

“Esa araña cuyas patas son sueños:”  
Granada as *Space* and *Place* in  
Ángel Ganivet’s Political Thought<sup>1</sup>

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Ángel Ganivet and his body of work have been the focus of significant research and reflection. He represents, without doubt, an important political, philosophical, and literary voice in late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Spain. Even though his role as a precursor to the Generation of 1898 was dismissed by none other than Miguel de Unamuno,<sup>2</sup> time and the work of scholars such as D. L. Shaw, Mark Del Mastro, Jesús Torrecilla, Judith Ginsburg, and Nil Santiáñez-Tió, among others, have substantiated the importance of

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<sup>2</sup> In the introduction written by Unamuno for the collection of correspondence between himself and Ganivet—*El porvenir de España* (1912)—the Basque thinker emphasizes his own ideological primacy: “Cuando Ganivet publicó su *Idearium español*, hacía ya algún tiempo que había publicado yo en *La España Moderna*, en los números de los meses de febrero a junio de 1895, mis cinco ensayos *En torno al casticismo*, en los que se encuentran, en germen unas veces y otras desarrolladas, no pocas ideas del *Idearium*. Lo que podría comprobar con las cartas mismas que Ganivet me escribió. Es decir, y lo digo redondamente y sin ambages, que si entre Ganivet y yo hubo influencia mutua fue mucha mayor la mía sobre él que la de él sobre mí” (17-18).

Ganivet's contributions to Spanish nationalist discourse at the turn of the twentieth century.

Shaw makes perhaps the most compelling argument that Ganivet—in *España filosófica contemporánea* (1889)—“lays bare with systematic clarity the origins of the real preoccupation of the Generation of 1898” (220). Shaw asserts that these texts, when combined with his later book *Idearium español* (1897), are companion volumes “and key to Ganivet's own spiritual evolution” (220). Indeed, these are the works that have found the most resonance in Ganivetian considerations of Spanish nationalist discourse throughout the twentieth century.

In addition, Ganivet's novels *La conquista del reino Maya por el último conquistador Pío Cid* (1897) and *Los trabajos del indefatigable creador Pío Cid* (1898) have been mined and scrutinized for further insights into Ganivet's nationalist vision. Juan Ventura Agudiez, Laura Rivkin, and other scholars have interpreted Ganivet's fiction as satirical philosophy and subversive national commentary. There are numerous articles that examine Ganivet's other works, and there is ample consideration of his national and international preoccupations, but the majority of scholarship on Ganivet tends to overlook the domestic focus of Ganivet's 1896 *Granada la bella*.

Notwithstanding its limited quantity, there have been some very insightful analyses done on *Granada la bella*. Loretta Frattale explores Ganivet's vision of Granada through Mikhail Bakhtin's lens of the chronotope, a geographic space that is intricately imbued with historical meaning; David Bird also takes a “spatiotemporal” approach to analyze the “intersection of built environments and their associated communities as these encounter and negotiate with... modernity” (1); and Leopoldo Torres Balbás, the famed architectural restorer of Granada, employs Ganivet's words in *Granada la bella* as support for the project of twentieth century architectural restoration in the city. In his 1923 essay “Granada: La ciudad que desaparece,” Torres Balbás calls Ganivet a “sutil ingenio granadino” (162) and he insists that Ganivet “debiera ser leído continuamente por los granadinos” (163).

In this essay, I will nuance these previous analyses through a spatial reading of *Granada la bella* with an eye to conceptualizations of *space* and *place* as theorized by social geographer Yi-Fu Tuan. An analysis such as this complements previous studies, such as the ones by Frattale and Bird, and it develops a new framework for understanding Ganivet's articulation of Granadian *space* and *place*. My thesis is that understanding

Ganivet's relationship with Granada as one structured by distinctions of *space* and *place* permits a broader analysis of his political thought as one influenced by the intimate geography of his hometown. As homage—and a complaint—to his birthplace, *Granada la bella* offers insights into the fundamental relationship that Ganivet had with his culture and nation.<sup>3</sup> Even though it is often overlooked, Ganivet's *Granada la bella* is key to understanding the development and scope of his political thought.

Yi-Fu Tuan's articulation of *space* and *place* as distinct conceptual "experiences" provides a framework in which to discuss the spatial dimensions of Ganivet's Granadian musings (Tuan 3). While Frattale's chronotopic analysis focuses on Granada and establishes the mythic possibilities that history and time contribute to the contemporary iteration of culture, Tuan's *place* and *space* are theoretical frameworks that he constructs to interpret urban settings as metaphorical sites of security (*place*) and freedom (*space*). For Tuan, *places* are "centers of felt value where biological needs . . . are satisfied" (4). They are intimate (144), stable (161), and a "repository of memories and dreams" (164). Tuan's *spaces* are open and infinite (4), mythical (86); they ignore "the logic of exclusion and contradiction" (99), and they are structuring (99). For Ganivet, his hometown of Granada is an affective *place* that is imbued with a meaning and resonance built on its long history; his intimate connection with the city informs his national—and international—conceptualizations.

Tuan's theorization of *space* and *place* offers a specific lens that illuminates important dynamics in Ganivet's writing on Granada. In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977), Tuan imbues these two terms with affective and metaphorical qualities that resonate with Ganivet's literary descriptions, despite the fact that Tuan never explicitly writes about Granada.<sup>4</sup> A more traditional interpretation defines *space* "as the physical setting where everything occurs" and *place* as "[t]he outcome of the social process of valuing space; a product of the imaginary, of desire, and the primary means by which we articulate with space and

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<sup>3</sup> Frattale notes that *Granada la bella* in certain ways functions as a preliminary exposition of ideas that would later be more fully developed in *Idearium español* (64).

<sup>4</sup> There are passages in Tuan's *Space and Place* that seem to have been written with the Alhambra and Granada in mind, but to my knowledge, Tuan never directly employs Spain, Granada, or the Alhambra as an example in this—or other—works. It was these parallel descriptions that first stood out to me in reading Tuan's work and offered a productive lens with which to approach Ganivet.

transform it into a humanized landscape” (Preucel 215). Tuan elaborates upon these interpretations, and his nuancing of the terms contribute a metaphorical element—“Place is security, space is freedom” (3)—that make them particularly useful for literary analyses. Henri Lefebvre’s theoretical contributions in *The Production of Space* articulate the varied forces that are at play in the understanding and experience of space, outlined specifically in his “conceptual triad” of space (33), and geographers such as Edward Soja, David Harvey, and others have further elaborated on the meaning and creation of *space*. For *place*, Tim Cresswell, Edward Casey, and Michael Curry have all contributed to robust theorizations of *place* and its relationship to *space*, but it is the work of Yi-Fu Tuan in *Space and Place* that stands out as a specific and comprehensive articulation of a useful framework for considering both *space* and *place* as distinct spatial experiences.

*Granada la bella* is a foundational moment in the development of Ganivet’s political thought. Shaw asserts that Ganivet’s *España filosófica contemporánea* and *Idearium español* are the key texts to understanding Ganivet’s philosophical evolution (220), yet Frattale proposes that *Idearium español* is only a more mature development of the ideas in *Granada la bella* (64). The localized, regional focus of *Granada la bella* is extended to the national scale in *España filosófica contemporánea* and *Idearium español*, and ultimately further expanded beyond the Iberian Peninsula in *La conquista del reino de Maya por el último conquistador español Pío Cid* (1897), *Cartas finlandesas* (1898), *Hombres del norte* (1898), and the posthumous publication of his letters with Miguel de Unamuno, *El porvenir de España* (1898). As his correspondence with Unamuno shows, Ganivet develops in *Idearium* and defends in *El porvenir de España* a vision for the future glory of Spain that is to be found on the African continent. This opinion—which differs from Unamuno’s—has its roots in his “affirm[ation of] the vital importance of Spain’s African-Islamic past” (Martin-Márquez 61).<sup>5</sup> In short, as I will outline below, the

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<sup>5</sup> Unamuno—in contrast to the Andalusian Ganivet—is from the Basque Country, a region known for its resistance to foreign invasion (Ganivet points this out in one of his replies to Unamuno in *El porvenir de España* [164]). Unlike Ganivet, Unamuno sees African influence on Spain as minimal, not a part of the deep *intrahistoria* that characterizes Spanish identity and culture. Unamuno is therefore much more open to European influence and professes antipathy towards Arabic/African influences on Spanish identity.

*place* of Granada in Ganivet's experience shapes his specific viewpoint on the *space* of the nation, Spain, and of Africa.

Ganivet's international worldview and his nationalist leanings begin with Granada. For Ganivet, Granada is a *place* in the way Tuan describes it: "Hometown is an intimate place" (Tuan 144) and "Place is a special kind of object. It is a concretion of value, though not a valued thing that can be handled or carried about easily; it is an object in which one can dwell" (12). In the first chapter, Ganivet reflects on the affective power Granada has on him:

Muchas veces, al volver a Granada después de largas ausencias, he notado en mí, al ponerme en contacto con el aire natal, cierta alegría espontánea, corpórea, que me ha hecho pensar que no era yo quien me alegraba, sino mis átomos al reconocerse; ellos, con una sensibilidad propia... en medio de sus antiguos amigos, de sus parientes más o menos cercanos. ¿Quién sabe si el amor patrio no será en el porvenir una fórmula química representada por la suma de los diversos grupos atómicos locales[?] . . . Por lo pronto yo me figuro que cuando viaje llevo conmigo mucho de mi ciudad natal . . . (*Granada la bella* 17-18)

Ganivet's experience of Granada is metaphorized as a cellular-level reaction to his "ciudad natal." There is the reciprocal, "espontánea, corpórea" reaction between his very atoms and those of his city. It could be said that the city is written into his being in a profound way. It is intensely intimate and his elaborate description metaphorizes a concrete valorization of the city's effect on him.

Ganivet's conceptualization of Granada as *place* is clearly displayed in his consternation at recent architectural decisions that disrupt the organic development of the urban space of Granada. The train station is his primary target of complaint; the train station is out of place and disrupts the experience of Granada as unique:

El viajero que llega a Granada y lo primero que descubre es una estación, como otras muchas que ha visto, sin la menor huella de nuestro carácter, o de lo que él se figura que debe ser nuestro carácter, piensa en el acto que está en un pueblo donde por casualidad se encuentra la Alhambra . . . nos abandonará convencido de que somos un pueblo por todos los cuatro costados. La diferencia entre pueblo y

ciudad está precisamente en que la ciudad tiene espíritu, un espíritu que todo lo baña, lo modela y lo dignifica. (*Granada la bella* 68)

The spirit of the city is formed in the shadow of the Alhambra; the modern train station is an architectural insertion that upsets the special value that Granada has curated and developed naturally over the centuries.<sup>6</sup>

This architectural disruption is significant to Ganivet because, as Bird notes, for Ganivet, *place*<sup>7</sup>

is the single most important determining factor in the development of local character. The Granadan believes that the combination of large-scale geography with the smaller-scale built environment of cities and towns creates a set of mental characteristics that individuals have . . . and that they must act in harmony with or suffer the spiritual decadence called *abulia*. (3-4)

For Ganivet, appreciating the intimate relationship that residents have with the architectural/urban space of their city is a fundamental element in developing and maintaining a vibrant cultural identity. In this sense, Ganivet's understanding of cultural identity draws heavily from Hippolyte Taine's environmental determinism, an understanding of national identity as one that is the product of "*la race, le milieu, et le moment*" (Taine XXIII).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Plans to develop a railway and train station in Granada began in 1844, but it was not until 1866 that Granada's first train station opened with the establishment of service between Granada and Loja; the station, however, was located outside of the city in the Vega. The construction of this station and line was complicated and long delayed (Martínez, García Raya, Peña Aguilera, "Introducción"). Contemporary to the writing of *Granada la bella*, construction began on a new station in 1890 that would connect Almería and Linares-Baeza. The station—that would be called *la Estación del Sur de España*—was inaugurated in 1904 and was built following "una tipología utilizada en las otras estaciones de importancia de la Compañía [ferrocarril]" (Peña Aguilera, "Adios"). It is this generic, corporate architectural style that Ganivet finds so offensive in the shadow of the Alhambra.

<sup>7</sup> Drawing on David Harvey's spatial theory, Bird uses the word "space" here. Harvey and Bird's use of the word in this context corresponds to Tuan's "place." This distinction derives from Tuan's specific use of *place* as a contrast to *space*, a distinction that Harvey does not focus on explicitly in the texts that Bird employs.

<sup>8</sup> Hippolyte Taine's (1828-1893) work on literary and historicist criticism greatly contributed to the fields of French naturalism, sociological positivism, and literary criticism in the second half of the nineteenth century. Taine's writings had a strong

The Tuanian articulation of place, therefore, finds resonance in Ganivet's own interpretation of Taine's *milieu*, an "espíritu territorial" (*Idearium* 57). Ganivet's emphasis on local character as a fundamental basis of identity is echoed in Tuan as the geographer notes the importance of *place* in the development of worldview:

If a cosmic world view does not guarantee uniqueness to locality, what beliefs do? Evidence from different cultures suggests that place is specific—tied to a particular cluster of buildings at one location—wherever the people believe it to be not only their home but also the home of their guarding spirits and gods. (Tuan 150)

Indeed, Ganivet's emphasis on the importance of place has led to a critique of his "falta de universalidad" (González Alcantud 99). The connection with *place*, rooted in Granada for Ganivet, is a fundamental relationship that directs unique cultural identity.

The introduction of nondescript/non-local architecture (in the generic train station), threatens the ostensibly natural equilibrium of *espíritu territorial*.<sup>9</sup> It disrupts the local identity of the *place*. The consequences of such a disruption therefore potentially jeopardize what Ganivet describes in *España filosófica contemporánea* as *ideas madres* (5)—"brújulas que nos guían en el océano de la vida" (5).<sup>10</sup> Ganivet is concerned with the dilution of this relationship between place and identity, and, as Shaw notes, he is one of the first among prominent Spanish thinkers to notice the "erosion" of this guiding influence tied essentially to *place* (232).

Accompanying Tuan's articulation of *place* is also his companion theorization of *space*. *Space* is a complementary contrast to the intimacy and known qualities of *place*. In contrast to *place*, *space* is often external

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influence on both French and Spanish literatures of the time. For further reading, see Kahn, Soltau, or Wellek.

<sup>9</sup> Peña Aguilera notes how the train station *Sur de España* was built in a corporate/generic style in line with other contemporary railway stations. It is interesting to note that, in 2010, as the city of Granada moved ahead with the demolition of the aging station, Peña Aguilera and the *Asociación granadina de amigos del ferrocarril y del tranvía* argued for the preservation of the original station and "algunas piezas ferroviarias de importante valor histórico que deberían ser conocidas y puestas en valor para el disfrute de todos los ciudadanos" ("Adios").

<sup>10</sup> Del Mastro examines these conceptualizations of Ganivet's in depth in "*La idea directiva, las ideas madres, and las ideas redondas: Conceptual Bases of Ganivet's Utopian Spain.*"

(beyond the borders of the hometown), mythical (unknown when compared to the intimacy of *place*), and organizing in that it contextualizes *place*.

For Ganivet, Unamuno, and other intellectuals of the Generation of 1898, the remaining American and Pacific colonies functioned as an ordering *space* that contextualized and defined the nation. According to Tuan, broader conceptualizations of *space* structure ideas of a “middle place”—“[t]he idea of a center or heartland” (99). Pilar Concejo Álvarez notes this tendency in Ganivet: “Para Ganivet, Europa ha representado siempre el centro unificador y directo de la Humanidad, y esto ha podido lograrlo solamente ejerciendo violencia en los demás pueblos” (133). European imperial expansion made possible the affluence of European modernity and established the cultural and political dominance of a handful of European nations. This structuring *space* of the Spanish empire, which served to enrich and distinguish the peninsular nation, finds its remaining external *spaces* shrinking at the close of the nineteenth century.

Ganivet’s correspondence with Unamuno, compiled in *El porvenir de España* (1898), explicitly discusses these concerns. In one letter, Unamuno writes to Ganivet about the shifting *spaces* external to the peninsular Spanish nation and what the loss of this external structure could potentially bring about:

La cuestión es ésta: o España es, ante todo, un país central o periférico, o sigue la orientación castellana, desquiciada desde el descubrimiento de América, debido a Castilla, o toma otra orientación. Castilla fue quien nos dio las colonias y obligó a orientarse a Europa, y si se rompen barreras proteccionistas, esas barreras que mantiene tanto el espíritu *triguero*, Barcelona podrá volver a reinar en el Mediterráneo, Bilbao florecerá orientándose al Norte, y así irán creciendo otros núcleos nacionales ayudando al desarrollo total de España.

No me cabe duda de que una vez que se derrumbe nuestro imperio colonial seguirá con ímpetu el problema de la descentralización, que alienta en los movimientos regionalistas. (Ganivet and Unamuno 187)

Ganivet recognizes the shifting dynamics that require a reconceptualization of the national identity. His response is to employ Africa as the *space* in which Spain finds its future identity and glory:



Yo decía también que convendría cerrar todas las puertas para que España no escape, y, sin embargo, . . . deajo una entornada, la de África, pensando en el porvenir. Hemos de trabajar, sí, para tener un período histórico español puro; mas la fuerza ideal y material que durante él adquiramos verá usted cómo se va por esa puerta del Sur, que aún seduce y atrae al espíritu nacional. No pienso al hablar así en Marruecos; pienso en toda África, y no en conquistas ni en protectorados, que esto es de sobra conocido y viejo, sino en algo original, que no está al alcance ciertamente de nuestros actuales políticos. (Ganivet and Unamuno 176)

Africa is an Other geographical space where Spain can expand, but also a familiar one where Spain will find its logical extension. He argues that “El espíritu territorial independiente . . . obligará a la nación unida a buscar un apoyo en su continente africano para mantener ante Europa nuestra personalidad y nuestra independencia” (Ganivet and Unamuno 25). For Ganivet, Africa will be the salvation of the Spanish decadence at the end of the nineteenth century; Africa represents possibility, innovation, and the rehabilitation of Spanish identity.

Tuan’s theorization of “mythical space” can be transposed to illustrate Ganivet’s conceptualization of Africa as a “a fuzzy area of defective knowledge surrounding the empirically known; it frames pragmatic space . . . it is the spatial component of a world view” (Tuan 86). Ganivet admits as much when he describes Spain’s limited knowledge of the African continent: “Si se mira el porvenir, hay mil hechos que anuncian que África será el campo de nuestra expansión futura. ¿Qué sabe de África nuestra juventud estudiosa? Menos que de América: ni los primeros rudimentos geográficos” (Ganivet and Unamuno 194). This “fuzzy” knowledge is a necessary characteristic of *space* because “[s]pace is transformed into place as it acquires definition and meaning” (Tuan 136). For Tuan, the hazy “‘mythical’ space that surrounds the field of pragmatic activity . . . is necessary to our sense of orientation—of being securely in the world” (86). The contrast between the external, Other *space* with the intimate, known *place* is what establishes a sense of identity and context. For Ganivet, Africa is the perfect dialectical foil for Spain.

This is not the first time that Africa serves as a blank slate upon which Ganivet paints his dreams of a powerful Spain. In his first novel, *La conquista del reino Maya por el último conquistador Pío Cid*, Ganivet employs the setting of Africa and the mythical kingdom of Maya as a stage

for European innovation and development. The protagonist, Pío Cid, is able to critique the ills of contemporary Spanish society by rectifying them in his African kingdom. His enlightened knowledge finds its full expression not in Spain or Europe, but in Africa. The contrast of Africa highlights the defects of Spain.

There are moments when Ganivet seems to ignore this dialectic that structures much of his thought. In *Idearium español*, he asserts that:

Hemos tenido, después de períodos sin unidad de carácter, un período hispanoromano, otro hispanovisigótico y otro hispanoárabe; el que les sigue será un período hispanoeuropeo o hispanocolonial . . . Pero no hemos tenido un período español puro, en el cual nuestro espíritu, constituido ya, diese sus frutos en su propio territorio . . . Importante es la acción de una raza por medio de la fuerza, pero es más importante su acción ideal, y ésta alcanza sólo su apogeo cuando se abandona la acción exterior y se concentra dentro del territorio toda la vitalidad nacional. (*Idearium* 93)

Ganivet recognizes the contrasting dynamics that have structured and made possible the sense of “nuestro espíritu”—the internal (hispano) confirmed by the external (hispanoromano, hispanovisigótico, hispanoeuropeo, hispanocolonial)—and he acknowledges that without these external forces Spain endured “períodos sin unidad de carácter.” Nevertheless, he expresses a desire to develop national identity intrinsically, instead of as a response to peripheral pressures. In this wish, Granada implicitly assumes its importance as *place*—“a concretion of value” (Tuan 12)—that is waiting to be utilized as an expression of “nuestro espíritu, constituido ya.” If Spain is able to learn the ideological lessons within its peninsular borders, then it will be able to develop and maintain “la vitalidad nacional.” Ganivet never explicitly mentions Granada here, but it is implied that the answers can be found within Spain, and these answers have been left by a litany of cultural forces throughout Spain’s long history.

Ganivet may claim to long for a respite from external pressures, but in the following paragraph he admits that the structuring internal vs. external/*space* vs. *place* distinctions are relative. The dialectical distinctions continually shift, yet they are always present. He notes the cultural forces that have made contemporary Spain: Castille and Aragón and “la [influencia] africana y la italiana” (*Idearium* 93). This insight on

the relative positioning of dialectical contrasts confirms the underlying tension between *place* and *space* as Ganivet's foundation for a conceptualization of national identity. His momentary lapse in ideological consistency in the previous paragraph, therefore, serves two rhetorical functions: first, his Peninsular focus offers a concession to Unamuno's insular conceptualization of the *intrahistoria*, and second, this emphasis subtly draws focus to the importance of the multicultural identity of Ganivet's beloved Granada as a repository of national identity.

Ganivet's worldview is structured by the opposition between an external and an internal *space* and *place*—an external *space* that defines the familiar *place*. For Ganivet, this dialectic originates in his hometown of Granada where traces of both *space* and *place* are present. Granada's unique, multi-cultural history and architecture create a dialectical opposition that makes possible Ganivet's wider conceptualization of national identity. Susan Martin-Márquez has noted this tendency in Ganivet when she describes his sense of "alterity of the self" (66). Ganivet is one of the few late nineteenth-century intellectual voices that understood Spanish national identity as one built on the interaction of multiple cultures. In short, Ganivet finds himself unable to whitewash Spanish identity and history when his hometown sits in the shadows of the Alhambra.

Indeed, the Alhambra casts over Granada a constant reminder of the "alterity of the self" that is the modern Spanish nation. The Nasrid palace dramatically demands recognition of an Other upon which the modern nation was built. It is Other and external to the present, whitewashed moment, but the Alhambra is clearly a "repository of memories and dreams" (Tuan 164). In *Granada la bella*, Ganivet is intensely concerned with the opposition between the symbol of the Alhambra and the rapidly modernizing city expanding around it. Torres Balbás notes Ganivet's strong opposition to "estas vías modernas, creación de la cursilería concejil y la ignorancia de los técnicos" that ignore the wisdom of the Nasrid design—inspired by the specific geography of Granada's *milieu* (162).

For Ganivet, drawing inspiration from Taine, *race*, *milieu*, and *moment* are guiding principles for a vibrant culture. Intimate knowledge of *place* should be privileged over adopted patterns that ignore the product of organic dialectical development. He writes:

Granada es una ciudad de sombra; apesar [sic] de su exposición y de la proximidad de la Sierra Nevada, que producen grandes

irregularidades climatológicas, su carácter es el de una ciudad meridional; su estructura antigua, que es la lógica, obedece á [sic] la necesidad de quebrar la fuerza excesiva del sol y de la luz, de detener las corrientes de viento cálido; por eso sus calles son estrechas é [sic] irregulares, no anchas ni rectas. Y sin embargo la aspiración constante es tener calles rectas y anchas, porque así las tienen «los otros». (*Granada la bella* 35)

Responding to and being attuned to *place* is the basis for his concept of the *idea directiva* that would lead to a vibrant and “progressive . . . native ideology” (Del Mastro, “*La idea directiva*” 53).

Tuan’s words could be Ganivet’s own: “architecture is a key to comprehending reality” (102). The walls of the Alhambra are a testament to former glories that could be regained through careful attention to their lessons. Tuan elaborates that:

[a]rchitectural space . . . is a microcosm possessing a lucidity that natural features lack. Architecture continues the line of human effort to heighten awareness by creating a tangible world that articulates experiences, those deeply felt as well as those that can be verbalized, individual as well as collective. (100)

The legacy and the shadow of the Alhambra have the ability to instruct and inform modern Spanish society and its ostensible political and cultural decadence. The medieval architectures that abound in Granada provide depth and value. Tuan explains this process, wherein “[t]he edifice is a public timepiece. The city in which it is located also has temporal depth objectified in the city’s successive walls that accrue like the annual rings of an aged tree” (191). Granada’s history is literally written on the walls of the Alhambra, and Ganivet sees in the history of his hometown a microcosm of the nation at large.

Ultimately, Ganivet’s description of Granada obtains symbolic, nationalist value precisely because it conflates the Tuanian conceptualizations of *space* and *place*. Ganivet opens his work in saying “Voy á [sic] hablar de Granada . . . Mi Granada no es la de hoy, es la que pudiera y debiera ser, la que ignoro si algún día será” (*Granada la bella* 13). Granada is a familiar place that Ganivet chooses to describe in the subjunctive, mythical, and possible voice. Granada is a real, inhabited place that he is intimately familiar with, and yet he frames it as a mythical

space, rendering it full of potential qualities. Furthermore, as Ganivet discusses the beauty of Granada, he writes:

En cuanto a nuestro carácter monumental, dudo que pueda ser nunca otro que el arábigo, no porque sea nuestro, sino porque está encima de nosotros y fuera de nosotros. De la Alhambra pudiera decirse que está en toda Europa y fuera de Europa . . . La idea universal es que la Alhambra es un edén . . . (*Granada la bella* 84)

The Alhambra and—by extension—Granada, embody a *space/place*, Same/Other dynamic. Ganivet inserts the Arabic heritage into the discourse of national identity, a national discourse that tended to emphasize the Christian and European side of the story. The Alhambra is a familiar *place*—“encima de nosotros”—and external *space*—“fuera de nosotros.” It is domestic and external. This articulation recognizes the dialectical construction of modern Spanish society, a paradoxical dynamic that permits the creation of a national ideal.

At times Ganivet struggles with this inherent alterity. In chapter VIII of *Granada la bella* he asks “¿[q]ué somos?” and he responds “[s]omos lo que todos saben, lo que es todo en España, una interinidad” (59). Existence and identity, therefore, are ephemeral unless they are tied to an anchor that informs them. The legacy of the Alhambra offers that structure. Its superficial alterity is “transformed into place as it acquires definition and meaning” (Tuan 136). Recognizing the lessons of the Alhambra can guide Spain out of what Ganivet sees as its state of profound *abulia*.

As Ganivet concludes chapter XI on “Monumentos,” he waxes poetic with a striking metaphor that holds parallels for the preoccupations of the nascent Generation of 1898. Describing the Alhambra, he writes that:

¿Cómo hacer ver que ese Alcázar recibió su primero impulso de la fe . . . y fue teatro de grandes amarguras, de las amarguras de una dominación agonizante? El destino de lo grande es ser mal comprendido: todavía hay quien al visitar la Alhambra cree sentir los halagos y arrullos de la sensualidad, y no siente la profunda tristeza que emana de un palacio desierto, abandonado de sus moradores, aprisionado en los hilos impalpables que teje el espíritu de la destrucción, esa araña invisible cuyas patas son sueños. (*Granada la bella* 84-85)

This metaphor of a spider encasing the Alhambra in destructive webs is at once profoundly striking and confusing. At the root of this romantic description, though, is the sense that these ruins represent something powerful and serious in the history of Spain; they offer clues to Spain's past as well as lessons for Spain's present and future, and yet this lesson is in danger of being misunderstood or obscured. This metaphor is ambiguous, but it is clear that the Alhambra—and by extension Spain—is currently engulfed by a “spirit of destruction” that threatens its legacy. It is a provocative image that unsettles the reader; it is surreal and oneiric.

With this powerful image of the spider, Ganivet takes the familiar walls of the Alhambra—the *place* he knows intimately—and renders it mythical and mysterious. He invokes its *spatial* attributes in order to create an ordering context that articulates his vision for overcoming the *abulia* that plagues Spain. The metaphor of the spider—commonly found in bedrooms and pantries, spinning a web in overlooked corners—represents a domestic threat. With this singular image, Ganivet conflates metaphors of fear (“araña”), stagnation (“aprisionado”), ignorance (“invisible”), and potential (“sueños”) into one powerful illustration that captures the threats of continued national *abulia* and suggests hope for overcoming these perils.

With *Granada la bella*, Ganivet asks Granada and Spain to listen to the familiar *space* around them. The history of the Alhambra, Granada, and Spain has been whitewashed and forgotten, rendering the lessons of the red walls obscured in their quotidian familiarity. Tuan affirms that “Architectural space reveals and instructs,” citing the great Medieval cathedrals and their pedagogically motivated design (114). Ganivet takes the striking image of the spider over the Alhambra and paints a symbolic image, a “symbol [that] is direct and does not require linguistic mediation” (Tuan 114). The image obliquely asks the reader to look again at the Alhambra, to push away the veil that covers it, and to see the Alhambra as a historical *space* that can inform modern discourses on national identity.

In short, Granada and the Alhambra will always be familiar *places* for Ganivet, but they must also be understood as *spaces* that offer lessons, context, and an understanding of Spain's contemporary *race*, *milieu*, and *moment*. Spain will find direction and unity in understanding these dialectical dynamics and by knowing where to look.

Through all of this, Ganivet employs a discursive strategy when describing the Alhambra and Granada—a strategy that Tuan much later articulates as *place* and *space*—in order to articulate his vision for the

construction of a vibrant and meaningful Spanish national identity. *Granada la bella*, as a meditation on Granada, manages to sow the seed from which Ganivet's later thought develops. When examined alongside his other more ambitious works, it becomes clear that Granada itself serves as a microcosm of the world that structures Ganivet's political thought.

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