Abstract
This article seeks to stimulate thought around the language we use in social sciences and in Colombian public fields when speaking about Colombia; in other words, to promote thought, debates, and proposals about the country in general. I propose bringing the notion of the republic to the forefront, and abandoning the use of the notions of patria (homeland), and nation. The notion of republic refers to a geographic field of law, certainly in constant construction, but completely tangible, applicable, and susceptible of being discussed with regard to its validity, reform, application, or infraction. The notion of republic opens possibilities of critical thought regarding history, social sciences, humanities, law, and art, and simultaneously leads to responsible and pertinent discussions in the public field. At the same time, the word patria was used in the origins of the republic to invoke in its favor feelings of local belonging forged in previous centuries and which are today extemporaneous. The term nation, in highly inequitable societies such as Colombia's, refers to a project set in the future, and it is not uncommon to find the expression "construction of a nation". As a category of social analysis, the term has limited reach and its effect in critical thought is to create ambiguity and mystification. To demonstrate this I focus on two relatively recent books in which a debate between two general and opposite perceptions of Colombia is tacitly started. This debate loses strength precisely because it is stated in terms of nation and not of republic. I am referring to the books of Alfonso Múnera, El fracaso de la nación (The Failure of Nation) (1998) and Eduardo Posada Carbó, La nación soñada (The Dreamed Nation) (2006).

Keywords