national integrity” (figure 1.1).⁹⁵

From the opposite end of the Spanish political spectrum came a similarly prescriptive warning about the use of freedom and the need for gratitude and submissiveness. As discussed in the opening of this chapter, in 1894 the Directorio Central de las Sociedades de la Raza de Color de la Isla de Cuba honored Rafael María de Labra with a statue “symbolizing the spirit of liberty” in acknowledgement of his leadership of the Spanish Abolitionist Society (founded 1865) and his advocacy for greater political and civil rights in post-emancipation Cuba. In accepting the honor, Labra celebrated the works and spirit of the Directorio and indicated the reforms needed to improve the condition of free blacks in Cuba. However, he also paused to warn the Directorio’s leaders that they must not “elude the law of human solidarity” or resort to a “machination of race against race.” The fear of violence and racial conflict haunted his final warning: “Such an undertaking would merit the unconditional condemnation of the abolitionists who have always thought in terms of redemption, not revenge.”⁹⁶ Labra’s prescription drew an outraged response from the pages of the Cuban newspaper, *La Igualdad*: “But Mr. Labra . . . knows perfectly well, as he follows with interest the steps we take along the road of our regeneration, *that we do not advocate exclusiveness, nor do we plot machinations of race against race.*”⁹⁷

That latent tension, which existed even between staunch allies like Labra and the Directorio’s founder, Juan Gualberto Gómez, exploded with the outbreak of war in 1895. The renewal of conflict between Spain and

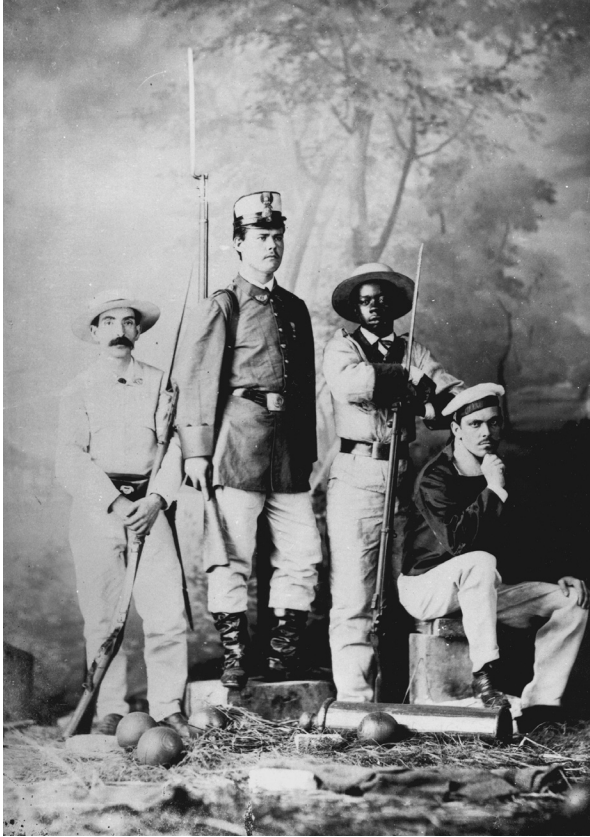


Figure 1.1. “Defenders of the National Integrity.” This image shows the metropolitan vision of the nation during the Ten Years’ War in Cuba, emphasizing Spain’s ability to assimilate conquered and enslaved peoples over the centuries of rule in the Americas.

Cuban patriots soon after the final destruction of Cuban slavery led Spaniards to dramatize the suspicion of barbarism and foreignness that lurked in Spanish representations of Africa, slavery, and post-emancipation society. Former slaves joined the Cuban insurgency and men of color rose to positions of authority, just as they had done during the Ten Years’ War. As Ada Ferrer has argued, the Spanish strategy in combating the insurgency included casting it as a race war that pitted barbaric blacks against civilized whites.⁹⁸

This attitude was widespread not only in the combat zone but also in

the metropolis. Even Spaniards who had fought consistently for the abolition of Antillean slavery and the civil and political rights of freed slaves were complicit. In a sense, Prospero was once again hurling invective at Caliban for his supposed ingratitude and treachery. *La Campana de Gracia*, a republican periodical that had advocated slave emancipation in strident terms, published inflammatory images of the Cuban forces, representing them as grotesque caricatures of Afro-Cubans. Like many Spanish commentators, Republicans implied that former slaves were ungrateful for all that Spain had done for them, beginning with emancipation. Two caricatures that featured the Spanish captain general Arsenio Martínez Campos convey not only racial terror and loathing, but also a strong sense of betrayal (see figures 1.2 and 1.3).⁹⁹

General Arsenio Martínez Campos was dispatched to Cuba in 1895 to



Figure 1.2. This caricature shows the unsuspecting Martínez Campos strolling through Cuba, hungrily watched by a hidden black insurgent made to look like an alligator.



Figure 1.3. In *La Campana de Gracia's* rendering, Martínez Campos's policy of reconciliation and paternalism leads directly to horrendous violence by the black insurgents he coddled: Spanish troops hacked to death with machetes and a train exploding in the background.

quell the insurgency. He had done the same in 1878, brokering the Pact of Zanjón with Cuban patriot forces. The scale of the new war, however, was much larger and the offensives of the Cuban Liberating Army more effective in breaking through Spanish defenses. The conservative government of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo quickly replaced Martínez Campos, whom many in the metropolis considered too conciliatory, as these images imply in crude fashion. The new commander was General Valeriano Weyler. Weyler, too, had considerable colonial experience as captain general of the Philippines, where he had butted heads with José Rizal. In contrast to Martínez Campos, who believed in the efficacy of negotiations and reforms, Weyler famously stated that “one answers war with war.” Part of his answer was the use of concentration camps devised to isolate the insurgency from the agrarian population, leading to tens of thousands of civilian deaths.

Images of race war and the sense of betrayal burgeoned in other media as well. D. J. O'Connor's recent study has shown that numerous plays about

the wars in Cuba and the Philippines were staged in Spain between 1895 and 1898. Those concerning Cuba were deeply implicated in the discourse on race war. For instance, in "Un alcalde en la Manigua" (1898), the author depicted black Cubans as "dirty, greasy animals."¹⁰⁰ Another author, M. Dolcet, actually used the military leader of the Cuban insurrection, the mulatto Antonio Maceo, to voice Spanish views about civilization and barbarism. The Maceo of "Muerte de Maceo" (1898) valued his Spanish blood and denounced his *liberto* troops for their servility and lack of gratitude to the Spanish colonial overlords: "You . . . were not slaves for nothing. Impotent to cast off your chains yourselves, you owe your freedom to the generosity of the Spaniards."¹⁰¹ Ultimately, this Maceo chose to separate himself from his black soldiers: "You swarm of worthless negros! . . . I don't belong to you. . . . I am of mixed blood!"¹⁰² Thus, the author of "Muerte de Maceo" made the play's hero into the mouthpiece for Spanish colonial ideology. Spain promised inclusion and civilization to the colonized and enslaved; rejection of that promise was conclusive proof of incivility and barbarism.

Antonio Maceo as spokesman for Spain appears surprising, if not perverse. Yet, this personification epitomized the agonizing view that Spaniards held of their colonial and national past and present in the nineteenth century. Emilio Castelar had argued that the proof of Spanish colonialism's superiority and success was ironically to be found in the very wreckers of Spanish rule in the early nineteenth century, creole patriots like Hidalgo and Bolívar. In his view, what moved them was not hatred for Spain but the spirit of liberty that Spain had implanted in its New World colonies. Like other Spanish commentators, Castelar argued that Spain had recreated itself overseas, either by perfecting metropolitan institutions in new lands or by mixing with the native peoples and incorporating them into Spanish civilization, processes that had already taken place in the metropolis itself in the centuries preceding overseas expansion. The dramatist's rendering of Maceo partook of this perspective; Maceo's very act of rebellion for Cuban independence, as well as his mixed blood, demonstrated how profoundly Spanish he was. Maceo represented the apotheosis of Spanish colonization in the Americas, as did Hidalgo and Bolívar before him.

Like Rafael María de Labra's postcolonial reflections on Spain and Cuba, the appropriation of Maceo, coupled with the denunciation of Afro-Cuban rebels, indicated how prominently the *provincias de Ultramar* figured in the Spanish national imagination in the nineteenth century. Cuba was a proving ground for the construction of the new regime, just as much as metropolitan regions like Catalonia and Galicia. The feelings of betrayal

expressed during the war with Cuban patriots arose from a vision of the Spanish state that vacillated between empire and nation. Such was the case despite the apparent lessons of conquest and colonization learned in the age of revolution by most Europeans. Enlightenment theorists like Adam Smith wrote Spain off as a historical relic, doomed largely by the nature of its archaic form of colonization and its apparent indifference to the principles of political and economic liberty. Though most of the American colonies—not only of Spain but of England and France as well—gained their independence during the age of revolution, Spaniards after the 1830s rejected Smith's vision of European overseas expansion and sought to construct a national historical narrative that would legitimate the continuation of Spanish rule in the Antilles and Pacific against the currents of history. The rhetoric and archives of empire forged during the Habsburg dynasty and rejuvenated under the Bourbons provided nineteenth-century patriots not only with the solace of grandeur but also with the tools and resources to craft a national historiography in response to challenges from foreign and colonial critics alike. From a metropolitan perspective, the threat posed by Cuban separatism and slave emancipation in the last third of the nineteenth century was not only a colonial crisis but also a crisis of the nation first articulated at Cádiz and defended until the dying days of the century.