Enslaved by Liberalism: Spain after 1868

Lisa Surwillo
Stanford University

Abolition and women’s political emancipation are often read in conjunction. As Frederick Douglass wrote, “the cause of the slave has been peculiarly women’s cause.” He was referring solely to the fact that women actively agitated for abolition, but throughout the Atlantic world, both women and slaves lacked civil rights while nevertheless being subjects of nations. Mary Wollstonecraft may be the best-known writer in the English-speaking world to compare the fate of women to that of slaves, but the Cuban Spanish writer Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda and the Spanish American writer Carolina Coronado also explored similarities between the subjectivities of the two populations in their literature in the mid-nineteenth century. However, despite the current visibility of such women who wrote for social change, white Creole women throughout the Atlantic world, whose words were less likely to be recorded because they mostly remained in the private sphere, were both profit-earning slaveholders and ideological supporters of the patriarchal slave system. Whereas some abolitionists were also protofeminists, Spanish antiabolitionists ascribed to a belief in a “womanhood,” that was a conservative idealization of female behavior. The rhetorical moves by which these women positioned themselves as imperial agents, moral spokeswomen, and domestic nationals illuminate the place of gender in the politics of modern empire. These women’s stories are an oft-overlooked part of the means by which Spain negotiated its nation-empire in the volatile years following the end of the slave trade.


1 Frederick Douglass, Life and Times of Frederick Douglass (Hartford, CT: Park Publishing, 1882), 570.
2 See Vron Ware, Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History (London: Verso, 1991), esp. 103–9, for a discussion of nineteenth-century British writers who developed this position, from Wollstonecraft to Anna Wheeler to John Stuart Mill.
3 Hilary M. Beckles, Centering Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1999), 61.
The 1990s saw a flourishing of research on gender and nationalism, but in the case of Spain as well as many other European countries, by and large it did not take their imperial dimensions into account. As “new imperial history” and its variants contribute to new appreciations of nations as metropolises and national cultures and as constituted—economically, culturally, and discursively—through relations with their colonies, a reconsideration of the roles of gender and womanhood in the maintenance of these empires-masked-as-nations is in order. How did women’s support of colonialism and slavery renew sexual structures of power and naturalize the narratives of nationalism? This essay draws on some of the foundational work on gender and nationalism and analyzes proslavery arguments in a political petition by women from Cuba and Puerto Rico living in Barcelona during the years immediately following the “Glorious Revolution” of 1868. Although we might well wish to imagine that all women were allies of slaves, they were not, and attention to petitions such as this one offers a crucial perspective on the complex gendered politics of the proslavery parties.

The year 1868 was a turning point for Spain, in particular regarding colonial and slave policies. The military uprising led by a coalition of generals in October 1868 resulted in the abdication of the Bourbon monarch, Isabel II, in 1870. More immediately, it sparked rebellion in two of Spain’s colonies, Cuba and Puerto Rico. Cuba waged a war of independence for ten years; although defeated in 1878, the revolutionary movement did not disappear. During the same period Spain embarked on a six-year hiatus from the Bourbons (called the Sexenio revolucionario), and, initially, a regency held power during a Europe-wide search for a candidate for the throne. After all but provoking the Franco-Prussian War, Spain offered the crown to Amadeo of Savoy, whose father, Vittorio Emanuele II, ruled over a newly unified Italy. However, Amadeo’s combination of dynastic prestige and liberal politics failed to draw the nation together, and he abandoned Spain after two years. Spain’s First Republic lasted for just under a year; shortly thereafter a Bourbon heir was given the throne, in a joint intervention by slaveholding interests, the military, and the aristocracy.

The slave trade had transformed Cuba into the world’s sugar bowl and Spain’s new gold mine, but it was also valuable as a captive market for peninsular products. Consequently, the war in Cuba had a critical effect on revolutionary Spain. As Raymond Carr has written, the war “sapped[ed] the vitality” of the 1868 revolution. Manpower was not the only issue: the revolutionary government in Madrid also had to contend with Creole demands for a reshaped empire in the form of a freer market, political liberties, and abolition. The territories on both sides of the Atlantic were divided by the question of slavery.

For Creole reformers—and the enslaved—emancipation was crucial for economic modernization, liberation from Spanish control, and reasons of ethics. In the words of the young Cuban patriot José Martí, writing from Madrid in 1873 (just a few months after our petitioners wrote from Barcelona), Cubans condemned their economic bounty “porque era prosperidad esclava y deshonrada, porque el Gobierno le permitía la riqueza a trueque de la infamia” (because it was a dishonorable, slave-made prosperity, because the government had allowed wealth in ex-

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In contrast, Spanish peninsulares living in Cuba and large plantation owners (mostly pro-empire), feared abolition as tantamount to the destruction of wealth, race war, and a definitive political break with Spain. For their part, the various liberal regimes in Spain after 1868 faced a newly changed Atlantic world following the U.S. Civil War and growing abolitionist sentiment at home. Within the Iberian Peninsula, abolition was a crucial element of the revolutionary agenda, yet Cuban money was integral to metropolitan finance. Tensions boiled over when the overseas minister, Manuel Becerra, proposed the recognition of the civil rights of slaves and full abolition within six years. However, his position sparked widespread protest, and he fell from power. Entrenched financial networks in the peninsula, especially in Catalonia, were staunchly opposed to many of these reforms and set up a “Permanent Commission for the Defense of Spanish Interests in Cuba.” While Madrid, the administrative capital, benefited immensely from its wealthiest colony, the lion’s share of private wealth and commerce moved through Barcelona, in particular, its Banco Hispano-Colonial.

The revolutionary governments ultimately not only moved to abolish slavery, but also held free-trade economic positions that promised to eliminate the protected colonial markets that favored Spanish products. For Spain after 1868, the imperial challenge was to keep the disparate regions unified through a discourse of nationalism, based on both commercial imperialism and a shared culture. As a result, discursive representations of Spain and its colonies as an imperial family were again reformulated. Abolition in 1868 Spain was, as elsewhere, framed as fundamentally an economic question, but the proslavery party represented it as a death knell for the Spanish nation. Spain’s call for “integridad nacional” (national integrity) as a battle cry to prevent Caribbean independence referred, not to ethics or purity, but rather to “integrity” as “indivisibility,” positing an indivisible nation connected by a slave economy and a unified market. Slavery kept the nation whole; abolition would, it was argued, prompt national dissolution.

In response to the hypocrisy of the First Republic’s sustained imperial position during the Ten Years’ War, José Martí satirized the logic of the integrity argument. Quite simply, the claim of national integrity was “ridiculous” for a territory divided by the Atlantic Ocean. Less absurd, but equally dangerous for Cuba in Martí’s survey of Spanish Republicanism’s imperial nationalism, was the conflation of the political notion of the “nation” as “state” with a more Herderian Romantic “patria” in a new narrative of nationalism. In the following passage, Martí replaces the jingoist term “nación” with “patria,” underscoring the perversion of the idea of cultural nationalism in the service of commercial imperialism. “Patria” remains, as “nation” should, beyond the reach of the logic of the market. "No constituye la tierra eso que llaman integridad de la patria. Patria es algo más que opresión, algo más que pedazos de terreno sin libertad y sin vida, algo más que derecho de posesión a la fuerza. Patria es comunidad de intereses, unidad de tradiciones, unidad de fines, fusión dulcísima y consoladora de amores y esperanzas." (Land is not that which they call integrity of the patria. Patria is something more than oppression, more than chunks of

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6 José Martí, “La República española ante la Revolución cubana,” in La guerra del 68 (Havana: Editorial de ciencias sociales, 1983), 34.
7 Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833–1874 (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 142–44.
8 For various perspectives on the relationship between Cuba and Barcelona in the nineteenth century, see, e.g., Jaume Carrera i Pujal, Historia política de Catalunya en el siglo XIX, 7 vols. (Barcelona: Bosch, 1957–58); Jordi Maluquer de Motes, Nación e inmigración: Los españoles en Cuba (ss. XIX–XX) ([Oviedo]: Ediciones Jucar, 1992); Martín Rodrigo y Alharilla, “Con un pie en Catalunya y otro en Cuba: La familia Samá, de Vilanova,” Estudis històrics i documents dels arxius de protocols 16 (1998): 359–98.
land stripped of liberty and life, something more than the right of possession by force. *Patria* is a community of interests, unity of traditions, unity of goals, a sweet and consoling fusion of love and hope.\(^9\) By rejecting the extension of nationalist discourses over the domain of the *patria*, Martí attacks the core logic of the Spanish Empire.

The relationships among *patria*, nation, territory, and empire in Spain were (and remain) complicated by local and global interests. In the period after the cessation of the slave trade, politics in the Atlantic region underwent a radical realignment. In Europe, too, 1870 marked the beginning of a transformation in nationalism, moving away from "voluntary" and rational ideas of statehood and nation to ethnolinguistic national identities.\(^10\) Women and slaves were, of course, excluded from both formulations; however, the Barcelona petition is striking in how proslavery women engaged with the premises of local, cultural (and class-based) knowledge of their *patria*, but used them to validate the older model of national statehood. But nationalism crossed geographic, class, and political lines. As Martí made clear in his denunciation of the imperial designs of the First Republic, it was not only the proslavery faction that invoked the discourse of "Spain" in its defense of control over the Antilles. Even among those Spaniards who pessimistically viewed the impending loss of the colonies as a foregone conclusion, next to none advocated for their independence. "Across the political spectrum, there was consensus that the colonies were not separate countries or nations with their own histories. Rather, they were integral parts of the Spanish nation-state."\(^11\) Cuba, Puerto Rico, and their slaves were chained to liberalism. As I will show, implicit in this definition of the relationship between colony and metropolis was a particular sort of politicized domesticity.

While the Spanish Cortes debated the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico from December 1872 to January 1873, citizens took to the streets. Abolitionists protested in Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Cádiz, and elsewhere; colonial interests in the peninsula and the Caribbean also organized a massive popular intervention.\(^12\) Juan Manzanedo and Julián Zulueta (Spanish-born slave traders, bankers, politicians, and landowners) spearheaded the mobilization of the various chapters of the Círculo hispano-ultramarino (a network of clubs for men with colonial interests) and the political action group the Liga nacional. They succeeded in gathering thousands of signatures from individuals and municipalities in protest of abolition, in the name of "the nation." In Barcelona alone, 240 women and 2,679 men signed their adherence to the proslavery, political, and commercial agenda.\(^13\) The numerous petitions from this campaign can be consulted at the Archivo histórico nacional (AHN) in Madrid.

The petition signed by the 240 "mujeres nacidas en las islas de Cuba y Puerto Rico y residentes en [Barcelona]" is of particular interest for the way that it draws together nationalism,

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\(^9\) Martí, "La República española ante la Revolución cubana," 39.


\(^12\) Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery*, 151, 148.

\(^13\) AHN 3554/3, no. 6, had 2,679 signatures. In 1877 the adult male population of Barcelona was 120,000. In other words, about 5 percent of this group signed a single petition. Members of the Junta directiva del fomento de la produccion nacional asociacion de productores establecida en Barcelona (AHN 3554/3, no. 10) and the Ynstituto yndustrial de Cataluña (AHN 3554/3, no. 9) sent separate petitions from Barcelona. The petition by women "nacidas en las islas de Cuba y Puerto Rico y residentes en [Barcelona]" (AHN 3554/3, no. 30) rounds out the commercial, imperial, and nationalist language with a sentimental argument bolstered by firsthand testimony to the "fact" that it would be a crime to release slaves to their "natural" "barbary."
proslavery, and gender. The signatories had far-reaching social, political, and economic ties. The husbands of many were leading financiers and industrialists (Güell, López, Llopart, Bosch). Consistent with gender hierarchies of the nineteenth century, these women write from within the “tranquilidad del hogar” (tranquility of the hearth), but, in this case, one that had been disturbed by a general uproar over the proposed reforms in Puerto Rico, the “patria hermosa y feliz” (beautiful and happy patria) for many of these women. The term ‘hogar’ confirms their position outside the public sphere, but the image of the intrusions by political clamoring suggests that the impending political reforms will impact private life. Indeed, with the hearts of mothers and wives, they claim to divine something sinister hiding behind the apparent benefits of colonial reforms.  

14 Domestcity is the particularly nineteenth-century category of labor and morals that separated economics and politics from the home, presenting the home as somehow free from these concerns, and at the same time, it is the feminine space of rest and recovery for all of society’s members. However, in Spanish “domestcity” also refers in general to that space which has been cultivated under the care of men, in opposition not to the public sphere, but rather, to savagery.  

15 The invocation of domestcity, of the right of these women to best understand the local space of the family (the patria, the home), exemplifies not rebellion but rather an allegiance to patriarchy and the analogy between the monarchy and the family.  

16 The petition (that runs six manuscript pages) argues that the proposed ruptures in slave society, in what is the private domain of the patrias governed by these Antillean women, would weaken the structure of the family and the stability of the empire-nation.

The invocation of domestcity also served another end: the mobility of these women realizes the metaphor of the imperial family. Born in the Antilles and resident in the Catalan capital, they migrate from the periphery to the peninsula (where they hear of reforms emanating from the center that will impact the islands) but do not leave the domestic sphere. The fact that these women founded homes in Barcelona demonstrates the rhetoric of “integridad nacional” in familial terms: the hearth at the heart of Spanish life can be found anywhere in the nation. Thus, they present a typically conservative position that does not threaten to upset the race- and gender-based assumptions of the male nation as a space of political action and commerce. Cuba and Puerto Rico are thus presented as an extension of Spain’s private space, despite their numerous differences. But at the same time, the womanhood evoked here is not universal. It transcends no boundaries other than those of the Atlantic, pointedly excluding slave women.

Luisa Brú and her cosignatories pride themselves on belonging to Spain: “nos vangloriamos de pertenecer” (we are proud to belong) to Spain. Yet, even though they are daughters of white Creole families, the women acknowledge the importance of birthplace to the construction of allegiances, even as they deny any division between the peninsula and the islands. Unlike the other files in this dossier at the AHN that emphasize the Spanishness of the various regions of the state, this document points out the difference of birthplace as unique. However, in their self-presentation as “domestic angels,” the women evoke a racialized category.  

14 “Pero somos esposas y madres y nuestros corazones adivinan institutivamente que algo grave, muy grave se oculta tras de esas proyectadas reformas” (AHN 3554/3, no. 30).
15 See, e.g., the entry for doméstico in Diccionario de la Real académia española (1884), available online at rae.es.
were born in Cuba and Puerto Rico, they are clearly to be thought of as white women (unlike the popular image of *mambisa* agitators), representing colonies that are ethnically like Spain, similar yet subservient. The women collapse the distinctions between metropole and colony in their persons while at the same time expressing not only a whiteness in racial terms but one connected to their “angelic nature,” supposedly free from profit motives and consequently more pure in its view of slavery. In this they stand apart from (male) *indianos*, whose American experience was always defined by commercial enterprising and who were depicted in contemporary literature as deeply tanned or otherwise physically marked by their time in America. Their proximity to divinity notwithstanding, these Caribbean women were also closer to the slaves and, accordingly, offered reliable testimony. The angelic domestic womanhood encounters a different logic when it speaks to imperial rather than simply metropolitan concerns such as the materiality of actual governance.

The dual *patrias* strengthen rather than weaken imperial ties for these Caribbean subjects. José Martí explored the paradox of dual *patrias* in his poem, “Dos patrias tengo yo: Cuba y la noche” (I have two homelands: Cuba and the night). In Julio Ramos’s analysis, the poet’s angst arises from his position between two modes of producing meaning: battle and aesthetics.¹⁸ “Cuba y la noche” is the antithesis of “Cuba and Spain.” The petitioners’ position is no less paradoxical: they find the “hogar” in the peninsular city of their residence, although their native *patria* is Puerto Rico or Cuba. Slavery becomes the means of maintaining this union of homelands. The petitioners’ cultural authority to speak about politics requires the acknowledgment of drastic differences among the various *patrias* in the nation, which are, at the same time, essentially Spanish. These women make Spain-in-Antilles natural by speaking as Antilleans-in-Spain.

We must be careful to avoid reading the Barcelona petition independently from the propaganda machine that orchestrated the resistance to Puerto Rican abolition in the winter of 1872–73. The women’s address charged the Círculo hispano-ultramarino network’s political position with a particular tone of virtue and purity deemed necessary to the viability of the proslavery position, however far-fetched and fantastic their claims seem today. Gender positions were elemental to the reformulated narratives of empire-as-nation. The premises of religiosity and domestic morality both explicit in their petition and implicit in their position as domestic angels counter the prevailing assumptions (based on fact) of the criminality of colonial society (government corruption, fraud, and graft) and also of the immorality of slavery itself.¹⁹ These women quite probably wrote, or signed, as instructed by their husbands. Nevertheless, our concern is not the authenticity of authorship but the place of politicized womanhood and the concomitant moral authority it lent to the narratives of nation and empire in this period.

The 240 petitioners spoke as women, “sin ser hombres de Estado” (not men of state), and accentuated their roles as wives and mothers; their signatures reflected their discursive position. Many of the petitioners appended the possessive form of their husbands’ names (Luisa Brú added “de López”; Isabel López added “de Güell”; Estanislá Ligart added “de Goytisolo”). Susan Kirkpatrick has interpreted the popularity of this trend in the nineteenth century as perhaps indicating that “the more socially mobile women of bourgeois society required this apppellative

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mark of their domestic subordination.”20 Here the practice graphically represents not only gender hierarchy, but also the dynastic and familial ties that bind Creole to indiano. These signatures also affirm that the women belong to Spain as much as to their husbands. As Tamar Mayer has argued, nationalism and gender are similar in their social and cultural constructedness, and the narratives that create and sustain them function in concert.21 In particular, the Western “nation” builds upon gendered hierarchical participation. In this hierarchy, women are subservient to men but superior to children (and slaves and animals). Yet, proximity to these other creatures outside of civil society grants women a particular type of experiential knowledge unavailable to men in the public sphere. Thus, the petitioners’ moral (gender) and geographical (Antillean) positions authorize them not only to influence the enfranchised men of their private spheres, but also to represent slavery to the men of the central government according to a logic that ran counter to the prevailing liberal ideas about the economic and political makeup of the nation, the Cuban insurrection, and English-led reform movements. Motherhood is a political device within this domestic authority. In the framework of the nation, it implies hierarchical and custodial powers. Indeed, the petitioners infantilize the slaves by stripping them of any sense of self-control or awareness: “no saben vivir sino guiados por el suave yugo de los consejos y del amor de sus amos, con los que se hallan identificados, cuyo apoyo y protección necesitan como necesita el debil al fuerte, el ignorante al entendido” (they do not know how to survive unless guided by the gentle yoke of the counsel and love of their masters, with whom they identify, whose support and protection they need, as the weak needs the strong, the ignorant the wise). In their refusal to see the slave as an enslaved man or woman capable of reason (or of forming his or her own family), and in presenting them as without identity, and as innocent and weak, the Barcelona petitioners emphasize their influence in the islands, which they treat as their domestic domain. Empire is not simply politics, according to these women; it is a question of family and domestic governance, congruent with narratives of nationalism.

The petitioners present their unique authority to judge the morality and necessity of slavery in the islands based on their gender, religion, and patria and then progress to argue against abolition by claiming that the enslavement, forced labor, and servitude of Africans and Afro-Hispanics in the Caribbean is not, in fact, actually slavery. The women suggest that this disconnect between words and meaning is one that only those who have run a household in the Antilles can comprehend. Such a unique perception of the patriarchal system sets these women apart from other proslavery petitioners who argue along the logic of economics. Moreover, confident in their Christian identity, the Barcelona petitioners claim that abolitionists are “católicos de doble” (duplicitous Catholics) (emphasis in original), underscoring the non-Spanishness of their opponents’ duplicity by writing the term in French: they are both bad Catholics and bad Spaniards, for they mistreat their white servants worse than Antilleans do “sus llamados esclavos.” As the petition develops, Antillean slaves are renamed “so-called slaves” and slavery “so-called slavery.” The women thus attack Northern Europeans and Spanish Catholic reformers by purging their words of significance: “slave” does not mean what Europeans believe that it does, nor does “slavery” describe the labor conditions in the Antilles, where the reformers were not born and, thus, which they can never truly understand. It is unclear if the central government

21 Tamar Mayer, Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1.
noted the irony of American women redefining key economic terms in Spanish, the language of the empire.

"Over there," they claim, slaves in all categories of all labors "disfrutan de mayor bienestar y desahogo que la generalidad de los braceros y domésticos en Europa" (enjoy greater well-being and are more carefree than most laborers or domestic servants in Europe), designating Europe, by contrast, as the space requiring humanitarian-inspired reforms. The petitioners hijack the concerns of the revolution and suggest that the capital, and indeed the Continent, put its own house in order before upsetting the colonies, where, they argue, labor is not an issue. The periphery becomes the model for the center. Rejecting the ideals of liberty, this petition presents Cuba and Puerto Rico as exemplary cases of contented labor based on a conservative, paternalistic system. Paradoxically, the most stable part of the Spanish state—untouched by modern liberties—is that which is under siege in the Caribbean.

In their comparison of English laborers with Caribbean slaves, the petitioners revive the north-south antagonisms of the "Black Legend" while also maligning English textile and other contemporary industries that presented a constant threat to Catalan interests. At the same time, they carefully avoid that most domestic of social questions: the condition of wage laborers in peninsular factories. Catalan workers, as the government well knew, displayed growing dissatisfaction with an exploitative labor system. On the heels of the 1868 revolution, Barcelona had seen the first Spanish Workers’ Congress, which was led by the Communist International, and spoke to class and labor outside of the framework of the nation.

The women’s final argument reconverts the familial story of the Antilles into a political nightmare: abolition would simply not address the actual inequalities of the world; moreover, it would transform Cuba and Puerto Rico into another Santo Domingo (not simply Haiti): Columbus’s lost paradise, mired in vice and crime. They allude to both a broken imperial bond and a racialized image of savagery and barbarity—one often envisioned in Europe as the avenging black male of Haiti. Santo Domingo refers, here, simultaneously to the former French colony of Saint-Domingue and the Dominican Republic, newly independent and emancipated from the Spanish family for the second time. Concluding their case in the starkest of terms, the women state that not only has Spain’s empire been lost, but, they insinuate, the conditions in the Caribbean are worse than they were before Columbus’s arrival. The women unwittingly delegitimize the entire conquest in their support of slavery.

The paradoxes of nineteenth-century Spanish liberalism are most clearly seen in the case of slavery. As Maluquer de Motes has written, throughout Spain there was, with very few exceptions, a general moral condemnation of slavery during the nineteenth century. Its defenders argued their positions in terms of economic necessity and political expediency but almost never in terms of overall support for the system of slavery. What is striking in the Barcelona petition is the way in which womanhood is engaged to bridge the disconnect between the moral and the economic. Consonant with the classic position of female abolitionists, the petitioners accept that slavery is a moral issue and do not attempt to shield it from ethics by privileging economic concerns. Rather, they call for a new name for slavery.

Beyond their immediate antiabolition position—and in spite of their rhetorical protestations of ignorance of governance—Luisa Brú and her fellow petitioners engaged in serious imperial work. Women may not have been part of the electorate, but their stance of disinterested womanhood shaped the narrative of the empire-nation as wholesome, natural, and stable. Their

(self-defined) impeccable moral position and unshakable “Spanishness” counter the ideas (widespread throughout Europe) that colonial contact would erode the morals of European emigrants and that slave owners were inherently corrupt. Far from being infected by overseas immorality or intimate contact with Afro-Hispanics, these Spanish women from Cuba claimed moral authority equal to that of their European counterparts, in addition to their reliable first-hand testimony as to the quotidian, practical knowledge of life in a slave society.

Scholars of nineteenth-century Spain have explored the nature of Spanish womanhood and domesticity. Recent work has analyzed womanhood in nineteenth-century Spain and its deployment under the Franco regime in the twentieth century. Similarly, we are beginning to understand the growth of abolitionism in Spain and the profound importance of empire and slavery to modern Spanish culture, yet it remains unclear how anti-imperialism might have nuanced the development of Spanish feminism, especially in the dynamic years of the Sexenio revolucionario. We have yet to understand how womanhood—in particular, in its whiteness—was invoked throughout the century in terms of the refashioned empire and the internal debates over Spain’s relationship with the overseas colonies, slavery, and the wider Atlantic world. Individual women writers took various positions, but how did men and women play with gender to craft versions of the stories of manhood and nationalism meaningful to a European society with complex familial and financial ties to the Caribbean?

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