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On Rivers and Maps: Iberian Approaches to Comparatism

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For many years, scholars have studied the case of Spain, and even the entire Iberian Peninsula, as a separate entity within the confines of Europe.¹ Countries such as Portugal and Castile, that were once leaders in the transformation of the Western world, opening up new and poignant ways of relationship with the Other, have become modern nations which, because of their eccentricity, are commonly depicted as failing to fulfill the requirements of the Northern European paradigm. The ways of colonialism and the access to modernity have been, for these countries, everything but an easy path. Thus, scholars (some within the context of Europe, others within the framework of globalization and colonialism) have used terms like “alternative,” “marginal,” and “peripheral” to portray the Iberian experience.² Though well-intended, this kind of approach only stresses the original sin of the accuser: “Let the one without sin cast the first stone.” Recent studies, such as John H. Elliott’s *Empires of the Atlantic World* (2007), teach us many lessons. For one thing, they show that colonialism and its aftermath is a convoluted history in which there are only losers, particularly among the “discovered.” When discussing general historical and cultural movements, Elliott portrays in dazzling ways the many oddities related to time and space. The complications introduced by the effects of time-lag are further amplified by the effects of fragmentation, and by the complex dialogue between center and periphery, which is the unpredictable implication in the colonizing society of its creation of parallel worlds, similar but extremely different. This mirror effect can be further developed if we turn the tables and look at just the case of Castile and Portugal—or, even better, the entire Iberian Peninsula—from such a perspective. By this I mean looking at the study of cultural issues from a multicultural and plurilinguistic perspective, which allows us to shift paradigms and challenge preconceptions.

In recent years we have witnessed an unfathomable general reassessment of what it means to study culture/literature in the Iberian Peninsula, as has been suggested by several studies.³ Tensions connected with the overlapping movements of national affirmation and globalization have provoked different perspectives, new ways of look-

ing at old issues. What was once depicted as a backward and lagging area in Europe, has, in recent years, been looked at very differently. Issues of multiplicity and cultural difference have been revalued as something positive and as potential sources of inspiration and reformulation for the tortuous, unresolved, postcolonial narratives of former major players, such as the UK or France. Not too long ago, Joan Ramon Resina inquired in non-rhetorical terms: "What would happen if Hispanism were conceived as a supranational discipline in which the various cultures of the Iberian peninsula (including the Portuguese) could be studied in a non-hierarchical relation to each other?" (114). However, this poignant question has not yet been satisfactorily answered.

Here I propose a reflection on comparative literature in the Iberian Peninsula, which takes into account this emerging drive for the redefinition of Hispanism. I will do this through the reading of two motifs, rivers and maps, as a way of presenting a different version of Comparatism, one more akin to issues of center and periphery, otherness and non hierarchical assumptions. This approach is not exactly a "humanistic geography." Although this project owes much to that field, it is not by any means inscribed in that tradition. Rather, it is indebted to the idea of restoring and making explicit the relation between knowledge and human interests. In this article I want to emphasize a goal I have in common with geographers: "to explore how worlds, places, landscapes, meanings, and human experiences are socially constructed and help constitute specific cultural contexts" (Adams, Hoelscher, and Till XVI). In fact, what I pursue is both a reflection on Comparatism and the discussion of two practical cases, which provide lessons on how to read in a non-centripetal way.

Claudio Guillén's "Europa: ciencia e inconsciencia," a chapter in his latest book *Múltiples moradas* (1998), suggests a way of "reading" Europe. He explores in a new light some concepts dear to him, such as the combination of unity and diversity, which he deems crucial in a general discussion of Comparatism. He proposes that the conceptualization of "Europe" is aware of and based on the awareness of it as a heterogeneous conglomeration of juxtaposed lands, or unwelded pieces, and that to grasp this multifarious reality requires a plurality of perspectives and definitions as varied as they are uncomfortably accurate: states, nations, countries, autonomies, provinces, communities, nationalities, territories, regions, cantons, shires, jurisdictions, municipalities, towns, counties, towns, hamlets, villages, places (381–82). The reason for this variety of terms lies within a diversity of criteria: geography, history, politics, society, and economy. It is the combination of all these factors what has played a part in an equivocal complicity. He concludes that no political map of the continent suggests the abundance he describes, and that as a place of interspaces, multiplication of countless adjacent fragments, almost infinitely divisible, Europe offers the historian not only successive changes but also rhythmic reiterations, recurrent conflictive structures (383).

In his discussion of Europe he also borrows a key idea from Francisco Tomás y Valiente: that our identity does not belong to a single unique entity. On the con-

trary, we belong to different circles, not as uncommitted individualists, but rather as rational human beings aware of the true complexity of social reality, where every man is a point of intersection between different collective subjects (qtd. in Guillén 403). Moreover, Guillén introduces the idea of dialogue of pluralities, expanding what Edgar Morin proposed in his book *Penser l'Europe*. The French thinker provides some complementary thoughts, particularly that a dialogue of pluralities pushes for change and transformation. What is "important" to note about European culture, according to Morin, is not only its "governing ideas (Christianity, humanism reason, science) but also their opposites." The "genius" of the continent, he writes "does not rest solely in plurality and change, but more precisely in the dialogue between the pluralities that produce the change." He points out that the redeeming qualities of Europe can be found specifically in the "antagonism between the old and the new," and not just in the "production of the new as such" (74). This is important because honoring and exploring this antagonism leads us closer to the concept of enrichment through dialogue and the confrontation of diversity. Although Morin sounds a little bit too optimistic, not taking into account the sheer quantity of blood, pain, and hatred generated by the confrontation of opposite religious, philosophical, and political schools of thought, his concept of a "dialogue of pluralities" may be taken as a good objective for the future. Guillén concludes his essay on a more personal note suggesting that the "complexity we struggle to grasp is best understood as the constant movement and oscillation between concepts and their limits" (426). He warns against "reducing either the multiplicity that makes it possible nor the acts of conscience that tend to differentiate and discover it—in the I, in the world" (426). Albeit an overtly idealistic, almost utopian conceptualization by both Morin and Guillén, the latter's essay gets us interested in conflictive notions, in new ways of reading a continent both as an entity and as the purveyor of a rich literary tradition. Guillén's proposal encapsulates many tools to read a continent, exploring, in fact, the rich literary tradition on which it has been founded, and which goes well beyond the secluded world of conventional comparative literature. By taking Guillén's conflictive notions in the borders of literature a bit further, I wish to pursue a vindication of comparative literature in the Iberian Peninsula.

Drawing Rivers

"Los mismos que expulsaron a los judíos en 1492 nos expulsan a nosotros" (The same people who expelled the Jews in 1492 are expelling us), said Joaquim Xirau in 1939 on his way to exile. For too long the notion of hispanicity has been defined through a politics of exclusions and inclusions, expulsions and executions, censorship and repression, conquest and colonization, and concentration camps and forced labor. Thus, fear and menace have been the *mot d'ordre* among so-called intellectual circles. Rivers provide an illuminating example of the appropriation and (re)definition of space because they have been incorporated into a symbolic geography.

Let's start with the image of a particular river, as portrayed by Italian critic Claudio Magris. In his book *Danubio* (1986), Magris uses Heraclitus' image of the river applied to the Danube in a rather innovative way. For him the Danube represents a consideration of identity. A river, which is primarily a geographical trait, exudes other notions beyond physicality. In fact, certain rivers seem to express an identity, or even a notion of diversity. On the other hand, the case of the Rhine, an iconic German river, offers a conflictive notion. According to Claudio Magris the Rhine is mostly "un mistico custode della stirpe" (28) (a mystic custodian of the stock), whereas the Danube has a much more complex meaning because

è il fiume di Vienna, di Bratislava, di Budapest, di Belgrado, della Dacia, il nastro che attraversa e cinge, come l'Oceano cingeva il mondo greco, l'Austria asburgica, della quale il mito e l'ideologia hanno fatto il simbolo di una koinè plurima e sovranazionale. . . . Il Danubio è la Mitteleuropa tedesca-magiara-slava-romanza-ebraica, polemicamente contrapposta al Reich germanico. (28–29)

(This is the river of Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Belgrade, Dacia, the circle which, the same way the Ocean surrounded the Greek world, crosses and surrounds Habsburg, Austria, which through myth and ideology has become a symbol for a plural koinè. . . . The Danube is the Mitteleuropa German-Magyar-Slavic-Romance-Hebraic, polemically contrasted to the German Reich.)

Precisely because rivers move constantly, they have become a symbol of renovation, a statement against fixation and stillness, contrary to what is identical and cannot be modified. It is very clear, however, that here we are not discussing actual rivers, or their physical aspect. On the contrary, Magris encourages us to speak of a symbolic geography. His characterization of these two rivers allows us to make a distinction between alternative versions of identity. In fact, this image of rivers is useful when trying to find other ways of discussing Hispanicity or Spanishness (*españolidad*), moving away from the "españolada" in the version portrayed by the Francoist Ministry of Information and Tourism: *Spain is different*, Fraga Iribarne dixit. As is well known, slogans such as "*Spain is different*" wanted to stress bullfights, beaches, and "fiestas" (Kaplan 193). Accordingly, I want to stay away from a notion of hispanicity that is "carpetoverónico," identical, and stationary in character, and to offer, as a substitute, a more open notion, based on variety and abstractness.

In a *Thousand Plateaus (Mille Plateaux)* (1980) Deleuze and Guattari propose a concept of alternative space, one which belongs to nomads, living on the fringes of an established—striated—society, a concept which may prove very useful in my discussion of rivers and maps. On the one hand we encounter the walled city-state, closed and with a well regulated spatiality. The second—smooth—kind of space is that of the "bricoleur," the nomad's camp, built with materials at hand, an informal workplace without walls. Smooth space invites roaming, wandering between regions, instead of going from place to place with specific starting and finishing points.

Smooth space is without landmarks, or with landmarks that are too feeble to remain. Rather, trajectory itself becomes a landmark:

The first aspect of the haptic, smooth space of close vision is that its orientations, landmarks, and linkages are in continuous variation; it operates step by step. Examples are the desert, steppe, ice, and sea, local spaces of pure connection. Contrary to what is sometimes said, one never sees from a distance in a space of this kind, nor does one see it from a distance; one is never "in front of," any more than one is "in" (one is "on . . ."). Orientations are not constant but change according to temporary vegetation, occupations, and precipitation. There is no visual model for points of reference that would make them interchangeable and unite them in an inertial class assignable to an immobile outside observer. (Deleuze and Guattari 493)

Against the well-defined striated space, these authors juxtaposed smooth space. This well-known distinction allowed the diffusion of key concepts such as deterritorialization, which derives from the spatial metaphor. It describes the condition of the "plane of consistency" or "smooth space." Its opposite—territorialization—describes the condition of "striated space." As proposed by these authors, striated space consists of lines between points; smooth space consists of points between lines. Striated space consists predominantly of closed intervals; smooth space of open intervals. Striated space closes off surfaces; smooth space consists of "distributed" surfaces (480–81). To better understand this use of space we could add Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad: the perceived, the conceived, and the lived (33–39). All the rivers, as perceived by writers, use as a starting point, a spatial practice: that is, the production and reproduction of spatial relations between objects and products. The spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space.

Rivers can be related to this sense of space, as they have a dual condition of being, at the same time, smooth and striated. They define, but at the same time, are difficult to define. From a geographical perspective, they set a very clear path, but, likewise, their content (meaning) is difficult to ascertain. They set landmarks and borders, but their significance is transferable. At the same time, rivers can be substitutes, through a synecdochical effect, for an entire country, and can connect points in their path (as in the quote from Magris), thus creating a new identity that goes beyond the limitations of political borders. In Lefebvre's terms, they are crucial for a definition of space. Subsequently when poet Josep Carner evokes a mythical and imaginary France through images of rain and rivers, in his sonnet "Plou" from *Cor quiet* (1925), he summarizes the map of France in a few names of rivers: "Paris regala deplorablement; / es nega Niça d'aiguarells en doina. / Milers d'esgarrafances d'un moment / punyen Sena, Garona, Rin i Roine" (147) (Paris swamps herself deplorably; / Nice is drowning. / A thousand shivers suddenly / hit Seine, Garonne, Rhine, Rhoine).

When this poem was written, rain had not only a meaning in climatic terms, but

also had a "moral" meaning, as it was perceived to provide moments of recollection and reflection. This can also be perceived in a Eugeni d'Ors' 1907 "glosa":

Oh Pluja! Germana la Pluja, tu no n'ets responsable pas, de les inundacions. Ja hem quedat que la culpa era dels homes que no s'autocanalitzaven.—En canvi a n'a tu, quants beneficis te devem, els homes civils! [. . .] Tu proporciones ocasió a què llegeixin llibres alguns homes que no llegirien llibres. [. . .] Potser per a l'establiment definitiu de la nostra civilitat en convindria això: que ploqués—no, tant com ploure, no,—que plovisquegés tres anys de carrera, aquí. . . . Amb això ens estariem a casa, aniríem als còrcols, als salons, als teatres, però no a passejar. [. . .] I després de tres anys ja començaríem a tenir dret, sense perill, al bon sol, i ja ens assemblem lo suficient a París per a començar a pensar en assemblem-nos a Atenes. (667–68)

(Oh Rain! Sister Rain, you aren't responsible for the floods. We already decided that men who don't channel themselves are at fault.—On the contrary, how many benefits do we civilized men owe you! [. . .] You give men who otherwise would not read books occasion to read them [. . .] Maybe it would be convenient for the definitive establishment of our civility that it would rain—no, not so much rain, no—that it would drizzle here three years straight. . . . If it were so we would stay home, we would go to the gatherings, to the sitting rooms, to the theatres, but we wouldn't go for walks. [. . .] And after three years we would begin, without danger, to have a right to the sun; and then we would resemble Paris closely enough to begin to think about resembling Athens.)

The rivers in Carner's poem are clearly a substitute for the whole of France, but they are also a referent for civility, and, furthermore, a certain model of European civilization. This goal of refinement can be attained through reading and study, and in a rainy climate it is much easier not to be distracted by café life. In the sophisticated mental rewriting of European tradition performed by Catalan "noucentistes," Paris is, among other things, a passport to get to Greece, its classic culture an idealized version of the Mediterranean, a goal very dear to the them ("ens assemblem lo suficient a París per a començar a pensar en assemblem-nos a Atenes"). Carner manages to draw a map of France based on parts of its geography: regions (Britanny and Normandy), cities (Paris and Nice), and the four main rivers (Seine, Garone, Rhine, and Rhône), creating a physical, yet imagined version of the whole country.

In a similar way, but with different meaning, Federico García Lorca incorporates two of Granada's rivers in a poem, opposing them to the Guadalquivir, the main Andalusian river. In "Baladilla de los tres ríos" from *Poema del cante jondo* ("Baladilla of the Three Rivers," from *Poem of the Andalusian Song*), we read contrasting versions of Andalusia:

El río Guadalquivir
va entre naranjos y olivos,

los dos ríos de Granada
bajan de la nieve al trigo.

¡Ay, amor
que se fue y no vino!

El río Guadalquivir
tiene las barbas granates,
los dos ríos de Granada
uno llanto y otro sangre. (142)

(The River Guadalquivir / goes between orange and olive trees, / Granada's two rivers / flow down from the snow to the wheat. / Oh, love / that went and didn't come! / The River Guadalquivir / has crimson beard, / Granada's two rivers / one tears and the other blood.)

In this way, Lorca indicates how different the Guadalquivir River is from its tributaries, the Darro and the Genil. This is perceived through different notions of vegetation, color, and sorrow, linked to these two rivers, which imply opposite places and states of mind: the planes—Guadalquivir—opposed to the steep descent from Sierra Nevada, as represented by the Darro and the Genil. Metonymically, both rivers are converted respectively into "llanto" and "sangre," two of the most recurrent words in Lorca's poetry and plays. Here we also recognize typical distinctions in Lorca's work: between dry land and the magical, onirical forest, individual freedom and moral constraints, wedding and blood, life and death. The two Granadine rivers are real, as they belong to the realm of geography, but they attain a symbolic status when they confront the Guadalquivir.

Alberto Caeiro, one of Fernando Pessoa's heteronyms, in a poem from *O Guardador de Rebanhos* (1911–12), "O Tejo é mais belo," compared, through a paradox, the powerful Tejo (Tagus) with the nameless minuscule river, which crosses his small town:

O Tejo é mais belo que o rio que corre pela minha aldeia,
Mas o Tejo não é mais belo que o rio que corre pela minha aldeia
Porque o Tejo não é o rio que corre pela minha aldeia.
[. . .]
O Tejo desce de Espanha
E o Tejo entra no mar em Portugal.
Toda a gente sabe isso.
Mas poucos sabem qual é o rio da minha aldeia
E para onde ele vai
E donde ele vem.

É por isso porque pertence a menos gente,
É mais livre e maior o rio da minha aldeia.

(The Tagus is more beautiful than the river that runs through my village, / But the Tagus is not more beautiful than the river that runs through my village / Because the Tagus is not the river that runs through my village. [. . .] The Tagus arrives from Spain / And the river Tagus enters the sea in Portugal. / Everybody knows that. / But few know which is the river of my village / And where it goes / And where it comes from. / And because it belongs to fewer people / It is freer and larger than the river in my village.)

This reductionism of sorts is useful in exalting small things, in a re-creation of the *aurea mediocritas*, and thus allows the contrast of a lesser known and anonymous local river—which clearly is of immense intimate value to the poet—with a very well-known river of Iberian dimensions. In a way he is expressing a vindication of small things, meaning that identity is closer to anonymous intimate realities, the “*terruño*,” or *petit pays*. The conclusion of the poem stresses this aspect of disparity between the cosmopolitan world and the little familiar corner:

Pelo Tejo vai-se para o Mundo.
Para além do Tejo há a América
E a fortuna daqueles que a encontram.
Ninguém nunca pensou no que há para além
Do rio da minha aldeia. O rio da minha aldeia não faz pensar em nada.
Quem está ao pé dele está só ao pé dele. (53–54)

(Through the Tagus you get to the world. / Beyond the Tagus there is América / and fortune for those who can find it. / Nobody ever thought what it is in addition / to my village's river. My village's river makes you not think about anything. / Who is next to it is next to it.)

Here, the river Tagus has no association with grandeur or connections to other continents. It does not make you think about anything. The river only reminds you that you are there: “Quem está ao pé dele está só ao pé dele.” Pessoa's consideration can be related to what Georges Perec wrote about space in *Êspèce d'espaces* (1974). His is an idealistic perception of space as immutable, one which creates emotional linkage to points in somebody's life map. He imagines “stable, static, untouchable” (122) places that serve as references for one's personal history. Together with the emblematic artifacts of one's life they comprise “the attic of [one's] childhood filled with unbroken memories” (122). But he realizes immediately that this is an impossible dream because of time's destruction, and that it creates a sense of doubt and a need for marking space. “Those sorts of places,” he writes, “don't exist” (122). For Perec, space is always in doubt and he feels the constant “need to demarcate it, designate

it” (122). It is never simply given to you, he writes; you must “conquer it” (122). But because these intimate spaces are part of some sort of personal photography collection, one cannot keep them, because they have been destroyed by time. Perec describes his spaces as “fragile”; time has “used them, destroyed them” and “nothing will ever again resemble what it was” (122). He sees “yellowed photos torn around the edges” and he can no longer recognize them (122). That is why writing, as Perec concludes, is one of the few available protocols for saving lost space. He describes writing as a way “to try meticulously to retain something . . . to snatch some snippets from the void that deepens, to leave some part, a groove, a trace, a mark or somekind of sign” (123). A postmodern version of Proust's need for remembrance, these words are a reminder of the fragility of the present, and the need to inscribe in our own intimate landscape a sense of property. It is also a vindication of an intimate reality without big names, those who become recognizers. In this sense it is similar to Pessoa's claim that intimate space—a nameless river—provides a better understanding of one's intimate world, and is much more powerful from a representational point of view. In other words, he puts forward the strength of quasi-anonymity against the power of fame and name recognition.

In yet another poem, “Tresmares” by Gerardo Diego, the poet gives voice to a mountain peak in Cantabria and he converts it into a symbol and birthplace of a certain reductive conception of Iberia:

Ni una gasa de niebla ni una lluvia
o cellisca ni una dádiva de nieve
ni un borbollar de fuentes candorosa
dejo perderse. Madre soy de Iberia
que incesante en mi seno nace y dura.
A los tres mares que la ciñen, corren
—distintas y purísimas—mis aguas.
Al Ebro el Híjar, el Pisuerga al Duero
y el Nansa se despeña. Tres destinos:
Mediterráneo, Atlántico, Cantábrico.
Y mi cúspide eterna, bendiciendo
—vientos de Dios—España toda en torno.
Prostérnate en mi altar si eres hispano.
Si de otras tierras, mira, admira y calla. (419)

(Not a thin film of fog nor rain nor / slush nor a downpour of snow / nor innocent spouting fountains / will I let go to waste. I am the mother of Iberia, / that in my breast is born and endures without end. / To the three seas that cradle her, my waters / —distinct and pure-run free. / Híjar to the Ebro, Pisuerga to the Douro / And the Nansa over flows. / Three different seas: / Mediterranean, Atlantic, Cantabrig. / And my eternal summit, blessing / —winds of God—Spain all around. / Prostrate yourself at my altar if you are Hispanic. / If a foreigner: look, admire, and shut up.)

While rivers are like "sons," the mountain is an "altar" only for true believers of a very specific origin—"hispano"—and this altar must impose silence and respect on those visitors coming from other countries ("otras tierras"). Here we have shifted the paradigm, since the rivers have become, as was the case in Magris, expression of identity. In fact, rivers in Diego's poem bestow a reductionist version of identity, where only the believers—"hispanos"—have the right to pray, to participate in an identity ceremony. The rest have to watch silently. This poem can be related to another one by Fray Luis de León, "Oda VII-Profecía del Tajo" (Prophecy of the Tagus River), in which the river itself admonishes King Rodrigo because of his love for Cava and his negligence towards the invading Moors. As a result the Tagus river speaks ("el río sacó fuera / el pecho, y le habló desta manera") (The river started speaking this way) and reprimands him for having lost Spain:

¡Ay! esa tu alegría
 qué llantos acarrea, y esa hermosa,
 que vio el sol en mal día,
 a España ¡ay cuán llorosa!,
 y al cetro de los Godos ¡cuán costosa! (47)

(Oh! This, your joy, / that sobs engenders, and lovely, / who saw the sun on a bad day, / to Spain; how sensitive! / and on the scepter of the Goths; how expensive!)

Even in this case we cannot but notice the use of first person in a sort of prosopoeia, but also the symbolic, rather historical sense of those lines. The river, Tagus, denounces a distressing event in Spanish history, a terrible stain in the country's honor.

Following these lines, André Gide in his *Voyage au Congo* (1927) distinguishes, in an almost ridiculing fashion, between the Belgian and the French margin of Congo River. This is proof of the absurdity of defining countries according to the colonizer's identity (Gide 35). We are in desperate need of establishing bridges, to better launch communication for everybody. In this way, without bridges, rivers only separate.

In her poem "Soledad," from *En las orillas del Sar* (1884), Rosalía de Castro manages to adapt the *locus amoenus* motif to synthesize spiritual values. Opposed to materialism and nature, she defends the heart ("corazón") as a space in which she can dwell:

Un manso río, una vereda estrecha,
 un campo solitario y un pinar,
 y el viejo puente rústico y sencillo
 completando tan grata soledad.

¿Qué es soledad? Para llenar el mundo
 basta a veces un solo pensamiento.

Por eso hoy, hartos de belleza, encuentras
 el puente, el río y el pinar desiertos.

No son nube ni flor los que enamoran;
 eres tú, corazón, triste o dichoso,
 ya del dolor y del placer el árbitro,
 quien seca el mar y hace habitable el polo. (81)

(A gently flowing river, a narrow path, / a solitary field and a pine forest, / and the old bridge, rustic and simple, / rounding out such pleasant solitude. / What is solitude? To fill the world / one solitary thought is enough. / So today, tired of beauty, you find / the bridge, the river and the pine forest deserted. / Clouds and flowers are not the ones who love; / You are, my heart, sad or happy, / arbiter of pain and pleasure, / the one who dries the ocean and makes habitable the poles.)

Here we recognize a refusal of external landscape and a retreat into inner life. Like Emily Dickinson, Castro prefers an intimate version of nature, one which portrays states of mind, or can be used as a refuge from the world. Also, as in Pessoa's poem, here, too, we come upon a sense of intimacy. Against "puente," "río" and "pinar," metaphors for the external world of nature, the poet finds refuge in her heart ("corazón"), which dries up the sea and makes the pole livable.

Rivers were also present in other definitions of Hispanic identity and they refer to a nearly forgotten chapter in the history of the Franco regime, which includes concentration camps, called with a sinister euphemism "Servicio de Colonias Penitenciarias Militarizadas" (Department of Militarized Penal Colonies). This "service" was responsible for centralizing the Franco regime's use of political prisoners as forced laborers or slaves. Concentration camps had an unintended side effect, as they facilitated the installation of prisoners' families in their vicinity, and thus the spontaneous creation of new towns such as El Palmar de Troya, Dos Hermanas, Los Palacios or two neighborhoods in Seville, Torreblanca, and Bellavista. One of the project's most important effects was the Canal del Bajo Guadalquivir, the so-called Canal de los presos, or "Prisoner's Channel."⁴ Interestingly enough this historical fact may be useful to demonstrate the way in which the identity between waterway and people has completely converged to become one and the same identity. In this particular case, each defines the other to the point that they are inseparable: it's not just a canal, it is *their* canal, and they are not simply prisoners, they are the prisoner's whose purpose—and very existence—depended on and *became* the canal. Their history and memory are preserved by this waterway.

This brief overview of the many literary examples—in which the metaphor of the river expresses transformation as well as national identity—would not be complete without mentioning the first stanza of the *Deutschlandlied* (Song of the Germans), which was excluded from the National Anthem after the second World War, because of its possible negative allusions to the "Dritte Reich." In the first stanza of

that song, rivers were used again to define identity and borders. After the infamous "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles," they used to sing: "Von der Maas bis an die Memel, / Von der Etsch bis an den Belt" (Hoffmann von Fallersleben 274) (From the river Mosel to the Niemen, / From the river Etsch to the Belt"). That is, the four rivers which circled old Prussia, and which used to encapsulate a sense of German identity. Furthermore, in this case, the river motif is a public expression of identity, nationalism, and solidarity, and the river/people definition is consecrated through national discourse, which is circulated, shared, and uttered by all members of the community.

This set of examples provides us with a possible classification of rivers, which maybe useful in my discussion of Hispanism. Going back to Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad (the perceived, the conceived, and the lived) they all use as a starting point a spatial practice, that is, the production and reproduction of spatial relations between objects and products. The spatial practice of a society creates that society's space. In the poems we've examined, spatial practice is introduced by the geographical idea of a river and a particular name associated to it, both physical and conceptual. Such handling by the poet introduces two possibilities. In some cases (Carner, García Lorca, Diego), we come across a representation of space that identifies what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived. A second tendency is the one in which the river serves as representational space (Pessoa, Castro). This kind of space refers to spaces "lived" directly "through its associated images and symbols and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users' . . ." (Lefebvre 39). These are the lived experiences that emerge as a result of the dialectical relation between spatial practice and representation of spaces.⁵ All the rivers evoked here bestow a sense of identity. Some are transformed into a symbol of the national and political, aesthetic and vital dilemmas, whereas, others become an expression of vital obsessions related to intimacy, where name or location is not important. If we go back to the distinction offered by Deleuze and Guattari, the first group is a good example of striated river; in the second one we locate smooth versions of a river.

Reading Maps

A second possibility of reading in smooth or striated ways is provided by maps. As stated by Louis Marin, maps are "the inscription of an essence in the visible" (qtd. in Jacob 30). Therefore, just as rivers may come to symbolize two models of expressing the complexity of national identity, maps can be seen as metaphors for smooth or striated spaces, representing national consciousness. The idea of the map as a cultural construct is further amplified in a seminal book by Benedict Anderson. When discussing his understanding of "Imagined Communities" from an anthropological point of view, he proposes a definition of nation in these terms: "[I]t is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (6). He adds that it is imagined because it is impossible that all inhabitants know each

other. All nations are limited, because they have finite boundaries, bordering other nations, and none (except for a few radical religions, Christians, Muslims, Communists, among others) can become a nation of planet-wide dimensions. A nation is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an era when Enlightenment and Revolutions were destroying the "Ancien Régime," which was based upon divinely ordained, and dynastical principles. It is also imagined from an egalitarian perspective because, as Anderson puts it, "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (7). "Nationhood" calls for many ironic situations, almost surrealistic, depending on who (what community) formulates the concept or definition of a given territory: Spanish or British Gibraltar, as opposed to Spanish or Moroccan Ceuta and Melilla; Val d'Aran and Vall d'Aran; Puerto Rico as "Estado Libre Asociado," literally "Associated Free State of Puerto Rico," with its grab bag of misunderstandings, or "independent Puerto Rico," etc.

According to Anderson, colonial rulers created three institutions of power, which were influential in nurturing a sense of nationhood among previously loosely interconnected areas: the census, the map, and the museum. The map had two purposes. On the one hand, historical maps, were conceived as a series of pictures "designated to demonstrate, in the new cartographic discourse, the antiquity of specific, tightly bounded territorial units" (174–5). This sequence of maps would arrange a narrative of the space, with vast historical depth. On the other hand, maps became a sort of "logo," almost a piece of an immense imperial jigsaw, in which each piece could be detached from its context, thus entering "an infinitely reproducible series, available for transfer to posters, official seals, letterheads, magazine and textbook covers, tablecloth, and hotel walls" (175).

I would like to explore different possibilities of map reading, which can be traced to Anderson's proposal. The map of Spain has been read in many contradictory ways. One cannot help but think about the clashing meanings of Spain's supposed resemblance to a bull's hide: "la piel de toro," the base for Salvador Espriu's 1960 rendition of "la pell de brau," in an influential poetry book, which became a symbol of freedom and reconciliation in 1960 (Walters 126). As we can see in the series of maps in the Appendix, it is obvious that there has been a shifting perception according to what maps intend to represent. *Map 1* depicts Roman Hispania, divided into the three provinces at the time of the Principate: Baetica, Lusitania, and Tarraconensis. The division of the territory is extremely different from the one portrayed in subsequent periods, as can be seen in *Map 2* and *3*, where we observe a strong division between Christian and Musulman Kingdoms, showing how the Iberian Peninsula after Roman occupation had become the battleground in a religious war which would last for eight centuries. *Map 4* is drawn one hundred years before the end of the so-called "Reconquest." In this map the emphasis is not only on the division between Christian and Muslim kingdoms, but also on the presence of an Aragonese-Catalan empire in the Mediterranean. *Map 5* portrays Spain at the time of Charles the Fifth, with much emphasis on expansion in Europe and Northern Africa. These four maps

are school-book versions of a well-known narrative of reconquest, growth, and unification. This is a narrative, which stresses the existence of foreign and internal enemies, with a hidden problematization of unity.

The unity issue becomes central in *Map 6*, a 1854 map that makes a clear distinction between four different Spains:

1. Castile and Andalusia: "España Uniforme ó Puramente Constitucional que comprende estas treinta y cuatro Provincias de las coronas de Castilla y León, iguales en todos los ramos económicos, judiciales, militares y civiles" ("Uniform or Purely Constitutional Spain which comprises these thirty-four Provinces of the Crowns of Castile and Leon, equal in all economic, judicial, military, and civil branches")
2. Kingdom of Navarre including the Basque Country: "España foral" ("Spain of the Fueros")
3. Crown of Aragón: "España Incorporada ó Asimilada que comprende las once provincias de la Corona de Aragón, todavía diferentes en el modo de contribuir y en algunos puntos del derecho privado" ("Incorporated or Assimilated Spain which comprises the eleven provinces of the Crown of Aragon, still different in the manner of contribution and in some points of private law")
4. Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippine Islands: "España colonial" ("Colonial Spain")

This Political map of Spain was drawn in shortly after the First Carlist War, and represents the frontiers according to tax, legal system, and the military situation (Torres Villegas). In this particular case, we realize how important map inscriptions are, proving right that maps' modes of inscription and graphic choices are as fundamental as the content of the textual fragments they use: "Texts organize a space of legibility that constantly interferes with the vision of the map's forms" (Jacob 9). What is remarkable about this map is that read one hundred and fifty years after it was drawn, it still accurately portrays a current political conception of the Iberian Peninsula, particularly of Spain, stressing the unresolved issue of regional and national differentiation.

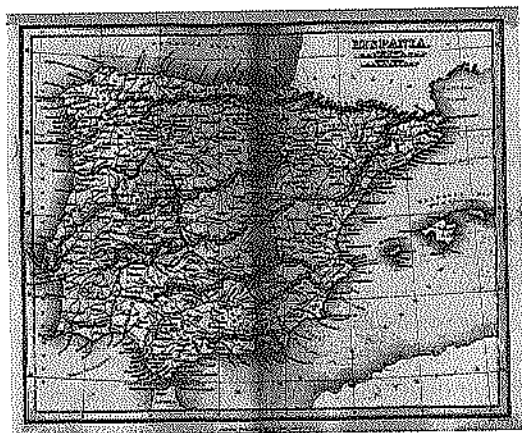
In another case we confront head-on the thorny issue of linguistic difference. What is disquieting about *Map 7* is the fact that it was published in the 1923 edition of *Enciclopedia Espasa* (vol. 21: 416–17). Even though the text about languages in that volume was supposedly written by eminent linguist Ramón Menéndez Pidal, the accompanying map is full of far-fetched inaccuracies such as the presentation of a linguistic reality which has been static for more than thirteen centuries, and with inscriptions which lead the reader to believe that there is such a thing as "dialectos baleáricos," or a "dialecto valenciano," ancillaries of a "castellano." There is a supra-linguistic identity shaped by this "Lengua española," which includes Galician-Portuguese, Basque, and Catalan. Furthermore, there is a suspicious coincidence between linguistic borders and those of main political regions of the time: Andalusia, Aragon, Asturias, Catalonia, Galicia, Leon, and Murcia (Burgueño 173–74).

The last two maps present a contemporary view of the Peninsula. *Map 8* shows the result of the 2008 general elections of the Spanish Parliament. The use of blue and red coloring codes is a reminder of the division of Spain at the Civil War's outset, and an echo of the US system of coloring political maps. *Map 9* is a Meteorat-type image of the Iberian Peninsula. The absence of signs alluding to frontiers, and coloring referring to political divisions, allows the reader to focus on much more important meaningful issues, such as the peninsula's situation vis-à-vis Africa, or the significant impact of global warming, with a crystal clear difference between north and south, that is, between desert zones and humid ones, and also the physical, topographical, geological characteristics of the country in general.

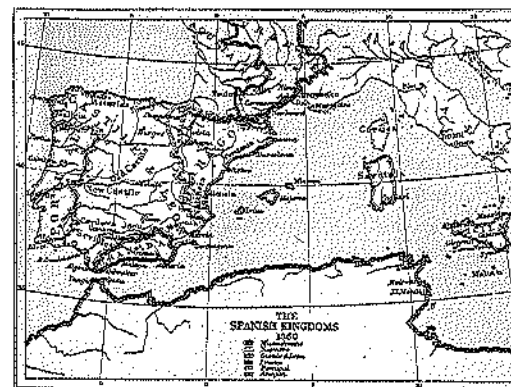
After reviewing these examples of map reading, we realize that we have different possibilities: from the glacial look, allegedly scientific, of sociology, to the manipulations of reality as seen in historical and linguistic maps. This kind of map reading can be traced to Plutarch. When he wrote about the election of the couple Theseus and Romulus, he justified his historical decision to go beyond real facts in geographic terms, making the point that, in the same way, Sosius had added notes on the margins of maps, referring to areas full of "sandy deserts full of wild beasts, unapproachable bogs, Scythian ice, or a frozen sea" (Plutarch 1). The reality depicted in those maps was discredited, or rather, accepted at another level: "I might very well say of those [legendary periods] that are farther off: 'Beyond this there is nothing but prodigies and fictions, the only inhabitants are the poets and inventors of fables; there is no credit, or certainty any farther'" (Plutarch). Likewise, many political maps can be read as pure speculation, created by "inventors of fables," or national narratives. This is so because, as Christian Jacob puts it, "between the map and its referent stands an array of complex relationships of substitution, creation, and intellectual conjecture" (100).

The reading of political maps as fiction is further corroborated by Polish journalist and writer Ryszard Kapuściński, who in his startling book *Imperium* (1993) offered a daunting evaluation of the Soviet Empire, which, unfortunately, can be applied to many others. In that book he reminds us of the absurdity of borders:

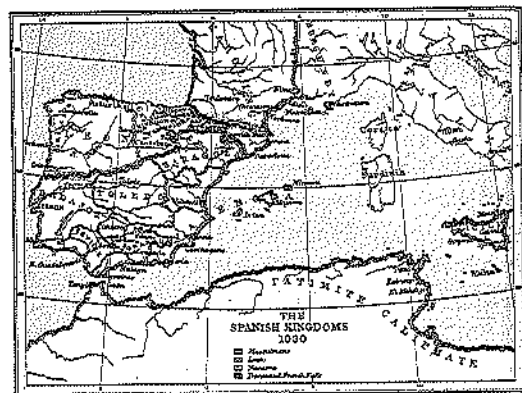
At the approach to every border, tension rises within us; emotions heighten. People are not made to live in borderline situations; they avoid them or try to flee from them as quickly as possible. And yet man encounters them everywhere, sees and feels them everywhere. Let us take the atlas of the world: it is all borders. Borders of oceans and continents. Deserts and forests. [. . .] And the borders of monarchies and republics? Kingdoms remote in time and lost civilizations? Pacts, treaties, and alliances? [. . .] How many victims, how much blood and suffering, are connected with this business of borders! There is no end to the cemeteries of those who have been killed the world over in the defense of borders. Equally boundless are the cemeteries of the audacious who attempted to expand their borders. It is safe to assume that half of those who have ever walked upon our planet and lost their lives in the field of glory gave up the ghost in battles begun over a question of borders. (19–20)



Map 1. Roman Hispania around AD 100, divided into three provinces at the time of the Principate: Baetica, Lusitania, and Tarraconensis.



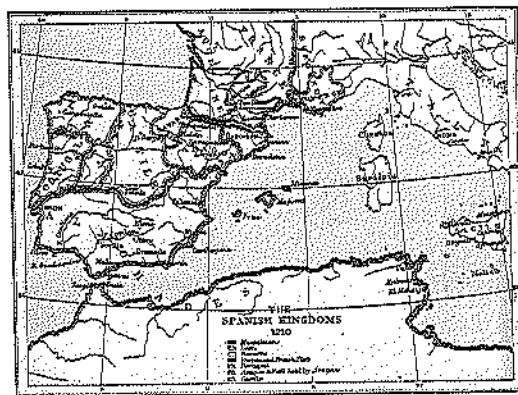
Map 4. The Iberian Kingdoms in the year 1360 by the end of the "reconquest" wars. Granada is the only remaining "non-Christian" territory.



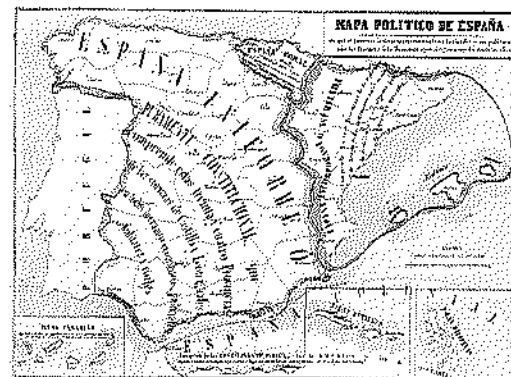
Map 2. The Iberian Kingdoms in the year 1030 at the beginning of the "reconquest."



Map 5. The Iberian Kingdoms and their European controlled territories under Charles V (c. 1550).



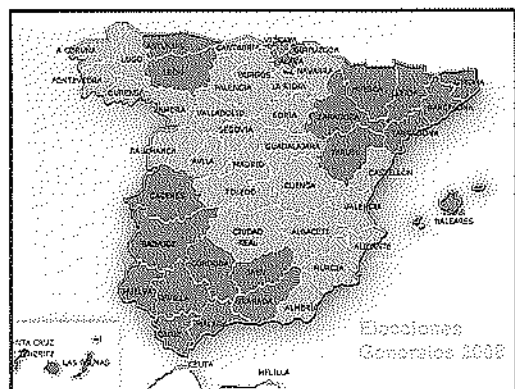
Map 3. The Iberian Kingdoms in the year 1210 midway through the "reconquest" wars.



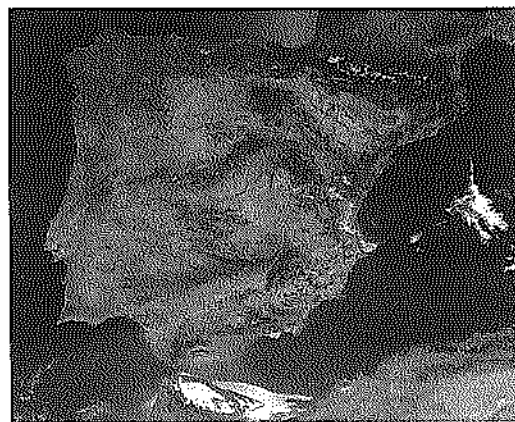
Map 6. Political map of Spain in 1854 drawn shortly after the First Carlist War, representing the frontiers according to taxation and legal system, and the military situation.



Map 7. Distribution of “Spanish languages” from 711 to the present according to Enciclopedia Espasa (1923).



Map 8. Election results of the 2008 general elections to the Spanish Parliament (Red = Socialist Party; Blue = Partido Popular).



Map 9. Satellite view of the Iberian Peninsula.

Kapuściński speaks about the absurdity of superimposing geography and politics, and also, from a much more tragic perspective, about violence among human beings goaded by this phenomenon. That is why he concludes: “And our brains? Encoded in them, after all, is an infinite diversity of borders” (20). He was writing in the 1990s, from the other side of the light, at the end of the tunnel, and he was uncovering a daunting chronicle of the Soviet “Gulag,” a communist version of the German “Lager” and Spanish “campos de trabajos forzados” (forced labor camps). Kapuściński’s condemnation brings into the picture another hidden map of Europe, one that refers to unhappiness and shame, the one depicted by concentration camps.

In this perspective, it is worth mentioning the case of Franz Tunda, the main character in Joseph Roth’s novel *Die Flucht ohne Ende* (*Flight without End*). Tunda is an officer in the Austrian Army, and after having been taken prisoner by the Russians in World War I, he survives the Russian Revolution under a false name. He decides to go back to his homeland, but it has disappeared. He has become a man without land. Europe is under a new order, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire has all but disappeared. He decides to go looking for his former fiancée in Berlin and Paris. This second flight allows him to find himself, and particularly to discover a new European spirit. He has become a man without a country, a map, or identity: “Jetzt aber war Franz Tunda ein junger Mann ohne Namen, ohne Bedeutung, ohne Rang, ohne Titel, ohne Geld und ohne Beruf, heimatlos und rechtlos” (322, 10) (Franz Tunda was a young man without a name, without importance, without rank, without title, without money and without occupation—homeless and stateless).

A similar case is the actual one lived by Claudio Magris. He lost his Trieste, which once belonged to *Mittleuropa*, and which was taken away, first to become a city in Yugoslavia, and later, after World War II, to be reincorporated into Italy. These are examples of movements on the map, which illustrate the creation of new identities, yet without moving from one’s own place, in the way that a river remains the same, though its waters may change.

Discussing the situation of the Armenian people, Kapuściński explained the country’s tragic destiny because of its specific geographical position on the map:

The map, looked at from the south of Asia, explains the tragedy of the Armenians. Fate could not have placed their country in a more unfortunate spot. In the south of the Highland it borders upon two of the past’s most formidable powers—Persia and Turkey—Let’s add to that the Arabian Caliphate. And even Byzantium. Four political colossi, ambitious, extremely expansionist, fanatical voracious. And now—what does the ruler of each of these four powers see when he looks at the map? He sees that if he takes Armenia, then his empire will be enclosed by an ideal natural border to the north. Because from the north the Armenian Highland is magnificently protected, guarded by two seas (The Black and the Caspian) and by the gigantic barrier of the Caucasus. And the north is dangerous for Persia and for Turkey, for the Arabs and Byzantium. Because in those days from the north and unsubdued Mongolian fury loomed. (47–48)

The case of Armenia provides us with superb and dreadful examples of maps and borders created and used by insatiable human greed, at the service of controlling the Other. In this case, the map is used as a planning tool for wars of invasion, for domination of close-by territory with military purposes. It reminds us vividly of some meanings of Iberian Peninsula maps discussed earlier. In fact, those maps are a very graphic way of representing disparate models of identity, which has been an unvarying issue in Spain from the beginning of modernity. At the onset of the nineteenth century there were violent clashes between the different ways of organizing political life in Spain, from Cádiz to the "Gloriosa," all the way to the Second Republic. Through that century, many voices paid attention to the need of defending a co-existence between a variety of cultures and histories, of rivers and maps. Some versions of Romanticism did much to vindicate forms of diversity. Other versions provoked a fundamentalist governmental theory of the state, which has been the prevailing one.

I mentioned at the beginning a Francoist tourist slogan, "Spain is different." Now, looking at it again, from another perspective, such as the one discussed here, that slogan may not be just another Francoist euphemism like the villainous inscription "Una, grande y libre" (One, great, and free) where only the first adjective was true. Reading rivers and maps in smooth—not striated—terms presents us with another way of being "different." A possible utopist solution to the maladies of Hispanic identity can be found in comparative literature, which can help to establish bridges between cultures. This would be a way of dealing with complexity, similar to the one defended by Guillén, "como movimiento y oscilación continuos entre conceptos-límite, como encuentro de propensiones y fuerzas polares" (understood as the constant movement and oscillation between concepts and their limits, as the meeting of propensities and polar forces). Another comparatist, Antonio Monegal, argues that Hispanism needs "models that are no longer based on the concept of the nation, but on the more complex concept of culture" (24). He proposes maps that are not based on national boundaries that separate "the inside from the outside," but maps that instead acknowledge "the fluctuation of such positions, their character as cultural constructs, simultaneously inside and outside" (24). For Monegal and others, Hispanic studies, in order to progress, must consider the impact of "cultural research" with roots in the "theory of difference" (24). Even the name Spain presents a problem for him, because to understand "what such a name signifies," he writes, "it is necessary to begin by not thinking of Spain as the place of identity but of a difference" (Monegal 24).

The rivers and maps of Europe remind us of so many fights, of so much destruction which has taken place because of the colors of a flag, the names of a piece of land, the sounds of words uttered in a post-Babel world. Set against rivers, which produce identity, or maps, which become symbols, we should be able to read literature as a river and a map, with innovative meanings. We can strive for an idea of smooth identity, not a striated one, following Foucault's call for a society with many heterotopias, as a space for the affirmation of difference, and also as a means of flight from authoritarianism and repression.⁶ We need to draw rivers and read maps of

another kind, which may allow us to invent a tradition, imagine a community not curtailed by the limitations of lands and borders, of intellectual closeness and repression, but one open to dialogue and diversity, to multiculturalism and multilingualism. Rivers are regional delimiters for geographical, cultural, linguistic, and political reasons. They should not become dividers, but catalysts for establishing bridges. As expressed in anthropology, "in its empirical moments [space] has long acted as a sort of 'clearing' for thinking about the inescapable and troubling spatialisation of human individual and collective experience" (Osborne and Rose 225). A new Iberian Comparatism focused on issues of inclusion and difference, non-hierarchical approaches, and an emphasis on multilingualism would do much to lead Europe on a path towards inclusiveness and respect for the Other.⁷ This Comparatism would profit much from such a "smooth" heterotopic perspective, where rivers and maps signal an open way of reading, one based on dialogue, not rigid, exclusionary identity.

Notes

1. Earlier versions of this essay were presented at the conference "Spanishness in the Spanish Novel and Cinema of the 20th-21st Century" (University of North Texas, Denton, March 2008), organized by Cristina Sánchez-Conejero, and the Sociedad Española de Literatura General y Comparada (SELGYC) conference, which was organized by Antonio Monegal and Montserrat Cots (UPF, Barcelona, September 2008). I am most indebted to the feedback and suggestions I received from those audiences and the input from some colleagues who very carefully read my paper: Lluís Quintana, Heike Scharm, and Sara Snider.
2. This is what Susan Friedman implies when she writes, "The association of modernism and modernity with Europe and the United States in the humanities not only excludes nonwestern locations but also contains peripheries within 'the West'—including, for example, margins based on gender, race, and geography, namely those of women, ethnic and racial minorities, and locations such as Spain, Portugal, the Balkans and Eastern Europe, Brazil, and the Caribbean" (512). For a thorough discussion of this issue, see a historical interpretation by George Mariscal, regarding particularly the cases of George Ticknor and James Fitzmaurice Kelly (3–6). See also a more contemporary discussion in Delgado; Mendelson; Vázquez, 2007.
3. See, for example, King and Browitt, Varela and Abuín González, Epps and Fernández Cifuentes, Moraña. Once published, the volume coordinated by Fernando Cabo Aseguinolaza, Anxo Abuín González, and César Domínguez Prieto, *A Comparative History of Literatures in the Iberian Peninsula*, may be a landmark.
4. According to Isaías Lafuente political prisoners were responsible for building huge reservoirs such as the ones in Ebro, Benagéver, Entrepeñas, Pálmaces, Mediano, Riosequillo, Revenga, Barasona, Mansilla de la Sierra, González Lacasa, El Cenajo, Torre del Águila, Barrios de Luna, Yesa, San Esteban and Linares, la Real Acequia del Jarama; and also canals in Bajo del Guadalquivir, Bajo del Alberche, Montijo, Jarama, Bárdenas, Monegros, Toro-Zamora, Bierzo, Badarán y Linares del Arroyo (Lafuente 2002).

5. Of course all three spaces are interconnected, as was demonstrated by Edward Soja in *Thirdspace*, with his "trialectics of spatiality," where the spatial and temporal are joined by the social (Soja).
6. "L'hétérotopie a le pouvoir de juxtaposer en un seul lieu réel plusieurs espaces, plusieurs emplacements qui sont en eux-mêmes incompatibles" (Foucault 48).
7. Douwe Fokkema previously made a call of this kind in an early article. See Fokkema.

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