ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the emergence of Hispanist discourse surrounding the celebrations of the Fourth Centennial of the “Discovery” in Spain in 1892. These celebrations became the first moment after the independence of continental Latin America in which intellectuals from both sides of the Atlantic revisited their common history and articulated a transatlantic Hispanic identity based on shared language, race and “spirit.” Hispanism offered them an alternative to the Anglo-Saxon and French modernities from which they were excluded as peripheral not-yet-modern nations. Both Latin American and Spanish authors implemented the myth of Hispanic anti-materialist spirituality to paradoxically reinforce transatlantic commercial exchange. Latin American authors imagined themselves as more modern than Spain, but Hispanic identity provided a white genealogy and the promise of a common economic front. Spanish intellectuals, on the other hand, sought to regain cultural authority and so capture the profits of the Latin American markets. In spite of convergence over the "Hispanic" as a strategic identity with which to claim modernity, intellectuals did not produce a homogeneous discourse, but constructed multiple and conflicting interpretations of the Hispanic bond, deployed by each author in their own nation-building projects. Transnational identity became subordinated to national interests and ultimately would turn into an ideological battleground in the definition of cultural and economic power relations between the former colonies and the ex-metropole. The writings of Hispanism are an ideal point of access for reconsidering issues of postcoloniality, neocolonialism, and internal
colonialism from the unique vantage point of transatlantic relations between Spain and Latin America.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is almost a convention to start the acknowledgements by referring to the “via
crucis” involved in writing a dissertation. I must say that while I felt moments of genuine
doubt and discouragement, I also had days of real pleasure and thrill about the project.
The people I want to thank in these pages shared my excitement during those good days
and comforted me during the “grey” ones. On those occasions I daydreamed about the
moment I would finally sit down to write my thanks to them rather than another chapter.
The irony is that I expected these pages to be so much easier to write and I have found
capturing their contributions to my life and work quite challenging.

First of all, I want to thank my advisor, Ericka Beckman, whose enthusiasm for
this project has been decisive to my progress. She showed me new ways of understanding
literature that have strongly shaped my critical perspective and of course, this
dissertation. Her sharp critical sense and structural skills have also helped immensely in
writing this work.

I am indebted to my committee, Elena Delgado, Mariselle Meléndez and Joyce
Tolliver for their valuable comments on the dissertation and advice on how to continue
with the project. I am grateful for how much all of you have taught me from my early
days in graduate school, teachings that have directly influenced on how I have developed
this thesis.

I also have to mention Michael Palencia-Roth. Not only because this project
started to germinate in one of his classes but also because his teaching was truly
inspirational. Thank you.
The Spanish Department at the University of Virginia gave me a warm welcome when I was still writing this dissertation, and I am especially thankful to Alicia López-Operé who helped me to transition from my “Urbana-Champaign” world by offering me her sincere friendship as we lived through parallel academic and personal experiences.

Leaving Urbana-Champaign was like leaving my second home, my friends there having become a second family. Their friendship and encouragement were crucial to continue forward. Thanks to Puy Ciriza, Marco Shappeck and Ji-Young Shin for the beautiful memories of 308 W. Washington. Thanks to Irune del Río and Marcos Campillo for being not only my insightful literary colleagues but more importantly, my friends. Thanks to Angelina Cotler and Mahir Saul who really give meaning to the word “generosity,” and have been so supportive throughout this experience.

I am grateful to Jon Franco for his confidence in me all these years. It has been a wonderful surprise to discover a friend in my former professor and mentor, and what a friend indeed! One that I can truly count on. I am also indebted to him for sending me on this transatlantic adventure. I would also like to thank my travelling companion, Susana Vidal: I will always remember with a twinge of nostalgia the day we move together to Urbana (as well as so many experiences we shared before that).

Thanks to Déborah Vegas and Alicia Burga, my “sisters.” Among many, many other things that I have to thank you for, I want to say here that your understanding and empathic attitude about the dissertation writing was a true comfort. I am so grateful to have you.
Gracias a mis padres, Victor Arbaiza y Lucía Tena. El momento más difícil de estos agradecimientos porque, ¿por dónde empiezo? ¿desde cuándo tendría que agradecer? Gracias por ser unos padres maravillosos y por haberme apoyado en todas las decisiones que he tomado. Aunque en el otro lado del Atlántico, os he sentido muy, muy cerca durante todo este proceso.

And finally thanks to you, Sasha Newell, for so, so many things. I should start by expressing my gratitude for your patient proofreading as well as for your stimulating comments on this dissertation. Your own work has been an inspiration to me; who would have imagined that your *sapeurs* and *bluffeurs* would help me so much to approach my *hispanistas*? But I must thank you for much more important things than your academic support: thank you for your love and friendship and for making life like a movie by Busby Berkeley and Jacques Demy.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION........................................................................................................................................1

CHAPTER ONE: STAGING EMPIRE:  
THE SPANISH CELEBRATIONS OF 1892............................................................................................ 28

CHAPTER TWO: THE COMPENSATORY EMPIRE OF HISPANISM:  
THE WORK OF JUAN VALERA AND MENÉNDEZ PELAYO IN THE CENTENNIAL OF 1892.......................... 64

CHAPTER THREE: FIGHTING THE DANGERS OF MODERNITY:  
THE SPIRITUALITY OF HISPANISM IN THE WRITINGS OF SOLEDAD ACOSTA DE SAMPER.................. 103

CHAPTER FOUR: “PÁSENME USTEDES EL LIMEÑISMO:”  
RICARDO PALMA’S NATIONALIZATION OF LANGUAGE THROUGH HISPANISM........................................... 144

CHAPTER FIVE: REVIEWING RUBÉN DARÍO’S HISPANISM:  
A COMMERCIAL VISION ON TRANSATLANTIC BONDS........................................................................ 178

CONCLUSION: 1492, 1892, 1992 AND BEYOND..................................................................................... 215

BIBLIOGRAPHY....................................................................................................................................... 228
INTRODUCTION

In 1892 Spain invited its former colonies to join the celebrations in the peninsula commemorating the Fourth Centennial of the “Discovery.” This occasion not only attracted politicians and diplomats, but a great number of Latin American writers and intellectuals also attended the celebrations, for many this being their first trip to the former metropole. These intellectuals engaged in exchanges with Spanish writers, took part in the multiple conferences organized on the occasion of the Centennial and many even wrote their impressions on this trip. After the ups and downs of the transatlantic communication following the independence of continental Latin America, the Spanish festivities commemorating 1492 thus became the first great event that reunited a considerable number of Latin American and Spanish intellectuals. Furthermore, the homage that the Centennial of 1892 paid to the “Discovery” and subsequent colonization of the America provided an encouraging frame for intellectuals across the Atlantic to rethink the colonial past and consider the possibility of embracing a transnational Hispanic identity.

This thesis analyzes the emergence of a Hispanist discourse around the Centennial of 1892, investigating the motivations by Spanish and Latin American authors in promoting the idea of a shared transatlantic identity. As Enrique Dussel (1995) has examined from the late 18th century, a Eurocentric concept of modernity developed that considered Latin Americans and Spanish as backwards and anti-modern. In rewriting the colonial past and embracing a transnational Hispanic identity, Spanish and Latin American authors had the opportunity to refashion the imposed idea of their cultural difference in positive symbolic terms. Under the frame of the Centennial, they could
claim to be part of a civilizing mission carried out in an earlier and larger colonial project than either the British or French Empire. The vision of this Eurocentric modernity of the Hispanic character as incompetent within the capitalist system was also rewritten through the concept of a “Hispanic spirituality” opposed to Anglo-Saxon materialism, a spirituality said to be forged by a disinterested colonization process. Paradoxically, by appealing to solidarity within this “spiritual” community, Spanish and Latin Americans were also expecting to promote transatlantic commerce and transform their dependent economies on British, French and Dutch and German capitals.

As an ideology that attempted to fight against the cultural and commercial influence of the hegemonic European nations, Hispanism leads us to question the disinterested appearance of proclaiming familial and cultural bonds across the Atlantic. Indeed, while Hispanismo was presented as a conciliatory movement that praised the cultural unity of the Spanish-speaking nations and sought to establish an alliance of the periphery against Anglo-Saxon and French hegemony, I argue that it developed as an internally fractured union where the power dynamics between Spain and its former colonies were at stake. While the Spanish attempted to exercise a new form of cultural authority over its former colonies, Latin Americans considered themselves more advanced and developed than the decayed Spanish metropole, which even a committed Hispanist such as the Colombian writer Soledad Acosta de Samper would compare to “the mummified body of an old convent nun” (Viaje a España in 1892 1: 197). Underneath the shared discourses of familial affection and common bonds, Spanish and Latin American authors wrote multiple and competing visions of Hispanism. In this
dissertation I will analyze how the intellectuals’ writings surrounding the Centennial celebrations were rooted in institutional projects within their own nations and hence, each author approached this Hispanic affiliation in relation to their own nation building project.

In deconstructing this altruist illusion of Hispanism, we need to inquire into the motivations that brought each nation-building project towards this rapprochement, as well as examine the interactions between the former metropole and its ex-colonies that sprang from this unexpected alliance. In this work then, I have chosen to analyze the contrasting Hispanist conceptions of both Spanish and Latin American authors. All these authors coincided in participating in the Centennial from different institutional roles, conceiving the transatlantic rapprochement under the interest of each of their institutions. I argue that the Centennial was an exceptional platform for Hispanist discourses to emerge but simultaneously it was also the occasion to produce competing visions of Hispanism. I aim at showing that rather than a homogeneous movement, Hispanism was a set of ideological practices quite often in conflict in their deploy of a transnational identity for the sake of very diverse and conflicting national projects. While Hispanism homogenized Latin America and blended it with Spain, the division in chapters in this dissertation aims to show how interpretations of Hispanism were elaborated according to the conditions of each national context, with authors from different countries and diverging institutional backgrounds conceiving Hispanism in very diverse ways.

Most of the materials from my dissertation include writings around the Centennial celebrations, in my attempt to draw attention to a date that has been largely overlooked. 1892 represents an exceptional rapprochement between former colonizer and colonized amidst the
height of the expansion of European imperialism and as such, it is also a key moment to understand the shifting historical relations between Latin America and Spain. The Centennial of 1892 provided the coronation of a series of efforts in previous decades to reestablish transatlantic communication, and laid the foundations for the Hispanist discourses that would emerge after 1898.

1892 also reminds us of culture and discourse as powerful vehicles of identity construction. While critical studies on 1898 refer to the political loss and hence view Hispanism as a reparation of it, we find that Peninsular Hispanism of 1892 was reconstructing the relationship with Latin America on the basis of culturalist discourses even before having lost the last colonies. 1892 shows Spanish intellectuals deploying claims of common identity that were aimed at creating a new kind of imperial

---

1 A historical review of transatlantic exchange from 1840s reveals attempts for reestablishing the transatlantic relation that will finally thrive in the Centennial of 1892. As Becker (1922) and Castel (1955) have examined, the Spanish delay in acknowledging the independence of their former territories -not until 1836, and even later if we consider the recognition of each nation separately- created an anti-Spanish feeling in Latin America, and at the same time reveals the lack of a Spanish official project regarding the Latin American republics. But in spite of a governmental lack of direction, the historian Mark J. Van Aken has documented that from the 1840s there would be a Hispanist trend on both sides of the Atlantic supported by private initiative. The Spanish intervention in Latin America between 1860 and 1866 with the annexation of Santo Domingo, the alliance with France during the Franco-Mexican war and especially the Chincha islands war against Peru and Chile-O'Donnell’s “imperial campaign of prestige” as Álvarez Junco has called it (2001)- finished the first phrase of what Van Aken calls the Pan-Hispanist movement and renewed an anti-Spanish feeling in Latin America. However, as Carlos Rama comments, the Spanish renunciation of its dream of “Reconquest” in 1866 would eventually open to an extremely fruitful period of cultural relations. The impossibility of resuming political control over its former colonies, led Spain to appoint culture as the most solid bond between Spain an Latin America as well as the means to recover the Latin American markets. As Carlos Rama and María Isabel Hernández Prieto have examined, from the 1870s to 1895 -with the beginning of the Spanish-American war- there was an increasing interest in strengthening the transatlantic relation. In 1881, Spain would host for the first time the “Congreso Internacional de Americanistas” and 1885 witnessed the foundation of “La Unión Ibero-Americana,” a type of Iberoamerican Cooperation Institute with corresponding centers in Latin America. Also from the 1870s the Spanish Royal Academy started an intense activity to find corresponding academies in Latin America and promote the consciousness of a Hispanic community (Lázaro Carreter 1996). Furthermore, Spanish immigration to Latin America stimulated the transatlantic rapprochement, boosting the appearance of several illustrated magazines and newspapers that like *La Ilustración Española y Americana* (1869-1921) circulated on both sides of the Atlantic.
relationship built from cultural and commerce rather than territoriality. As the anniversary of 1492, 1892 is also a more significant date than 1898 to study the articulation of the transatlantic relation by Latin American authors. In reviewing and reconstructing historical memory, 1892 is a key moment not only for Spanish, but also for Latin Americans who were evaluating their bonds with Spain in the anniversary of the Spanish colonization of America.

*What is Hispanism? or Rather, Why Hispanism?*

As part of the incredibly extensive webpage of the Cervantes Institute, the “Portal del Hispanismo” provides us with a good example of the most frequent understanding of the term “Hispanismo” in our present day. As massive as the main page of the Institute, the “Portal del Hispanismo” offers us information on all kinds of resources and links related to the academic study of the language and literature in Spanish and more generally, about the culture of the Spanish-speaking countries: publications and journals, a database of scholars on “Hispanic studies,” specialized libraries, and so on. While the 4th edition of *Diccionario de literatura española* from Revista de Occidente in 1972 referred to Hispanism as “el estudio de la lengua, literatura e historia de España por los extranjeros” (442), we find today a much more encompassing and integrative concept of Hispanism as an academic field, a field that has expanded from the study of Spain by foreign academics to agglutinate all studies made by the Spanish themselves, to finally incorporate the studies on literature and culture of other Spanish-speaking countries. This integration of the rest of the Spanish-speaking world is implied in the definition by the Spanish Royal Academy that refers to Hispanismo as the “afición al estudio de las lenguas, literaturas o culturas hispánicas.”
Given this tendency to enlarge the academic field of the “Hispanismo,” it seems paradoxical that most dictionaries omit a reference to the Hispanist movement that occupies this study and that is after all at the basis of this progressive disciplinary agglutination. While we can identify two meanings of “Hispanism,” the academic discipline and the movement, the ideological tenets of the later seemed to sustain the first one, as Sebastiaan Faber has recalled, “in historical and ideological terms, Hispanism as a field of study is, indeed, closely related to Hispanism as a movement that proclaims the cultural unity of the Spanish-speaking world” (2005: 66).

The movement of Hispanism -also called Hispanoamericanism, Iberoamericanism, Pan-Hispanism, or Pan-Hispanoamericanism- was defined by Fredrick B. Pike as the belief in a transatlantic community that shared a set of characteristics such as “life style, culture, traditions and value judgments” (1). The proponents and actors of Hispanism, explains Pike, believed that these characteristics were developed by the Spaniards throughout their history and transplanted to Latin America during colonization. These features -often described in terms of language, culture, spirit, blood or race- set them apart from other nations and mark them as members of a Hispanic community.

Pike’s monumental work, *Hispanismo 1898-1936*, was one of the first studies -and still stands as one of the most complete- in analyzing the efforts by Spanish and Spanish Americans in establishing transatlantic ties between the Independence of the last colonies and the Spanish

---

2 Although we should not dismiss the ideological charge of employing one of these terms over the others, many times they are used in an inconsistent manner that makes it difficult to differentiate them. We should also note that the movement of the *Hispanidad* whose main figures were Ramiro de Maeztu and Zacarías de Vizcarra, represents a later variation of this movement, and hence some critics also refer to them as “Hispanists.”
Civil War. However, his analysis not only perpetuates the centralization given to 1898 but as he himself admits, his formation as an historian led him to mainly concentrate on the works of politicians and statesmen, with much less attention to the role of writers in this movement. The role of entrepreneurs in the promotion of Hispanism needs to be further researched as well as the kind of intellectual involvement in the movement considered here. In this dissertation I argue that in fact, the labor undertaken by writers on both sides of the Atlantic was of crucial importance, an importance surprisingly overshadowed when we consider that Hispanism never transformed into a political association. Unlike the British Commonwealth, Hispanism never achieved a formal structure and hence, as a movement without an institutional apparatus, it relied heavily on discursive constructions, on authors writing and stimulating the idea of a Hispanic identity.

Being a movement extremely dependent on discursive creation, Hispanism is paradoxically a difficult movement to define. While Pike’s attempt at providing a definition of the Hispanist movement is praiseworthy, totalizing definitions of the movement should be put into question when considering its multifaceted character. Pike himself struggled in his effort of reaching a definition, saying:

What is hispanismo? This can be best answered by describing some of the fundamental beliefs of the men who have shaped and guided the movement. Although divided on innumerable matters of detail and even on many issues of fundamental significance, the champions of hispanismo, [...] shared an unassailable faith in the existence of a transatlantic Hispanic family, community, or race. (1)
Here Pike is pointing out two elements that I consider of crucial importance to understand the movement (although he himself does not fully explore them in his analysis): the polysemous nature of Hispanism and the importance of faith as the sustaining element of the movement. Many of the defining categories employed by the proponents of Hispanism, are abstract concepts such as “spirit” or “culture” subject to diverse interpretations, and as Stuart Hall (1996) has argued regarding the term “race,” concepts that could be considered “floating signifiers:” discursive constructs whose meaning can never be fixed. Even language, the element that authors like Menéndez Pelayo and Ricardo Palma would consider the most “tangible” bond – an adjective that simultaneously seems to reveal their awareness of the abstraction of Hispanism– should be questioned as a concrete bond: while the claim of common language was sustained by the actual number of Spanish speakers across the Atlantic, the concept of linguistic community and language ownership that came with the idea of language was very differently understood.

Within this crisis of meaning -the very defining characteristics of Hispanism opened to multiple interpretations- Hispanism appears as the powerful signifier that appealed to the idea of a collective transatlantic identity and yet, remained open to every author to pour meaning into it, to define the transatlantic bond and the “Hispanic” by adjusting it to their particular interests. I argue that rather than a homogeneous movement, Hispanism was a set of heterogeneous and malleable conceptions, ideologically charged and in constant rearticulation. I am definitely inspired by the edited volume of Mabel Moraña that, with the unequivocal title *Ideologies of Hispanism*,
underscores the flexibility of Hispanism in becoming the discourse for a variety of agendas:

As an ideologically charged cultural practice, Hispanism produced different results and managed to define very diverse political agendas, depending on the project to which it was articulated, the international conjuncture in which it was immersed, and the goals pursued by intellectual sectors connected to its discursive field, both in the Peninsula and abroad. (Moraña xiii)

Given the flexibility of this signifier to define multiple diverse agendas as pointed out by Moraña, I think that the most significant question in the analysis of Hispanism is not what but why. Rather than falling into totalizing definitions, by asking “why” we can emphasize the polyvalence of Hispanism.

This dissertation shows this polyvalence by presenting the writings by five different authors on the idea of Hispanic union that sprung from the Centennial, a crucial celebration in promoting transatlantic communication and branding the idea of “the Hispanic.” By contrasting the diverse ways in which these Spanish and Latin American writers conceived of and wrote about the Hispanic union we highlight the fact that they each defined the transatlantic bond in relation to their own particular nation-building project. All these five writers were supported by institutional roles, and all chose to represent their institutional view when writing about the Hispanic identity. We will see then, that these authors highlighted and rewrote the characteristics of the Hispanic identity -language, spirit, blood, race, culture, traditions- that more conveniently
supported their ideological project, and thus Hispanism became a “floating signifier,” an empty discursive sign filled with different meanings by each author as they saw fit.

In pointing out the ideological charge of Hispanism, I am drawing on suggestive contemporary scholarship that, together with Moraña’s volume, present a diversity of projects that can be promoted under the flag of “Hispanism.” With the precedent of José-Carlos Mainer’s works on the relation between Spanish nationalism and Hispanism (1977, 1988) several recent studies have explored the instrumentalization of Hispanism as a way to unify the multicultural and multinational diversity of Spain (Resina 2005) as well as the means to establish a new form of relationship with Latin America after the final colonial loss (Hennesey 2000, Loureiro 2003, Sepúlveda Muñoz 2005, Santos Rivero 2005). The reappropriation by the Falange of the most conservative line of Hispanism has been studied by Pérez Monfort (1992) while María Escudero (1996) has demonstrated how the post-Franquist discourse on Latin America maintained many striking similarities with the Falangist rhetoric of the Transatlantic bond. Sebastian Faaber (2002, 2005) has analyzed how the Republicans in exile in Mexico developed a Hispanism that did not completely succeed in distinguishing it from the conservative Hispanidad in their struggle for cultural hegemony.

I aspire to contribute to this discussion on Hispanism by providing a new locus of enunciation and a new periodization of the discursive production. Compared to the number of studies on Peninsular Hispanism, the Hispanism developed in Latin America
has been largely ignored.\textsuperscript{3} Given that the Hispanist movement promoted a transnational identity, I chose a transatlantic approach to examine not only the relationship of the movement to Spanish nationalism but also with other Latin American nation-building projects. In this dissertation then, I am intending to present the idea of a Hispanic union from multiple loci, while presenting the Centennial, as the event around which most of these discourses were produced, as the common hub linking the texts together. As I will explore in this section, this loci of enunciation and periodization can help us to reconsider a model of Hispanism as a new theoretical frame with which to understand postcolonial relationships between Latin America and Spain while also rethinking broader debates on postcoloniality itself.

**Hispanism and Postcoloniality**

In this dissertation, I propose Hispanism as an ideal point of access to issues of neocolonialism, postcoloniality, and internal colonialism, using the specific conditions these acquired in Latin America and Spain to provide new perspectives. The Hispanist writings that emerged surrounding the celebrations concentrated multiple layers of the postcolonial condition and the neocolonial project: Hispanism represented the means through which the members of this “Hispanic pact” reconfigured their internal relations, between the former metropole and its ex-colonies but also amongst the Latin American republics themselves. It was also the means through which the Spanish-speaking countries negotiated the position of their own countries regarding the hegemonic

\textsuperscript{3} Brief studies on this matter, but still necessary to mention are the work by Jorge Larrain (2000) on Hispanism as a means to respond questions of identity raised by indigenistas in the 1930s, or the work by Mercedes Escamilla (1987) on the affiliation of Latin America right to Hispanism in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.
European nations. And finally, it was the means through which each nation promoted their own nation-building project, employing Hispanist discourse to implement a particular concept of citizenship. Hence, Hispanism worked simultaneously as a discursive vehicle for postcolonialism, neocolonialism, and internal colonialism.

This discussion requires a contextualization of the Latin American and Spanish place in the international world order of the turn of the century as well as a revision on the concept of “coloniality” and “postcoloniality” within our field. These terms and their applicability to Latin America had been a controversial topic in our discipline, in part, for the unique conditions of Spain and Latin America at the time in which the imperialist projects that have now become the privileged focus of postcolonial studies were founded.

The Spanish celebrations of 1892 not only represented the principal encounter between Spain and Latin America after Independence, and hence, the platform from which to redefine the transatlantic relation, but the Centennial also provided these nations with the opportunity to define themselves in opposition to their representation by hegemonic European nations. As Enrique Dussel (1995) has examined, the concept of Enlightenment, development and world history articulated by Kant and Hegel between the end of 18th century and the beginning of 19th century, located Spain and Latin America outside of modernity. By the end of 19th century, the height of European imperialism reinforced this Eurocentric conception of the world, with Latin America and Spain representing anomalies in a world geography constructed in the Berlin Conference of 1884 that mapped the world into a dichotomy between colonizers and the colonized. The discreet role of Spain in the Conference revealed that the few -increasingly agitated-
colonies that Spain maintained, were not enough to present Spain as an imperial power at the level of Britain, France, Belgium or Germany, leaving it, as Leopoldo Zea (1992) has put it, merely “on the fringes of the West.” Latin Americans, on the other hand, had not achieved the thriving economy of the increasingly influential US –whose preeminence in the 20th century was precisely announced by the Columbian Exhibition of 1893- and so they were condemned together with Spain to a peripheral role in the emergent global schema.

The fact that Latin America and Spain represented an anomaly in the world geography imagined in the Berlin Conference has contributed to the marginalization Spanish and Portuguese colonization have suffered in debates over postcoloniality and modernity -at least outside the fields of Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian studies (Verdesio 2002; Moraña, Dussel and Jauregui 2008; Moraña and Jáuregui 2008). But as Fernando Coronil (2008) argues, this exclusion of Latin America and Spain from postcolonial studies not only comes from the main attention that postcolonial studies have bestowed to Africa and Asia but is also reinforced by scholars within our own field who questioned the applicability of postcolonial theory to our region and treat it “as another foreign fad that undermines local knowledge” (414). While critics such as Coronil, Peter Hulme (1995, 2008) and Walter Mignolo (1993, 2000) transgress disciplinary boundaries and call for a revision of the development of postcolonial theory within our own field -a development implemented by critics such as Edmundo O’Gorman or Ángel Rama- an important group of scholars -Jorge Klor de Alva (1992), Rolena Adorno (1993), Hugo Achugar (1998), Mabel Moraña (1998) among others- have considered the application of
postcolonial theory to an earlier, mercantilist based colonialism anachronistic. Within this group, Klor de Alva represents the most radical critique, questioning the very existence of colonialism, decolonization and postcolonialism in America and claiming that “it is inconsistent to explain the wars of independence as anti-colonial struggles, and it is misleading to characterize the Americas, following the civil wars of separation, as postcolonial” (1992: 3). I agree with Coronil’s critique (2008: 405) of Klor de Alva, finding that he diminishes the degree of interventionism of the Spanish Empire, establishes too much of a difference between non-indigenous and indigenous populations and homogenizes Asian and African colonization, failing to recognize similarities between these and the Latin American case. Klor de Alva’s comment that the use of “colonialism” is unwarranted in the Americas (4) is refuted by recent historical studies that have examined the high degree of interference and bureaucratization of the Spanish colonialism (Elliott 2006), a process of colonization that lasted longer than most European colonialisms in Africa and Asia. But my main objection to Klor de Alva’s argument is his consideration of the Creole as a “non truly colonized subject” (9). Although he is right to point out the demographic collapse of the indigenous population was perpetuated after Independence by Creoles who were highly influenced by European models, he diminishes the subordinate role of Creoles under the colonial rule, who did not suffer the physical violence inflicted upon indigenous but who were prevented from political and economical privilege monopolized by Spanish representatives. Not only do I defend the inclusion of Creoles in the category of “colonial subjects” but also their status of “postcolonial” after Independence. When Klor de Alva refused to call the wars of
independence “anti-colonial struggles,” he identified Independence with social revolution, criticizing the Creole elites’ motivations to shake free from “the intrusive authority of the European metropolis” (Brading 1991: 484) for their attempt to avoid spurring political mobilizations from the oppressed lower classes. In a similar vein, the appearance of “internal colonialism” -a system of “white supremacy” as Mary Louise Pratt has called it (1992)- after Independence should not be considered as a claim to argue for the Latin American exceptionality and the inapplicability of the term “postcolonialism” to the region. Although much of the conceptual framework of “internal colonialism” was first developed by Latin Americanists (González Casanova 1965, Stavenhagen 1965), it is now a term adopted by scholars of different regions, a phenomenon that also appeared in African and Asian postcolonial states without it casting doubts about these nations’ condition of “postcolonial.” In his book on postcolonial nation-making in Peru, the anthropologist Mark Thurner (1997) refers precisely to how postcoloniality is defined by both negating and reclaiming colonial legacies (3). The postcolonial predicament of challenging colonial rule while preserving social exclusion is then, a phenomenon present in other regions, as Thurner’s quotation of Gyan Prakash illustrates:

Despite critical differences, Peru -like other old postcolonial nations of the New World South- may be seen to share this predicament with the new postcolonial nations of the Old World South. In all cases, this predicament meant that the postcolonial nation and its history had to be constructed -albeit in very different ways and to different degrees- by “contesting colonial rule and [at the same time]
protecting its flanks from the subalterns.” (Prakash 1994: 1481 qtd in Thurner 1997: 3)

Indeed, this negotiation with the colonial legacy -sometimes in the form of rejection, sometimes in the form of reappropriation- is precisely what I consider to be the heart of the postcolonial condition. As Peter Hulme has brilliantly commented, an important nuance when talking about “postcoloniality” is the processual character implied in the suffix “post:”

One of the most frequent ways of misunderstanding the term postcolonial is by imagining that the term itself somehow misleadingly suggests that “colonialism” has been completely left behind, […] Nothing in the word postcolonial implies an achieved divorce from colonialism; rather, it implies the process of breaking free from colonalist ways of thinking. (392)

“Postcolonial” does not simply refer to the end of political domination or imply the superseding of colonial structures, but on the other hand, refers to the cultural forms that emerged out of the negotiation with that colonial past, the aftermath of colonial rule even after the political break. Moraña, Dussel and Jaúregui’s accurate commentaries on the implantation of new forms of colonialism in the Latin American republics as modernization intensified (2008: 9) does not interfere with my argument on the existence of a Latin American postcoloniality, for I see these “neocolonial pacts” as one of the effects of the process of superseding the former colonial power. Latin America represents for me a privileged site for the study of postcolonialism and neoimperialism. Spain on the
other hand, being the first European nation in the modern period in to lose its colonies, also serves as an exceptional case study for examining neoimperialism.

Regarding Spanish colonialism and Latin American postcolonialism, I suggest we are better off emphasizing their specificity rather than their exceptionalism, for this position will allows us to enrich broader debates on postcolonialism –from which we could also benefit. As Mark Thurner has commented, “in the world history of European colonialism and postcolonial nationmaking, the New World is old and the Old World new” (1).

At the height of European imperialism, the Centennial of 1892 found Latin America and Spain at a different stage of imperial world order, negotiating the reestablishment of a transatlantic relationship. While facing a situation still unknown for the European imperial powers in processes of expansion, Spain and Latin America also formed part of that global scenario and had to confront the peripheral role that they were assigned in it. The alliance of Latin America and Spain articulated in the Centennial through the idea of a Hispanic bond represented then a gesture of solidarity among two peripheries that attempted to stand, through this rapprochement, against the hegemonic interpretation of world order. Hispanism for many Latin American Creoles was a means to supersede European neocolonialism: the British influence in the economy and politics, France in the culture, and even the US which had started to take shape as a growing influence in the region. For Peninsular Hispanists, on the other hand, Hispanism

---

4 The Monroe Doctrine (1823) which had been received with gratitude in the midst of the Independence wars, acquired in the last decades of the 19th century a threatening aspect of US aspirations of interventionism in the area (Inman 1921). Hispanism was viewed by many intellectuals as a response to a Pan-Americanism dictated from Washington.
presented the means to articulate a neoimperial relation with Latin America, attempting to exercise a cultural authority over their former colonies that would translate into a symbolic gain and also into a material recovery of the long lost Latin American markets, two aspects that would contribute to undermine the “peripheriality” of Spain. Underneath the discourses of familial affection and common bonds, this peripheral alignment was then a terrain of struggle. Apparently reuniting the former colonies with its previous metropole for the sake of language, culture, blood and spirit, Hispanism presented itself as a discourse of reconciliation, and also, as the means to endow their “cultural difference” -as it was seen from the hegemonic Eurocentric perspective- with positive connotations. However, in their aspirations to establish Spain as the cultural authority within the Hispanic union, Peninsular Hispanists also turned it into a colonizing discourse, a problematic vision that was contested by Latin American Creoles who most of the time reversed the dynamics of cultural authority and considered themselves superior to the former metropole, which they perceived as backwards and decayed. At the same time, Latin Americans also often employed Hispanism to develop national project of internal colonialism, excluding indigenous culture from the national imagination through the promotion of Hispanic cultural and religious values.

Hispanism was then, not only an alliance of peripheries and a reconciliation discourse but also an instrument for nation building which led Spanish and Latin American authors to produce contrasting visions of Hispanism and become involved in a power struggle over the very same stakes that defined the Hispanic bond. In Culture and Imperialism (1993), Edward Said called attention to the worldly affiliations of the
intellectual movements, presenting literature as a site that represents dominant ideologies and also reflects tensions and resistances against them. An analysis of Hispanist conceptions from different “loci of enunciation,” would provide us with Said’s proposal of “contrapuntal reading” (67), seeing both appropriation and resistance to colonialist practices.

The Commercial Interests of the Spiritual Race

In studying the multiple uses of the Hispanist discourse, this dissertation attempts to put in the foreground the commercial dimension of this movement, an aspect that has been traditionally neglected in favor of simply culturalist or political readings of the movement. In this dissertation I want to show how both Spanish and Latin Americans benefited from the myth of a Hispanic spirituality, this being paradoxically, the platform from which to promote commercial exchanges. This commercial aspect of Hispanism appears directly related to the peripheral situation of Spain and Latin America. Through the Hispanist discourse, these authors attempted to renegotiate their representation by Northern European nations who envisioned them as ineffectual capitalists, reappropriating and transforming a discourse of cultural unity and making it a form of commercial imperialism, both symbolically and materially profitable.

Cultural determinism in 19th century promoted the idea that Latin catholic nations and in particular, Spain and its former colonies were commercially incompetent. As Lily Litvak (1980) has studied, racial ideologies from early 19th century as well as Darwinist and evolutionist theories in the 1860s crystallized a dichotomy between Latin and Anglo-Saxon races, and so, with more prosperous economic development, Anglo-Saxon
countries were naturalized as industrious and enterprising while the Latin race was conceived as anti-mercantile. Hence, in the commercial imagination of 19th century, Spain and Latin America occupied a peripheral space, representing the “Other” of capitalism. These stereotypes were very strong not only abroad but also in Spain itself, where it was generally viewed as an unavoidable feature of the national character, as well as in Latin America where it was often conceived as an unfortunate biological trait inherited from the Spanish. However, at the Centennial of 1892 we will see how both Peninsular and Latin American Hispanists would reverse this negative commercial construction by praising Hispanic spirituality as a virtue and unifying feature of the Spanish speaking countries opposed to an Anglo-Saxon identity characterized by its interested and capitalist nature. Although the response in Latin America to the idea of the Hispanic race was not homogenous, there were a good number of intellectuals that supported the idea of an unselfishness and spirituality inherent in the Hispanic race.

From the classic work of Max Weber to the more contemporary of Claudio Véliz we find suggestive and crucial analyses to understand the impact of religion or

---

5 This was particularly believed and deplored by Creoles who sought to import Northern European models to Latin America, diluting both the indigenous and the Spanish heritage. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento is one of the main representatives of this visions, who in *Viajes por Europa, África y América, 1845-1847 y Diario de gastos*, would frequently refer to the Spanish ancestry as a burden in the path to commerce and progress.

6 Originally published in 1905, Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* represents a classic of economic sociology that argues that the origin of capitalism does not lie in a material reality as Marx suggests but in a religious cosmology: “when ascetism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order” (181). According to Weber, the Calvinist idea of “predestination” interpreted the economic success as a manifestation of divine grace, hence stimulating the development of capitalism.
cultural phenomena in the development of capitalism, but none question the vision of the Hispanic world as essentially anti-mercantilist. The work of José Carlos Mainer (1979) and Ángel Loureiro (2003) is a pioneer in this respect, pointing out the intersections between the production of a culturalist Hispanism and the transatlantic economic relations during the late 19th and early 20th century. In this dissertation I focus on the intersections between the two under the frame of the Centennial of 1892, which I argue has a central importance in solidifying the myth of Hispanic spirituality and in instrumentalizing this myth as a charter for commercial ties based on “racial solidarity.”

As we have commented, the Centennial celebrations of 1892 allowed Spain to relive its past glory and rewrite Spanish colonialism in the guise of a modern imperial enterprise. However, not only the symbolic benefit of Spain’s appearance as a European imperial power was at stake, but entrepreneurs, government officials, and intellectuals alike expected that the rapprochement with the Latin American republics would translate into material improvement of the Spanish economy. Under the frame of Hispanic fraternity advertised by the Centennial, entrepreneurs and mercantile circles sought to gain favor for Spanish imports in Latin America. Intellectuals not only supported this enterprise but also believed that by promoting a Spanish cultural tutelage through the idea of Hispanic union, the long desired treaty on literary property would be signed and the

---

7 Véliz proposes interesting objections to the analysis of Weber, R. H. Tawney or Thomas Macauley, and argues that the commercial character - and the lack of it - should be sought in the respective cultural revolutions of the two groups: the “Counter-Reformation” in the Hispanic countries and the “Industrial Revolution” in the Anglo-Saxon.

8 It could be argued that their conception of capitalism focuses on production and accumulation and ignores consumption, a factor which would definitely open a space for the Hispanic world in the analysis of commercial circuits.
exportation of Spanish cultural products to the region would increase -cultural products, that were simultaneously seen as an important means of stimulating the Hispanic union. Finally, the Centennial was expected to produce immediate economic benefits through the influx of tourism and the commercialization of imperial memorabilia. The Centennial of 1892 laid the foundations for the employment of the myth of the Hispanic spirituality as the vehicle for transatlantic commercial exchanges, a use that, as I will indicate in the conclusion, will continue to thrive in the 20th century.

On the other hand, Latin American intellectuals approached the issue of common Hispanic spirituality through very different veins. Many of them, like Soledad Acosta de Samper looked for a more symbolic profitability to that construction, as a way of marking difference from the materialist French and Anglo-Saxons. This employment of spirituality as a distinctive sign would frequently reappear in the Latin American literature of the early 20th century, José Enrique Rodó’s Ariel being the most emblematic example. In moments of crisis, this idea of spiritual richness would serve as a means to compensate for an unsteady economy. Other Latin American authors like Rubén Darío would promote commerce on the basis of Hispanic solidarity but preserve the idea of the superior spiritual condition of a quasi-Quixotian quality in the face of the imminent threat of US encroachment.

I will argue then, that the paradoxical relationship between transatlantic commerce and the discourse of Hispanic spirituality became crucial in the development of Hispanism as an alliance of the periphery against neocolonial influences, although
Hispanism would also turn into an instrument to exercise a commercial imperialism within the very same Hispanic community.

**Chapter Description**

To contemplate the dimensions of Peninsular and Latin American Hispanism around the Centennial of 1892, the first two chapters will focus on Peninsular Hispanism, contextualizing the spatial scenario and the Peninsular discourse that the Latin American intellectuals faced upon their arrival. In the remaining three I will move to examine the Hispanist articulations of authors from different Latin American nations. In the first chapter I examine Peninsular Hispanism through an analysis of the material celebrations of the Spanish Centennial. This analysis, apart from providing us the context from which most of the discourses of this study emerge, also shows us the parallelism between cultural artifacts such as exhibitions, parades and advertising and the literary work on Hispanism by Peninsular intellectuals that we will study in Chapter Two.

While this introductory chapter examines the forms through which an imperialist ideology was inscribed in cultural artifacts that both reviewed the colonial past and exalted the transatlantic union, I now turn to the discursive productions of two Spanish authors chosen to represent the event in literary form. Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo and Juan Valera framed the cultural significance of the Centennial by articulating the bonds that united Spain with Latin America, inscribing within this solidarity central and culturally superior position of Spain. To commemorate the anniversary, the Spanish Royal Academy commissioned Menéndez Pelayo to write an anthology of Spanish-American poets and which the author composed during the year of the Centennial: the
I also analyze the works of Juan Valera in *El Centenario*, the official magazine of the celebrations that he himself directed. I argue that for these intellectuals, the relationship with Latin America represented a kind of “compensatory empire,” such that by rewriting historical memory and claiming the existence of a common language and culture across the Atlantic, it was possible to endow Spain with a hegemonic and tutelary role over contemporary Latin America. Independent from political structures, this imperial conception promoted a cultural union under the direction of Spain that would also revive commerce with Latin America. The Hispanist discourse thus not only restored the national imagination at a symbolic level, but their authors expected that the Hispanic union articulated in their writings would become a vehicle to promote material exchanges.

In the next three chapters, I move to the Latin American discourses on the Centennial and on the idea of a Hispanic union. Although they share certain similarities, they are three separate articulations of Hispanism each anchored in the specific national contexts of the authors. The juxtaposition of these different interpretations of Hispanism within Latin America also helps us to counteract the homogenization of Latin America in Peninsular Hispanist discourse.

Chapter Three examines a particular vision on Hispanism by the Colombian writer Soledad Acosta de Samper. Coming from Bogotá -one of the centers where the Hispanist movement flourished most in Latin America- she envisioned the Centennial as a family gathering and travelled to Spain supporting the idea of a transatlantic Hispanic identity in her papers. I argue that the Hispanist union she proposed in the conference
papers allowed her to deindigenize the nation and claim a European affiliation alternative to the French and British. Acosta de Samper viewed French and British models of modernity as a corrupting force in Colombia and hence, in the papers she delivered at the Centennial imagined Hispanism as a means to protect the nation. However, in also considering the travel narrative she wrote after her visit, *Viaje a España en 1892*, I show that her vision of Spain during the Centennial confronted her with the limitations and contradictions of her Hispanist project. In this travel narrative, Acosta de Samper would envision Spain as a museum or archive, not itself ready for modernity, but constituting a resource from which Colombia could acquire its own model of progress.

Lima, the native city of Ricardo Palma, was like Bogotá another strong center of Hispanism in Latin America. Chapter Four examines Palma’s account of his trip to Spain, *Recuerdos de España*, as well as some of the speeches he pronounced during the Centennial in order to explore Palma’s aspirations—and disappointments—in pursuing a Hispanic alliance. I show how Palma interpreted Hispanism as the union of a linguistic community. A Creole from Lima, Palma identified Limeñan Spanish and culture as the national idiom, a conception that excluded indigenous culture and acknowledged Peru and Spain as members of a shared linguistic and literary tradition. I argue that for Palma the transatlantic rapprochement was not only justified on the grounds of this common culture but represented the necessary means to protect Spanish from the French exposure advocated by Palma’s detractors, the Peruvian *modernistas*. Not only seeking protection from the French, Palma also imagined that by investing in the idea of a Hispanic community of Spanish speakers, Peruvians would finally “nationalize” the language and
participate in contributing to and regulating the Spanish language itself. For Peninsular Hispanists however, control over language became one of the most essential elements in promoting a Spanish tutelage over Latin America, and hence the Hispanist interpretations of Palma and the Peninsulars were bound to clash in the Centennial.

In the final chapter I concentrate on Rubén Darío as a figure who represents a new stage of transatlantic relations. Born in Nicaragua and having travelled and lived throughout Latin America, Darío would become the most prominent figure of the Latin American modernismo, the literary movement that reversed the transatlantic authority dynamics and gave an unprecedented influence to Latin American literature over the Spanish. In spite of being the most outstanding figure of Latin American modernismo and being famous for his well-known inclination for French literature, Darío has also been considered a fervent defender of Hispanism. The vision of Darío as a prophet of Hispanism was fueled after his Cantos de vida y esperanza (1905) and promoted by Peninsular Hispanists who aimed to count such an emblematic figure in their ranks. I offer a new reading on Rubén Darío’s Hispanism, arguing that following the Centennial, he started to consider a Hispanic alliance as a means to face the geopolitics of his time, aspiring to construct a tangible commercial front among the peripheral economies of Spain and Latin America, while also providing a means for the new professional writers to reach a transnational Hispanic market.

When all the simultaneous and contrasting articulations of the Hispanic bond by actors on both sides of the Atlantic are brought into a single frame, Hispanism appears as a malleable and productive fiction rewritten by each author according to their own
national projects. Spanish and Latin Americans envisioned Hispanism as a postcolonial reconciliation uniting them for the sake of the common bonds forged by history. Their interpretations coincided in seeing this union as a way to combat the dominant Northern European ideologies and rewrite the peripheral position they were thought to occupy within this hegemonic conception. However, these Hispanist discourses did not only present tensions with the dominant Northern-European ideologies but, as a set of multiple and heterogeneous discourses, they showed conflicting interpretations within Hispanism itself.
CHAPTER ONE: STAGING EMPIRE:

THE SPANISH CELEBRATIONS OF 1892

Between September and October of 1892, Spain celebrated the anniversary of the “discovery” of America with a series of festivities spread across the country’s geography. Madrid, Huelva, Barcelona, Sevilla and several other cities navigated through the economic crisis and organized a series of events commemorating the date: exhibitions, parades, poetry contests, and a wide range of conferences. Under the name of “El Centenario de Colón,” Spain hosted a celebration quite convenient for the country: the occasion allowed the nation to relive its imperial past while fortifying its relation with the Latin American republics. The Spanish organization expected that this strengthening of transatlantic relations would be translated into an increase in Spanish cultural influence over the region and in beneficial economic treaties for the peninsula.

This chapter focuses on the material celebrations of 1892, providing the context from which the Hispanist literary discourses from the following chapters emerged. Before moving to examine the discursive productions around the Centennial, I want to undertake a cultural analysis of the celebrations. This study not only contextualizes Peninsular Hispanist discourse but also shows how literary productions coincided with other cultural artifacts such as exhibitions, parades and advertising in channeling an ideology that expected to compensate for the decay of the Spanish empire at the turn of the century.

---

9 The Spanish newspapers inaugurated the year with editorials on the Centennial that shared their front cover with articles about the new European customs taxes. The tendency to protectionism and the high taxation that Spanish products suffered in Europe aggravated the already critical state of Spanish finances, whose commercial balance had been mainly characterized by its deficit since the Independence of continental Latin America (Prados de la Escosura 1988: 71).
through the reconstruction of cultural bonds with Latin America. Both the material celebrations themselves and the discursive productions of Peninsular Hispanists coincided in revisiting and glorifying the colonial past, fueling through this recovery an imperial consciousness in the Spanish citizenship, and finally promoting commercial enterprises under the frame of the Centennial. The Spanish celebrations of the Centennial were also the context from which the Hispanist discourse of the Latin American authors considered in this project arose, and hence this chapter contributes to understanding some of the agreements and tensions of Latin American authors with Peninsular Hispanism.

**Financial Restrictions (and Aspirations) of the Celebrations**

The Board of Directors\(^{10}\) appointed by the government understood the Centennial as a chance to rebuild Spanish nationalism under the appeal of imperial nostalgia, and furthermore, to recreate through the rapprochement of the celebrations, a new kind of relation with Latin America that would compensate Spain for its contemporary decay. They faced such task with a limited budget and under the climate of economic depression mentioned above. Furthermore, at a political level the state was also in crisis: the internal tensions surrounding the labor movement and the Catalonian and Basque separatism added to the situation in the Caribbean and the Philippines, whose control was becoming increasingly unstable.

---

\(^{10}\) This Board of Directors -chaired in a very symbolic gesture by the Duke of Veragua, a descendant of Columbus- was created by the president Sagasta but later promoted by the next president, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo. The Board was not only composed of official government figures. Intellectuals and representatives of mercantile institutions also integrated the Board, a mixture which shows the interest of several sectors of society in the Centennial.
However, this state of crisis contributed to envisioning the Centennial as a necessary investment. While there was a certain anxiety regarding the expenses that the Centennial could generate -especially after the economic effort of the fair of Barcelona only few years before- the celebrations were expected to boost a sense of patriotism by appealing to imperial nostalgia and also, to reconstruct the transatlantic relation and favor Spain in the Latin American markets. The editorial of El Imparcial, entitled “Las fiestas del Centenario” from May 7th, argued that while there had to be some control in order to prevent waste, a degree of heavy expenditure would be unavoidable given the Spanish situation:

El mal no estará en lo que se gaste, sino en la manera de gastarlo. España tiene tanta mayor necesidad de los esplendores de su pasado cuanto más triste y angustioso es su presente, y tanta más precisión de recordar a las jóvenes naciones americanas los vínculos de parentesco cuanto más grande es su aislamiento en Europa.

The article form El Imparcial emphasizes the Spanish need of approaching the Latin American markets in response to European protectionism. As Francisco Comín studied, the Restoration had been promoting the Spanish commerce with the former colonies (2002: 253) and the Centennial could represent the coronation of these effort by giving a definite push to transatlantic trade in the name of family relations.

Entrepreneurs expected that a cultural alliance would translate into a great increase in demand for all kinds of Spanish exports in Latin America and that the belief in a shared Hispanic family -and that this family was indebted to Spain, the host and
matriarch of the gathering- would stimulate commercial initiatives. As we see from an article in *El Imparcial* the 13th April of 1892 that dealt with the inauguration of the new residence of the *Unión Ibero-americana*, Spanish entrepreneurs held great expectations about this type of transatlantic unions: “Es sin duda consolador este consorcio de voluntades y de generosos impulsos, ya que la empresa entraña gran porvenir para los intereses del país.” Not only were mercantile treaties with Latin America expected to materialize but the celebrations themselves would promote consumption. Entrepreneurs then, took an active role in the celebrations, with the Mercantile Circle, the Chambers of Commerce and merchant associations contributing to the limited budget by organizing events such as parades, bullfighting and several literary and academic contests. As we learn from the press, the Mercantile Circle and the Chamber of Commerce subsidized many of the congresses of the Centennial while the Treasury Department hosted several receptions for the celebrations. Hence, commercial issues got mixed in congresses of a supposedly cultural character like the “Congreso Literario Hispano-Americano” -which devoted a large part of its sessions to the treaty of literary property- or the “Congreso Geográfico Hispano-Americano Portugués” -which dealt with commercial treaties, customs leagues and free ports.

Influenced by World Exhibitions from the leading European nations, the Board of Directors attempted to follow their example, modeling the Centennial as an Exhibition that would reinforce their self-representation and stimulate their economy. World Exhibitions emerged in the second half of the 19th century as dialectical spaces in which European nations aimed to show their level of modernity, legitimize their imperial
policies and seduce their citizens to consume patriotic commodities that would ultimately reinforce national identity (Hobsbawm 1989, Richards 1990, McClintock 1995). An editorial signed by the Board of Directors in the magazine *Plus Ultra*\(^{11}\) conveyed their hopes and expectations that the Centennial celebrations would become the type of spectacle of modernity that the richest and hegemonic nations displayed through the World Exhibitions:

España reclama con toda justicia la parte que le corresponde en el mérito del descubrimiento y por eso ha resuelto conmemorar este cuarto centenario y organizar al efecto grandiosas fiestas, dignas de la gloria del ilustre navegante, y dignas, también, de la Nación que supo ayudarle y proporcionarle los medios de realizar sus vastos proyectos. Es necesario que, para tal aniversario, Madrid sea todo fiesta y alegría, que, de todas las partes del globo, acudan y rindan á porfía un tributo de admiración y gratitud entusiasta al [...] sublime héroe que murió desconocido, despreciado y miserable después de haber cumplido las más brillantes hazañas que pueda haber soñado un hombre. Este es el afán del Comité del Centenario, creado por el Gobierno de S.M.C., y el mejor éxito coronará, sin duda, tan nobles esfuerzos. Este género de festividades eleva el espíritu, ensancha el ánimo, y responde á las aspiraciones y necesidades de los pueblos modernos.

As we see here, the organizers of the Centennial viewed the celebrations as an occasion to highlight Spain’s intervention in the “discovery” of America. Drawing on the past and characterizing Columbus’ discovery and early colonization as one of the most brilliant

\(^{11}\) The official magazine of the International Exhibition in Madrid.
deeds in the advance of humanity, the celebrations were expected to restore Spain as a
nation capable of undertaking such enterprises of progress. Likewise, the Board
envisioned the celebrations as a magnificent spectacle that would become the
contemporary proof of the worthiness of the nation that had supported the achievement of
discovery and colonization. The Board imagined that the national exaltation of the
celebrations could elevate the spirit of citizenship, but also that the spectacle of Madrid,
as “todo fiesta y alegría,” would improve the representation of Spain to nations coming
from “todas las partes del globo.” The importance endowed to the Centennial as a stage
of representation in front of the international community is revealed in the attention that
press would pay to foreigners, with newspapers like El Imparcial, publishing on almost
daily basis the record of the number of foreigners that were entering the country.

The call in the above quotation to offer a good spectacle also reveals the anxiety
of competing with Chicago’s Universal Exhibition of 1893. As we see in the first line
“España reclama con toda justicia la parte que le corresponde en el mérito del
descubrimiento y por eso ha resuelto conmemorar este cuarto centenario,” shows the
attempt to mark Spain as the most entitled nation to organize the commemorative
festivities given its role in the “discovery.” Several other countries were putting on
parallel celebrations but the festivities in the Latin American republics were seen as
positive promotions of the links between Spain and the American nations, while the
Italian version was viewed as a complimentary event. In contrast, The Chicago
Exhibition, which was planned to be the last and final festivity of the Centennial, was
perceived as a competing event that threatened Spanish prominence. Predicted to surpass the Exhibition of Paris 1889 in its display of luxury and new technologies, the Chicago celebrations appeared as a manifestation of the US’ potential to become an imperial power abroad (Rydell 1987). In contrast, Spain was revealed as a dying empire which could not afford a display of material wealth at the level of the Fair in Chicago.

Given the financial limitations, organizers appealed to patriotism to mobilize the population and budgets were readjusted to offer if not a luxurious “spectacle of progress,” at least a worthy representation. Unable to construct a luxurious fair playground, the Board drew on more economical events such as historic exhibitions, parades and conferences that still provided a nostalgic revision of colonialism conceived to produce symbolic and also material results. Instead of an Industry Fair as in Chicago, the Board of Directors organized a Historic and Artistic Exhibition in Madrid and promoted a large number of congresses, expecting that a larger Latin American participation than in Chicago would compensate for the lack of material means. As the capital, Madrid hosted most of the conferences, the Historic and Artistic Exhibition and offered a parade celebrating Columbus. Huelva, the province from which Columbus’s ships sailed in his first voyage, also had a privileged position in the festivities: the first and one of the most

---

12 The article of Noël Valis “Women’s Culture in 1893: Spanish Nationalism and the Chicago World’s Fair” does an excellent job in analyzing the Spanish anxiety for presenting a worthy exhibition at the Fair in Chicago, especially given the nationalistic outburst promoted in their own celebrations just one year before. By focusing on two Spanish women, Emilia Pardo Bazán and the Infanta Eulalia de Borbón, Valis provides an interesting analysis of these women’ intersection of a national and gender consciousness in a fair where Spain had a marginal role but where international solidarity among women was promoted.

13 Apart from some minor conferences, the main ones were: Ciclos de conferencias en los Ateneos de Madrid y Barcelona, IX Congreso Internacional de Americanistas de La Rábida, Congreso Literario Hispano-Americano, Congreso Pedagógico Hispano-Americano, Congreso Mercantil Hispano-Americano Portugués, Congreso Geográfico Hispano-Americano Portugués, Congreso jurídico Iberoamericano, Congreso Católico de Sevilla, reuniones de la Sociedad Unión Iberoamericana.
important congresses in the Centennial, the “IX Congreso Internacional de Americanistas,” opened there, the models of the caravels were exhibited in its port and the kings visited the city, declaring in Huelva that the 12\textsuperscript{th} of October would be a national holiday in Spain.\textsuperscript{14} Apart from these two cities, the festive atmosphere disseminated in the Spanish geography with other Spanish cities such as Barcelona, Sevilla, Córdoba and Cádiz erecting monuments and organizing parades to celebrate the Centennial.\textsuperscript{15}

While the structuring of the Centennial through historic exhibitions, congresses and parades seemed strategically sharp given the budget, in their attempt to compete with Chicago the Board of Directors also engaged in doubtful projects that only underscored their financial problems. Unable to organize an Industrial Exhibition on the same level as the one in Chicago, the Board of Directors collaborated with France to produce a more modest Industrial Exhibition in Madrid in 1893. This association with France seems quite striking, considering the relationship of rivalry that Spain sustained with its neighbor over influence in Latin America. However, the most embarrassing part for the Spanish organization was undoubtedly the question of the caravels. In “Las naves de Colon,” from La Ilustración Artística of the 10\textsuperscript{th} October, Eduardo Toda explained how the feeling of competition with the US was influencing the Spanish organization. After

\textsuperscript{14} See \textit{Viaje a España en 1892}, vol. 2 by Soledad Acosta de Samper for more details on the inauguration of this holiday.

\textsuperscript{15} For more information on the celebrations of 1892, see the works of the historian Salvador Bernabeu \textit{1892: El IV Centenario del Descubrimiento de América en España} (1987), as well as the regional studies of Olga Abad Castillo in Andalusia \textit{El IV Centenario del Descubrimiento de América a través de la prensa sevillana} (1987) and Juan Sánchez González, \textit{El IV Centenario del Descubrimiento de América en Extremadura y la Exposición regional} (1991).
learning of the US plans to build a reproduction of the caravels, Spain readjusted the budget in order to make a model ship that originally had been considered unaffordable:

Fue preciso que un impulso exterior viniera a herirnos en la condición más desarrollada de nuestro carácter, el amor propio, para que volviéramos sobre el acuerdo de no hacer nada en el asunto, y adoptáramos un término medio conciliador del interés de los festejos con los intereses de la Hacienda. Díjose que el gobierno de los Estados Unidos mandaría reproducir las tres naves para dar mayor esplendor á las fiestas de Chicago en 1893, y naturalmente debíamos darnos por ofendidos con no ganar de mano á los yankees después de haber renunciado con bastante prioridad á la ejecución del gran proyecto. Por ello decidimos estudiarlo de nuevo, rehacer su presupuesto, reducir sus cifras ejecutarlo por lo menos en la medida que permitieran las varias exigencias de nuestro limitado presupuesto.

Ironically, after this nationalistic attempt to compete with the “yankees,” the construction of the caravels was ultimately funded by the US government (see fig. 1), who planned to bring them to Chicago after the Spanish celebrations. This story of the caravels epitomized the relationship between the two countries: the US figuring as an uprising power with economic strength and imperialistic leaning and Spain as a nation whose colonialist vocation was not supported by enough material means to sustain itself. Indeed, this rivalry reflected a disturbing conflict of political claims over Latin America which would come into fruition just six years later in the Spanish-American war. The decision of the US to participate in the celebrations of Columbus revealed their interest in Latin
American nations, and its placement as the final and star event of all the celebrations proved their growing influence.

The economic difficulties underlying the celebrations in Spain made for an unfortunate contrast with the efficiency and wealth deployed in the organization for the Chicago exhibition, but Spain counted on the strength of the Hispanist discourse of common bonds to appeal the Latin American nations to visit Spain for the Centennial and enjoy a feeling of solidarity unthinkable with the US. On January 1st, *El Imparcial* opened the year with the editorial “El año del Centenario,” advertising the Centennial as a family gathering, adding that the lack of resources would be compensated by the affection with which Spanish citizens would welcome Latin Americans:

Si los centenarios han de ser para los pueblos lo que son los aniversarios para las familias, en la celebración de esa fecha de su natalicio nuestros hermanos de Ultramar volverán con mayor cariño sus ojos á esta su casa solariega. En presencia efectiva ó en espíritu se asociarán todos a la fiesta. No empece que nuestros recursos sean deficientes para emular los esplendores con que sucesos menos grandes han sido conmemorados por pueblos más ricos. Nuestra raza se paga más de lo espiritual de que los sentidos, y los hispano-americanos hallarán compensaciones en la satisfacción y el amor con que habremos de saludarlos y acogerlos.

The editorial simultaneously argued that the lack of resources would not diminish the importance of the occasion and that, in any case, Spanish and Latin Americans shared a disregard for materiality. As in the Hispanist discourse by Peninsular intellectuals, we
find here an articulation of the sense that Latin Americans and Spanish belonged to the same race, the Hispanic, a race characterized by its spirituality. Indeed, Latin American’s feeling of affiliation with Spain would mark a difference in the way they related to the Spanish Centennial versus the Exhibition in Chicago. At the US Exhibition Latin Americans felt obliged to offer the most modern representation possible, but although their representation was also at stake in Spain, they shared a feeling of solidarity that strengthened their position.

**Exhibitions and Parades: An Economical Spectacle of Imperial Nostalgia**

This feeling of solidarity of Latin American towards the former metropole drew many intellectuals and governmental figures to travel to the celebrations, and their presence was key to Spain for several reasons. On the one hand, their presence could be presented as a symbol of Spain’s enduring influence in the continent, and indeed, it was expected that after their visit, having hopefully strengthened their relations, Spain would exercise a stronger cultural and commercial influence in the area. On the other hand, Latin American attendance at the Exhibition was expected to help Spain in their display of continued power and influence over the region. Latin Americans were expected to participate in their conferences, and more importantly, they would contribute their archives to the success of the Historical Exhibition in Madrid. In so far as possible, Spain avoided purchasing Latin American antiques for the Historical Exhibition but took advantage of the collections that Latin American republics brought to display in Madrid.
Some countries like Colombia even donated their collections as a gift to the Spanish government.  

Taking advantage of the Latin American archives, their own colonial collections and ecclesiastical museums, the Historic Exhibition in Madrid in 1892 was a more economical event to organize in compensation for their inability to match Chicago’s level of presentation. Christopher Schmidt-Nowara (2006) has pointed out the great importance that the control of history acquired in justifying the dominance of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines during the last years of the colonial regime, a manipulation and instrumentalization of history that we also find in the celebrations. At the Centennial, drawing on history was not only an economic alternative to a World Exhibition, but represented the only means of offering an imperial performance. Parallel to the discursive use of history that was being deployed in the conferences, the Historic Exhibition employed the historical past to boost an imperial conscience. Although the Historic Exhibition could not offer the spectacle of modernity later displayed at the Universal Exhibitions, their display of antiques from both sides of the Atlantic at the time of the discovery and colonization (see figs. 2 & 3) indeed contained an unequivocally imperialist tone. As Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out, this type of Historical Exhibitions became instruments of imperial advertising as they participated in a cultural representation that reasserted the idea of a hierarchy between civilizations: “These glimpses of strange worlds were not documentary, whatever their intention. They were ideological, generally reinforcing the sense of superiority of the ‘civilized’ over the

---

16 In Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 we can see some of the pre-Columbian antiques that the Colombian government donated to the Spanish.
‘primitive’” (1988: 80). Inaugurated in Madrid the 30th of October, the Historic Exhibition constituted a platform to establish a comparison between the different civilizations and exalt the colonizing labor of the Spanish. This intention of comparison was quite straightforward as Soledad Acosta de Samper herself would suggest:

La intención era presentar un cuadro objetivo de las industrias llevadas á cabo por los pueblos de uno y otro continente, de manera que los visitantes pudiesen comparar las dos civilizaciones, á saber: la europea, hasta el fin del siglo XV, y la americana hasta la llegada de los conquistadores. (Viaje a España en 1892 2: 208)

This “objectivity” of the display should be put into question when considering the symbolic meaning of objects in 19th century (Buck-Morss 1995) and the inherent associations of non-western culture representations. The editorial “Lo que significan las exposiciones del Centenario” in El Imparcial of October 30th commented that the Historic Exhibition provided the public with a glimpse of the two “worlds:” “el estado del pueblo descubridor y de la Europa conquistadora, á la ves que el de aquellas razas primitivas y cuasi salvajes de la América del descubrimiento.” As we see, the Historical Exhibition allowed Spain to compare itself to modern Europe, exalting Spanish colonization as a civilizing mission for the “savage” pre-Columbian culture. An illustrated magazine from Uruguay whose contributors included young radical writers form all over Latin America criticized this Historical Exhibition as an advertisement of colonization and an exaltation of Spanish nationalism. Parodying the Spanish gesture of improving their contemporary self-esteem through the glorification of the past, the Almanaque Platense published two images of Spanish allegorical types that the magazine
ironically suggested should be sent to the Historical Exhibition (see figs. 4 & 5): The figure of the conquistador of the 15th century appeared in contrast with a contemporary representation of the Spanish citizen that was characterized as an idle and vulgar type lacking refinement or cultivation.

Far removed from such critiques, the Spanish press supported the national glorification undertaken in the Exhibition and expected that the exhibit would renew a sense of patriotism in the Spanish public who would admire their ‘glorious’ past. Also the 30th of October, José Ortega Munilla published an article in El Imparcial praising the Exhibition and the feelings it would provoke in the citizenship. According to Ortega Munilla, the Spanish citizen would feel

allá dentro, en el fondo del alma, en donde vibran las raíces de la nacionalidad, una alegría más justificada, un orgullo más legítimo. Cuantos presencien este despliegue hermosísimo de nuestras galas históricas han de gozar una impresión honda é inolvidable. La España gloriosa, la España inmortal, el siglo ó mejor dicho, esos siglos de oro de nuestra estirpe reflejan en los muros de la Exposición y en sus vitrinas todo el fulgor que fluye de ellos.

In addition to this impression of national pride that the Spanish Exhibition planned to achieve, the Exhibition on pre-Columbian culture would engage Spanish citizens in the “civilizing mission” undertaken by Spanish colonization. Pre-Columbian culture, simplified to a series of objects in display, was read by many Spanish as instances of exotic and savage worlds, hence reaffirming the idea of Spanish colonization as a civilizing action, following the lines of their contemporary British and French imperial
discourses that claimed to be carrying civilization to Africa and Asia. In a letter to the Belgian diplomat, Jules de Greindl, in November 1892, Juan Valera himself would question the value of the pre-Columbian exhibition, and of the societies that had produced the objects in display:

La Exposición americano-precolombina pasa por un portento entre los americanistas; pero se necesita ser americanista, y de los más doctos, para comprender el mérito de todos aquellos abominables muñecos, informes cacharros, pitos, pedruscos, momias, cráneos y trapos sucios y groseros. Estos vestigios o reliquias de la civilización americana indígena si vi yo, antes de caer enfermo; y viéndolos, me confirmé en la idea de que lo más primoroso de los primitivos americanos hubo de estar muy por bajo de lo que debía haber en Ur de los caldeos, en la corte de Melquisedec o en Sodoma y Gomorra.

(Correspondencia 5: 430)

As we see here, Juan Valera interprets the pre-Columbian objects as signs of primitivism, questioning their level of civilization before the Spanish arrival and implying a hierarchy of cultures. In dialogue with many of the historical conferences in the Ateneo that were portraying colonization as an evangelical and civilizing mission, the Historic Exhibition was viewed by the Spanish as a sign of the glorious past of Spain, that in colonizing America was saving the continent from its own savagery.

While the Historic Exhibition allowed the Spanish to capitalize on their past and recreate imperial pride, the event held a different significance for Latin Americans. The semiotic multiplicity of the same event underscores that in spite of participating in
common projects, the Latin American position was radically distinct from the Spanish locus of enunciation. As Beatriz González-Stephan (2003, 2006) and Jens Anderman (2006) have discussed, during the last quarter of the 19th century Latin American countries conceived Exhibitions as “progress galleries,” a space to display their level of modernity, an “important means of staking claim to a place in ‘Western civilization’ ” (González-Stephan 2003: 238). Hence, while Industrial Exhibitions like the one in Chicago provided Latin Americans the space to claim their modernity showing their manufacturing abilities, the Pre-Columbian Exhibition in Madrid offered the challenge of combining a display of progress with the presentation of pre-Columbian objects that were generally viewed in Europe as primitive artifacts. For example, the correspondence of Ricardo Palma with Vicente Riva Palacio during 1891 reveals Palma’s concerns about the national representation of the country in the Historic Exhibition in Madrid, and his attempt to bring a collection of huacos and Titicacan knitting work to Spain. The image of a Creole like Palma, generally indifferent or dismissive of indigenous culture, aiming to gather a representative sample of pre-Columbian objects could appear surprising but was actually quite logical given the separation that Latin American Creoles established between their contemporary nations and indigenous cultural capital.

Latin American Creoles did not identify themselves with the exhibited samples of pre-Columbian civilizations nor claim them as their own culture. Even the Aztecs, Incas or Mayas that Creoles acknowledged to be more advanced still represented alien cultures for Latin American Creoles. However, Creole archaeological work and their systematic study of pre-Columbian civilizations made them feel connected with the European
scientific discourse. Hence, Latin American Creoles felt proud of their collections, their research and their artistic display of artifacts. Jesús Galindo y Villa’s description of this exhibition shows precisely this pride on their collections and mastery of scientific methodology:

Por lo que toca a nuestra República, muy lejos estuvo de hacer desairado papel; antes al contrario: puede decirse que culminó casi en primer término, por la riqueza y profusión de sus colecciones, por el método y orden científicos que predominaron en la exposición de ellas, y por la exacta sujeción que se tuvo al programa que de antemano dio a conocer el Gobierno español. México obtuvo por tal motivo, el aplauso de propios y extraños, y pudo alcanzar de esta suerte el más honroso lugar, en el seno mismo de la Madre Patria, donde por primera vez iba a ondear nuestro pabellón en verdadera fiesta de familia. (‘Exposición histórico-americana de Madrid de 1892’ 153)

As we see here, Galindo y Villa congratulates himself at his country’s performance as collectors and researchers at the same time that establishes his distance from that culture by reaffirming Mexico’s affiliation with Spain. The cultural and racial association with Spain is quite clear in his use of the “mother country” appellation and his reference to the transatlantic encounter of the Centennial as a family gathering. Acosta de Samper conceived the exhibition in a similar way, referring to the objects at the Exhibition as coming from a period in which the indigenous lived in “un estado completo de salvajismo” (Viaje a España en 1892 2: 216). As we will see in Chapter Three, Acosta de Samper diminished the indigenous impact in Colombia, exclusively delimiting
Colombian ancestry to the Spanish. Hence, she would look at the Columbian contribution to the Exhibition as archaeological and curatorial, a role that would awake certain competition among Latin Americans. Just like Galindo y Villa claimed the Mexican Exhibition had been the best, Acosta de Samper argued the same about the Colombian:

> no se puede negar, y esto sin que me ciegue el patriotismo que la Exposición de Colombia era la que presentaba los objetos más valiosos, y siendo el salón que se le había señalado uno de los más pequeños, indudablemente estaba adornado con mejor gusto que todos los demás. (Viaje a España en 1892 2: 212)

The attention was not endowed then to the culture that produced these artifacts, but to their arrangement and distribution in the display. The purpose was hence to show Latin Americans not as producers of those objects, but as collectors and consumers, just like Europeans, of such exotic items.

Parades became a parallel artifact of the exhibitions in their patriotic appeal and glorification of the colonial past. There were major parades in multiple cities like Cádiz, Sevilla, Barcelona and minor festivities in several other urban centers. In Madrid there were even two, “La cabalgata del comercio y la industria” subsidized by entrepreneurs and merchant associations, and the official parade, “La cabalgata del Descubrimiento,” that took place only a few days later after the inauguration of the Historic Exhibition. Most of them coincided in presenting effigies of Columbus and the Catholic Kings as well as allegoric representations of America, generally presented in a separate float with images of birds, palm trees, tropical fruits, gold and metal (see figs. 6, 7 & 8). Ironically, the parades displayed a portrait of the Discovery of America quite faithful to Columbus’s
descriptions in his letters, perpetuating the fictionalization and exoticism that he endowed to his account.\textsuperscript{17} Indeed these parades were characterized by their lack of historical rigor and a careless representation of the indigenous people. *El Imparcial* of Oct 21\textsuperscript{st} announced for example, that the actors in the parade were recruited from the municipal police and staff, being in charge “de los caciques, varios vigilantes de alcantarillas; de los indios bravos, algunos subalternos de las vías públicas.” The absence of historical accuracy was compensated for by profuse and excessive decoration, enough to cause Acosta de Samper to question the good taste of the official parade in Madrid (*Viaje a España en 1892* 2: 260) and Orrego Luco to describe the one in Sevilla as an oriental spectacle (101). Orrego Luco’s accusation of oriental spectacle would have been quite unbearable for Spain, which was already orientalized by northern Europe, and who was trying to display its most modern aspect in the Centennial.

In spite of criticism from Acosta de Samper and Orrego Luco, accounts from the press of the period indicate that Spanish citizenship reacted with enthusiasm to these parades exalting the nation with *brillo y oropel*. They became stages to glorify the nation, and Madrid’s parade brought together images from the “discovery” to the “Reconquest.” Although the figures of the Spanish press might have been exaggerated -*El Imparcial* suggested that each parade in Madrid had congregated around 300,000 people- the parades seem to have been incredibly popular. Drawing such a considerable public, the parades contributed to turning the city itself into a space of exhibition. Given the lack a

\textsuperscript{17} For Columbus’ construction of the Latin American landscape and Amerindian, see the article “The Construction of a Colonial Imaginary: Columbus’ Signature” by Rene Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini (1992) and Margarita Zamora’s *Reading Columbus* (1993).
fairground like that in Chicago, through parades and parallel events the Spanish cities themselves (especially Madrid) became the stages from which to offer a performance of national prosperity to the international community. As revealed in the words of the Board of Directors: “Es necesario que, para tal aniversario, Madrid sea todo fiesta y alegría.” As Walter Benjamin (1999) observed, the end of the 19th century witnessed a transformation of the space of the city into an exhibition -storefront displays imitated exhibitions while exhibitions increasingly became sites of consumption- a transformation that Timothy Mitchell has called the “world-as-exhibition” (Mitchell 1988: 10). While Mitchell describes how the limits between the fairground and the city blurred in the Paris Exhibition of 1889, in the case of the Centennial in Spain, the cities themselves became their own exhibition in the attempt to create a festive atmosphere without the means of building a fairground like in Chicago. The imperial ideology of the World Exhibitions on which the Centennial was modeled thus unfolded within the space of the city and manifested in these parades, monuments and the commemorative commodities produced for the occasion.

**Commercializing Columbus: Producing and Selling Imperial Nostalgia**

The interest that imperial representation provoked among Spanish citizens and consumers is revealed by the involvement of merchant associations in the celebrations. Apart from the several parades organized by the Board of Directors, entrepreneurs subsidized commercial parades that mingled advertisements of their products with the allegorical floats of the “discovery” that appealed to citizen’s patriotism (see fig. 9). More importantly, the Spanish industry started to produce commemorative goods for the
occasion of the Centennial, to sell to the population, appealing to their patriotic pride through imperial nostalgia. As Mitchell (1988), Richards (1990) and McClintock (1995) have analyzed, the World Exhibitions constituted a new imperial form of representation that advertised the colonial enterprise and created a new type of citizenship which combined patriotism and consumption. The Exhibitions became a commodity spectacle that legitimated imperialism through the sale of all kinds of goods and artifacts that strengthened the collective imagination of the country as a strong and hyper-masculinized country, essentially distributing and commercializing imperial ideology. Imperialism, capitalism and culture produced a kind of dialectical feedback loop at the service of the state: the attractiveness of empire contributed to the sale of any kind of item with an imperial motif and at the same time, these goods reaffirmed the ideology of colonization. The Centennial gave Spain the opportunity to participate in this practice of imperial consumption from which, with its few remaining colonies, it had otherwise been excluded.

Seizing the opportunity of the Centennial, Spanish industry started to produce memorabilia intended to find a market among the population through an aggressive advertising campaign. The figure of Columbus was a fortunate symbol because unlike later conquistadores, he was for the most part very well considered in Latin America. Hence it represented the union of Spain and Latin America while being intimately associated with the Spanish enterprise of colonization. Most newspapers and illustrated magazines launched special editions and some of them even edited Columbus’ biographies or volumes of the History of Spain (see figs. 10 & 11). Not only a number of
luxurious, single edition products were made with motifs of the colonization -
reproductions of the ships, watches, commemorative medals, paintings, decorative boxes
with the image of Columbus (see figs. 12, 13 & 14)- but also the most common, trivial
goods were molded in Columbus’ image or made some reference to the colonization. The
Centennial became the perfect excuse for business to refer to the past colonial domination
and to engage consumers in purchasing all kind of items that symbolized a time of
national glory. Satirical illustrated magazines such as Blanco y Negro and Madrid
Cómico would make parodies of this excessive commercialization. In the article “Un
poco de… Colón!” from Blanco y negro, Andrés Corzuelo commented:

la industria no se duerme en las pajas, y no se acerca usted a un escaparate
donde no provoque su atención un artículo elaborado en honor del insigne
genovés. Hay caramelos de Colón, bizcochos Colón, pastelitos a la Colón,
madapolán Colón salchichón Colón, […] Un industrial ha tenido una idea feliz.
Ha fabricado unos bustos de Colón con chocolate, y ha llenado el escaparate
con este letrero: COLONES A 0’50 El industrial me explicaba su ingeniosa idea
diciéndome: -Ya ve usted. ¿Quién nos trajo el chocolate sino Colón? Así es
que haciendo sus bustos con el producto que él nos trajo, rindo un tributo a su
talento y otro a su hallazgo. (655)

Columbus became not only a commodity but also a marketing device; his figure was used
as a vehicle to commercialize other products. As we see from advertisements, the
Centennial was imagined as an incredible platform of consumption, such that references
to Columbus, the Catholic Kings, and colonization became powerful lures to advertise
articles that were not even commemorative: beds, drinks, restaurants, photo studios (see figs. 15, 16, 17 & 18). These advertising campaigns exploited the appeal of imperialistic nostalgia as well as to the civic duty of Spanish for offering a worthy representation of the country. Taking advantage of this perception of the Centennial as a national stage, entrepreneurs aimed to sell citizens products that were considered indispensable for a good performance (see fig. 19): “-Para recibir dignamente á los extranjeros, lo primero que se necesita es frac./ -¡Oh! Lo primero es una camisa de Martínez, San Sebastián, 2.” The advertisements endowed the foreigner with the authority of judging, a gesture that reveals the Centennial as a staged representation before foreigners, as a moment to reconstruct the image of the country within the nation but also abroad. As we see in the following advertisement (see fig. 20) “-¿Ustedes creen que los extranjeros vendrán á ver las fiestas del Centenario? ¡Pues no, señores! ¡Vendrán solamente por comer en el restaurant Las Tullerías, Matute, 6!” it was not only the festivities but the whole country as a stage.

With such extraordinary commercialization around the Centennial, it seems incredible that the Spanish and Latin American authors I will examine here would embark on a promotion of a Hispanic spirituality opposed to Anglo-Saxon (and for some writers also French) materialism. The idea of a Hispanic spirituality would generate a great amount of debate, including a speech entitled “El idealismo hispánico” by Juan Zorrilla de San Martín at the Royal Theater in Madrid. On the surface, the idea that a speech with such a title was delivered only blocks away from streets flooded with commodities that showed the ultra-commercialization of the Centennial might seem
shocking. However, as I will show in Chapter Two and Chapter Five, Hispanist discourses undertook the idea of “Hispanic spirituality” as a vehicle for transatlantic trade. The commodification of Columbus by merchants and the instrumentalization of the “Hispanic spirituality” by intellectuals paralleled each other in their symbolic use of the concept of unity between Spain and Latin America for economic profit.

**Conclusion**

The lack of financial means prevented the celebrations from offering the superb spectacle of the hegemonic European in their World Exhibitions, but nevertheless, the Centennial followed their ideological tenets in so far as possible. The Board of Directors aspired to turn the celebrations into a stage for the display of national progress and into a productive tool in improving Spanish economy. Due to the budget restrictions, the celebrations mainly concentrated on capitalizing the historical past and reinforcing the transatlantic ties with Latin America rather than offering an industrial exhibition. Events such as exhibitions and parades and cultural products such as advertising and memorabilia represented more economical means than a fair as the one in Chicago while at the same time served to depict Spanish colonization as a glorious civilizing mission whose result was the enduring Hispanic culture. As we will see in the next chapter, these cultural products would converge with the literary work of Peninsular Hispanists that would articulate this Hispanic identity as a form of compensation and as way to maintain an imperial consciousness in the waning moments of Spain’s political empire. They shared the same ideological agenda that informed the material celebrations of the
Centennial, playing a crucial role in rewriting colonization and supporting through their works the idea of a Hispanic identity.
Fig. 1. Model of the caravel, *La Ilustración Ibérica* (17 Oct 1892)
Fig. 2. Colombia in the Exhibition, *La Ilustración Española y Americana* (2 Nov 1892)

Fig. 3. Colombia in the Exhibition, *La Ilustración Española y Americana* (2 Nov 1892)
Fig. 4. Almanaque Platense (44)

Fig. 5. Almanaque Platense (45)
Fig. 6. Parades and festivities in Barcelona, *La Ilustración Ibérica* (20 Nov 1892)
Fig. 7. Parades in Madrid, *La Ilustración Artística* (28 Nov 1892)
Fig. 8. Parade in Barcelona, *La Ilustración Artística* (28 Nov 1892)
Fig. 9. “La cabalgata del comercio y la industria,” Madrid Cómico (9 April 1892)
Fig. 10. *La Velada* (13 Aug 1892)

Fig. 11. *La Ilustración Ibérica* (1 Oct 1892)
Fig. 12. *El Imparcial* (14 Oct 1892)

Fig. 13. *El Imparcial* (7 Oct 1892)

Fig. 14. Commemorative medal minted by the City Hall of Barcelona, *La Ilustración Artística* (24 Oct 1892)
Fig. 15. Madrid Cómico (3 Nov 1892)

Colón no enseñó a los indios más que cuentas de vidrio y le añadieron en seguida. ¿Qué hubiera sucedido si les llegara a enseñar una cama del Bazar de la plaza de la Cebada, núm. 17?

Fig. 16. El Imparcial (7 Oct 1892)

PARA EL CENTENARIO
¡PUEY!
En colores y ultramarinos.
Exigir la verdadera marca.
Han regresado a Madrid y están a disposición de su numerosa clientela, los Dscs. Vivas, dentistas americanos, Rosas y Mino, 1.

Fig. 17. Madrid Cómico (19 Nov 1892)

Entrambos Reyes Católicos, para huir más a Colón, fueron a Las Tullerías después de la procesión.

Fig. 18. Madrid Cómico (24 Sep 1892)

Gran fotografía artística de la vida de Oliván y Herrán.
 Puente de la...
Fig. 19. Madrid Cómico (8 Oct 1892)

—Para recibir dignamente a los extranjeros, lo primero que se necesita es frac.
—¡Bah! Lo primero es una camisa de Martínez, San Sebastián, 8.

Fig. 20. Madrid Cómico (8 Oct 1892)

—¿Ustedes creen que los extranjeros vendrán a ver las fiestas del Centenario? ¡Pues no, señores! ¡Vendrán solamente por comer en el restaurante Los Tulleres, Matute, 61!
CHAPTER TWO: THE COMPENSATORY EMPIRE OF HISPANISM: THE WORK OF JUAN VALERA AND MENÉNDEZ PELAYO IN THE CENTENNIAL OF 1892

Only six years before the celebrations of the Centennial in Spain, Menéndez Pelayo wrote a letter to Juan Valera about the potentiality of the Latin American markets for expanding Spanish book commerce. Menéndez Pelayo warned the latter that Spanish intellectuals should not waste this American audience, which he portrayed as an available community of readers:

Creo, como usted, que debíamos estrechar nuestras relaciones literarias con América, donde verdaderamente tenemos un público que nos quiere bien. A pesar de no haber escrito yo más que cosas de erudición, cada día recibo de aquellas repúblicas cartas y libros y testimonios inequívocos de que leen con atención y benevolencia todo lo que uno escribe. Hay allí cierta virginidad de admiración y de entusiasmo que no debiéramos echar en saco roto. (Antología general de Menéndez Pelayo 1: 262)

The emphasis that the letter places on the naivety and even virginal admiration of the American readers reveals the endurance of a colonial paradigm that highlighted the availability of the continent and the candid character of its citizens. But while this rhetoric had served as a compelling image in the 16th century to fuel the territorial colonization, Menéndez Pelayo deployed it at the end of the 19th century to call the attention to the possibility of establishing a transnational market for the Spanish book commerce. At the turn of the century, Spanish politicians, entrepreneurs and intellectuals
became increasingly aware of the benefits that the consolidation of a transatlantic relationship would bring to their nation. Spanish writers became particularly interested in signing a treaty of literary property that could protect and expand the circulation of Spanish literature in Latin America and hence they supported the transatlantic rapprochement through their writings. The discursive productions surrounding the Centennial would become crucial to branding the idea of Hispanic identity and to fortifying a new relationship with Latin America, both initiatives that were envisioned as methods of improving Spain symbolically and materially.

This chapter analyzes how 1892 marked the emergence of the Spanish instrumentalization of Hispanic identity to restore Spain’s international prestige, its national cohesion and even its deteriorated economy. At a national level, the celebration of colonization provided Spanish citizens with a sense of national pride through the glorification of the imperial past. At a transnational level, Spanish intellectuals aimed to reconstruct Spanish colonization and rearticulate their relationship with the Latin American republics by appealing to a shared past and Hispanic identity based on common language, blood, race and spirit. On the occasion of the 4th Centennial of the “Discovery,” this Hispanic character was depicted as a result -even as a gift- of the Spanish civilizing mission and hence, Spain was located on the top of the Hispanic family and was represented as a model and the only natural arbitrator in Pan-Latin American relations. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the benefits that the occasion of the Centennial could bring for Spain were not only symbolic for it was believed that the symbolic authority Spain would acquire as the origin of shared Hispanic
transatlantic identity would materialize in an increase of Spanish commercial enterprises in Latin America. Intellectuals would contribute to the labor of the government and entrepreneurs by rewriting colonization, asserting the Hispanic character of Latin America and promoting a feeling of communal solidarity. The intellectual discourse on the Hispanic Bond would attempt to distinguish Spain from other foreign investors that operated in Latin America, while praising a Hispanic spirituality that made Spain and Latin America more suitable trade partners. Thus, the Fourth Centennial in 1892 served as a site for both the construction and presentation of a new model of Spanish empire, one in which cultural and commercial rather than political hegemony were at stake.

In studying the emergence of Hispanic identity in 1892 as a new model of empire, I will focus on the works of the two authors whose exchange opened the chapter: Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo (1856-1912) and Juan Valera (1824-1905). As the opening quotation showed, these two authors had long been interested in the possibilities of Latin America, becoming some of the main precursors in imagining the region as “capital” that could compensate for the Spanish predicaments at the turn of the century. But, even more importantly, these two authors held an institutional role during the celebrations of 1892, and their writing thus became representative of the Spanish institutional position regarding its former colonies. Juan Valera was appointed by the Board of Directors as the editor of *El Centenario*, the official magazine of the celebrations, while Menéndez Pelayo was commissioned by the Spanish Royal Academy to write the *Antología de poetas hispano-americanos*, the work through which this Spanish institution commemorated the Centennial.
It does not seem coincidental that these two authors were appointed to take such a prominent role in a celebration that aspired to establish a strong transatlantic bond. Menéndez Pelayo and Juan Valera were some of the pioneers amongst Spanish authors to devoting significant attention to Latin American literature and cultivating epistolary friendships with their peers across the Atlantic. Thanks to these efforts, these already famous authors in Spain acquired a parallel prestige in Latin America as well as an extensive social network throughout a variety of American republics. As the Guatemalan author Enrique Gómez Carrillo described it, they formed with Emilio Castelar “la Trinidad del pensar español en América” (129). Their fame and success precisely illustrates the importance that networking and the promotion of common cultural ties played in the consolidation of the transatlantic literary market.\textsuperscript{18} Exercising cultural influence in Latin America not only became a form of symbolic compensation for the secondary role that Spain occupied in the world system but the commercial gains obtained through this cultural influence would also alleviate the economy of Spanish authors and in a broader context make up for the economic predicaments of Spain at the turn of the century. Valera and Menéndez Pelayo would become some of the forerunners in viewing Latin America as a compensation for the Spanish decay, and more

\textsuperscript{18} In the next decade many Spanish authors would get increasingly interested in the Spanish book commerce in Latin America as well as in writing contributions to the Latin American press, imagining the continent as the recipient per excellence of Spanish cultural production. Juan Valera, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Benito Pérez Galdós, Miguel de Unamuno and José Ortega y Gasset are, among others, some of the writers who frequently wrote for Latin American newspapers. The Latin American market not only provided them with an extra income -as Unamuno would acknowledge in “Público y prensa,” his family’s “garbanzos” were supplied from his articles to \textit{La Nación} in Buenos Aires- but also multiplied their public. As Pardo Bazán would comment, the Spanish audience was so reduced that the idea of the Latin American audience represented an incentive: “A no ser por el auxilio \textit{in extremis} del mercado de América bueno andaría nuestro comercio de libros. [...] Como no sea para influir a los sudamericanos, no sabemos para qué se escribiría aquí algo social” (“Asfixia” 163).
importantly, in acknowledging that the reconceptualization of the colonial past and an emphasis on common ties was key to regaining influence on the continent.

As Alistair Hennessey (2000) and Ángel Loureiro (2003) have examined, from late 19th century to mid 20th century, Spanish intellectuals would imagine Latin America as a symbolic and material restitution from their decay -especially in the movement of Hispanidad and its franquist reappropriation. Inspired by Hennesey’s idea of a “surrogate imperialism” and by Loureiro’s concept of “the Ghost of Empire” I want to highlight the centrality of the Centennial of 1892 in producing this new conception of transatlantic relations. With its transatlantic rapprochement and its referentiality to the past empire, the Centennial celebrations stimulated the conception that the Latin American nations could make up for Spain’s decline, and the idea of a Hispanic common identity would turn into an instrument to attempt to gain influence over the former colonies. Drawing on Menéndez Pelayo’s and Juan Valera’s frequent references to Latin America as a compensation for their contemporary predicaments, I refer here to their reconceptualization of the Spanish relation with the former colonies as a “compensatory” empire. The word “compensatory” opens up to two meanings that I find adequate to analyze the phenomenon. As an intransitive verb, “to compensate” suggests the return to a former state by offsetting an error or defect or substituting an equivalent to replace something lost. In its transitive form it means to make an appropriate and usually counterbalancing payment. With the term “compensatory empire” I aim to convey how this new model evokes a countervailing force that would compensate Spain for the loss of the American colonies and return it to its former glory, but I also demonstrate how
Spanish intellectuals felt that Latin America was indebted to Spain and had to compensate the former metropolis for the cultural heritage that had been invested.

While the Centennial did not achieve the immediate hoped-for effects and 1898 would witness the Spanish colonial disintegration, I argue that 1892 provided the foundations of the articulation in the 1930s and 1940s of Hispanism as an imperial dream (Pérez Montfort 1992, Hennesey 2000). I want to highlight that this concept of Hispanism as a new model for the imperial project emerged prior to the territorial and political loss of 1898, rather than appearing afterwards as is typically presumed. Six years before the loss of their remaining colonies, Spanish intellectuals were already working to create a cultural and commercial empire vindicating the cultural links that united Spain and its ex-colonies. With my emphasis on this earlier genealogy of Hispanism as a “compensatory empire” I aim to see the imperial character of Hispanism not so much as a reaction to the loss -with the negative stress on the “lack”- but as a sign of awareness at the turn of the century of the productivity of fiction, of the potentiality of a discourse that creates a common identity. The emphasis on these cultural, abstract bonds indicated a superseding of the unfeasible territorial aspirations of O’Donnell’s campaigns in the 1860s as well as the emergence of a paradigm that could endure 1898. In this sense, Spain was formulating a non-territorial concept of empire, advancing the neoimperialist structures that would appear later in the 20th century. If the ghosts of the British and French Empire have been said to live on in the forms of the Commonwealth and Francophonie (Armitage 2000), I argue that the emergence of the Hispanist movement in
Spain could be analyzed as a much earlier attempt to reinvent the colonial relationship after the depletion of political and territorial domination.

**The Anthology and the Construction of Cultural Empire**

As part of the commemorative program for the Centennial, the Spanish Royal Academy commissioned Menéndez Pelayo to organize an anthology of Spanish American poets. Menéndez Pelayo wrote it during the year of the Centennial and it was published in four volumes between 1893 and 1895 under the title of *Antología de poetas hispanoamericanos*.\(^\text{19}\) The anthology reviewed the poetic production of Mexico, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Central and South America from the colonial period until the mid 19\(^{th}\) century. The anthology did not include contemporary authors, for Menéndez Pelayo commented that the canonization of contemporary figures was a delicate issue. The exclusion of Brazil on the other hand, was explained as necessary due to limitations of space, but Menéndez Pelayo ultimately thought that Brazilian writings (and even Portuguese) should be included within Spanish literature. This is quite revealing of the encompassing, agglutinating character of the intellectual project of Menéndez Pelayo, who aimed to restore the position of Spain through the idea of Iberia and of a transatlantic Hispanic community, an inheritance passed on by the Spanish across the ocean.

The period immediately after Independence saw a proliferation of anthologies which intended to prove the cultural autonomy of the new nations and characterize their...\(^\text{19}\) In 1911 this would be revised and expanded, being called *Historia de la poesía hispanoamericana.*
literature as a product independent from the Spanish tradition.\textsuperscript{20} One of the most famous anthologies of this period was the work on South American poets by the Argentinean Juan María Gutiérrez, \textit{América Poética} (1846), a volume that was criticized by Hispanistas for its francocentrism. Launched in 1892, Menéndez Pelayo’s anthology gave voice to an Hispanist feeling that was growing amidst the Spanish intellectual community (as well as amongst some Latin American intellectuals) and aimed to counteract works such as Gutiérrez’ to present American literature as product of a Hispanic cultural diaspora spread out through Spanish colonialism. Already a few years before, in the prologue to his commercial success \textit{Cartas americanas}, Juan Valera had described Spain as the origin of a culture and language common to all Latin American nations, and hence, entitled to be counted on as indispensable:

\begin{quote}
las literaturas de México, Colombia, Chile, Perú, y demás repúblicas, si bien se conciben separadas, no cobran unidad superior y no son literatura general hispano-americana, sino en virtud de un lazo, para cuya formación es menester contar con la metrópoli. (xi)
\end{quote}

Valera was revealing here an operation of hierarchization, subtly recasting Spain as a “metropole” for Latin Americans -a position it had long ago lost to France and England- and pointing out the impossibility of a Latin American cultural formation without the presence of Spain. The anthology of Menéndez Pelayo shared these ideological tenets but it represented a more formal and extensive elaboration of these principles. As the anthology was commissioned by the Spanish Royal Academy, it represents the

\textsuperscript{20}For information on the anthologies in 19\textsuperscript{th} Century, see the doctoral thesis of Marcos Campillo-Fenol.
imbrication between literary and cultural politics, the work moving beyond the mere literary criticism of the *Cartas americanas* to a convergence with institutional projects.

The publication of the anthology was framed in this moment of reunion stimulated by the Centennial. As Menéndez Pelayo himself stated in the opening pages of this work, the Centennial offered the possibility of strengthening the links of origin and language between Spain and Latin America:

> Ocasion bien adecuada para estrechar estos lazos de origen y de comun idioma, nos ofrece hoy la solemne conmemoracion de aquel maravilloso y sobrehumano acontecimiento, merced al cual nuestra lengua llego á resonar prepotente desde las orilla del Bravo hasta la region del Fuego. (iv)

In this quotation, Menéndez Pelayo describes 1892 as the solemn and propitious occasion for Hispanic reconciliation, the moment to jointly celebrate a colonization that brought Spanish language to the continent. The nostalgia for the global prominence of Spain is remarkable but the centrality that Menéndez Pelayo endows to language is even more striking. The delight of Menéndez Pelayo at the expansion of Spanish is obvious in his characterization of linguistic diffusion as the most significant colonial contribution and no less than a superhuman deed. Continuing in this hyperbolic tone, he rejoiced in recalling the power with which Spanish resonated from the Mexican frontier with the United States to the Magellan Straight. These were the very same geographical limits that José Martí employed in the concluding paragraph of “Nuestra América” just one year
before, in 1891. But while Martí was calling for the celebration of a Pan-Latin American identity, Menéndez Pelayo was constructing by means of “nuestra lengua” a “we” in which he unified Spain and Latin America. If 1892 provided the context to articulate a new form of (post)colonial relationship with Latin America, language represented the most visible and strongest common element for Menéndez Pelayo to claim the construction of this relationship.

Spanish language was a tangible tie that still bound Spain and Latin American together in 1892, a common ground from which to call for the identification of both sides, and hence a decisive element to produce the idea of a common transatlantic race. On the other hand, the use of Spanish as a common denominator allowed Menéndez Pelayo to locate Spaniards in a position of authority. The logic employed was that since Spanish originated in the peninsula, Spain was entitled to regulate language and literature in Spanish, hence becoming a kind of cultural guide for the other side of the Atlantic. The identification promoted in the Centennial did not imply equality among members but was rather identification in a parental sense: Spain adopted a position of motherhood, claiming the family connection but establishing hierarchy.

As with all the cultural productions of 1892, the anthology was constructing a particular vision of 1492. While during the Centennial of 1992 some Spanish groups employed the term “Encounter” promoted by Latin American intellectuals to attempt a

---

21 “¡Porque ya suena el himno unánime; la generación actual lleva a cuestas, por el camino abonado por los padres sublimes, la América trabajadora; del Bravo a Magallanes, sentado en el lomo del cóndor, regó el Gran Semi, por las naciones románticas del continente y por las islas dolorosas del mar, la semilla de la América nueva!” (33)
more egalitarian approach to the relationship between Spain and the Amerindians, the Spanish celebrations of 1892 highlighted the heritage that Spain had donated to the continent, obliterating the share of the indigenous nations as well as effacing the profits that the colonization rendered to Spain. The anthology would reproduce this emphasis on the Spanish contribution, depicting Latin America as a tabula rasa before the Spanish arrival. In particular, it defined colonization as the process that imported Spanish language and culture, expanding throughout the whole territory and shaping it for good.

The attention to language is clear in these first pages: the anthology opened with a comparison of Spanish language to Latin and Greek in their relation to imperial development, demonstrating how each of these languages was spread through political domination but survived the demise of colonization. Menéndez Pelayo envisioned language as a vehicle of civilization, the tool through which empires expanded but also as a surviving cultural marker that transcended the end of the physical empires. At the level of the classical languages, he would argue, the modern day presented only Spanish and English:

Son las lenguas de los dos pueblos colonizadores que nos presenta la historia del mundo moderno: representantes el uno de la civilización de la Europa septentrional, del espíritu germánico más o menos modificado, del individualismo

---

22 For more information on the 5th Centennial, see the conclusion.

23 This comparison reminds of the historical work by Andrés Bello and José Victorino Lastarria. For more information on their review on the colonial past and their historical philosophy, see the articles by Mariselle Meléndez “Miedo, raza y nación: Bello, Lastarria y la revisión del pasado colonial” and Allen L. Woll’s “The Philosophy of History in Nineteenth-Century Chile: The Lastarria-Bello Controversy.”
protestante; el otro del genio de la Europa meridional, del organismo latino y católico. […] América es ó inglesa ó española. (iii)

The discussion of language allows Menéndez Pelayo to depict America as either English or Spanish, indirectly reclaiming the Latin American republics as part of the same Spanish body, and thanks to this agglutination, being able to stand up to the influence of “English America.” The attribution of a civilization or cultural baggage to this linguistic division-Protestant individualism to the English America, Catholic spirit to the Spanish-underscores that through language Menéndez Pelayo was articulating a concept of cultural empire that transcended political dominion and allowed him to raise Spain to the level of an equal competitor to Anglo-Saxon modernity.

As Menéndez Pelayo was building a new concept of empire on the grounds of language and culture, the first pages of the anthology emphasized the role of language in the development of an empire and reiterated the incredible expansion of Spanish language in the American continent. Political definitions of empire were pushed into the background, and a cultural conceptualization of empire appeared as operative as the political definition in providing a sense of national imperialistic pride and in emphasizing the connection between Spain and Latin America:

debemos contar como timbre de grandeza propia y como algo cuyos esplendores reflejan sobre nuestra propia casa, y en parte nos consuelan de nuestro abatimiento político y del secundario puesto que hoy ocupamos en la dirección de los negocios del mundo, la consideración de los cincuenta millones de hombres que en uno y otro hemisferio hablan nuestra lengua. (iv)
The large quantities of Spanish speakers that colonization had produced is envisioned here as compensation for the economic and political decay of Spain. The number of Spanish speakers represented the remainder of the Spanish empire but also allowed Menéndez Pelayo to reconstruct a new empire through this linguistic body as a form of Spanish capital. By taking over the Spanish language, Spain could represent itself as an imperial power, claiming Spanish language and Latin American literature as a cultural property of Spain that had survived the loss of territoriality and upon which Spain still exercised its influence. In this sense, the anthology would represent the materialization of this project, organizing and regulating Latin American literature as a reflection of Spanish authority over their former colonies.

This quotation also shows that the way in which Menéndez Pelayo articulates a reunification with Latin America holds a distinctive imperialistic character: on the one hand, he agglutinates Latin American and Spanish citizens as a way to create a considerable, visible human capital comparable for instance to that of British Empire; but on the other hand, he reveals a Spanish national consciousness and envisions this agglutination with Latin America explicitly in terms of the profit that it would render to Spain. For the fifty million of speakers he is counting Spaniards and Latin Americans but the “we” that he describes as suffering from a secondary position but that could receive the “splendors” of being a linguistic power refers exclusively to Spaniards. Indeed, to judge by Menéndez Pelayo’s comments on Latin American authors, his interest in reappropriating American literature was motivated more by the expansion of the number of Spanish speakers it represented than for the quality he bestowed to American literary
production. Harsh criticism of Latin American literature abounded in the intimate correspondence of Menéndez Pelayo during 1892, a literature that he qualified as “mediocre.” As we see in a letter to José María de Pereda, in November 1892, Menéndez Pelayo described the anthology as a titanic effort to identify the rare good authors amongst the mediocre masses: “He procurado hacer un trabajo serio, deslindando lo poco bueno que hay entre el fárrago de versos medianos que se han escrito en America” (138). Also, in the intimacy of his personal correspondence Juan Valera would write to Menéndez Pelayo in August 1892

Considero a usted engolfado en la Antología de poetas líricos americanos. Muchísimo malo debe de haber. Lo difícil es escoger lo menos malo, y ver cómo, sin que se piquen los postergados, atina usted a hacer un libro en que se pueda leer algo más que el prólogo o introducción que usted escriba. (420)

As we see in their letters, Menéndez Pelayo and Valera considered the metropole the space of excellence in literary production and disregarded the artistic value of Latin American writings. However, they also appreciated the existence of a Latin American literature as testimony of the expansion that Spanish language and letters had achieved. Latin American production was simultaneously depreciated and envisioned as valuable capital that served as the compensation for the fading of Spain’s grandeur.

The Centennial, with its revision of transatlantic bonds and performance of conciliation, represented the optimum occasion to raise this type of claim in a digestible rhetoric. The celebrations definitely helped to justify the appearance of this anthology in 1892, both reappropriating Latin American literature and in doing so, establishing a
hierarchical order with Spain at the top. As we see in the first pages of the anthology, Menéndez Pelayo bestowed the Spanish Royal Academy with the power of canonizing Latin American literature, appointing the academy as the ultimate and decisive organ in legitimizing the American letters:

Hoy que la fraternidad está reanudada y no lleva camino de romperse, sea cualquiera el destino que la Providencia reserve á cada uno de los miembros separados del común tronco de nuestra raza, ha parecido oportuno consagrar en algún modo el recuerdo de esta alianza, recogiendo en un libro las más selectas inspiraciones de la poesía castellana del otro lado de los mares, dándole (digámoslo así) entrada oficial en el tesoro de la literatura española, al cual hace mucho tiempo que debieran estar incorporadas. (v)

Here we see how 1892 becomes for Menéndez Pelayo the frame to resume a fraternal relationship which in turn provided the opportunity of reappropriating the American letters into the Spanish canon. To fully understand the integrative project that the anthology pursued, drawing on the discourse of conciliation promoted by the Centennial, we must consider the fact that Latin American modernism was at its height. Latin American authors were decisively turning to French cultural models to produce a poetry that was starting to be imitated in Spain. Although the anthology did not address contemporary authors, the assimilation of the previous Latin American literary production appeared as a more general attempt to absorb Latin American literature into the Spanish canon -supplying hence, Spanish cultural capital- and to reaffirm the hierarchy being desestabilized by modernism. The vocabulary deployed in this quotation
eloquently speaks of the attempt to confirm the Royal Academy as the regulatory authority that awarded official entry to the Latin American authors. Although the Anthology designed Spanish and Latin Americans as members of the same race -“el común tronco de nuestra raza”- and linguistic community, it did not present them on the same authoritative ground. The quotation also reveals that the anthology provided an opportunity for self-appraisal, but this self-appraisal was then transformed into a rhetorical device used to claim the right to linguistic and literary authority. Menéndez Pelayo confirmed the worth of Spanish literature depicting it as a “tesoro” at a time in which the Spanish literary production was quite unknown in the rest of Europe. The discreet position of Spain in the European literary scene would hence be compensated for by exercising a position of cultural authority over the Latin American republics. The anthology was, in conclusion, operating on two fronts that were interrelated: it aimed at erecting Spain as a cultural authority over Latin America and secondly, it intended to act as a reaffirmation of Spain’s cultural importance to itself.

In the articulation of a new relationship with Latin Americans in which Spain would occupy a model role, the anthology had to echo the discourse of the celebrations that commemorated ties of origin and common language but also carefully construct the genealogy and characteristics of Latin American literature. The anthology was organized under the premise that American literary works were an extension of Spanish literature and that American culture was an exclusive manifestation of Spanish civilization. The influence of pre-Columbian past was deliberately excluded, diminishing the impact of indigenous culture in shaping American identity.
Sea cual fuere la antigüedad y el valor de los pocos y obscuros fragmentos literarios que de estas lenguas primitivas quedan (no sin sospecha muchas veces de interpolación y aun de inocente falsificación literaria debida á los ojos de cualquier misionero ó de algún neófito de noble estirpe indiana) su influencia en la poesía española ha sido tan escasa ó más bien tan nula (fuera de pasajeros caprichos de algún poeta), que la historia de esa poesía puede hacerse en su integridad prescindiendo de tales supuestos orígenes y relegándolos al estudio y crítica del filólogo. (viii)

The logic of Menéndez Pelayo isolates indigenous culture and reaffirms Spanish tradition as the only substantial source of an American character. Indigenous culture was located in the past, obliterating the contemporary presence of indigenous people and qualifying pre-Columbian traditions as “opacas, incoherentes y misteriosas tradiciones de gentes bárbaras y degeneradas” (viii). The anthology consciously marginalized the indigenous influences in America in an attempt to reemphasize the Spanish character of America.

In studying the construction of the Peruvian literary canon, Antonio Cornejo Polar has commented on the deep impact Menéndez Pelayo’s anthology had on it. The Peruvian canon, Cornejo Polar says, was characterized by its radical Hispanism, one which isolated writers who did not fit into these parameters.

Menéndez Pelayo más que antólogo fue, por entonces, el forjador indiscutido del canon poético hispanoamericano, canon que ordena y jerarquiza el sistema y la historia de nuestra poesía -y a fin de cuentas de toda nuestra literatura- bajo los principios de un hispanismo duro y beligerante. (72)
Polar’s characterization of Menéndez Pelayo’s Hispanism as belligerent reflects the parallelism between language and army established in the anthology when referring to the expansion of Spanish in the continent.

Polar’s description also resonates with the animated, aggressive controversy that the anthology originated. The publication of such an anthology by the Spanish Royal Academy as a key celebratory sign of the Centennial, restituted Spain as mentor and judge of the American cultural production but it also posed certain dangers as it damaged nationalistic susceptibilities. Aware of controversial nature of his work, Menéndez Pelayo produced an obscure statement in the anthology, arguing that the Spanish Royal Academy did not expect to acquire any type of authority, if this would not be founded on reason:

La Academia ni en esto ni en nada pretende imponer su fallo ni aspira á ningún género de autoridad no fundada en razón, pero se atreve á esperar que los conocedores de la literatura americana han de rechazar muy pocos de sus juicios.

(v)

Here we see that Menéndez Pelayo is anticipating an accusation of bias and the imposition of Spanish rule. But while he is presciently refusing these charges, he is simultaneously establishing his expectations of not finding any objection to his judgments. The language, with expressions such as “daring to expect” and the appeal to the connoisseurs aims to play down his call to respect Spanish authority at the same time that he avoids to modify his position.
Latin American hispanists of a conservative character such as the Peruvian Riva-Agüero admired the work of Menéndez Pelayo but some other Latin American intellectuals questioned the impartiality of the project and accused the anthology of diminishing the American cultural production. In *Excursión literaria* Ricardo Palma’s son, Clemente Palma, questioned the objectivity of Menéndez Pelayo in carrying out this project, accusing him of a superficial analysis conditioned by his Spanish nationalism:

Perfectamente sé que el ilustre crítico español tenía el propósito de no ocuparse, en sus ANTOLOGÍAS de los literatos vivos, para no verse en la dura necesidad de hacer justicia; más también es cierto que á los escritores muertos del Perú Independiente los estudia con una ligereza y un desdén que no corresponden á la altura de un juez literario de los americanos. Desde luego creo encontrar la causa de esto en dos razones. Una de escuela y otra de nacionalismo. Según el marqués de Rojas, el señor don Marcelino es de un españolismo *enragé*, intransigente. (41)

Clemente Palma was supported by his father in accusing the anthology of being conditioned by Menéndez Pelayo’s patriotism. Ricardo Palma even interpreted the anthology as a vengeful act in return for the political independence of Latin America and suggested that Menéndez Pelayo -who as we will see in the fourth chapter, fought against Palma’s *peruanismos* - intentionally diminished the quality of American literary production. In a letter to the Hispanist Colombian Aníbal Galindo, Palma claimed:

---

24 Although it is difficult to guess if Ricardo Palma believed as he claimed, in the theory of a revenge after seventy years, he had already commented in the past about the aspirations of Spanish over the lost colonies. Palma had harshly criticized the imperial enterprises of the Spanish Prime Minister O’Donnell in the 1860s and after the invasion of the Chincha islands in 1864, he would warn about an attempt by the Spanish of undertaking a Latin American “Reconquest.”
En lo de que no se nos perdonan en la Metrópoli el que nos hubiéramos independizado, y en lo de que se procura siempre empequeñecernos tratándonos como a poquita cosa, bástele por toda contestación recomendár a usted que lea los cuatro volúmenes de la Antología de poetas americanos, escrita por una eminencia en las letras castellanas, por el egregio Menéndez y Pelayo que, con frase culta en verdad, no desperdicia ocasión para cascarnos, y de firme.  

(Epistolario 2: 246)

Menéndez Pelayo había abordado este tipo de crítica de antemano. Justamente como Palma acusó a Menéndez Pelayo de que su calidez política manchaba su sentido crítico, Menéndez Pelayo advirtió en el prólogo que si el antología es el objeto de crítica, esta podría ser inducida por resentimiento político y no por las características de la antología en sí misma. 

Interestingly, at the same time that he launched his warning about the possible consequences of the past wars, he clarified that the wars of Independence were almost civil wars:

Si alguna vez encontramos en nuestro camino reliquias de la lucha de otros tiempos, procuraremos que no se empañe en nosotros la serenidad del criterio histórico, sin olvidar nunca el carácter de lucha cuasi civil que tienen siempre las

---

25 Although it seems from his private correspondence that Ricardo Palma completely agreed with his son in considering that Menéndez Pelayo’s literary judgments were marred by his patriotic spirit, Palma tried to maintain a somehow diplomatic relationship with Menéndez Pelayo. In fact in a letter to Menéndez y Pelayo, in March of 1895, Palma tried to smooth over his son’s critique. Comparing Palma’s letters, we found a double discourse that reveals the complexities of the duality and diplomacy that required the social network of the period, a social network that played a decisive role in the publication of one author’s works in other nation.
Menéndez Pelayo is reinforcing here the idea of a Hispanic family by depicting the
contenders of both sides of the Atlantic as members of the same race and community, a
vision on the Independence wars that would be shared by many Peninsular Hispanists and
some conservative sectors of the Latin American societies.

The insistence on sharing family ties would pervade a later edition of the
Anthology published in 1911 under the title of Historia de la poesía hispano-americana.
The transformation from “Anthology” to “History” might suggest a more comprehensive
approach, but in practice the Historia preserved for the most part the character of its
predecessor. This new edition was expanded and corrected but it continued to exert
similar operations of inclusion and exclusion based on the same ideological tenets: the
emphasis on the Spanish character of American literature.

As we can see in the following quotation, Menéndez Pelayo defended the goodwill of his
anthology but particularly insisted on the idea of family unity.
The Magazine “El Centenario:”

Promoting 1892 as the Compensation for Material Poverty and National Decay.

In an article for the Revista Ilustrada in 1891, Juan Valera expressed his desire for the Centennial of 1892 to become the occasion to relaunch the transatlantic relation:

Yo espero que las fiestas que se preparan para celebrar dignamente, y hasta donde nuestra pobreza lo permita, el cuarto centenario de Colón, han de estrechar más las relaciones intelectuales entre España y América. (“Cartas a la Revista Ilustrada” 427)

As we see here, the Centennial generated contradictory feelings in Valera: the anxiety of being able to offer a worthy representation in spite of the limitation of economic means, but on the other hand the excitement of expanding relations with Latin American intellectuals. This article reflects the personal involvement that Valera took in the Centennial, an involvement that represented the culmination of almost a decade working for increasing transatlantic communication.

In 1889 Valera had published Cartas americanas, a collection of critical essays on Latin American authors whose success in Latin America promoted the publication of a second volume, Nuevas cartas americanas, in 1890. Beyond a work of literary criticism, Cartas americanas aimed to draw Spain’s attention to the amount of speakers and literature produced in Spanish across the ocean. The prologue claimed that after the estrangement of post-Independence, the time had come to resume relations and encourage an increase in transatlantic cultural exchange:
sin pensar en alianzas ni confederaciones que tengan fin político práctico, […]
piensan en reanudar sus antiguas relaciones, en estrechar y acrecentar su comercio intelectual, y en hacer ver que hay en todos los países de lengua española cierta unidad de civilización que la falta de unidad política no ha destruido. (*Cartas americanas* ix)

Valera was suggesting the existence of a common Hispanic character between the two continents, a shared identity that had survived the disintegration of political unity. He is indeed rejecting any type of political association, advocating instead a cultural union based on the solidarity of a common Hispanic civilization. The disaster of the imperial policy advocated by O’Donnell in the sixties seemed to inform Valera’s project who in the same article for the *Revista Ilustrada* mentioned above asserted that “España, si se atiende sólo al pensamiento, y sin soñar con nada activo y político, seguirá siendo mucho tiempo madre común de los americanos que de ella proceden” (“*Cartas a la Revista Ilustrada*” 427). Valera seemed to imply that colonial enterprises like the ones promoted by O’Donnell in Peru and Mexico could endanger the influence of Spain over its previous colonies and hence, that the union should be one forged in cultural more than in political terms.

Given his vocation for strengthening links with Latin America and the social capital he had accumulated through his exchanges with American intellectuals, Valera became a logical choice for directing *El Centenario*, the official magazine of the celebrations. As Valera himself explained in the article “*La Crónica del Centenario,*” published in *El Imparcial* in March 1891, the Board of Directors of the Centennial had
created a committee to direct a magazine that would describe the celebrations, at the same time advertising the Centennial and its symbolic importance (“La Crónica del Centenario” 365). After the celebrations, they expected to publish the work in a special edition of four volumes, aiming to record and “sell” the Centennial in the form of a luxurious commodity. Appointed as director of the magazine, Valera used his connections to request articles from a large number of outstanding figures from Spain and Latin America: Emilio Castelar, Menéndez Pelayo, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Víctor Balaguer, José Alcalá Galiano, Rubió i Lluch, Rubén Darío, Soledad Acosta de Samper, Ricardo Palma, Vicente G. Quesada.  

Valera selected the topics of the articles for El Centenario, also monitoring their tone and style. As it appears in his correspondence with several writers for the magazine, Valera wanted to avoid addressing serious matters or employing a satirical tone and instead, aimed at celebrating and embellishing the acts of the Centennial. El Centenario promoted a laudatory account of the Spanish colonization in America and the civilizing power of the Catholic faith brought by Spaniards. It characterized Spaniards and Latin Americans as members of the same cultural civilization and promoted on this ground, a major cultural and commercial exchange.

26 In a letter in December of 1896 in El Correo de España from Buenos Aires, Valera would advertise the publication of the last volume of El Centenario by giving a long list of collaborators: Emilio Castelar, Menéndez y Pelayo, Calixto Oyuela, Ricardo Palma, Oliveira Martins, Luis Vidart, Jiménez de la Espada, José Alcalá Galiano, Soledad Acosta de Samper, Emilia Pardo Bazán, padre Mir y padre Blanco García, Víctor Balaguer, general Arteche, Azcárraga, Teófilo Braga, Adolfo de Castro, condes de la Viñana y de las Navas, Rubén Darío, Fabié, Fastenraht, Cesáreo Fernández Duro, Vicente G. Quesada, Méliá, Madrazo, Sánchez Mogel, Montojo, Paz y Melia, Felipe Picatoste, Uhagón, Pinheiro, Chagas, Restrepo, Rubió y Lluch, Eduardo Saavedra, Serpa Pimentel y cien otros. (OC 3: 487)

27 See Valera’s letters to Alfred Morel-Fatio (5: 385) and Doctor Thebussem (5: 396) in Correspondencia.
As Valera clearly stated in the first article of the magazine, the publication was not an academic journal that aimed at revealing unknown data of the colonization. Instead, its goal was to make Spanish citizens aware of the importance of the discovery and colonization:

Además de la historia y descripción de todo lo relativo al Centenario, es nuestro intento que sea la Revista a modo de álbum, donde notables escritores portugueses, hispano-americanos y españoles, den muestras de su ingenio y saber en artículos variados y amenos, que divulguen el conocimiento de las hazañas y empresas que van a celebrarse, en lo cual, aunque no logremos revelar misterios, desentrañar recondíteces, añadir noticias peregrinas a lo que se sabe, y cambiar, como no sea en menudencias, lo que es tenido por verdad histórica, todavía podremos hacer popular cuanto por esta verdad se atestigua, realizando en la mente del público de hoy su sublimidad trascendente. (“El Centenario” 1883)

Valera was not as concerned with the magazine pursuing an exhaustive and accurate historical research as he was with the glorification of the past and the promotion among the citizenship of a sense of awe and pride for the nation. Like Valera, many intellectuals28 as well as the greater part of the press and the conferences privileged an exaltation of the national past and of the historical figures of the colonization over a more

---

28 See for instance an interesting article by Benito Pérez Galdós in the Argentinean newspaper La Prensa in October 1892. In spite of being more liberal than Valera, Galdós would agree with him in mistrusting the historical research, which for Galdós, destroyed the sublime aura of the discovery:

En cuanto a Colón, es personaje más para sentido que investigado, y cuando los eruditos le toman por su cuenta, paréceme a mí que pierde algo de la majestad que le rodea. No puede negarse que figura tan grande y bella se nos presenta con algunos de los atributos correspondientes a la divinidad y todo lo que sea manosearla y traerla de aquí para allí es deslustrarla con muy buena intención. Pasa con él lo que con las cosas divinas, y con el dogma y es que cuanto menos se ande con ello, mejor. (465)
critical revision. Indeed, voices who looked for a more analytical perspective were harshly criticized, as Emilia Pardo Bazán recalled in her article “Elegía:”

El año del Centenario sufrimos recio vapuleo los que en una ú otra forma nos atrevimos á echar los lentes á Colón y encontramos en él, no al vidente sublime, al profeta, sino tan sólo al experto marino y explorador afortunado que, creyendo descubrir el paso hacia las Indias Occidentales, sentó el pie, sin saberlo, en un nuevo continente. Mi inolvidable amigo Luis Vidart me traía á cado paso números de periódicos que nos ponían de hoja de perejil, prodigándonos calificativos tan extraños como *foliculares de ambos sexos y reptiles marítimos*, por haber dicho que Colon no salió del puerto de Palos seguro de lo que iba á hacer, y que al pisar tierra americana creyó estar hollando el mismísimo suelo del Catay, que así llamaban entonces á la China. (109)

In spite of the project of national exaltation that Valera aimed to accomplish through *El Centenario*, he inaugurated the magazine with an article in which he acknowledged that the Centennial had caught Spain at a time of decay, of economic dearth, of national pessimism and lack of self-esteem. Far from a triumphal tone, he diagnosed:

A la moda de las Exposiciones sucedió, no hace mucho tiempo, la de los Centenarios: algo como mundanas y populares apoteosis, culto y adoración de los héroes. Y hallándose esta moda en todo su auge, se nos vino encima el año de 1892, y con él un grandísimo empeño, en la peor ocasión que pudiera imaginarse y temerse. (“El Centenario” 1876)
By the fashion for exhibitions and Centennials, Valera referred to the large number of exhibitions organized in Europe since the one in London in 1857 set the tendency. As we examine in the first chapter, exhibitions of these kind required an economic investment that Spain could not afford. The recent exhibition in Paris and especially the forthcoming Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1893 constituted the high standards of comparison that Valera, as well as the rest of the Centennial Committee were facing:

Así, al pensar en la soberbia esplendidez con que los Estados Unidos se preparan a celebrar el cuarto Centenario del descubrimiento de América, se contrita y se amilana el espíritu por la escasa cantidad de que en España se dispone para las solemnidades y pompas que deben conmemorarle. (“El Centenario” 1880)

The anxiety conveyed in this quotation pervades the beginning of the article, in which Valera complains about several aspects of Spanish reality: the financial state of the country, the insufficient militarization and the perception of Spain abroad. His admiration for the wealth of the US and England and his concern with Spain’s lack of military power reveals Valera’s unavoidable admiration for imperial models of government. Within this global scheme of imperial and emasculated nations, Valera not only resented that Spain did not occupy a more prominent position but also that it had become the target of criticism of the prosperous Anglo-Saxon nations.29

To save the position of Spain within these global categorizations which he himself could not always avoid using regarding other nations- Valera tried to

---

29 Valera would attack Anglo-Saxon nations as well, especially the US as the war in Cuba develops. His articles of 1896 “Los Estados Unidos contra España” and “Quejas de los rebeldes de Cuba” reinforced the dichotomy between Hispanic and Anglo-Saxon races.
dissociate material poverty from moral decline, “Cierto que España, […] ni tiene motivo para sentirse humillada” (“El Centenario” 1876), and criticized foreign judgments of Spain. In another article for the magazine, “Concepto progresivo del nuevo mundo,” Valera criticized the academic works on Spanish colonization by British and American authors that had appeared on the occasion of the Centennial. He accused their essays of inaccuracy and he especially condemned their ideological undertone:

No hay escritor de raza anglosajona, por ilustrado e imparcial que sea, que pueda prescindir de tratarnos mal a menudo, y de declamar contra nosotros en nombre de filantropías, mansedumbres, amabilidades y ternuras, que nosotros volvemos locos para hallar, ejercidas por los ingleses con las naciones inferiores en civilización que han subyugado, y no las descubrimos casi nunca. (“Concepto progresivo del nuevo mundo” 2275)

The paragraph reveals Valera’s frustration at the British employing the same rhetoric for Spain as for their colonized “inferior” nations. By not questioning the categorization of “inferior and superior” nations, he is implicitly acknowledging his agreement with this global order and that his dissatisfaction came from the position in which Spain was being placed.

Valera pointed out that this type of foreign criticism had caused an erosion of national self-esteem, leading Spaniards to mistrust their own judgments and values. Indeed, in “El Centenario” he argued that being enlightened in Spain had become synonymous with privileging Protestant and positivist models while abandoning the Spanish Catholic tradition. Valera’s defense of “forgotten Spanish values” reveals that at
the very moment that Spanish intellectuals undertook the mission of resurrecting imperial Spain, the country was itself undergoing a colonization of values. Valera would diagnose this harmful foreign influence as the cause of the erosion of national patriotism and the prevention of Spain’s citizens from fully realizing the symbolic dimension of the coming Centennial.

De la aceptación resignada de cuanto el desdén o el odio ha hecho decir contra nosotros en tierras extrañas, nace, sin duda, la indiferencia general que no podemos menos de notar, y que no queremos disimular, con que se mira el Centenario, ya cercano, en que ha de conmemorarse el hecho importantísimo que abre en la Historia Universal nueva Era y es el mayor de nuestros triunfos pasados. (“El Centenario” 1878)

This pessimistic perspective undergoes a change of tone as Valera explains the significance of the approaching date and proposes a change of attitude among the Spanish citizens. The Centennial becomes for Valera at once a symbol and a motor of greatness. For him, the discovery represented a moment of glory for Spain, and by encouraging citizens to celebrate it, they would recover their national pride and make up for their current decay. He aimed to transfer the past glory of the discovery into the present, to give it impact in contemporary life.

In a moment in which Spain was diminished abroad within northern European racial imaginaries, Valera conceived the Centennial as a showcase of the nation and hence made a call to citizens to devote all their energies to the celebrations. He would especially remark that Spaniards should not to feel intimidated by the overwhelming
luxury of the Chicago exhibition: “España no debe arredrarse; España necesita, hasta donde alcancen sus fuerzas, celebrar también el cuarto término secular del grande acontecimiento” (“El Centenario” 1880). The emphasis on the idea of Spain not shrinking before the power of United States reveals how already in 1892 the rise of the US elicited a defense mechanism in Spanish cultural imaginary. On the anniversary of the colonization, and with the US appearing as the coming world power, Valera felt the need for Spain to claim its place as a colonial power. According to Valera, Spain ought to devote as much energy as it could to compensate for the superior means of the US. The image of an exhausted country, struggling up to the limits of its strength, reminds us of the double edge of this “compensatory empire,” which restitutes Spain as a colonial power but also forces the nation to offer a representation of imperial grandeur to compensate for the lack of imperial potency.

Indeed in spite of budget limitations, Valera believed that Spain could still offer an honorable celebration, especially counting on the economic backing and support of several groups: the government, the church, the patriotic citizenship, and of course, on their Latin American family members, “las repúblicas de nuestra lengua y sangre” (“El Centenario” 1881). Arguing that there had not been a more transcendental event in history than the Discovery of America, Valera employed the magazine to encourage all possible festivities and commemorations for that anniversary:

Si prescindimos de lo sobrenatural y religioso, no hay en la historia hecho de mayor importancia que el descubrimiento de América. Pocos parecen, pues, todos los esplendores, pompas magníficas, erección de monumentos y publicación de libros
en verso y prosa para conmemorar este hecho y ensalzar al gran navegante.

(“Concepto progresivo del nuevo mundo” 2268)

The collective effort to organize the celebrations was viewed as worthy of the cost given the larger benefits it could later generate. Even Valera acknowledged that it was not the most propitious moment for the economic expenses of the celebration, yet he believed that the Centennial would provide an important symbolic profit: that of restoring national pride to the citizenship. 1892 represented for Valera an occasion to make up for their economic poverty, rebuilding national self-esteem by acquiring a sense of superiority as a country based on the colonizing enterprises of the past: “Al retraer todo esto a nuestra memoria siente el amor propio nacional honda satisfacción y se experimenta algún consuelo para los apuros con que hoy vivimos” (“El Centenario” 1880). We see how the logic of compensation is operating here, Valera proposing that the past worked as compensation for the belt-tightening of their present.

In restoring national pride and reclaiming the Spanish heritage of America, El Centenario portrayed colonization as a civilizing enterprise in which Spain forged America both materially and spiritually. This depiction aimed to respond to “la leyenda negra” and to contemporary works by Anglo-Saxon historians who had taken the opportunity of the Centennial to reexamine Spanish colonization in ways that Valera found inaccurate and biased. He pointed out that many European nations had promoted the destruction of the Spanish colonies and inflicted abuses against indigenous populations, adding that many acts of cruelty and pillage were undertaken by outlaws - Drake, Morgan, Belman- that many European countries had turned to in order to evade
the just legal policies of the Spanish colonies. Most importantly, he responded to the accusations of abuse during the colonization, arguing that 19th century conceptions of philanthropy were completely anachronistic for the evaluation of the acts of four centuries before.

Concedamos que todo fue culpa de aquella edad en que la filantropía, de que hoy se hace gala aunque no se sienta, aún no estaba muy en uso. Pero es insufrible, si no se toma a risa, que en nombre de filantropías, ternuras y tolerancias, desusadas y hasta desconocidas antes, se nos acuse, se nos condene y se nos maldiga, como a los más crueles y fanáticos. (“El Centenario” 1884)

In contrast with the British accounts that Valera criticized, he hyperbolically characterized the discovery and colonization of America as the most important event in history, a moment whose importance he defined as inferior only to supernatural or religious events, “no hay acaso otro mayor, salvo la teofanía del Sinaí y el suplicio redentor del Gólgota” (“El Centenario” 1876). Valera glorifies the Spanish colonial enterprise, describing the “Discovery” as a historical moment that in its transcendence was almost supernatural. Locating the “Discovery” only a step below religious epiphany allows Valera to keep a pious attitude, giving prominence to divine manifestations but also allowing him to secularize and modernize the original discourse surrounding Spain as the chosen nation to spread the Catholic faith. By rescuing some of the religious language and mixing it with the rhetoric of progress, Valera depicts Spain as the representative of European civilization, appointed by the law of progress to expand in the virginal American territory:
España era digna de llevar a cabo la hazaña maravillosa y estaba llamada por el
Destino, la Providencia o por la ley que dirige a la Humanidad en su progreso, a
ensanchar los límites del mundo conocido y a completarle para el hombre
abiendo vías nunca holladas y explorando inmenso campo, fértil y virgen por
donde se dilataran triunfantes el audaz linaje de Jafet y la civilización de Europa.

(“El Centenario” 1879)

Here we see that Valera restores the image of Spain by calling it “worthy” of the
“marvelous deed,” and making a very convenient use of the conjunction in commenting
that the nation was called on to undertake this effort by providence or by the law of
progress. While destiny and providence evoke a religious sense that resemble the original
discourse of Spanish colonization, Valera introduces the more modern call to progress,
appointing Spain as a “worthy” agent and pioneer of progress. Spain’s relationship to the
ideal of “advancement” is considered unquestionable, as the nation is not simply depicted
as experiencing progress, but as a country that propagates it. The reference to expanding
the limits of knowledge, to the opening of new paths, shows that the discourse on
religious evangelization that supported colonization in the 15th century is transformed
here into a narrative of scientific exploration. The discovery of America is rewritten,
from an act of divine manifestation to a sign of progress, narrated in a way that would
update the official evangelical mission of the time to the parameters of progress and
civilization of 1892.

30 For an analysis of the spiritual rhetoric of the “Discovery,” see Margarita Zamora’s “El prólogo
al diario de Cristóbal Colón.”
This depiction of Spanish colonization as proof of Spain’s abilities to progress was intended to characterize contemporary Spain as well. As Valera argued, this single act of colonization had proved the status of the Spanish nation for good:

en nombre del sentido común, que todavía, aunque nada más hubiéramos hecho que descubrir el Nuevo Mundo, colonizarle y fundar Estados en él, hubiéramos trabajado como pocos otros pueblos por la civilización material y espiritual y por todo progreso, así en acción como en teoría. (“El Centenario” 1884)

Valera implies that the American campaign was already enough in itself for Spain to be an imperial power. He updated the discourse of the colonization to talk of “material and spiritual” development, and especially of the key word, “progress.”

*El Centenario* did not only utilize the past to create a contemporary imperial consciousness, but indeed it also envisioned translating the rebuilding of transatlantic ties into the creation of a new commercial empire. From within the pages of this magazine, Valera asserted a common race and tradition -a consequence of the Spanish civilizing mission, to which Latin Americans were therefore indebted- as a way to create a Hispanic solidarity that would help Spanish exports in the American markets. Although he was mainly concerned with book commerce he will also refer, as we will see, to the expansion of markets for all kinds of Spanish industries.

In reaffirming this common identity, Valera would frequently comment that the Spanish character and tradition was alive in Latin America, being preserved and cultivated by Latin American authors, among which he listed some of the most prominently Hispanist American writers: Caro, Amunátegui, Cuervo, Montalvo and León
Mera (“El Centenario” 1886). In fact, he would call on Spaniards and Latin Americans to transcend political definitions and think about themselves as a common family, and even more importantly, as a society with the same goals and aspirations:

Nuestras miras en la celebración del Centenario deben dirigirse a que esta gran fiesta lo sea de suprema concordia, donde nos honremos y amemos, poniendo, por cima de la discrepancia política de los diversos Estados, un sentimiento de familia y una común aspiración que en esfera más amplia nos identifiquen. (“El Centenario” 1886)

Valera specified that this resumption of family ties had to be celebrated, but should not be limited to “recreo, diversiones y pompas” (“El Centenario” 1885). The reconciliation favored by the Centennial ought to lead to practical results:

Todo lo cual puede y debe tener fin práctico inmediato, ya por el desarrollo de nuestro comercio material, que abra de nuevo antiguos mercados, hoy más llenos de gente, y desvele y aguijonee el aletargado genio de la industria española; ya por el trato y convivencia mental, que vengan a hacerse más frecuentes entre España y América, y que, conservando y aún consolidando la unidad de nuestra acción científica y literaria, le den vigor ubérrimo, y la hagan más variada por la diversidad de los Estados, climas y suelos, donde se emplee, y más distinta que hoy de la de otras naciones, y más original también, merced a su indeleble sello castizo y a su marcado carácter propio. (“El Centenario” 1886)

By referring to a scientific and literary union with an indelible and singular character, Valera is unifying Spain and Latin America, promoting the idea of a supra-Hispanic
character that spreads throughout different states in their cultural manifestations. At the same time, as he acknowledges the political autonomy of every country, he makes a call to transcend political definitions and to think about themselves as part of a common family, and even more important, as a society with the same goals and aspirations. He is dismissing a territorial, political identity to create a cultural one that could become an alternative to obtain material, concrete benefits. Although Valera was particularly interested in the intellectual market, he refers here to commerce in general, coinciding with the Spanish entrepreneurs in considering the possibilities that the Centennial offered to open new markets.

Valera used El Centenario to support the idea of a Hispanic family, a concept that would serve as the motor of the Spanish economy and could create a new imperial consciousness. El Centenario became a means of propaganda for this “compensatory empire,” as Valera himself concludes in his article “El Centenario,” saying: “La Revista Ilustrada […] procurará contribuir a que tan plausible fin se consiga” (“El Centenario” 1886).

Conclusion

Postcolonial studies have hardly devoted any attention to the case of Spanish imperialism in the 19th and 20th century, following the tendency to overlook forms of empire that do not concern political or territorial domain. As Ann Laura Stoler (2006) has pointed out, forms of imperialism sans territorial control tend to be more elusive and difficult to pin down, but at the same time become more pervasive and naturalized among the citizenship. In the Centennial of 1892 a cultural concept of empire started to emerge
that had the potential to overcome the Spanish territorial and political loss of 1898. This concept was indeed recovered by the Hispanist movement in the 1920s and 1930s and later by the early Franquist regime.

In recent years, several critics have described a consciousness of imperial identity among Spanish intellectuals during the early 20th century. Sebastian Balfour and Martin Blinkhorn examined the idea of the Spanish empire as an organizing myth during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and Franco (Balfour 1997, Blinkhorn 1980). As Alistair Hennessey (2000) has commented, the Hispanist movement acquired the character of a surrogate empire in Ramiro de Maeztu’s Defensa de la Hispanidad (1934), a vision reappropriated by the Franquist regime. Frederik Pike (1971) suggested that the divisive lines between conservative and liberal Hispanists were finely drawn and indeed Sebastiaan Faber (2001) demonstrated that the Spanish Republican exiles in Latin America in the 1940s celebrated a pan-Hispanic spirit as an expansion of Spanish culture and history, a gesture that paradoxically resembled the Franquist ideologies of Hispanism.

The celebrations of 1892 represent an anticipation of -and are crucial to contextualize- the 20th century consolidation of Hispanism as what I am referring to as the Spanish “compensatory empire.” More importantly, it shows that Peninsular Hispanism emerged as such before the loss of the remaining Empire. The 20th century Hispanists’ promotion of a great Hispanic family defined by common blood, race, language and spirit that had already appeared and congealed in the writings of 1892. The concept of Hispanidad started to emerge during the Centennial as a compensatory model
for their contemporary decline but also as productive force that could bring material results, literally alleviating their decay. Indeed, two influential books in the Hispanist movement, *Idearium español* by Angel Ganivet (1893) and *Hacia otra España* by Ramiro de Maeztu (1895) would appear only a few years after the Centennial initiated this discursive trend, following this attempt of reconstructing Spanish nationalism and insisting on its imperial character before the final colonial disintegration.

While I juxtapose 1892 and 1898, I resist the idea that the project of 1892 failed after the Spanish-American war. The type of compensatory empire that emerged during the Centennial represented a neo-imperial model not based on a political structure, but on the idea of “Hispanic solidarity” and hence, prepared to overcome the political independence of the last colonies. What I find fascinating in the discourse of 1892 is the great dependence upon this compensatory empire” of cultural production. The construction of this compensatory empire was promoted by cultural products of the celebrations such as the memorabilia and the exhibition that capitalized the colonial past to fuel a new imperial consciousness. Literature production would become even more crucial, as literary works did not only glorify colonizatio

n but developed the idea of a common Hispanic identity through which they aimed to appeal to not only Spaniards but also Latin Americans. Faced with the decline of the Spanish state, Valera and Menéndez Pelayo referred to the discursive identity of the Hispanic family that could serve as the motor of both the Spanish economy and patriotic feeling. Literary production was key to constructing this Hispanic identity that was expected to renew Spanish nationalism and imperialism through various fronts: agglutinating the different nationalisms within the
country, stimulating the exports of Spanish commodities to Latin America and offering an alternative to the Anglo-Saxon model of modernity which marginalized Spain. This “compensatory empire” thus represents a new model that, independent from political structures, would need to rely on discursive construction as the means to create a cultural union, and through this cultural union, build a new commercial relationship. Just when Spain was considered a backward and decayed form of empire, with only a few agitated colonies, the Centennial of 1892 surprisingly boosted the emergence of a new and modern model of empire, a cultural and commercial one based on the fiction of the Hispanic bond. This model of cultural and commercial empire would only gain ground in the rest of Europe after the loss of their own colonies half a century later.
CHAPTER THREE: FIGHTING THE DANGERS OF MODERNITY:
THE SPIRITUALITY OF HISPANISM IN THE WRITINGS OF
SOLEDAD ACOSTA DE SAMPER

In one of her papers for the Centennial of 1892, the Colombian writer Soledad Acosta de Samper expressed her feeling of obligation as a Latin American in celebrating the anniversary of the onset of colonization:

todo americano debe, á la medida de sus fuerzas, manifestar su entusiasmo en esas lides literarias abiertas en la Madre Patria para celebrar el 4º Centenario del Descubrimiento de América; agradecer en el alma la acogida benévola que se le hace con el objeto de estrechar los lazos que unen las Repúblicas de Ultramar con la Monarquía española, y además llevar su contingente de luces, cual más, cual menos, al antiguo hogar de sus mayores. ("El periodismo" 85)

The proposal of a transatlantic rapprochement as well as the description of Spain as the mother country and home of her elders conveys the Hispanist sentiment that animated Acosta de Samper’s works around the festivities of 1892. She herself had responded to this call of duty: as a well-known figure at the time in both in Colombia and Spain, she

---

31 In spite of being the most prominent woman writer in 19th century Colombia, her literary work - especially her historical essays- fell into oblivion until the 1980s when it was rediscovered by Montserrat Ordóñez and Aída Martínez Carreño. Daughter of Joaquin Acosta, a national hero in the Independence war and a famous historian, Soledad Acosta de Samper received an unusually solid education for the women of her generation and developed a very versatile professional career: she cultivated historical works, wrote fictional and historical novels, translated English and French works, wrote journalistic articles and even founded the Revista Americana with her husband, the journalist and politician José María Samper. The reasons for this unfair oblivion could be the androcentric character of early 20th century criticism as well as the categorizations of historiography and literature that at the beginning of the 20th century considered the hybrid works of Acosta de Samper as neither reliable historical essays nor literary pieces. As Montserrat Ordóñez and Carolina Alzate have examined, her works are pieces of indisputable value as they incorporate narrative elements and novelize historic episodes in an attempt to create a national tradition, a genre not
was invited by the Spanish author Gaspar Núñez de Arce to take part in the congresses of a Centennial that praised a Hispanic common bond. Indeed her conference papers as well as her travel narrative *Viaje a España en 1892* coincided in promoting the idea of a common Hispanic race shared by Colombians and Spanish. This Hispanist affiliation connected Acosta de Samper with Colombian Hispanists such as Miguel Antonio Caro, Rufino José Cuervo and Sergio Arboleda but her work stands out as it not only encapsulates some of the ideological basis and motivations for the Latin American Creole to invest in such an alliance, but also reveals the limitations and contradictions that Hispanism carried within it.

In this chapter I argue that through the language of Hispanism, Acosta de Samper was articulating a multifaceted racial discourse, reappropriating but also challenging hegemonic models of modernity to construct Colombia as a white and modern nation. Because of the salience of imperial racial ideologies in the late 19th century, the identification against indigeneity became for Latin American creoles more important than marking separation from the former colonial power. With the rise of Social Darwinism from the 1860s and the classification of the “non white” nations as inferiors, Hispanism represented a convenient affiliation to deindigenize the nation, even overcoming the anti-

---

32 The edited volume by Richard Graham, *The Idea of Race in Latin America: 1870-1940* provides a good background of how Social Darwinism offered an apparent scientific basis for racism, formulating an idea of race that contributed to justify the hegemony of some nations over those considered “inferior.” The articles put together in this volume explore the importation and transformation of these ideas of race in Brazil, Argentina, Cuba and Mexico from the late 19th century to the mid 20th century. Another interesting book on the subject is Nancy Leys Stepan’s “The Hour of Eugenics Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America”, that examines how eugenics were not simply imitated in Latin America but they evolved differently from the Anglo-Saxon tradition.
Spanish discourse that emerged after the Independence of continental Latin America. On the other hand, this scientific discourse typically separated the Hispanic, assigning it an inferior position within the white races. Acosta de Samper drew on this idea of difference to confer Hispanic identity a unique spiritual value in opposition to French or Anglo-Saxon identities. This Hispanic identity, she believed, would protect Colombia from the corrupting force of French and British modernities.

The Centennial of 1892 provided Acosta de Samper the opportunity to develop this Hispanist discourse, fulfilling her *regenerationist* aspiration to construct a new Colombian national identity. However, while the celebrations offered her the perfect frame to create an idealized Hispanic identity, her actual experience of Spain paradoxically problematized her investment in this common and transnational identity. The reality of the nation depicted in her travel account, *Viaje a España en 1892*, conflicted with her theoretical descriptions of Hispanic values from her conference papers. The juxtaposition of the literary texts that Acosta de Samper produced for and about the Centennial reveal that even a single author would employ multiple and sometimes contradictory ways of defining the Hispanist bond tying Latin America and Spain together. Acosta de Samper’s texts represent a compelling example of how the Hispanic identity that the Centennial helped to produce was productive as a fiction, a malleable signifier that authors reformulated for their own national projects, which in the case of Acosta de Samper was to construct an alternative model of modernity for the Colombian nation.
In *Viaje a España en 1892*, Acosta de Samper described the opening of the “IX Congreso Internacional de Americanistas” as a joyful moment of Hispanic confraternity: “Aquella escena fue alegrísimá: todos brindaban, todos discurrían con la elocuencia hija del entusiasmo que producía el sentimiento de confraternidad que unía a España con América en aquellos momentos solemnes” (2: 121). Acosta de Samper attributed this vibrant enthusiasm to the reunion of what she considered to be family members, a reencounter long postponed that in her eyes transformed the Centennial into a solemn and celebratory moment of mutual rediscovery by Hispanics on both sides of the Atlantic. She added in one of her conference papers for the Centennial that indeed, for the first time since Independence, “las fiestas del IV centenario del Descubrimiento de América […] reunirá á los representantes de todas las familias americanas de raza española en el hogar materno” (“El periodismo” 90). This categorization of the Latin American republics as American families of Spanish ancestry presents a good example of the conception of a Hispanic race that Acosta de Samper would develop during the Centennial of 1892. The festivities, with their explicit promotion of the Hispanic race, laid out for Acosta de Samper a convenient scenario to create a new point of identification for the Colombian nation. As 19th scientific racism conferred a strong legitimacy on racial claims in the justification of a particular community, Acosta de Samper would insist on the idea of a Hispanic race as a key aspect to support her claim for a transatlantic community, for an identity shared on both sides of the ocean.
The racial conception conveyed through Acosta de Samper’s work shows a dialogical relationship with late 19th centuries categories of race, partly reproducing the standard hegemonic hierarchy of the time but also challenging its order in her promotion of the Hispanic race over the northern alternatives. Her texts reveal a world vision structured by different levels of racial opposition: the broadest one being the European (white) versus the non-white, and within the European, the Anglo-Saxon versus the Latin. She would also distinguish two fronts within the Latin, the French versus the Hispanic.

While Acosta de Samper would reject British or French modernity, her work nevertheless revealed the desirability of European affiliation. The empirical illusion of scientific racism concealed a Eurocentric vision in locating and hierarchizing cultures (McClintock 1995, Fabian 2002, Anderson 2003), and as Jerome Branche has pointed out, the translation in Latin America of this dominant ideology of whiteness “provoked a massive inferiority complex in elite intellectuals in the latter nineteenth century” (21). Acosta de Samper would reproduce this vision in her early historical narratives on Colombian colonization that downplayed the indigenous heritage to privilege a Spanish legacy that would connect the nation with European racial and cultural tradition. Within the frame of the Centennial, she not only reiterated the Spanish affiliation versus the indigenous, but she also worked to endow value upon a particular category, the Hispanic, which had long occupied a subaltern position within the European scheme. In essence, Samper was promoting a 19th century vision of an alternative modernity.

As Lily Litvak (1980) has studied, the origin of the Latin and Anglo-Saxon differentiation could be located in the early 19th century but it was the popularization of
evolutionist and Darwinist theories in the decade of the 60s that consolidated this racial
distinction. The French defeat of 1870 as well as the weak control of Spain over its last
colonies confirmed the image of a decadent Latinidad in comparison to a thriving Anglo-
Saxon race that centralized industrialization, technical advances and scientific
knowledge. While some Latin American and Spanish writers felt included in the Latin
definition, Acosta de Samper preferred the affiliation of a Hispanic race rather than a
Latin one that necessarily included the French. The Latin race held positive associations
with classic culture but it also chained Latin Americans to a French modernity that
Acosta de Samper considered immoral and corrupting. So while in few instances she
spoke of a “Latin race” in contrast to the still more alien Anglo-Saxon, the inclusion of
France in this category moved her to reemphasize the idea of a transatlantic Spanish race.

Her works on the Centennial would crystallize the racial affiliations to which
Acosta de Samper had already subscribed in her historical narratives. As she herself
stated in Un hidalgo conquistador, she had cultivated the hybrid genre of the historical
narrative with the didactic purpose of “instruir divirtiendo” (Un hidalgo conquistador
11), offering role models for Colombian youth to imitate. In the process of selection and
discrimination implied in the construction of a national paradigm within her historical
works, Acosta de Samper had already eschewed indigenous identification while
reemphasizing Spanish ancestry. Her prologue for Biografías de hombres ilustres ó

---

33 See in Chapter Five how Rubén Darío established multiple and simultaneous identifications
alternating between the Latin and the Hispanic depending on the context. Acosta de Samper would
represent a more radical Hispanism that would consider a Latin affiliation as a competition to a Hispanist
conception.
*notables* (1883) for instance, commented that the research on indigenous history was merely an ethnographic curiosity but that no useful or moral knowledge could be taken from it (2). By contrast, Spaniards were appointed as the spiritual fathers of the nation:

> A pesar de la gran mezcla de la raza indígena con la blanca que existe en Colombia, la primitiva tiende a desaparecer; y aunque ésta exista por muchos años aún, la civilización de que gozamos nos viene de Europa, y los españoles son los progenitores espirituales de toda la población. Así pues, á éstos debemos atender con preferencia si deseamos conocer el carácter de nuestra civilización. (2)

As we see here, her historical narratives combined a marginalization of indigeneity with an amplification of Spanish heritage on grounds of a superiority she understood as linked to the Spanish race: spirituality. Colombian civilization, “our civilization” for the narrator’s voice, was the “spiritual” descendent of the Spanish, since Acosta de Samper believed that in spite of the large masses of indigenous people the morally superior race of the Spanish had prevailed.

This diminishing of the indigenous influence as well as the attribution of spiritual qualities to the Hispanic race would be reemphasized in her work for the Centennial which praised their common race and blood and argued that the Hispanic race was endowed with superior moral virtue. Indeed her imagination of Colombians belonging to the Hispanic race informed her paper on pre-Columbian culture that she wrote for the “IX Congreso Internacional de Americanistas,” entitled “Los aborígenes que poblaban los territorios que hoy forman la República de Colombia en la época del descubrimiento de América.” She chose the topic based on the call for papers proposed by this congress,
which invited lectures on ethnographic, historical and linguistic studies on pre-Columbian societies, especially those which focused on their stage of “evolution” around the time of the Discovery. The popularity of these types of studies in comparison to the marginalization of the period of Independence earned an ironic remark by Acosta de Samper, who commented on the lack of interest displayed among Spanish historians for researching the American emancipation:

Los llamados americanistas, sólo quieren ocuparse de la historia precolombina, muy poco de la época de la conquista y colonización, y se niegan absolutamente á oír referir algo de lo sucedido en la época de la independencia. (Viaje a España en 1892 1: 226)

But although she criticized Spanish intellectuals for favoring certain historical periods, her representation of indigenous culture was also ideologically conditioned. Far from a gesture of indigenous vindication as the title might suggest, her work diminished the indigenous impact on Colombian culture and reaffirmed their exclusion from the national imagination. As Acosta de Samper herself pointed out, she started to investigate the customs and characters of pre-Columbian civilizations as she was influenced by the positivist theories, scientific societies and academies that researched indigenous cultures - a referential frame that undoubtedly influenced her approach.

As in European scientific discourse, Acosta de Samper’s paper for the Centennial, “Los aborígenes,” assumed a distant and objectifying position in the representation of indigeneity while marginalizing them by employing a similar treatment of temporality to that of scientific racism. The European discourse drew on the idea of a world in which
different temporalities coexisted, representing the indigenous cultures of the colonies as anachronistic civilizations that needed the modernizing effects of colonization to reach the temporality of the modern nations. Assigning different nations to varying degrees of evolution justified colonization but in the case of Colombia, the two coexisting temporalities -the backward past of the indigenous and the modern present of the Spanish- problematized the creation of a unified and modern Colombian national identity. Acosta de Samper would move from portraying indigenous culture as “doomed to disappear” in her historical narratives to depicting them as cultures that were “extinguidas y olvidadas” (“Los aborígenes” 2) at the Centennial. By reducing them to the realm of the past and the target of historical research, her contemporary indigenous population was obliterated and their space in the formation of the Colombian nation denied. Colombia appeared then as a white nation which was racially connected to Europe through the legacy of the Spanish. The selection process initiated in her works in the eighties culminated in an undisputable Hispanic genealogy in her papers for the Centennial.

In a very Spenserian style, she argued that this Spanish legacy had prospered through the survival of the fittest. Although she admitted the “mano ruda” (“Los aborígenes” 2) of the Spanish conquistadores, she would explain the disappearance of the indigenous population by arguing that they were corrupted and already moving towards barbarism and extinction when the Spaniards arrived. She clarified that in nations such as Mexico or Peru, more Indians had survived but she considered that even there their destiny was to disappear by melting into the stronger white race: “tienden á desaparecer ingertándose, amalgamándose con la raza blanca; de manera que, al cabo de tres ó cuatro
generaciones, prevalece la sangre más vigorosa, la del blanco, y se elimina por completo la del aborigen americano” (“Los aborígenes” 8). By reaffirming the idea of the Spanish race surviving and surpassing the indigenous, she was constructing a white Colombian nation.

The glorification of colonization in the Spanish celebrations of 1892 contributed to frame her last step in establishing the Hispanic as a new point of identification for the Colombian nation. The concluding paragraph of the paper for the “IX Congreso Internacional de Americanistas” even exalted the arrival of Spanish colonization, whose intrusion Indians had not been able to resist:

eran aquellos desdichados tan timoratos y de ánimo tan apocado que cuando llegó en medio de ellos Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada á la cabeza de ciento sesenta hombres armados y acaballos, las tropas indígenas, que se consideraban aguerridas en los combates con sus vecinos, se convirtieron en humo, y Zaques, Zipas, Usaques, Jeques, todos cayeron postrados junto con sus súbditos á los pies de los Conquistadores españoles! (“Los aborígenes” 49)

The exclamation that rounds off this portrait of the indigenous troops bowing down to the conquerors highlights the epic character that this account confers to colonialization.

Spaniards and conservative Creoles banded together in producing similar narratives of colonization, for just as Spanish restored their national pride as a colonizing power, Colombian creoles provided a heroic narrative of those they identified as their ancestors. The fact that Acosta de Samper’s selection and reconstruction of the Colombian national ancestry also supplied a historical narrative for Spain made her a quite well-known figure
among Spanish intellectual circles. The Spanish appreciation for her work was evident in the attention that the press paid to her during the Centennial as well as in the warm welcome by Emilia Pardo Bazán, Antonio Rubió i Lluch and Juan Valera, who even asked her to contribute to “El Centenario.” As Rubió i Lluch confessed to her in a letter in January 1892 her Biografías had filled him with pride and “as a Spanish citizen” (105) thanked her for the compliments to the “humanitarian character” (105) of the Spanish colonization. After commenting that her work filled him with admiration for his national past, he translated Spanish colonial history into a motif of contemporary pride:

Vivos deseos le vienen a uno de recorrer esos países que pisaron por vez primera y bautizaron aquellos héroes de tenacidad infatigable y de voluntad de hierro, muy superiores a los Stanley, los Emiro y los Livingston modernos. (105)

The comparison with these contemporary explorers explains the symbolic importance that her accounts hold for Spaniards. The salience of colonial discourse in late 19th century in concurrence with the expansion of British and French control in Africa and Asia urged Spanish intellectuals to make up for their diminished role as colonial powers and reinterpret the past through a model of “civilizing mission.” This conjunction between Spanish and conservative Creoles in rewriting colonization would carry over to other issues as both groups progressively envisioned Hispanism as an advantageous union. Acosta de Samper herself expressed her desire for the Celebrations to strengthen the relations among members of the same race and obtain practical results from the alliance. As she would say in her lecture for the “Congreso Literario Hispano-Americano”, the congress should have as a goal
no solamente aumentar la amistad que une á todos los miembros de nuestra raza y que es hija de la comunidad de sangre, de carácter, de aspiraciones y de Religión, sino también acrecentar los beneficios espirituales y materiales de nuestras respectivas nacionalidades. Una liga como ésta, fuerte, sincera y verdaderamente útil, debe tener un resultado práctico de grande trascendencia.

(“El periodismo” 85)

As we see here, Acosta de Samper aimed to obtain both spiritual and material benefits from an alliance based on grounds of blood and race. Language was an element that Acosta de Samper would refer to, but unlike Palma, she did not consider it their most fundamental connector. She believed in a Spanish race traversing the Atlantic, and that by belonging to it, individuals were bound to share the same ideological values: respect for the elderly, honor, bravery, gallantry, and especially the fervent religious passion that she admired so much. Instead of a straightforward religious lexicon, the ambiguous term of spirituality became a term more adjusted to modern discourse, but the spiritual character she assigned to the Hispanic race definitely held an association with Catholicism. This association became clearer as the nations she categorized as non-spirituals were consistently Protestant, or, as in the case of France, imagined as the center of a growing atheism.

In the concluding paragraphs of her paper “El periodismo,” Acosta de Samper expressed her hopes for the Centennial having some practical results, results that she precisely envisioned as a strengthening of “spirituality.” She said that apart from a festive
moment of family reunion, the celebrations ought to have a “useful dimension” and become a space to discuss the illnesses that afflicted America:

¿cambiará en algo esta situación de espíritu? No lo podríamos ciertamente decir, pero esperamos grandes bienes de estas reuniones amistosas. En ellas se podrán discutir los problemas que más nos importan, y en paz completa, con cariño hermanable en medio de las asambleas compuestas de lo más granado de la sociedad española, podremos investigar las causas de los males que nos aquejan en América. (“El periodismo” 90)

Here we see how Acosta de Samper viewed American republics as a sick body, a medical discourse that conservative Creoles would deploy to criticize the growing democratization and secularization of their societies, and that Acosta de Samper imagined could be alleviated by a Hispanic association.

This type of medical diagnosis and her determination to change was in tune with the spirit of the Colombian movement of the Regeneración (1878-1898). Through the Constitution of 1886 and orchestrated by the liberal Rafael Núñez and the conservative Miguel Antonio Caro, the Regeneración aimed to establish a new political order and especially, to reconstruct Colombian nationality after the failure of the federalist constitution of 1863 (Espriella 1978, Lemaitre 1986). Moderate liberals and conservatives merged around this constitution and its proposals of centralization, order and, especially, clericalism; even liberals such as Rafael Núñez, envisioned religion in Colombia as a structural and organizing social system. So while in the regenerationist movement converged figures of such different ideological positions -Caro was a
prominent Hispanist, while Núñez who even advocated for some economic and legal reforms were inspired by British liberalism - they all coincided in a rhetoric that promoted a “dematerialization” of the nation. As we see in the following quotation by Núñez:

Reemplacemos el imperio de la fuerza material con el imperio de la fuerza moral; la intriga corruptora de los caracteres, con la opinión consciente; el despotismo con el derecho, y quedando así el país en posesión de sí mismo, tendremos libertad y paz, y entraremos con paso seguro en la vía de la verdadera civilización, que es también la del progreso. ("La Reforma” 322)

Núñez proposes here an alternative concept of progress and civilization as he downplays the material elements that were generally associated to the idea of progress. His proposal encourages the substitution of material interests for moral values, a proposal that as we will see, shares many points with Soledad Acosta de Samper’s.

The political debate on the construction of a Colombian national ideology mainly constituted a male domain -as proved by the lack of women among the writers of the Constitution- but nevertheless, Acosta de Samper was committed to this regeneracionista spirit in her writing. Her own husband, Jose María de Samper, had been one of the prominent intellectuals in the debates around the reconstruction of the nation and the model it should take, and he would become an ardent defender of Pan-Hispanism (Van Aken 1959, Martínez 1996). As Harold E. Hinds has remarked, the Samper-Acosta marriage practiced a “division of intellectual labor” (37) that prevented Soledad from concentrating on political and social commentary, and lead her to focus on historical narratives and novels. Her historical works already revealed her commitment to
educational projects designated to create Colombian citizens, but after Samper’s death in 1888, she would become more vocal about her civic conscience. Her production on the Centennial clearly conveys her participation in the spirit of the *Regeneración* in her attempt to establish a new path to Colombian national identity. For Acosta de Samper, the emergence of a new Colombian identity passed through an investment in the idea of a Hispanic race to which Colombians belonged.

Hispanism offered to Acosta de Samper the possibility of eschewing indigenous roots while avoiding the growing influence of French cultural patterns in Colombia. By isolating Spain as the only decisive influence in the formation of Colombian identity and by playing with the ambiguous location of Spain within Europe Acosta de Samper could build her own desired model of modernity for her country. To vindicate the whiteness of Colombia, she located Spain within Europe, then associating Colombia to this continent. But when referring to the excess that modernity could fall into, she separated Spain from Europe, attributing a spiritual character to Spain which had been transmitted to the American republics during the colonization and that stood as an alternative model of modernity. Hence with Hispanism, Acosta de Samper aimed to create an independent model that could be compared on the same level as the French or British but that did not share their moral flaws.

Turning to European models in the construction of Colombian nationalism was a common denominator within the politics of the *Regeneración*, which used these models as examples or counter-examples to carry out the new political order. Since the comparison with Europe was at the centre of this *regeneracionista* movement, this
continent became a malleable, flexible signifier that each Colombian intellectual could manipulate and rewrite, conferring it with certain values that suited their ideological purposes. As Frédéric Martínez recalls (1996), Europe was envisioned in multiple ways even within the same ideological groups. While liberals were taking Europe as the centre of modern liberalism, for the conservatives, Europe could be represented in two contradictory fashions: it could be a space of atheism and anarchy used to warn against the dangers of liberalism, or on the contrary, the birthplace of Christian civilization. These subscriptions to different European models among Colombian intellectuals responded to a diverse positioning regarding modernity that also informed the constitution of 1886. The Constitution had achieved the reconciliation of liberals and conservatives but their conceptions of modernity and their European affiliations remained different. Even the primary authors of the constitution, Rafael Núñez and Miguel Antonio Caro endorsed different models. For Núñez, French liberalism was the model that originally inspired him in the seventies but as the anarchist and socialist movements emerged, he moved towards British conservative liberalism. On the other hand Caro defended the links with Spain to counteract Colombian advocates of British liberalism, which for Caro endangered the cultural identity of the nation. Caro defended the Spanish colonial administration, argued for a return to traditional values and saw in Spain the path to Colombian cultural authenticity (Jaramillo Uribe 1974, 1993; Rubiano Muñoz 2006).

Within this national division regarding the models to take, Acosta de Samper exhibited a closer position to Caro in considering Hispanism as a way to refashion national identity. A woman of stronger religious values, Acosta de Samper was
concerned with reinforcing religious belief in Colombia and avoiding anarchist movements. She reconciled the two opposed visions of Europe -Europe as the centre of Christianity versus Europe as the focus of atheism- by ascribing to Spain and depicting this country as the spiritual reservoir of an otherwise increasingly atheistic Europe. She identified Spain as Europe when she wanted to claim the modernity, progress and whiteness associated to this continent, but Spain appeared as different from Europe when she referred to the moral values. The result is that Europe appeared as an inconsistent signifier, assigned with polysemous and contradictory attributes even in contiguous sentences. In her paper “El periodismo” she refined her construction of the Hispanic identity versus the French, but while each identity presented clear characteristics, the use of the adjective “European” remained inconsistent:

Nuestros antepasados europeos nos habían legado su carácter, sus tradiciones, su vida intelectual. Esta última estaba apoyada en dos principios fundamentales, entonces preponderantes en España, á saber: la lealtad á su Religión y el amor á su Soberano. Con los odios que engendró la guerra entre los criollos americanos, pretendieron éstos arrojar de si todo lo que viniera de la Madre Patria, y buscaron con ahínco los libros franceses que fueran enemigos de la Religión católica y partidarios de la Revolución. (“El periodismo” 86)

In this quotation Acosta de Samper refers to Columbia’s Spanish ancestors as European in order to attain the socio-cultural prestige that was linked to the category of European. But in spite of the symbolic value that the category of European conferred, the claim of European ancestry posed a strange contradiction with the French books, also European,
that were portrayed as foreign elements of corruption within the same paragraph. So while the association to Europe was desirable in some ways — hence her “European ancestors” — she avoided a European identification when referring to cultural values such as religion that she found incompatible with what she imagined as an increasingly atheistic Europe. Hence the text specified that it was from Spain that Colombians inherited values such as religiosity and love for the monarchy. Europe then, became an extremely malleable entity with features dependent on the construction of a Hispanic identity. Acosta de Samper would stick to the geographical definition of Europe to include Spain within but at the same time distinguished between two European cultures, the French and the Hispanic from which Colombians originally descend. The French represented for her the excess of modernity, revolution and disorder, while the Hispanics provided the desired elements of progress and modernity associated to Europe combined with the Catholicism and the social hierarchy that she imagined as typical of Spain. While her texts in the Centennial reveal that Acosta de Samper was not a monarchist, her fear for anarchism made her suspicious of France and its history of Revolution and so she clung to Spain, whose emergent anarchist movements she seemed to ignore.

Once the author determined a particular set of attributes for each country, she moved to the question of the imported French books that Colombians had read “con ahínco” after Independence. Acosta de Samper was very concerned about this eagerness for French literature as she considered that this taste had contributed to set Colombia and Spain even further apart. The midcentury, she would add, had been a period lacking in
the Hispanic communication, and the encroaching French influence had carried the
country into a chaotic, anarchical situation:

Después de la magna guerra de la Independencia (la que puede decirse que fue
una guerra civil, puesto que combatían gentes de una misma raza) aflojáronse las
cadenas que nos unían á España y se rompieron también las ligaduras que ataban
á aquellas nuevas naciones al principio de autoridad y al respeto por las Leyes, sin
lo cual no puede haber jamás orden, ni familia organizada ni verdadero progreso.
(“El periodismo” 86)

Hispanic heritage is associated here with progress while the anti-Spanish sentiment and
the French influence post-Independence are seen as hindering it. “Real progress” for
Acosta de Samper had to be contained by order, which she associated with the Spanish
tradition. The relationship that Acosta de Samper establishes in this quotation between
Spain and progress is strikingly different to the voices of many prominent letrados of the
midcentury, who like Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, equated Spain with backwardness,
disorder and barbarie. Indeed, she had overcome the need demonstrated by these post-
Independence intellectuals of demonstrating cultural distinction from the colonial power,
and would refer to Independence as a civil war among members of the same family and
race.

Acosta de Samper reversed the negative associations of Spain while implying that
the imitation of French models was detrimental to the country, for France had become the
hegemonic cultural model since Spain lost its influence. She referred directly to the
damaging influence of French culture, commenting that in comparison the Spanish models had been unfairly ignored:

Es la verdad: como al principio dije, que desde la época de la Independencia venimos en Sud-América imitando en todo y por todo á Francia, tanto en la política como en la literatura, y, como sucede siempre, rara vez es lo bueno que tomamos como ejemplo sino lo malo, lo que hace ruido, lo que brilla. […] No sucede lo mismo con respecto á España, nuestra madre, nuestra progenitora, la que nos dio la vida intelectual, la que nos formó a su semejanza. No, salvo entre los literatos, lo que allí sucede no llama la atención del vulgo hispano-americano. (“El periodismo” 89)

Acosta de Samper warmly refers here to Spain as the mother whose intellectual life Colombians had been originally modeled upon. She describes the ingratitude of those who had rejected the Spanish model and whom she discredits by qualifying them as a “herd.” In contrast, she supported the intellectuals who had not disdained the Spanish cultural models, depicting the latter as the only viable option for intellectuals.

This commentary on French cultural influence would serve as a counter-example justapoxed with the benefits that Hispanism could bring to Colombian cultural and political life. Acosta de Samper cheerfully announced that the country was indeed already experiencing a revival of Hispanism and that “the honest consciousness of their common race” (87) had prevailed in spite of French subversive doctrines. By a revival of Hispanism, she was referring to the movement of the *Regeneración*, which as we commented above, had strengthened the links between church and state in the
constitution of 1886, granting a great importance to religion as a structural and organizing social system. Since the movement included liberals like Rafael Núñez it was not explicitly Hispanist, but its discourse on morality versus materiality agreed with Soledad Acosta de Samper’s goals. She would imagine the dichotomy that Núñez established between materiality and spirituality as an opposition between Spanish versus Anglo-Saxon and French values.

Acosta de Samper considered that the nation had undergone a period of moral corruption and developed a tendency for Colombians to acquire and “worship” French imported goods. The revival of Hispanism represented a turning point for Colombian society for her, the return of the traditional values that she appreciated and that would awaken the honest consciousness of Colombian citizens. She warned however, that for Colombian society to recover fully from its moral disease, the press would need to take part in the national transformation.

Pero ahora que aquellas naciones, después de tantos años de enfermedad moral, principian á convalecer, es preciso nutrirlas con alimentos adecuados á su estado intelectual. […] es preciso, pues, que su educación sea adecuada á la parte que le toca desempeñar en la nueva misión que se le señala, y la prensa es sin duda la grande educadora de este siglo. (“El periodismo” 87)

Given its influence, the press was at the centre of Acosta de Samper’s project of refashioning the nation. Since she considered that French books had corrupted Colombian society, Acosta de Samper was concerned about the morality of the Latin American newspapers that continued imitating their French counterparts in a period that she
qualified of “convalescence.” She believed that a Hispanic alliance could make up for that influence, promoting the spiritual and moral values that Colombians had acquired from their Spanish ancestry but had lost during the revolutionary period.

Anarchism, atheism and luxury were the European influences that Acosta de Samper found particularly dangerous for the Latin American republics. Europe was portrayed as an infected body that was contaminating America:

Europa se halla actualmente en una situación delicadísima, rodeada de peligros, amenazada por la anarquía que difícilmente logran los Gobiernos refrenar. […] En Hispano-América no hemos llegado á ese extremo, a pesar de lo mucho que han trabajado los demagogos para hundirnos también en una completa anarquía; a pesar de los esfuerzos inauditos de los enemigos de la Religión, del orden y de la autoridad para trastornar las ideas del pueblo, por lo general éste ha conservado las ideas sanas de sus mayores. […] El peligro para ellas está en el contagio de la prensa europea que difunde en todas partes el veneno que mana de sus heridas sociales y el insano prurito de imitar lo malo que les señalan. ¡Ah! ¡qué valen los maravillosos descubrimientos modernos! ¿Cuáles serán los bienes que de la ciencia obtendremos si al mismo tiempo se falsea el espíritu, si los corazones se han pervertido? Todavía en América sabemos sufrir: el progreso no nos ha llevado hasta el punto de solo desear la vida regalada de los refinados europeos, que no tiene otra aspiración que eliminar el dolor á todo trance; olvidar los sufrimientos; gozar de todas las comodidades posibles; vivir para este mundo no más;
materializarse; impedir que el alma se manifieste jamás y así poder negar su existencia! (“El periodismo” 88)

The two social diseases that Acosta de Samper diagnoses in this quotation, class struggle and luxury, represent an interesting juxtaposition of doctrines as different as the anarchist movement and the society of consumption, providing an idea of the intermediate model she advocates. She distrusted the communist and anarchist movement because she aspired to build a hierarchical, religious society. However, neither did she want to impose a capitalist model that would favor consumption, for she dreamt rather of a more stoic, ascetic society, modeled upon Spanish tradition. So in this quotation she clearly separates Spain from Europe, which appears as an infected body to be put in quarantine.

Since the Centennial had reunited the transatlantic family, it also became for Acosta de Samper the platform to initiate a Hispanic alliance that would work together to restrict European influence. As we will see in the following quotation she proposed concrete measures, beginning by controlling the diffusion of European news in the Latin American media:

> Si -como suele suceder con las pestes que nos vienen de Asia- lográsemos impedir que en adelante penetrase entre los pueblos de Hispano-América aquel virus social, que puede causar su ruina moral, sería este uno de los mayores triunfos que pudiera obtener el presente Congreso, congregado bajo el generoso amparo de la Madre Patria. (“El periodismo” 89)

Thus the intervention of Spain became crucial for Soledad Acosta de Samper, who advocated that a rapprochement with Spain would restrain this European epidemic. For
Acosta de Samper the French and British models caused social turmoil and promoted a materialist culture contrary to her Hispanic ascetic ideal. She believed that this inclination towards other European models had given morally corrosive results, and hence, she claimed it was time for Latin American youth to rediscover the Spanish model, which she envisioned as the natural Latin American soul concealed behind the imported and refined European commodities. The reason Latin Americans had adopted European fashions was, according to Acosta de Samper, due to youth’s interest in a model that contrasted with the all “too similar” Spanish nature. With these statements Soledad Acosta de Samper solidified the identification of Colombians and Spanish as being part of the same race, deproblematizing the relationship between Spain and its former colonies. While Palma attributed Latin American lack of interest in Spain as the consequence of the Spanish reluctance to acknowledge the political and cultural sovereignty of the Latin American nations, Acosta de Samper compared this distance to the attitude of adolescents who went through a stage in which they tried to distinguish themselves from their parents.

In the final part of “El periodismo,” Soledad Acosta de Samper would conclude by confirming this vision of “the family of the Spanish race,” and by assigning Spain the role of beneficial influence for the Latin American republics to which it could also work as a mediator.

En este terreno hospitalario y neutral nos reuniremos todas las hijas de una misma madre, las cuales siempre hemos vivido separadas por la naturaleza de los países en que vivimos y de común acuerdo trabajaremos para hacernos mutuamente el bien. España con esto nos proporcionará un favor tan grande que indudablemente
As we see here Spain becomes the spiritual counterpoint to French influence and the means to control the excess of modernity. Acosta de Samper did not want to reject progress or a modernity that represented unavoidably desirable paradigms, but she believed in regulating it, exerting control through a Hispanic tradition of law and order. While French and British modernity appeared as overflowing with dissociative, even deviant values, the Hispanic affiliation became the instrument through which to attain a restrained modernity.

The Travel Writing of 1892: Contradictions and Limitations of the Hispanist Project

In studying Acosta de Samper’s Hispanist affiliation, her lectures in the Centennial must be juxtaposed to the travel narrative that she wrote during her stay in Spain. This travel writing complicates the Hispanist project delineated in her lectures as her conference papers were created in advance and lacked the close ethnographic perspective of her travel narrative. Faced with the reality of the country, she started commenting on the defects that -together with the virtues- she found in the Spanish society. Hence, in Viaje a España en 1892 she would say:

A cada paso en España nos encontramos con recuerdos de la ausente patria, y no podemos negar que somos hijas legítimas de la Península ibérica, no solamente
Like many other passages in this work, the familial rhetoric of this quotation reveals Acosta de Samper’s commitment to establishing a Spanish genealogy for Colombia, but it also shows that she is acknowledging that together with values, Spanish ancestry brought its defects. In this first trip to Spain, Acosta de Samper described customs and characters in Spain, commenting in awe how these reminded her of the Colombia of her elders, which was, to her regret, disappearing. However, the text did not offer an exclusively positive portrait but also acquired an ambiguous tone in some passages and presented many contradictions with her conference papers. While her papers presented an ideal and abstract vision of a Hispanic alliance, her travel writing reflected its limitations, the concrete realities that she encountered during her trip that contradicted the ideal vision constructed in her articles for the Centennial.

*Viaje a España en 1892* described a trip around Spain at a time in which Latin American travelers were just starting to include the former metropolis in their European tours. Due to the estrangement after Independence, Latin American creoles did not initially show much interest in traveling to Spain and while the trip to Europe became more popular among Latin American elites during the second part of the 19th century, the inclusion of Spain within the European tour was quite rare until the very end of the century. Latin American creoles understood this European trip as an educational experience, in which they preferably visited what were considered the centers of the modern world, London and Paris. The Latin American traveler approached the European
tour as a pilgrimage or as a mandatory visit in order to acquire some of the modern qualities that were associated to the continent. Comparing the European descriptions of Latin America with the travel narratives on Paris by the Argentinean Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Mary Louise Pratt has pointed out the existence of a colonial asymmetry that operates in the Creole representations of Paris, the metropolis par excellence where the Latin American author experiences a lack of discursive authority (Pratt 92). We should specify, however, that the portraits of Europe were not entirely homogenous. As Roberto Dainotto (2007) has examined, the theorization of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth century marginalized the continent’s own southern region, representing countries like Spain -and also including Greece, Italy, and Portugal- as pre-modern and irrational compared to the rational and civic nations of the North. This dichotomy was imported into the travel genre and from the end of 18th century, Northern European and US travelers depicted Spain as a space of Otherness and exoticism, an image reinforced in the 19th century with the popular accounts of Washington Irving, Prosper Mérimée and Hans Christian Andersen. The controversial sentence “Africa begins at the Pyrenees”³⁴ conveyed the European sense of Spain as a non-European country, and as such, the portrayal of Spain by British, French and other European travelers moved between aestheticization, eroticization, and debasement (McGann 1963, Robertson 1976, Rees 1977, Serrano 1993, Gifra-Adroher 2000).

³⁴ Although the sentence is commonly attributed to Alejandro Dumas, there is not evidence that the author coined the expression. In an article in La Ilustración española y americana in 1883 the Spanish journalist Pedro de Prat denied that Dumas had ever pronounced the sentence. This expression, however, had a profound impact on Spanish society and members of the generación del 98 would even refer to it.
During most of the 19th century, Latin American travelers reproduced this pyramidal organization in their narrations, only reevaluating this hegemonic classification by the turn of the century. Even Acosta de Samper’s husband explained in his autobiography *Historia de una alma*, that he organized his European trip in 1859 as a tour of symbolic ascent in the scale of civilization:

Por una parte, yo estaba imbuido -a fuer de radical colombiano de entonces, y por falta de comunicaciones y relaciones en que se hallaban mi país y la madre patria- en la preocupación de suponer que España era en todos sentidos, el país más atrasado de la Europa Cristiana; y me parecía que, para viajar con agrado y provecho, lo más conveniente era ir ascendiendo en la escala de la civilización.

De ahí mi propósito de recorrer primero España e Italia, antes de viajar por toda Francia, Suiza y Alemania, Bélgica, Holanda e Inglaterra. (210)

José María Samper explains here that due to the lack of communication between Colombia and Spain, he considered Spain the least advanced country in Europe, a perception shared by Northern European and French authors. Given that Spain was considered a backward country, during most 19th century Latin Americans did not show a particular interest in visiting the country and hence it was normally excluded from the European tour. José Samper himself did not offer an account of his trip until more than twenty years later, in this autobiography from 1881 when he had already moved to reconsider the relationship with Spain.³⁵ It was because of his Hispanist turn that he toned

---
³⁵ As Frédéric Martinez studied, José María Samper underwent a progressive transformation from anticlerical liberalism in the fifties towards his conversion to Catholicism and his affiliation to conservative politics in the seventies. His evaluation of Hispanic cultural and the ties with Spain would also radically
down his 1859 perceptions, justifying, as we see in this quotation, his early conceptions of Spain as a result of the lack of communication with the former metropole as well as a consequence of his post-Independence “radicalism.”

This post-Independence radicalism that José Samper mentions here influenced the early Latin American accounts of Spain, making them different from the Latin American narratives on the non-Hispanic Europe. As Spain was a country considered peripheral within Europe, Latin Americans did not feel so constrained by the asymmetry they experienced vis-a-vis northern Europe. However, Spain being the former metropole, its representation implied a positioning of alliance and/or resistance that entailed a self-definition of the Creole and generally ended up with an appraisal of their independent republics. While the notion of difference was typically assumed in the travel books on other European nations, when representing Spain the question of difference and likeness was a recurrent issue that put their claims of cultural autonomy at stake. Ideologically conditioned, the travel narratives coincided in describing some of the same quantifiable phenomena - the polarization of an industrial economy in the periphery and an agricultural centre, the poverty of Castilla, the high numbers of civil servants and beggars in the capital - but the evaluation of Spanish reality noticeably varied between authors.

Before the turn of the century, the most positive accounts still offered a romanticized and exoticized portrait of the country while the negative ones, which were the most frequent ones, would avoid identification with Spanish values and qualify the state of the country as backward. The work of Sarmiento, *Viajes por Europa, África y América, 1845-1847*, is

---

change from his work of 1851 *Ensayo sobre las revoluciones políticas y la condición social de las repúblicas colombianas* to his self-biography of 1881.
a paradigmatic example of these negative portraits showing a position of authority and cultural superiority that never emerged in their depiction of Northern European nations.

As the case of José Samper illustrates, towards the last two decades of the century a growing number of Latin Americans reconsidered their relation to the former metropole. This favored the inclusion of Spain in the European tour and also modified the politics of representation of the Latin American travel narrative on Spain. In this transformation, the celebrations of 1892 played an important role as they attracted for the first time a good number of Latin American visitors and writers who continued to travel to the peninsula in the following years. Acosta de Samper’s travel account was paradigmatic of this change and presented features that would recurrently appear in the Latin American travel narrative on Spain of the next two decades: it offered a more favorable depiction of the country as well as a growing identification with Spain. However, having aimed to consolidate the Hispanic alliance in her papers for the Centennial, Acosta de Samper also evaluated the limitations of the project when facing the Spanish reality. The travel writing established a dialogue with her former papers as the narrator reflected on the viability of the Hispanist project, becoming an even more hybrid work in its attempts to redefine Hispanic identity, almost an epilogue to her conference papers. While in her papers Hispanism had offered her an alternative to indigeneity on the one side and French and British modernity on the other, the reality of Spain confronted her with the limitations of claiming modernity -a discourse embedded

36 Ricardo Palma would threaten that the pretensions that Spanish intellectuals shown in 1892 of exercising a cultural authority over Latin America would decrease the number of Latin American visitors (see Chapter Four). However, many writers visited Spain and wrote about their trip at the turn of the century and during the early 20th century: Manuel González Prada Amado Nervo, José Enrique Rodó, Enrique Gómez Carrillo, José Santos Chocano, Clorinda Matto de Turner.
and unavoidable in the Latin American discourse of the 19th century. Hence in *Viaje a España in 1892*, she would reconstruct again the bond with Spain to build a Hispanic model of modernity for Colombia that selected certain elements of the Spanish tradition but distinguished itself from French and British models and the negative aspects of Spanish reality.

The opening quotation of this section showed the narrator reiterating the bond between Colombia and Spain by claiming that in Spain one could observe both the qualities and defects that Colombians had inherited from the “mother-country.” This statement frequently appeared in the travel account as the narrator found reminiscences of Colombia in several aspects of the Spanish reality, not only in the national character, but also in the physiognomy of the people and in the architecture:

La estructura de las casas recuerda á las nuestras; la disposición de sus edificios las hemos copiado en Sud América. [...] En Sevilla oímos el acento y contemplamos los negros ojos chispeantes, el andar desembarazado y el aspecto todo de nuestras mujeres de Cartagena y de las costas sud americanas. (*Viaje a España en 1892* 2: 68)

This type of description reaffirms that the travel narrative shared a similar ideological perspective to the conference papers that privileged a Spanish genealogy of Colombia. Through the description of Spain, *Viaje a España en 1892* articulated a Colombian nationality which minimized the impact of black and indigenous ancestry and reiterated the weight of Spanish lineage in constituting the Colombian race. But while the matching aspects between Colombia and Spain served her to provide a new genesis for the
Colombian nation, one that started at the Spanish colonization, she had to acknowledge that the Spanish reality presented national defects:

Pero si los españoles están llenos de vivacidad moral, no son lo mismo en sus movimientos. Allí nadie camina aprisa ni se mueve sino con lentitud, y hasta los trenes de ferrocarril participan de este defecto. (1: 228)

As we see in this quotation, while she praised the moral vivacity of Spanish, she disapproved of their actual rhythm of carrying out work, something that she ridiculed through the personification of the trains themselves participating in this national weakness. Acosta de Samper would repeatedly refer to this defect, diagnosing this “pereza” or “inacción” as the “llaga oculta de que sufren en España todos, grandes y pequeños, ilustrados é ignorantes” (1: 208). This trait, which she qualified as an ulcer in the national body, needed to be dissociated from Colombian identity, and hence the narrator started to create fissures and to point out national idiosyncrasies within the unifying characteristic of the Hispanic identity.

Acosta de Samper was concerned with this idleness and slowness that the country presented as she viewed these qualities as incompatible with progress: “Hoy el que se detiene en la vía del progreso retrograda, y con dificultad España, que anda siempre despacio, podrá alcanzar á las otras naciones que le han tomado la delantera” (Viaje a España en 1892 1: 30). Her articulation of this idleness denotes that in spite of her aversion to French and British modernity her imagination of nations was also dominated by paradigms of temporality and progress. After the affiliation proposed in her papers, her travel narrative distinguished between Colombians and Spanish, with the narrator
specifying that Colombia did not show the signs of inactivity that Spain presented and was more in tune with modern times. Hence, the travel narrative deployed a double exercise of identification and differentiation, as seen in the following quotation:

A pesar de ser de la misma raza, pues la parte indígena de las Repúblicas sud-americanas no tiene influencia sino cuando se amalgama con la europea, á pesar de descender del mismo tronco, los españoles del día han conservado exactamente las mismas costumbres de las cuales nos hablaban nuestros padres; mientras que nosotros, al menos en Colombia, estamos mucho más adelantados, y hemos imitado más bien la civilización francesa é inglesa, que hemos guardado las tradiciones de nuestros mayores. (Viaje a España en 1892 1: 197)

The travel narrative reverses here the usual postcolonial dynamics of representation; travelers from the metropole employed the rhetoric of the trip into the past in describing the colonies but here Acosta de Samper reappropriates it to depict her Spanish tour as a travel to the Colombian past. Spain is portrayed as resembling the Colombian past, the historical period between colonization and modernization. This is a complex point in which the narrator reveals a double standard: although other parts of the text deplore the effect of French and British civilization, this quotation conceives of exposure as an element that makes Colombians more “advanced” than Spain, which is stuck in the past and that has not assimilated these influences.

This statement of Colombian’s more advanced stage shows again that she was not necessarily rejecting the idea of progress. Her reference to the tradition of “our” elders, with the possessive denoting her closeness to her ancestors offers a glimpse of her
appreciation for the old values, an admiration that appears clearly throughout the text. But the pride in appointing Colombia as more advanced than Spain, shows that her take was not simply a return to the past because although tradition provided values she admired, the desired paradigm of progress entailed the idea of going forward. Hence, in this travel account she made a selection of the old values that Colombia lost and Spain still displayed to apply them to Colombia in pursuing an alternative model of modernity and progress.

Así, pues, lo repetimos, en estos recuerdos de España el lector hallará pocas veces relatos de lo moderno que se ha injertado en ese país, casi á su pesar; no encontrará sino cuadros de todo lo más viejo que he encontrado en el hogar de mis antepasados, de aquello que llevaron á América y dejaron allí al tiempo de retirarse. (Viaje a España en 1892 1: 197)

Travel narratives on Europe by Latin American authors generally paid special attention to technological advances and modern artifacts, but as the narrator warns here, the readers of her account should not expect modern scenes. While the past is completely naturalized
in many passages of the work, here she acknowledges that she selects only certain aspects for her account as she wants to recover those customs that Spanish brought to America and constituted the American tradition that got lost.

It was this character of the nation as hermetic shelter what the narrator admitted that attracted her attention in Spain. For Acosta de Samper, Spain had become a haven of old traditions and moral values that had been lost everywhere else:

Lo respetable en España, lo interesante, lo que agrada es aquello que conserva todavía el sabor característico de la Edad Media; los recuerdos de sus glorias; de la fe cristiana que tantas hazañas les inspiraron; las costumbres que eran las mismas en toda Europa hace algunos siglos, y que solo allí se conservan vivas. (Viaje a España en 1892 1: 197)

This paragraph reveals that her appreciation for Spain partly came from being the “vanguard of the Christian civilization,” a leading position that for Samper had been confirmed in the evangelic nature of enterprises such as the Reconquest in the peninsula and the colonization of America. This was paralleled precisely the official description of Spain in the Centennial, emphasizing the religious effort carried out by Spanish colonization. Although she acknowledged that their religious fervor had decreased in the 19th century, she still considered Spain a spiritual bastion, and therefore she believed that Latin America could prevent the harmful influence of France by strengthening relations with the “mother country.”

A key element for the construction of a modern Colombian national identity, Spain became then a vital figure whose representation ought to be controlled. In Viaje a
*España in 1892* we find a schizophrenic movement between the fixation of Spain as a remnant of the ideal past and the glimpses of modern life that Acosta de Samper could not avoid criticizing and presenting as counter-examples. She aimed at perpetuating the image of Spain as a time capsule from which Colombians could model their culture but at the same time, she wanted to warn of the impact of modernization on the country. Hence, when describing several Spanish cities, she stressed their antiquity and their value as testimony of the past but sometimes she also denounced that modern habits were appearing and corrupting Spanish. As appears in the following quotation, Acosta de Samper believed that modern habits would make young generations forget about their glorious past:

Por todas partes en León se ven antíquísimos y curiosos palacios; casas solariegas de familias cuyos descendientes no viven en aquella dormida ciudad, y muchos de los cuales no conocen siquiera la cuna de sus antepasados. Éstos andan con el siglo, no viven sino en Madrid, no viajan sino á París ó recorriendo los baños de moda, y allí derrochan las fortunas que otros adquirieron para legarles, y ¡cuántos deshonran el nombre clarísimo que brilló en los anales históricos de la Edad Media! Gran número de estos nobles hidalgos, acosados por las necesidades de la vida moderna, han vendido los edificios de sus mayores para usos viles, y se ven las armas esculpidas de los caballeros de otras épocas sobre las puertas de las tabernas y de corrales de animales inmundos! (*Viaje a España in 1892* 1: 115)

In this quotation, Acosta de Samper establishes a temporary difference between these old cities “dormidas” in the past and those who “andan con el siglo.” This contrasts with her
discourse on Colombia which Acosta de Samper expected would enter into the track of progress by recovering certain models from the Spanish tradition. Acosta de Samper was not so concerned with bringing Spain onto the path of progress but rather with preserving it as an immovable, static body that served as an inspirational archive for Colombians.

While *Viaje a España in 1892* generally represented Spain as the container of tradition which Acosta de Samper aimed to recover, it also included aggressive reactions by the author against elements of contemporary Spanish reality that contradicted this very same conception of a “preservation of the past.” She would harshly criticize the modern habits and commodities that were changing the external appearance of Spain, especially the French cultural colonization that had also reached Spain and which Spanish intellectuals avoided to admit. Ultimately the narrator would claim that the country should not betray its essentially anti-modern nature with corrupting foreign objects:

> Lo nuevo, lo moderno, cuadra á España como un vestido de bailarina de la ópera sobre el cuerpo momificado de una vieja Abadesa de un convento. Si vemos á ésta con su toca, su velo y su vestido largo, nos inclinaremos con respeto; pero si se nos presentase envuelta en gasas y á medio vestir, apartaríamos la vista con repugnancia. (*Viaje a España in 1892* 1: 197)

The grotesque and hyperbolic image of the mumified nun in a dancer’s gown conveys Acosta de Samper’s imagination of Europe: Spain, bastion of Catholicism, was personified as a dead nun, which could be perfectly respectable and even admired if only she did not appear semi-naked in a chiffon ballerina dress. The narrator desired a Spain paralyzed in time, perpetuating the customs of their ancestors instead of captivated by
artifacts of modernity such as fashion. Spain could serve as an example of traditional values for nations such as Colombia, but Acosta de Samper did not present Spain with the possibility of entering the path of modernity, literally comparing it to a dead body. As she envisioned Spain as the model of the old good values, she felt infuriated at the image of the dead nun dressed in fashionable clothes. The clothes clearly represented imported goods coming from France, the commodities metonymically linked to the corrosive French morals. The chiffon also evoked a consumer society far from the ascetic ideals of Acosta de Samper while the opera dancer stood for an image of femininity opposed to her more religious and domestic vision of women’s role. The imported goods symbolized a model of modernity that for Acosta de Samper endangered the Hispanic nature she admired: the values of sobriety, control and domesticity.

In contrast to her attacks on foreign imports and modern habits, the narrator praised the isolated centre of Spain, considering that commercial harbors like la Coruña made the population particularly immoral, with the commercial flow turning the city into a place in which “los vicios hacen estragos” (*Viaje a España in 1892* 1: 131). Among these imported goods, Acosta de Samper paid special attention to fashion, which became an epitome of French modernity and its associated passion for luxury and superficiality. As with the metaphor of the dressed-up nun, she expressed here her disapproval when describing how even in rural areas in Galicia, citizens tended to adopt the imported fashion:

¡Siquiera, pensé, hemos salido de las vulgares imitaciones de los vestidos franceses y nos encontramos en un país en donde el pueblo prefiere los hermosos
vestidos de sus antepasados á remedar las invenciones de otras gentes! Pero nos equivocábamos: Galicia, como toda España, se civiliza exteriormente demasiado. Según vimos después, y nos informaron en Santiago, los labriegos de los pueblos más infelices son los que aún conservan intacto el vestido nacional; los habitantes de las villas y ciudades hacen gala de vestirse á la moda francesa y toman muy á mal que se les aconseje que no pierdan el hermoso carácter de su mayores con ridículas imitaciones que no les convienen. (Viaje a España en 1892 1: 123)

In this quotation as in many other parts of the text, the question of dangerous imitations, of the betrayal of authentic national character, appears metonymized by the dresses. As Spain was envisioned as a “moral preserve,” as the only space within Europe that retained the old values, Acosta de Samper harshly reacted against any hint of modernity that could diminish the picturesque, the traditional aspect of the country. Spain had to remain as a pure archive, a museum of the old traditions for the benefit of the South American republics.

**Conclusion**

Almost twenty years after the Centennial, Soledad Acosta de Samper would refer to the war of Independence in her *Biblioteca Histórica* (1909) as a civil war between two bands who shared the same Spanish blood and race. Independence was envisioned as a political conflict, as a coming of age, but not as a breaking-off of the cultural and racial ties between Colombians and Spaniards. While she never questioned the national sovereignty of her country, she would persist in the idea of a common Hispanic race years after the Centennial.
The celebrations of 1892 played a decisive role in confirming her belief in a transnational Hispanic race towards which she had been hinting in her previous work. The Centennial promoted a family rhetoric that overcame the Bolivarian image of the “denaturalized mother” of Independence to replace it with a picture of parents and children reunited after a period apart, a rhetoric that stimulated this revision of the wars of Independence, as appeared in her *Biblioteca Histórica*.

The papers she presented in the Centennial conferences provided a coherent and consistent image of the values that shaped the Hispanic identity and the benefits that a Hispanic alliance could bring to Latin America in facing the French and Anglo-Saxon modernities. But for her, the investment in a transatlantic Hispanic race did not imply that Spain should assume a kind of symbolic tutelage over their former colonies, an aspiration of some Peninsular Hispanists. So while her discourse was mostly in tune with the official discourse of the celebrations, the benefits that she pursued by investing in this common identity were grounded on the needs of her own nation. For Acosta de Samper, the regeneration of Colombian nationality had to go through an affiliation with Hispanic values and hence Hispanism was envisioned as a means to reinforce Colombian identity.

Furthermore, the idealized, theoretical benefits that Hispanism could bring collided with the Spanish reality she described in *Viaje a España en 1892*, as she feared that some of the Spanish national defects would be labeled as Hispanic traits. For Acosta de Samper, the most important of these defects was laziness, the idleness that made her see Spaniards as incapable of progress. This led her to establish a set of different temporalities within the different countries of the Pan-Hispanic family, the Spanish being
conveniently located in the past and Colombians as more prepared to advance. Spain would become a museum of tradition, providing Colombia with a genealogy and an archive of old values from whence they could derive their own authentic values with and so configure their own alternative concept of modernity in opposition to French and British. She imagined Colombia with the potential to achieve a moral but solid progress that neither France, England or Spain could achieve.

The Hispanist conception of Acosta de Samper illustrates one of the paradoxes of the movement: that beneath the ambiguous discourse of unification on the grounds of race, language and spirit, persisted national interests that contributed to relating Hispanic nations to one another in terms of a differentiated hierarchy. The Centennial produced a fictional Hispanic union: a strong discursive accord beneath which every author articulated their own version of Hispanic identity for the sake of her/his own country.
CHAPTER FOUR: “PÁSENME USTEDES EL LIMEÑISMO:”
RICARDO PALMA’S NATIONALIZATION OF LANGUAGE THROUGH HISPANISM

The commemoration of the “Discovery” in 1892 overshadowed another anniversary of great significance: the publication in 1492 of Antonio de Nebrija’s first *Gramática de la lengua castellana*. In his prologue dedicated to the queen, Nebrija expressed his political motivations in writing this work: “siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio” (13), an instrument in uniting and identifying a community. It was precisely this pervasive idea of language as the marker of a community after Independence that put Latin Americans in the predicament of displaying their cultural autonomy while belonging to the same linguistic community as the Spaniards. From mid-19th century onwards, a vast number of grammars were published in Latin America, most of them revealing a vocation to conceive Spanish not as a mere cultural transplant from the metropole but to claim the participation and rights of Latin Americans in shaping the language. This posed the problem of how far to follow the Peninsular standard, and within this frame, the decision of whether or not to establish alliances with

---

37 In 1875 Zorobabel Rodríguez published in Santiago de Chile his *Diccionario de chilenismos* and one year later Fidelis P. del Solar released his response *Reparos al Diccionario de chilenismos del señor don Zorobabel Rodríguez*. Pedro Paz-Soldán y Unanue wrote under the pseudonym of Juan de Arona his *Diccionario de peruanismos* of 1883. In 1885, Rufino José Cuervo published *Apuntaciones críticas sobre el lenguaje bogotano*. Aristides Rojas, Miguel Luis Amunategui, Hipolito Sanchez and Miguel Riofrío among other also worked in registering new lexicon.
Spanish cultural institutions became a source of tensions and bitter debates among Latin Americans.\(^{38}\)

In the 4\(^{th}\) Centennial of Nebrija’s grammar, the confrontation between Ricardo Palma and the Spanish Royal Academy showed the permanence behind the rhetoric of the Hispanic bond of both Nebrija’s conception of language and the Latin American will of linguistic and cultural self-assertion. While both Palma and the Peninsular Hispanist promoted the idea of a Hispanic bond employing the element of language as one of the most powerful transatlantic ties, the Hispanist discourse around the Centennial covered two different national projects that instrumentalized language for opposite and clashing projects.

Ricardo Palma, the author of the famous Tradiciones Peruanas and the founder of the Peruvian Academy, was harshly attacked during his lifetime by the Peruvian modernistas, who led by Manuel González Prada, accused Palma of still being a colonial subject of Spain. According to the modernistas, Palma revealed his sympathies towards Spanish culture in his taste for linguistic archaisms and his efforts to establish a branch of the Spanish Royal Academy in Peru. Indeed, Palma stimulated dialogue with Spanish writers and in 1892 he travelled to Spain to participate in the celebrations of the

---

\(^{38}\) Many of these debates took place among intellectuals that were not far from each other. This is the case of one of the most famous ones, the controversy of 1842 between Andrés Bello and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Bello, who had been working in language since the decade of the twenties, aimed to preserve a linguistic unity as well as a cultural and literary tradition common to the Spanish speakers through the academies and institutionalization of the language. Nevertheless, as Julio Ramos has pointed out (“El don de la lengua” 23) there was a certain linguistic nationalism in Bello’s work as aimed at legitimating a certain number of American voices. Bello’s selection of American voices was limited to those of the elite since he envisioned that the popular classes were corrupting the language and that regulation was necessary. Sarmiento recriminated Bello’s linguistic elitism and his association with the Spanish Academy since for him, Latin America should become independent literally and linguistically following their already achieved political autonomy.
4th Centennial in hopes of a transatlantic rapprochement. Nevertheless, Palma abandoned Spain after public and very much-talked-about arguments with Spanish intellectuals. As Lázaro Carreter (1996) has commented, the Spanish Royal Academy was the first Spanish institution to establish a dialogue with Latin America after Independence, encouraging the consciousness of a Hispanic community and stimulating the foundation of corresponding academies. For Peninsular Hispanism, language became one of the most essential, and definitely the most tangible element in claiming the existence of a transatlantic community sharing a past and bound to a common future. While Palma had been invested in strengthening transatlantic relations for several decades, his experience during the Centennial moved him to denounce the Spanish aspirations of linguistic and cultural authority.

In this chapter I argue that Palma’s visit to Spain during 1892 and his investment in the idea of a transatlantic Hispanic alliance was part of his nation-building plan of his centered around the Spanish language. From the Tradiciones Peruanas to his commitment with the Peruvian Academy, Palma aimed at imposing Limeñan Spanish over all Peru, identifying Limeñan culture as the national model and excluding indigenous cultures from the nation-building process. Palma believed that an alliance of Spanish-speaking nations would eschew indigenous cultural influence at the same time that it would protect Spanish from exposure to French culture so advocated by Palma’s detractors, the Peruvian modernistas. I suggest that through Spanish, he was trying to create a linguistic and cultural space, a hermetic dominion to preserve Creole culture from both indigenous and foreign influence. I also argue that Palma got immersed in the
twin paradoxical acts of reinforcing the centrality of Spanish language in the construction of the nation and establishing a dialogue with Peninsular intellectuals in order to claim the cultural autonomy of Peru. By emphasizing original linguistic and cultural productions stemming from Lima, Palma was isolating Limeñan Spanish from the Peninsular variation, underscoring the creativity and originality of a variety that arose from the native Peruvian environment. Once that he established the Peruvian linguistic and cultural particularities, Palma expected to deal with Spanish intellectuals on equal terms, envisioning an egalitarian transatlantic dialogue. He believed that this dialogue would lead to tolerance and respect for all national variations of Spanish and that regulations on Spanish language would be undertaken in tandem by actors of both sides of the Atlantic. Contrary to his expectations, Palma’s encounter with the Spanish Academy would prove to be disastrous. In Peru, both pro-Hispanist and anti-Hispanist understood Palma’s position as an ideological commitment with Spain when in reality he only aspired to linguistic affiliation. His inflated expectations for his visit to Spain in 1892 crashed against the politics of the Spanish Royal Academy and the tensions between Spanish and Latin Americans in establishing cultural authority.

I will start this chapter by giving a background about the language ideology underlying Palma’s famous work, *Tradiciones peruanas*, a fundamental work to understanding the nationalization of Spanish language. I argue that his support of the Peruvian Academy as well as his vision of 1892 were continuations of his attempt in the *Tradiciones* to institutionalize *peruanismos*. I will finally show how Palma became disappointed with the outcome of the celebrations of 1892, accusing Spanish intellectuals
of exerting cultural imperialism through their attempt to monopolize the control of language. The linguistic conception of Ricardo Palma and his relation to the Hispanist movement show the agglutinating but also dissociative capacities of language as an instrument that can be exercised at the same time for national and transnational building projects.

*The Politics of Language and Nation Building Project in Las Tradiciones*

In a letter to Juan María Gutiérrez in 1877, time in which Palma was immersed with the writing of the *Tradiciones*, Palma clearly established what he wanted to rescue from Spanish cultural capital:

> Yo no quiero que, en cuanto al pensamiento, seamos siempre hijos de España. 
> Nuestra manera de ser política y social a las par que la ley del progreso humano ha puesto una raya divisoria y muy marcada entre América y la vieja Metrópoli. 
> Lo que no quiero, amigo, es la anarquía en la lengua. (*Epistolario* 1: 135)

This quotation reflects that Palma’s proposal for strengthening bonds was in the terrain of language, not political or social matters, for which Palma had very different perspectives on relations between Peru and Spain. As a Creole, Palma felt more connected to the Spanish cultural tradition than to indigenous or the African cultures. However, his critical perspective on Spanish politics and religiosity made him see this heritage as an unavoidable but not particularly desirable condition. He privileged Spanish ancestry over African or indigenous influences, but unlike other Latin American Hispanists, Palma did

---

39 Palma’s mother was a mulata, but culturally he associated himself with creoles. Early biographies rarely mentioned the mixed ancestry of their most prominent author, a silence quite revealing of the association between whiteness and prestige during that time period.
not engage in a praising the common racial heritage of Spaniards and Americans.
Likewise, he avoided the question of spirituality that the Hispanist discourse claimed as a
common feature among the Spanish-speaking countries. Palma believed in the superiority
of Peru over Spain in its democratization and secularization, so he saw blood and race as
a legacy to endure, while hoping they would not develop as terribly as in Spain.40

As his letter to Gutiérrez shows above, Palma engaged in conversations with
Spaniards for the sake linguistic considerations, since he considered, as Andrés Bello had
suggested in 1842, that language should be institutionalized. But in contrast to Bello, who
believed that intellectuals should regulate language that otherwise could be perverted by
the masses, Palma aimed at registering and then institutionalizing popular language.
According to Palma, popular language such as pure limeñismos were connected with
national identity as they represented a linguistic production that was authentically
Peruvian, originated within the context of Lima, and neither transplanted from Spain nor
imitated from French.

Tradiciones Peruanas has been masterfully interpreted by Cornejo Polar as a
reappropriation of the colonial history, as a “nationalization” of the colony. Following this
line, I want to propose a new reading of the Tradiciones, interpreting them not only as a
reappropriation of colonial history but also as a “nationalization” of the Spanish language.
Palma’s work after Tradiciones peruanas was mainly concerned with linguistic questions
and it was in interest of language that he promoted relationships with Spain.

40 This vision of Palma as Americans as more evolved than Spanish clashed precisely with Riva
Agüero, who thought of Americans as Spanish who became degraded in America because of the weather
and the environment (68).
The raw material for *Tradiciones Peruanas* came from archives from the colonial period or from Limeñan oral traditions that Peruvians continued passing between generations. I am especially interested in the second of these, in how Palma transcribed this popular speech, turning it into literary, legitimate language and including Peruvian words and expressions that did not appear in any dictionary. Linguistic digressions were quite frequent in the *Tradiciones*, with the narrator often interrupting the action to define a particular *peruanismo*. Sometimes, one of these *peruanismos* would even be the pretext for the narrator to tell the story that originally popularized the expression. These *peruanismos* were mainly substantives referring to material, concrete realities in the Limeñan environment. Palma would eventually create a list of 300 *peruanismos* including some that appeared in the *Tradiciones*, and some that he recorded later in order to ask the Spanish Royal Academy to include them in the Dictionary. Another good part of the *peruanismos* in the *Tradiciones* were also expressions and *refranes* or proverbs that were in the Peruvian collective memory but that Palma felt were endangered by foreign influence and which he wanted to preserve by recording them. Among others from a vast list, these following expressions reveal the kind of proverbs that Palma was compiling: “Cortar el revesino,” “De asta y rejón,” “Zurron-Currichi,” “La camisa de Margarita,” “Los tres motivos del oidor,” “El chocolate de los jesuitas,” “A muerto me huele el godo,” “El alacrán de Fray Gomez,” “La custodia de Boqui,” “Los jamones de la madre de Dios,” “Soy camanejo, y no cejo,” “No tener ni cara en que persignarse,” “Estar a la cuarta pregunta,” “La maldición de Miller.”
This idea of recording popular and oral stories recalls the Romantic School from Weimar, which according to Heinz Krumpel’s investigations was quite influential in Latin America. Among the German romantics, it was especially Herder’s conception of language, folk tales and national identity which most resembled Palma’s project in the Tradiciones Peruanas. Herder conceptualized the nation as a linguistic entity, considering that it was language and folk tradition that shaped the nation. Oral traditions and tales, Herder indicated, become a national nutriment compared to food itself or mother’s milk. In “¡Ahí viene el cuco!” Palma in fact defended the Peruvian word “cuco” instead of the Spanish “coco,” by establishing a parallel between nutrition and language:

Pásenme ustedes el limeñismo. Un purista habría dicho el coco; pero los que nos hemos destetado con campuz de agrio y mazamorra (también un purista diría masamora, que árabe es el manjar) nacimos oyendo hablar del cuco, y lo que entra con el capillo sólo se va con el cerquillo, y ya estamos viejos para salir ahora, al cabo de los años mil, llamando coco al cuco. (Tradiciones Peruanas 3: 381)

Like food, Palma conceived of language as a product of the national environment from which the individual found nourishment. In spite of the request for authorization from the Spanish Academy, Palma was definitely vindicating the word “cuco,” by claiming that the word had already become traditional, and more importantly that it was particular to the Peruvian reality.

But although Palma claimed the words and expressions as belonging to Peruvian reality, we should specify that most of them came from the Limeñan circle. In Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana José Carlos Mariategui pointed out that
Palma envisioned Lima as a microcosm of the nation, a centralization that excluded the cultures of other parts of the nation, a tendency also evident in his linguistic project. Unlike the indigenist *Tradiciones cuzqueñas* by Clorinda Matto de Turner (1884), *Tradiciones peruanas* was interested in *criollismos*, but not particularly in the vindication of Quechua. Indeed Palma was making *criollismo* a national model, even using the word *criollismos* as a synonym for *peruanismos* in some *tradiciones* like in “Las tres puertas de San Pedro” or in “La casa de Francisco Pizarro”.

In contrast to Bello, who considered that the masses were perverting the language, Palma bestowed a great value to popular language in his *Tradiciones*, where the narrator underscored the importance of preserving and knowing both *limeñismos* and popular sayings. In “¡Que repiquen en Yauli!” for instance, the narrator explained that a group of young ladies mocked him and told him to go back to school for not knowing the expression that finally provided the title and main plot line to this *tradición*. Similarly, in “Dónde y cómo el diablo perdió el poncho” the narrator commented that an old friend questioned his literary and historical knowledge for not knowing the expression:

¡Cómo! Y usted que hace décimas, y que la echa de cronista o de historietista, y que escribe en los papeles públicos, y que ha sido diputado a Congreso, ignora lo que en mi tiempo sabían hasta los chicos de la amiga? […] ¡Oropel, puro oropel!

(*Tradiciones* 2: 172)

---

41 In the *tradición* “El Manchay-Puito” devoted to Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera, the narrator employed much more quechua vocabulary than usual (*quena, mate, yaraví, Manchay-Puito, haravicu…*). However, Palma did not show a manifest interest for quechua as Matto de Tuner or Cabello de Carbonera herself did.
We see how the narrator’s friend portrays high culture as a realm of fakeness and performance versus the authenticity of the real folk traditions. Indeed, the Tradiciones repeated that oral and popular culture of Lima was not a somehow “inferior” segment of mass culture, thus encouraging intellectual elites to learn all these sayings and lexicon as a part of their national cultural heritage. The emphasis on their value came from their endangered quality, since as the old man pointed out, once Peru became an independent republic and France became the new cultural model, all those proverbs fell into disuse. Much of Palma’s nostalgia for this vanishing world focused on these words or proverbs that were originally from Lima and that Palma feared were bound to die with the old generation. In “Sabio como Chavarría” the narrator commented “Hoy son pocos los que dicen estas palabras. El refrán está sentenciado a morir junto con el último octogenario” (Tradiciones 2: 141). Not only did the Peruvian proverbs and lexicon contain the character of the nation in Palma’s eyes, but he found that as national products, they were indeed the most suitable tools with which to describe his nation. Within a section called “Refranero limeño,” the narrator would comment regarding the expression “Ser de Padrenuestro:"

Hay refranes que son verdaderos limeñismos, y que no atinamos a explicarnos el por qué han caído en desuso. No hay razón para que mueran. Uno de ellos es el que sirve de título a este artículo, y que en mi concepto es de lo más intencionado que cabe en materia de refranes. (Tradiciones 4: 380)

Palma advocated here that these proverbs should be maintained and used by Peruvians since they were appropriate and expressive, and furthermore, as he would specify in some
other tradiciones, such limeñismos were a particularly sharp means of describing the Peruvian reality.

This conception of language and literary style was harshly attacked by Manuel González Prada, who understood the changes in language as a natural consequence of a desired evolution and felt that Spanish needed the energizing contact of French. González Prada insisted that Spanish needed to afrancesarse not only by accepting galicisms but also by morphologically transforming the language in a similar way to French. In his “Discurso en el teatro Olimpo” in 1888, he clearly referred to Palma’s tradiciones in his attack on literary language that was “gala de arcaísmos, lujo de refranes i hasta choque de palabras grandilocuentes” (Obras 1: 66). González Prada made his attack very explicit when criticized “la mala tradición, ese monstruo enjendrado por las falsificaciones agridulcetes de la historia i la caricatura microscópica de la novela” (Obras 1: 65). He did not appreciate the nationalistic value in Palma’s recovery of limeñismos but understood Palma’s archaism as a reproduction and subjugation to the Spanish Royal Academy.

In strengthening relationships with the Spanish Royal Academy, Palma intended to make an ally against this French-oriented tendencies of the Peruvian modernistas. In

---

42 A letter to Francisco Sosa, in November 1889 reveals Palma’s upset about González Prada’s discourse:

En estos días he estado muy agriado. Una asociación de muchachos dio una función en el teatro, en la que hubo discursos muy insolentes contra los Académicos, contra España y contra los hombres que peinan canas culpando a estos de todos los males del Perú. Los jóvenes a la obra y los viejos a la tumba fue el tema sobre el que diserto largo el Presidente de esa Sociedad, que es un caballero de 44 años y no falto de talento y de ilustración. Hablando de mis tradiciones, pues todo su discurso fue personalísimo contra Roca, Lavalle, Cisneros y demás académicos, dijo que las tradiciones eran la caricatura de la Historia. (Epistolario 1: 387)
the Tradiciones published around the late seventies and eighties it is more noticeable his
dialogue with the Spanish Royal Academy, with tradiciones such as “Quizá quiero,
quizá no quiero,” in which the narrator addressed the Academy for their approval: “con el
eterno difuntear (páseme la Academia el verbo)” (Tradiciones 2: 226). But in spite of
being criticized for subordinating himself to Spanish norms, Palma’s appeals were more
of a formal courtesy than a sincere entreaty. The narrator felt authorized in preserving
these words that he considered such adequate vehicles of expression for character of his
country, and hence Palma felt certain that the Spanish institution would accept them
without question. As the “Prologuito de ordenanza,” the prologue to the fourth series in
July 1877 stated: “y pláceme saber que la Academia/ no encuentra en mis sencillas
narraciones/ contra la lengua estúpida blasfemia” (Tradiciones 2: 191).

The relationship with the Spanish Royal Academy would be particularly cordial
around that time, the late 1870s and the 1880s, when Palma was consolidating the links
with the Spanish members to establish a corresponding Peruvian Academy. During this
time, Palma pushed the Spanish Royal Academy to include many peruanismos that were
of common use among Peruvians but which the Dictionary did not acknowledge. In
“Carta canta,” for instance Palma traced back the history of a creole proverb and
commented on the regularity of its use, “Lo que es la gente ultracriolla no hace rezar ni
cantar a las cartas, y se limita a decir: papelito habla” (Tradiciones 2: 25). Palma added
that since its use was so generalized, it should be included in the Dictionary and stated
that “voy a reclamar ante la Real Academia de la Lengua los honores del peruanismo”
(Tradiciones 2: 25). Similarly, in his tradición “Barchilón” Palma called the attention of
the Academy to the word “barchilón” which had not been accepted in spite of its common use in Lima:

Ni el Diccionario de la Real Academia en su ultima edición, ni otro alguno de los diversos que he hojeado y ojeado, traen la palabra *barchilón*, muy familiar en Lima. Y sin embargo, pocas son las voces que mejor derecho que ésta podrían alegar para merecer carta de naturalización en la lengua de Castilla. Tuve, hace cinco años, el honor de proponerla a la Real Academia, que si bien aceptó más de doce de los peruanismos que me atreví a indicarle, me desairó, entre otros, el verbo *exculpar*, tan usado en nuestros tribunales de justicia, el adjetivo *plebiscitario*, empleado en la prensa política de mi tierra, y el verbo *panegirizar*, que no contrasta ciertamente con el verbo *historiar* que el Diccionario trae. Por mucho que respete los motivos que asistieran a mis ilustrados compañeros para desdeñarme estas y otras palabrillas, no quiero callar en lo que atañe a la voz *barchilón*. Ella tiene historia, e historia tradicional, que es otro ítem más. Paso a narrarla. (*Tradiciones* 4: 29)

This quotation shows Palma’s delight at Peruvian words that had been accepted but also foreshadows the tension in 1892 between Palma’s vindication of his *peruanismos* and their rejection by his “ilustrados compañeros.” This quotation also reveals that while the institutionalization of the language was crucial for Palma, he also saw limitations in the Dictionary. In “Los refranes mentirosos” the narrator reported that the Dictionary of the Spanish Academy had failed to correctly define some traditional proverbs and continued to explain the origin of the proverbs and to prove the mistake of the Dictionary: “Hame
dado hoy el naipe por probar, con el testimonio de sucesos tradicionales, que en el Perú tenemos refranes que expresan todo lo contrario de lo que sobre ellos reza el Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua” (Tradiciones 2: 237).

Palma conceived of the Academy as an institution that would collect the commonly used expressions rather than as a prescriptive organ that to impose a standard from top to bottom. In “Respuesta a dos preguntones” the narrator deals with the spelling of the expression “suerte en baca.” The word baca, written with “b” used to indicate that one was sharing a lottery ticket. The expression was coined by the people who were playing lottery, Palma explained, and hence he defended the right of his creators to spell it as it pleased them:

¿Cuál ortografía debe prevalecer? Tengo para mí que la adoptada por los suerteros [...] y últimamente, porque, en todo caso, la palabra baca no pasa de ser un limeñismo, y si con el tiempo y las aguas llegase a alcanzar la honra de figurar en el Diccionario de la Academia, que sea con el traje con que la vistieron los que la dieron vida. (Tradiciones 4: 384)

**The Establishment of the Peruvian Academy**

On the 5th of May in 1887 the Peruvian Academy was finally founded by Ricardo Palma. In the first public intervention of the Academy the 30th of August of the same year, Palma gave a speech about the significance of the institution. In this discourse, Palma drew a dividing line between politics and language, emphasizing that even right after Independence there was a spirit of much more tolerance and open-mindedness within the
Spanish Royal Academy than within the political sphere. In fact, he commented on his belief that questions of language were not being influenced by political divergences:

Empezaba á desvanecerse el humo del último cañonazo que resonó en el campo de Ayacucho, y aun no se hallaba oficialmente reconocida por España nuestra autonomía, cuando la Real Academia, poniéndose a mayor altura que la diplomacia de los gobiernos, declaró que dos americanos, el venezolano don Andrés Bello, y el peruano Felipe Pardo y Aliaga, habían merecido bien de las letras castellanas, que no están sujetas á los lindes de la nacionalidad ni á los caprichos veleidosos de la política. (“Inauguración” 105)

Paralleling his separation of language and politics, Palma opposed the territorial conquests of the 16th century with the “conquest of sympathies” that the Spanish Academy was carrying out in America:

La Academia Española infatigable en su empeño de realizar, en América, la conquista de cariñosas simpatías, conquista más inconmovible que la que, por medio de las armas, llevaran á cabo Hernán Cortés y Francisco Pizarro, fue lentamente aumentando el número de sus correspondientes en las repúblicas que un día vivieron sujetas al dominio íbero. (“Inauguración” 105)

Although Palma was establishing a difference between the conquerors and the Academy - in a very favorable comparison for the Academy- it is striking that somehow he was depicting an invasion, pacific and well-received but nevertheless a solid invasion. This was precisely what most disturbed González Prada, who refused to participate in the Peruvian Academy, and criticized those Peruvian writers who were seduced by the halo
of the Academy. Prada, who in “Notas acerca del idioma”\textsuperscript{43} merrily depicted French and British as militias invading the ramshackle fortress of Spanish language (\textit{Obras} 1: 259), viewed the foundation of the Peruvian Academy as a dangerous force that would bring the religious and political culture of Spain to Peru. But to understand Palma’s warm welcome to this “conquest,” we must take notice of his reference to a “conquista de simpatías,” a wording that reveals his desire for the Spanish Academy to seductively conquer Latin Americans through the gift of cultural recognition. Through this game of seduction, Latin Americans would be able to participate in the regulation of language on equal terms. After the Centennial, Palma would go back to a negatively tinged metaphor of conquest to talk about the Spanish Academy, but during this time period of growing expectations, his commitment to a transatlantic rapprochement was firm. Indeed his discourse for the inauguration concluded with a striking paragraph in which he acknowledged a Hispanist communion in stronger terms than he had ever done before. Palma stated:

Hijas de la Española, todas han tenido la buena suerte de contribuir con precioso caudal de americanismos á la formación del último Diccionario de la Lengua; y si bien los académicos peruanos llenamos también el deber, enviando modesta ofrenda de voces para el enriquecimiento de la armoniosa lengua de Castilla, que fue el habla de nuestros mayores y que ojalá, nuestros hijos, por patriotismo y amor á la memoria de sus padres, se empeñen por conservar en toda su pureza,

\textsuperscript{43} Although this article was published in the first edition of \textit{Pajinas Libres}, it was written in 1890, a closer date to his fight against the Peruvian Academy.
hay que confesar que el número de peruanismos que figuran en el lexicón castellano es, relativamente, corto. Nuestra labor fue individual, aislada. Faltábale la cohesión y el carácter de autoridad que reviste todo lo que se presenta como fruto del examen y acuerdo de corporación sensata. (“Inauguración” 106)

Palma had in mind the Latin American Academies that were established before the Peruvian one- the Colombian (which was the first), the Ecuadorian, the Mexican, the Centro-American, the Venezuelan, the Chilean- and attributed the fact that the Dictionary had registered so few Peruvian words to the late incorporation of Peru. Palma thought that the way to gain legitimacy for the Peruvian lexicon was precisely through the Academy and that within the Academy, members should behave in a fraternal way between all the corresponding academies in Latin America, thus enriching the Dictionary by contributing each of their americanismos. As he stated, he considered that by joining the Academy, they would finally get the right to have a voice on the question of language:

Con la inauguración de la Academia correspondiente de la Española, nos unificamos por completo, en propósitos é intereses, españoles y peruanos. Desaparece todo espíritu de exclusivismo, y si mucho debimos á la lengua que con tradicional respeto conservaron nuestros progenitores, desde hoy conquistamos el derecho de que tomen carta de naturalización en el idioma, voces que son nuestras, exclusivamente nuestras, y que por escrúpulos de purismo desdeñan nuestros escritores más atildados. Señores académicos: á la obra, como deber literario y como deber patriótico. (“Inauguración” 106)
It is interesting here how strongly Palma emphasized that the lexicon he was referring to was exclusively Peruvian, a comment that would justify his position in the *Tradiciones* about Latin Americans being the ones entitled to judge those words that were the product of their environment. It is also remarkable that since the validation of these words was a question of patriotism for Palma, the writers who looked down on this lexicon were implicitly antipatriotic. As we see in the last sentence, Palma believed that the linguistic protection of these *peruanismos* was a question of patriotism and that “conquered” by the Spanish Royal Academy, Peruvians would conquer their right to intervene in linguistic legislation.

The discourse for the inauguration concluded with a striking paragraph in which Palma mentioned the several links that joined Peru and Spain together and referred to Spain as an affectionate mother:

> Estamos vinculados á España por las tradiciones de familia, por la educación religiosa y por la magestad del idioma. Si estos vínculos pudieron debilitarse un día, la España moderna se esfuerza por reanudarlos y robustecerlos. La madre, reclama, anhelosa el cariño de los que fueron sus hijos é hidalga obligación es en ellos la correspondencia de afectos. (“Inauguración” 107)

As we see in this discourse, during the climax of the transatlantic relationship with the establishment of the Academy and the expectations of a prolific egalitarian dialogue, Palma referred to bonds that he had never privileged in the *Tradiciones* or his previous literary production.
Palma’s correspondence during that period reflected his predisposition to strengthening links with Spain as well as his expectations for the Centennial to achieve this. He maintained a regular exchange with the Mexican writer Vicente Riva Palacio who at that time was living in Madrid as Plenipotentiary Minister of the Mexican Government. Palma would frequently comment to Riva Palacio his desire to finally meet members of the Academy, especially Tamayo y Baus, who had become in Palma’s words, an “excellent friend” (Epistolario 2: 325). Around the same time period, González Prada was bitterly criticizing those writers who like Palma, were seduced by the Academy, predicting that this institution would not approve the changes that language had undergone in Peru. In “Conferencia en el Ateneo de Lima” González Prada expressed his conviction that the Spanish Academy would brand any Peruvian, even the most literate one, as barbaric.

Señores, el que habla en este momento ¿qué sería en alguna academia de Madrid?

Casi un bárbaro, que pronuncia la ll como la y, confunde la b con la v i no distingue la s de la z ni de la c en sus sonidos suaves. (Obras 1: 53)

Unfortunately for Palma, after his visit to 1892, he himself would reproduce the words that González Prada intended as an attack against him. Language, one of the most tangible elements of the Hispanic bond, became an ideological battleground in the definition and dismantling of cultural hierarchies.

_The Discourse on Language During The Centennial: What Unites Us, Divides Us_

In the biography that Angélica Palma wrote about his father, she highlighted the emotionally complex role the Centennial played for Palma:
Para el Tradicionista, […] para el literato de vocación, enamorado de la lengua magnífica; para el hombre de su época, en quien la devoción estética por el pasado legendario no excluía sino apoyaba el empeño ideológico por la evolución y el avance innovador, la visita a España encerraba honda y emocionada significación que, por compleja, presentó en algunos de sus aspectos, oposición y lucha. (56)

As Angélica Palma commented, this first trip to Spain represented the culmination of Palma’s transatlantic collaboration in the years previous to the Centennial, with the expectation of further intensification to follow the celebrations. During the inauguration of “Congreso Internacional de Americanistas” in Huelva, Palma expressed his commitment to the Hispanic Bond, identifying this type of association as a motor of progress:

¡Bien hayan, señores, aquellos que nos han congregado para la celebración de un acto que sintetiza la verdadera, la única fórmula del progreso en el siglo que vivimos, siglo de pacíficas batallas en que son las ideas las armas poderosas de combate! Esa fórmula es la evolución perenne del espíritu, y la realizamos por medio de la asociación. ¡Gloria, pues, á España, que, madre afectuosa, ha convocado aquí, en tan humilde como augusto recinto, á las que fueron sus hijas y que hoy constituyen las jóvenes Repúblicas de América! (Congreso Internacional de Americanistas 39)

As we see here, the familial rhetoric covers a very instrumental view on this transatlantic identification. Palma mentions that by the end of 19th century, association had become an
agent of progress, a comment that reveals his belief in establishing alliances as a means to producing a Peruvian presence in the global order. His reference to peaceful battle is extremely interesting. At this moment, Palma still felt that association was the key to a new order more regulated by diplomacy than by armed confrontation, hence, conceiving Hispanic affiliation as a way for the jointly peripheral Spain and Latin America to present a Hispanic cultural front against the influential and hegemonic culture of France. However, this peaceful battle of ideas described precisely the conflict that would arise with the Spanish Royal Academy only a few weeks after these inauguration words. The Hispanic Bond became a discourse that masked a struggle over cultural power, a struggle in which language played a central role.

Palma came to Spain with a proposal for 300 Peruvian words he thought should be included in the Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy. The resistance of Spanish intellectuals to accept his proposal shattered Palma’s expectations and caused a bitter discussion between Palma and the Royal Academy that became a popular and controversial topic amongst literary circles. Remembering this period, Palma told Benito Pérez Galdós in a letter in 1903 that “en el caserón de la calle de Valverde [the Spanish Royal Academy] dejé la reputación de hombre atrabiliario y hasta chiflado, según dijo Tamayo” (Epistolario 2: 411). Indeed, as the Chilean Luís Orrego Luco described in La pandereta, Palma became the target of critiques and jokes among Spanish authors for his attempt to legitimize 300 words. Valera himself would agree with the Academy in finding many of Palma’s peruanismos inadequate, justifying the restrictions of the Academy on the sake of good taste and simplicity:
Convengamos que para esto no hay límite ni más regla que el buen gusto, y la necesidad o la utilidad de expresar una nueva idea sin perífrasis y con una sola palabra. Valga para muestra el verbo presupuestar, cuya no inclusión en el Diccionario de la Academia enojó tanto a mi ilustre amigo el señor don Ricardo Palma. (OC 3: 550)

This justification of “good taste” rests on charged terrain as it assigns the Spanish Academy the role of taste-maker -and hence the ability to regulate language- while diminishing Latin American productions as not reaching this parameter. Palma interpreted this exclusion as an aspiration by Spanish intellectuals to exercise cultural authority over Latin Americans, a critical turning point in his relationship with Spain.

Language was one of the most concrete and thus profitable vehicles of Peninsular Hispanism. As the Spanish writer Núñez de Arce stated in the “Congreso Pedagógico” that Palma attended,

Cuando se extingan los últimos ecos de las fiestas del Centenario, y vuelva cada cual al seno de su patria querida, espero que […] empiece á germinar una idea, […] Pongámonos de acuerdo para conservar incólume el verbo de nuestra raza, y si el éxito corona tan generoso esfuerzo, no perdamos la esperanza de que algún día nos entendamos del mismo modo, no solo para estimarnos platónicamente como miembros emancipados de una familia dilatada, sino, lo que vale más, para auxiliarnos y para defendernos. (180)

Language was one of the core elements for Spaniards to claim a stronger connection with Latin America and create a Hispanic alliance that would give them a more prominent
position in the international scene. But at the same time that language represented one of the most tangible elements for a claim of Hispanic community, it was also the focus of the imperial aspirations of the Spanish, who saw in the regulation of Spanish in Latin America the remnants of their lost empire and a mechanism for competition with Great Britain and the US over their expansion of the English language. Hence, in the congress of Huelva, the second speech of the inauguration by the bishop of Badajoz became one of the most applauded interventions, due to his reference to the growth of Spanish language allowing Peninsular Hispanists to feel on even terms with the thriving English-speaking nations:

Hagamos votos por que los pueblos americanos nos envíen nueva vida, y que esa lengua española que salió con las carabelas se arraigue y extienda tanto como la inglesa, por lo menos, y se hable en todos los países descubiertos por el inmortal Colón! (Congreso Internacional de Americanistas 120)

For most Peninsular Hispanists, this linguistic competition with Great Britain and the US was imagined as a rivalry among colonial forces, a vision that conceived of Latin American speakers as a form of capital rather than participants in the contest.

In his intervention in the “Congreso Literario Americano,” Palma would state precisely that Spanish opposition to his peruanismos, was “una especie de tiranía de lenguaje, que es la peor de las tiranías, toda vez que es la que ejerce presión sobre el pensamiento” (133). He bitterly complained that since his arrival in Spain, he felt he was playing “el papel de un D. Quijote, enamorado de una Dulcinea” (132). This comparison of the Spanish Academy to the idealized prostitute of Cervantes’ play reveals Palma’s
disappointment, who likewise described himself as the pursuer of a chimera. Palma denounced the Spanish Royal Academy for not fulfilling the Hispanist aspirations of Latin Americans who had seen language as the strongest link between America and their former metropole. Spain itself, he added, was indebted to the Spanish Royal Academy for achieving what diplomacy had not achieved:

A la Academia debe mucho España, como elemento de fortificación de los vínculos entre América y nuestra madre patria. Más que la acción de los Gobiernos, más que la acción de la diplomacia, ha sido eficaz la acción de la Academia Española para despertar en los pueblos americanos una corriente que, si me es lícito, la bautizaré con el nombre de hispanófila. (132)

In this quotation Palma describes the Hispanist discourse on language as a powerful means to strengthen the transatlantic relationship, an effectiveness that was shaken by the conflicting agendas hidden behind the idea of linguistic union. Palma would add that while agreements over language during the Congress could be translated into practical benefits -a taste of the treaty over literary property and Spanish exports to Latin America that he will mention later - the conciliating work of the Centennial would be at risk if the Spanish persisted in its intolerant spirit towards Latin American linguistic innovations:

Mucho debe esperarse, como resultado práctico, de las resoluciones de este Congreso pero para que estas resoluciones se lleven á la práctica y tengan resonancia en América, es indispensable que en España haya más espíritu de tolerancia para las innovaciones que los americanos propagamos en el lenguaje.

(132)
In this dance between conquering and being conquered, every actor attempting to seduce while letting himself be seduced to achieve their own goals, the Centennial of 1892 became the battle of ideas that Palma had mentioned earlier.

Palma collected his impressions of his trip to Spain in 1892 in a volume called *Recuerdos de España*, where he included several articles about the Centennial he had been sending to Peruvian newspapers such as *El Comercio* during his stay in Spain. This work was published in 1899 and as his letters to Rubén Darío and Lola Rodríguez de Tío show, Palma had serious doubts about how it would be received. Indeed, Palma had trouble publishing *Recuerdos de España*, which did not appear until 1899, making it the last travel narrative about the Centennial to come to the market, as he bitterly complained to Rubén Darío.

*Recuerdos de España* was structured in three parts and it was partly conceived to do justice to his 300 words, which he finally published as an appendix. The first part of *Recuerdos de España* described the Spanish cities that Palma visited, while its second part offered brief portraits of several Spanish intellectuals that Palma met at the Ateneo, the Spanish Royal Academy or at the literary gatherings of Pardo Bazán and Juan Valera. The third part, “Neologismos y americanismos,” was a direct response to the Spanish Royal Academy, and included the *peruanismos* that had not been accepted for the Dictionary. Precisely because of its controversial topic and because Palma considered it his “bandera revolucionaria,” “Neologismos y americanismos” became the most popular section of *Recuerdos de España* and would eventually be published as a separate article.
While I focus here on the linguistic discussion of the third section of *Recuerdos de España*, it is noteworthy that the first part of the book develops a portrait of Spain as a backward and anti-modern country, allowing Palma to question Spain’s legitimacy in claiming an authoritative position regarding Latin America. One of his central arguments in this section is that Latin America had achieved much greater progress than the former metropole, and Spain position was insufficient to consider itself a linguistic and cultural model: thus Palma claimed that Latin Americans should take equal part in the regulation of language. Except for pockets like Barcelona and the Basque country that Palma disassociated from Spain, the depiction of the country abounded in images of poverty, backwardness and decadence, and terminated with a comparison of Spain to a cemetery. Most importantly, the narrator described most Spanish cities as stuck in 15\textsuperscript{th} century, never having been touched by the progress of 19\textsuperscript{th} century. The Eurocentric parameters of modernity that quite often excluded Latin America became in this work a rhetorical device to defend Latin American interests against Spain.

Although criticism in this first part was harsh, we see through several letters to Rubén Darío and Lola Rodríguez de Tío that it was the third part that caused Palma more concern over how the work would be received. In his letter to Darío in May of 1894, Palma explicitly commented that he wrote this part with the clear intention of questioning the authority of the Spanish Academy:

Falta un capítulo que no me resuelvo todavía a escribir. Se titulará “La América y la Academia Española” y en él me propongo fustigar a esa mayoría intransigente con los neologismos generalizados en América y que aún en España se usan […]
Esos señores creen que todavía el sol no se pone en los dominios de España. Del fondo del capítulo por escribir resultará que para los americanos, el Diccionario no debe ser autoridad, que debemos ser refractarios a toda tiranía inclusive la del léxico, que no nos conviene ajustar tratados sobre propiedad literaria con España ni con nación alguna de Europa, y que independientes en política, debemos serlo también en literatura. (*Epistolario* 2: 182)

The reaction to “Neologismos y americanismos” indeed demonstrated that Palma’s hesitations over the reception of this article were not for nothing. As we learned from his frequent correspondence with the Puerto Rican writer Lola Rodríguez de Tío, the Spanish press mainly ignored the work while the Cuban media, still under the control of Spain, gave him terrible reviews. In a letter to Benito Pérez Galdós in 1903, Palma defended himself by saying that his work was nevertheless “un propósito verdaderamente hispanófilo” (*Epistolario* 2: 411).

“Neologismos y americanismos” opened by stating that Latin Americans believed that Spain had not forgiven them for becoming independent. Palma started this section by commenting that the new generations of Latin Americans felt more connected to France or England than to Spain, and that the dynamics of the Centennial would not help contribute to promoting Spain within the European tour that many Latin Americans undertook. But far more important for Palma was the breaking-off of the relationship

44 In a letter to the Catalan intellectual Antonio Rubió y Lluch in 1901 Palma would comment that the Iberoamerican Congress of 1900 did have a low American attendance as a result of the celebrations of 1892.
between the Spanish Academy and the Peruvian Academy, an institution in which Palma had invested so much effort and which had shut its doors in 1893. It is difficult to determine to what extent the closure of the Peruvian Academy was orchestrated by Palma, but through his personal letters it is clear that he was very much in favor of this outcome.\textsuperscript{45} He even referred to \textit{Recuerdos de España} as the piece that exposed the reasons for the termination of the Peruvian Academy. As he explained in his letter to Gaspar Núñez de Arce: “La Academia correspondiente en Lima, por causas que verá Ud. expuestas en mi libro, no funciona desde 1893” (\textit{Epistolario} 2: 265). From the Centennial on, Palma would insist on the idea that the misguided policies of the Spanish government, with its glorification of the colonial past and the disdain of many Peninsular intellectuals for the Latin American cultural production, were damaging transatlantic relations. The tone of “Neologismos y americanismos” was not only vindicative but subtly threatening. Palma mentioned that an antagonistic attitude of the Spanish government and their intellectuals would reinforce the cosmopolitan vocation of the emerging Peruvian literary movements. He claimed that unlike his generation, nourished by “la lengua de Cervantes,” the youth were turning towards French, German and British cultural models. The popularity of German, English and especially French culture was a quite dodgy topic for Peninsular Hispanists who acknowledged the need to remain in touch with neighboring literatures but at the same time felt they were colonized

\textsuperscript{45} At least in his letter to Francisco Sosa in February of 1893, Palma commented that he was chosen as the spokesman to announce the Spanish Academy that the Peruvia was in recess: “la Academia correspondiente me ordena decir a la de España que se ha declarado en receso” (\textit{Epistolario} 2: 144).
by them. Furthermore, the fact that foreign literature was so influential in Latin America complicated the Hispanist project which aimed to reinforce links with Latin America through Spanish cultural products.

Peninsular intellectuals were not only interested in increasing the Spanish cultural exportation as a means for spreading and reinforcing the Hispanic bond, but they were also concerned with the book commerce. As mentioned in the second chapter, Spanish writers were clamoring for a treaty on literary property as a way to increase the exportation of Spanish literary works to Latin America as well as to stop the circulation of illegal copies that did not provide them with any benefit. During his visit to Spain, Palma noticed the high interest of Spanish writers for signing the treaty, even joking that Campoamor, because of his personal fortune, was the only Spanish writer who did not care about the treaty of literary property (*Recuerdos de España* 114). This situation empowered Palma, who used the treaty to negotiate with the Spanish academics, subtly reminding them in his writing that their lack of diplomacy and hegemonic aspirations would deprive Spain as well as Spanish writers of American “gold.” In fact, as we see in his letter to Francisco Sosa in February of 1893, the Centennial ruined the possibility for the treaty: “El efecto moral del Centenario va a ser contraproducente. […] el Perú no suscribirá el tratado sobre propiedad literaria tan beneficioso para los españoles” (*Epistolario* 2: 144).

Palma not only referred to the book market but played with the idea of several other losses that the antagonistic attitude of the Spanish government and their intellectuals would bring to Spanish commerce. Palma referred to the Spanish
intervention in Mexico and of course, to the Chincha islands\textsuperscript{46} as two acts that sent Latin American consumers towards friendlier markets:

La principal causa del indiferentismo ó alejamiento nuestro se debe a la errada política del gobierno peninsular, que tardó muchos años en convencerse de que la América estaba definitivamente perdida para España. Si, después de Ayacucho, los hombres de la política se hubieran dicho lo que el vulgo -lo perdido, perdido, y ojo al ganar- no retardando el conocimiento de las repúblicas independientes- ni el comercio inglés, ni el comercio francés, ni el comercio alemán, se habrían adueñado por completo de los mercados americanos. Por lo menos habría conseguido España que no adquiriésemos el perverso gusto de envenenarnos consumiendo los malos vinos franceses, ya que la península es productora de los mejores del mundo. Mercantilmente no era el provecho para desdendarlo.

(Recuerdos de España 160)

The commercial losses in America in favor of French, British and even German products was a great concern behind the celebrations of the Centennial, which as we saw in Chapter One, had been partly financed by Commercial Societies.

Therefore, Palma would conclude his “Neologismos y americanismos” by saying that he came to the celebrations with a faithful Hispanist purpose and expected to materialize the Hispanic alliance in a number of practical results:

\textsuperscript{46} Also called the Spanish-Peruvian War (1864-1883). Spain initiated a war in the Pacific when a ‘scientific expedition’ occupied the guano-rich Chincha islands. This Spanish intervention should be considered in the larger context of Spanish Prime Minister O’Donnell’s “policy of prestige” advocating imperial enterprises in Central and South America, Morocco and Southeast Asia (Heredia, 1998; Alvarez Junco, 2001). Spain signed an armistice with Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile in 1871, but the definite peace treaty was signed between Spain and Chile in 1883 during the time of the Chilean occupation of Peru. For more information about the war, see Jorge Basadre Historia de la Republica del Peru, vol. 4.
Propósito muy hispanófilo fue, pues, el que me animó cuando, en las juntas académicas á que concurri, empecé proponiendo la admisión de una docena de vocablos de general uso en América. Yo anhelaba que las fiestas del Centenario tuvieran significación práctica, revelando que España armonizaba tanto con nosotros que, si no admitía como suyos nuestros neologismos, por lo menos no los despreciaba como argentínismos, colombianismos, chilenismos, peruanismos, etc. etc. (Recuerdos de España 171)

The quid pro quo contained in this concluding paragraph is quite obvious. Palma was essentially threatening that after the linguistic disaster of the Centennial, the practical significance of the celebrations -the materialization of treaties and exchanges- would remain suspended until a change in the linguistic politics of the Spanish academics. While Peninsular Hispanists envisioned Latin American speakers as capital for their “compensatory empire,” Palma clarified that for Spanish to put their hands on that capital, Latin Americans ought to obtain some benefits too: for Palma that constituted linguistic recognition. Under the surface of Hispanic solidarity that the discourse of Hispanism promoted, we find the language of commercial contract, in which Palma demanded that Latin Americans, as the “clients” and purchasers of the idea of Hispanism, had to receive a privileged reciprocal offering.

In the following years, Palma advertised his “Neologismos y americanismos” through his extensive letter network. He called this work his “bandera revolucionaria” and tried to persuade other Latin American writers to join him in criticizing the intransigency of the Spanish Royal Academy. Palma especially debated this topic with
intellectuals like the Mexican Francisco Mostajo or the Costa Rican Carlos Gagini who were developing bodies of work that paralleled Palma’s linguistic recuperation. Almost one hundred years after Independence, Palma was borrowing the political rhetoric as well as the Bolivarian idea of American unity to establish a common front against the Spanish Royal Academy.

Palma not only promoted his book among Latin Americans but also among Spanish intellectuals since, in spite of his critiques of the Academy, he still seemed to believe in the need to institutionalize the *peruanismos*, and continued to hold out hope for a change in attitude from the Spanish. The letter he wrote to Benito Pérez Galdós in November 1901, with Cuba’s independence on the verge of becoming official, Palma attributed Spain’s loss of the last colonies to the mistake of the Spanish administration in dreaming of imperial grandeur. Language, he would warn, was the only transatlantic tie left:

> Por vivir engolosinados con las heroicidades y las glorias que alcanzaron en los siglos que fueron, descuidaron prepararse, o prever, lo contrastes que ha sufrido en recientes días. Hoy las repúblicas americanas están unidas a España por el lazo de idioma únicamente, lazos que con sus intransigencias la Academia debilita de día en día. Así se explicará usted el por qué la juventud de muchas repúblicas no lee libros españoles, sino franceses, alemanes o ingleses. (Epistolario 2: 388)

Palma maintained a similar exchange with other Spanish authors, persisting in the idea of language as the most important bond of the transatlantic relation. By the end of his life, he would find an interlocutor in Miguel de Unamuno, whose conception of Hispanism
adapted more conveniently to Palma’s requests. Although Virginia Santos Rivero (2005) has examined how Unamuno’s concept of “Hispanidad” through language had a neocolonialist spirit, his receptiveness to other varieties of Spanish seduced Palma. In letters to Antonio Rubió i Lluch and Aníbal Galindo, we see how Palma had developed by the beginning of the 20th century a new argument against the Spanish Royal Academy: appealing to the numerical superiority of Spanish speakers in America compared to Spain and the growing interest of many scholars in cultivating their regional languages - Catalan, Basque, Galician- Palma argued that Americans were more suitable authorities of Spanish language. This very linguistic plurality was starting to be perceived as a threat by a new generation of Peninsular Hispanists such as Miguel de Unamuno who found in the idea of Hispanism a means to agglutinate increasing national diversity on the peninsula itself.

**Conclusion**

Although the Centennial damaged Palma’s ties with some of the Spanish scholars he had been building relationships with throughout the two previous decades, he never completely abandoned his dream of Hispanism as a means to institutionalize his *peruanismos* and create a linguistic and cultural front. Even after the Centennial, Palma could not subdue his desire for linguistic recognition, as he gave language a crucial role in the constitution of national identity, such that acknowledgment of their linguistic variations implied recognition of their cultural autonomy as a nation. His fixation on the connection between language and nationhood, combined with his belief in language regulation made Palma a victim of his own principles. Avoiding indigenous languages
and French influence, Palma situated Spanish as the core of his linguistic nationalism as he hoped for his *peruanismos* to be legitimized by the Spanish Royal Academy. But Spanish language was also a fundamental instrument for many Peninsular Hispanists, who imagined that an unconditional defense of the Peninsular norm and standardization of the language would confer a position of authority upon Spain in their excolonies. The unavoidable clash that took place during the Centennial did not imply the exhaustion of Hispanism as a language ideology (or better, as a set of language ideologies). The appearance of a new wave of Peninsular Hispanists with their reconceptualization of linguistic ties, and the increasing influence of an ever growing number of Latin American speakers, insured that the crisis of the Centennial was not the end but just the beginning of the linguistic instrumentalization of a Hispanist discourse as malleable as it was strategic.
CHAPTER FIVE: REVIEWING RUBÉN DARÍO’S HISPANISM

A COMMERCIAL VISION ON TRANSatlANTIC BONDS

¡Inclitas razas ubérrimas, sangre de Hispania fecunda,

espíritus fraternos, luminosas almas, salve!

Rubén Darío’s ode to the eminent and fertile races that share the richness of Hispanic blood and a related, fraternal spirit have become some of his most popular verses as well as a kind of hymn to Hispanism. Indeed, these verses from “Salutación del optimista” belong to Cantos de vida y esperanza (1905), a work that has been extensively characterized as the turning point marking the beginning of Darío’s involvement in social and political concerns (Anderson-Imbert 1979) and his self-recognition as a Hispanist after his early identification with French authors. Critics have generally explained Darío’s Hispanist recognition of the links of blood and culture with the former colonial power as a reaction of solidarity after the Spanish-American war of 1898, a Hispanist reading fueled by Darío himself who in Historia de mis libros (1916) commented about Cantos, “Hay, como he dicho, mucho Hispanismo en este libro mío” (219). However, the way in which Darío articulates this statement opens the possibility for a revision of the poet’s Hispanism. His representation of Cantos as presenting “a great deal of Hispanism” implies a conceptualization of Hispanism as a temporary category, a consideration that leads us to reconsider Darío’s Hispanist vision as well as his appropriation by the Hispanist movement.

In this chapter I argue that in spite of appealing in these famous verses to a common Hispanic blood and spirit, Darío essentially believed that transatlantic
commerce was the means to consolidate the Hispanic relation. He acknowledged certain common bonds such as blood, language and traditions, but in spite of those, he considered Latin Americans as distinct from Spain. Language and literature had taken a different path for Darío since Independence and as we can see in the following quotation, he admitted only a vague sense of community based on certain common spirit: “Los glóbulos de sangre que llevamos, la lengua, los vínculos que nos unen a los españoles no pueden realizar la fusión. Somos otros. […] Esto no quita que tendamos a la unidad en el espíritu de la raza” (“La novela americana en España” 350). This “spirit of race” refers, of course, to the attribution of a spiritual, anti-materialistic character to the Hispanic race.

In this chapter I show, that drawing from this concept, Darío would envision a transatlantic commerce based on the solidarity of this spiritual race. For Darío, any other link apart from commerce would be too weak to strengthen the transatlantic relation and at the same time, this Hispanic commerce would represent a means for Latin American republics and Spain to engage in the geopolitics of his time, constructing a tangible commercial front among these peripherals nations. He envisioned this commerce as benefiting all parts and that, given the character of the Hispanic race, this Hispanic trade would represent a different form of commerce and progress than that of the US.

I also suggest that the professionalization that the literary field underwent at the turn of the century influenced the way in which Darío embraced multiple identities, and that in particular, his affiliation to a Hispanic identity was partly motivated by promoting a transnational Hispanic literary market. Through the social networks he developed in his visit to the Centennial Celebrations of 1892, Darío believed that Latin American authors
could profit from their connections with the Spanish literary market and vice versa. His interest in the benefits of such cultural exchange expanded into broader economic expansion that would benefit both Latin America as a whole as well as Spain itself. I will use lesser known productions of Darío, such as some of his writing during 1892 as well as his *España contemporánea* (1901), to rethink Darío’s commitment to Hispanism and the terms in which he conceived a Hispanic alliance.

In reviewing Darío’s conceptualization of Hispanism, we must also reconsider the usual chronology employed in referring to Darío’s Hispanist shift, which is typically seen as a consequence of the Spanish American war. The Centennial of 1892 laid the grounds for Darío conceiving a transatlantic approach in a commercial way, and hence by moving the temporary frame of Darío’s Hispanism from the post-98 to an evolution from 92, we see more clearly that Darío’s affiliation to Hispanism not only came as a response to the Spanish-American war, but as an awareness of the potentiality of this transnational market.

Darío’s employment of an identitarian discourse for commercial purposes presents a facet hardly studied in the poet. As the most prominent figure of the Latin American modernism -a movement generally identified as French-oriented and anticommercial- and as a spokesman of Hispanism -an alliance of nations traditionally assigned a Hispanic spirituality opposed to Anglo-Saxon materialism- Darío has been widely represented as a cosmopolitan and anti-bourgeois aesthete that later developed a political conscience and reevaluated the Hispanic heritage in opposition to the growing influence of the US in the Caribbean and Central America. As Arellano (1981) and
Schulman (1993) have remarked, a figure of Darío’s prestige produces multiple readings, with critics privileging or devaluing certain discourses in order to promote a particular literary history. So while Darío has been considered the national writer of Nicaragua, the poet of America and the prophet of Hispanism, his commercial interests have been quite neglected. In this chapter, I aim to show Darío’s thoughts about the market and the importance that this played in his Hispanist affiliation.

These multiple titles that Darío has received originated not only in the appropriation that different movements have undertaken of Darío but in the fluidity of his identity as well. Pan-Latin Americanism or Hispanism have been interested in counting such an influential figure amongst their membership, but this appropriation would not have been possible if Darío himself had not showed an affiliation with these movements at particular moments in his own production. Compared to the other authors in this study, Darío’s Hispanism seems more questionable as he also promoted other competing movements such as Pan-Latinism and to some extent Pan-Latin Americanism. On the other hand, his cosmopolitan character made his Hispanist vision less rooted in a particular national project, thinking more of the interest of all nations included in the Hispanist conception as well as on his own personal interest as a professional writer working across nations.

The ideological debates during Darío’s time period about categories such Pan-Americanism, Pan-Latinism, Pan-Latin Americanism or Hispanism make the mobility of the poet’s identity even more exceptional. The 19th century Latin American discourse on cultural autochthony holds a complex relationship with modernity and cosmopolitanism.
The very cosmopolitanism that that allowed the *modernistas* to compete with the metropoles (Aching 1997) also aroused criticism that the movement was not American. Indeed, it was a critic as international as José Enrique Rodó who promoted the thesis of Dario’s anti-Americanism, presenting the *afrancesamiento* of the later as incompatible with an American character.\(^{47}\) While Americanism and cosmopolitanism maintained a constant tension, the relationship between Americanism and Hispanism was also quite delicate. As we have seen throughout this study, the Centennial showed the predicament of reconciling Pan-Latin Americanism and Spanish culture in the name of a common transatlantic tradition, with actors on both sides rooting their Hispanist discourse in nation-building plans. Finally, Hispanism also held a contradictory relation with Pan-Latinism (Gabilondo 2009). Although the idea of a Hispanic race was inspired by the concept of Latin race and in certain contexts Hispanistas would vindicate the association with France, Pan-Latinism was also viewed as a competing category and a means to intervene in the relation of Spain and its former colonies.

Darío however, moved fluidly amongst all these categories, presenting himself as Latin American, Hispanic and Latin. This mobility has been the source of an extensive

\(^{47}\) In Rodó’s essay of 1899: “Rubén Darío.” As we see in his letters to Miguel de Unamuno, Darío himself would receive these qualifications as accurate judgments. In a letter in April 1899 Darío would write:

> Le confesaré, desde luego, que no me creo escritor americano. Esto lo he demostrado en cierto artículo que me vio forzado a escribir cuando Groussac me honró con una crítica. Mejor que yo ha desarrollado el asunto el señor Rodó, profesor de la Universidad de Montevideo. Le envío su trabajo. Mucho menos soy castellano. Yo, ¿le confesaré con rubor?, no pienso en castellano, ¡más bien pienso en francés! O mejor, pienso ideográficamente; de ahí que mi obra no sea castiza. Hablo de mis libros últimos. Pues los primeros, hasta *Azul*, proceden de innegable cepa española, al menos en su forma. (25)

Darío’s reluctance to accept any of these categorizations as well as his preference to define his mental process in terms of ideograms rather than languages, is quite significant of Darío’s universalism.
scholarship in the 20th and 21st century; much of it argues for a particular side of his identity, but most acknowledge the other aspects as integrative parts of the Darian identity. Darío’s expansionist concept of identity contrasts with the exclusivist conception of most Hispanists, a difference that I interpret as the consequence of the professionalization of the literary field, which pushed him to transcend national markets and aspire to reach the broadest possible market.

Not only was Darío unusual in this simultaneousness of affiliations and his new conception of the market, but he also represented a complete turning point in the transatlantic relation. At the very moment in which Peninsular Hispanists aimed to fortify the cultural influence of Spain in Latin America, Rubén Darío and the modernist movement turned the tide of transatlantic exchange, as Latin American cultural productions started to be imported and to substantially impact the Spanish literary scene. Ironically, a native of Nicaragua, the periphery of a periphery, would become a figure of reference in all Spanish-speaking countries and hence Peninsular Hispanism would aim to appropriate Darío as a Hispanist so that he, with his immense influence, would confer prestige to the Hispanist movement. This appropriation of Darío that sprouted in the Centennial of 1892 represents a new stage in Hispanism, a transformation that foreshadows the dynamics of the Hispanic movement in the 20th century.

The anti-americanist thesis of Rodó was finally overcome, with critics vindicating the americanist character of Darío’s work (Martín 1972) at the same time that others analyzed its Hispanic sign (Noel Alberto 1972, Quintián 1974). All these have acknowledged however, that other side of Darío. Among several work that have talked of the simultaneous Hispanism and Americanism of the author, the most classic studies are the early work of Torres-Rioseco, Casticismo y americanismo (1931) and Pedro Salinas’ La poesía de Rubén Darío (1948) which presented Darío as a believer of a transatlantic Hispanic community spread out between Europe and America.
Darío in the Centennial: Between the Hispanist Appropriation and a Hispanic Rapprochement

1892 is a central moment in Darío’s rapprochement with Hispanic affiliation as well as in the Hispanist appropriation of the poet. It was in this first trip to Spain-and also to Europe- that the emerging figure of Darío would be introduced in Spanish literary circles, bringing about a bidirectional movement: on the one hand, the rising prestige of the poet set off a process of appropriation by Peninsular Hispanistas that would particularly flourish after the publication of Cantos. On the other hand, Darío himself would begin that very year to develop a Spanish social network and to show a non-committal but flirtatious attitude to the idea of a Hispanic culture.

Funded by his government, Rubén Darío arrived to the Centennial as the secretary of the Nicaraguan delegation, one of the many official positions that the author took for a living throughout his life. But apart from this obscure governmental position, he also arrived as a young artist that had just published Azul (1888), an already very influential work that announced the importance his author would acquire. Indeed, Darío enjoyed a remarkable reception in Spain in 1892, not only by the young modernistas but also by consolidated authors. As many critics have commented and the same Darío pointed out in his autobiography (1915),49 the Centennial was his platform to initiate a Spanish intellectual network. He became acquainted with the most prominent figures of the Spanish intellectual community: Juan Valera, Menéndez Pelayo, Pardo Bazán, Núñez de

---

49 His autobiography was first published as La vida de Rubén Darío escrita por él mismo, Barcelona: Maucci, 1915.
Arce, Castelar, Canóvas del Castillo, Campoamor, Zorrilla. Darío was not only warmly welcomed by many Spanish writers, but the press also paid him a greater amount of attention than what a young poet generally received and that was even comparable to the notice that reputed authors like Ricardo Palma and Soledad Acosta de Samper attracted.

Four years after the publication of Azul, Darío appeared in Spain in 1892 as the main representative of a movement that divided the Spanish letters and more importantly, that would destabilize the traditional authority dynamics existing between Spain and Latin America. The earlier development of modernismo in Latin America as well as the reverence that Peninsular modernistas hold for Darío implied a break within the project of Valera and Menéndez Pelayo. In the prologue that Juan Valera wrote for the second edition of Azul, only two years before the Centennial, he recalled his first impressions on the book that Darío himself had sent him with an “amable dedicatoria” ("Prólogo" 3). Valera remarked that Azul was the Latin American book that he had read with most intense curiosity but confessed that he was indifferent at first because of the title and its obvious reference to Victor Hugo (a comment quite revealing of the rivalry that some Spanish authors felt against the growing influence of French cultural models in Latin America). These opening comments reveal Rubén Darío as one of the young Latin American authors who looked for the legitimizing signature of Valera while the later reaffirmed his consolidated position by admitting without hedging his early disinterest for

---

50 To read about the attacks as well as admiration that Darío and the modernist movement arouse in Spain, see the work of Carlos Lozano (1968; 1978)

51 Azul was first published in 1888 in Valparaíso: Imprenta y Litografía Excelsior. The second edition appeared in 1890 in Guatemala: Imprenta de la Unión.
the book. This presents a contrast with the position he acquired during the Centennial, when Valera himself received him as a promising literary figure and the Spanish modernistas looked to him as a model and voice of legitimization. A focus of attention for the Peninsular modernistas in 1892, Darío was frequented by Salvador Rueda, whose work *En tropel*, would appear that very same year with a prologue in verse by Darío, “Pórtico.” This famous prologue, later included in *Prosas profanas* (1896), would be the first in a long list of prologues that Darío would dedicate to the works of Peninsular modernistas.

For Darío’s friend, the Latin American modernist Enrique Gómez Carrillo, Valera’s prologue to *Azul* belittled the figure of Darío, a judgment quite correct when considered Valera’s condescending tone in justifying Darío’s drawing on French culture. For Valera, Darío took French models since Nicaragua could not yet have any culture of its own: “ni hay ni puede haber aún historia literaria, escuela y tradiciones literarias en Nicaragua” (“Prólogo” 8). The prologue privileged the book amongst the rest of the Latin American literature but this was also quite problematic because this praise to *Azul* implicitly carried a disregard for American productions, which, according to Gómez Carrillo (187) Valera viewed as inferior. But in spite of all these tensions, Valera’s prologue clearly announced that Darío would become an important influence on literature in Spanish. By 1892, as Darío himself mentions in his biography, Valera would give him a warm welcome, recommending him to Menéndez Pelayo, and introducing him in several literary circles. Darío represented a reverse in the transatlantic cultural dynamics, and hence, Valera and later Hispanists would prefer to negotiate with his figure by
appealing to the idea of Latin American reciprocity in exchange for the extended Spanish cultural investment in that continent. In his prologue on Darío, Valera struggled to classify the poet within a literary tradition, only successfully claiming a connection through language: “el lenguaje persiste español, legítimo y de buena ley, y porque si no tiene Ud. carácter nacional, posee carácter individual” (viii). In 1892, Valera continued acknowledging Darío’s originality but as we see in a letter to Menéndez Pelayo in September that year, he framed it as the beginning of Latin America’s reciprocal payback: “No es como Bello, Heredia, Olmedo, etc., en quienes todo es nuestro y aún lo imitado de Francia ha pasado por aquí […] Veo en él lo primero que América da a nuestras letras” (426). The way that Valera highlights Darío as the first contribution to “our letters,” not only assumes a common literature but also points out the idea of Latin American compensation, implying that up to that moment the Spanish had been the only participants to the common Hispanic literary capital. At the same time that many Latin American modernistas -as on certain occasions Darío himself- started to talk of the new movement as an evidence of the steadier and faster progress of Latin America towards modernity, Valera aimed to encapsulate Darío’s work as a contribution to the “treasure” of a common Hispanic literature. Darío, whom Valera even asked to collaborate in El Centenario, could thus become a crucial asset if categorized within a Hispanic cultural tradition.

On the other hand, Darío’s identification with Hispanic culture during 1892 was still quite ambivalent. The poem “A Colón” that he wrote for the Centennial of 1892 contained enough elements praising the Spanish heritage for the piece to be read in the
context of the Spanish celebrations. At the same time it did not completely commit to a Hispanic identification. Unlike Acosta de Samper, Darío referred to the *mestizaje*, and although he acknowledged the Spanish heritage, he diverged from her idea of “Spanish from America” talking instead of the Latin Americans as an interracial product. The praise to the race of Castilla contained in the poem fit into the discourse of the celebrations, but the emphasis on the indigenous influence weakened the Hispanist claim of common blood and race. Indeed the poetic voice in the poem, assumes multiple identifications, sometimes employing a “we” to refer to the Indians, sometimes deploying the first plural person to talk of the mixed-race population. As we see in the following stanza, the Spanish were acknowledged as an influence but the poetic voice differentiated them from the American race that was the product of *mestizaje*:

Cuando en vientre de América cayó semilla
de la raza de hierro que fue de España,
mezcló su fuerza heroica la gran Castilla
con la fuerza del indio de la montaña. (28-31)

In tune with the discourses of the festivities, the poetic voice referred to the racial heritage of the colonization, qualifying the Spanish race as heroic. However, there was a definite incorporation of the Indian heritage. As in the line “con nuestra boca indígena semi-española” (17) the poetic voice referred to a hybrid identity, conferring a considerable weight to the indigenous influence. On the other hand, the gendered portrait of the encounter as well as the adjectives that accompanied the personification of pre-Columbian America “india virgen y hermosa,” (2) revealed a colonized discourse that
reproduced the aesthetization and erotization of the European colonial accounts, and diminished the vindication of the indigenous. Also, the pre-Columbian past appeared idealized with the figures of “Atahualpas y Moctezumas” (27) as heroic representatives but the referential “they” for the indigenous people conveyed the distance of the poetic voice.

Parallel to these contradictions, we find certain Pan-Latin American feeling in the poem -when qualifying the American nations as “hermanos” and members of “las mismas razas” for example- although retaining a nostalgic sentiment for the colonial period. Furthermore, these colonial times symbolized order in contrast with a post-independence America represented as a hysterical woman: “tu india virgen y hermosa de sangre cálida/ la perla de tus sueños, es una histérica” (2-3). The Republican period, in contrast, was described as a sinister time with fights in “campos fraternos:”

hoy se enciende entre hermanos perpetua guerra,
se hieren y destrozan las mismas razas.

Al ídolo de piedra remplaza ahora
el ídolo de carne que se entroniza,
y cada día alumbría la blanca aurora
en los campos fraternos sangre y ceniza.

Desdeñando a los reyes nos dimos leyes
al son de los cañones y los clarines,
y hoy el favor siniestro de negros beyes
fraternizan los Judas con los Caínes. (6-15)
While the poetic voice aimed to emphasize the tragic sign of America, the representation of the postcolonial period as a fratricidal chaos juxtaposed to the reverence for the eliminated monarchy\textsuperscript{52} diminished the Americanist tone.

Up to the end, the poem maintains an ambiguous tone, moving to depict different time periods and alternating praise with criticism when referring both to colonization and Independence. Although the poem failed to convey a determined Hispanist affiliation, the poet acknowledged the Spanish racial and linguistic heritage and self-identified as a product of colonization, two recurrent points of Peninsular Hispanism. The poem remained hence ambivalent enough to suggest a varied number of interpretations while keeping a tone in tune with the Celebrations, much like the concept of Hispanism itself.

Darío’s cordial exchanges in 1892 with Valera and Menéndez Pelayo also show his good grasp in handling a transatlantic relation fundamental for advertising and publication. Darío’s epistolary exchanges are quite revealing of his diplomatic character since after the Centennial he would maintain a friendly relationship not only with Valera and Pelayo but also with Palma, the latter frequently writing him with criticism of the linguistic intransigency of the two Spanish authors. As Carlos Lozano has commented (1968), Valera’s prologue to Azul helped substantially to make Darío known in Spain - which paradoxically made Valera partly responsible for this transatlantic shift in influence- showing that in the transition from patronage to professionalization, the development of a collegial network played a decisive role in both Spain and Latin

\textsuperscript{52} Never openly anti-republican, Darío reveals however his fascination with the monarchy in several of his works, especially in Alfonso XIII (1909).
America. Hence, in Darío’s portraits of Castelar and Núñez de Arce written for La Nación in 1892 and even in the account of the Centennial in his self-biography, Darío offered a measured and sweetened depiction of his meetings with his Spanish colleagues. As Juana Martínez Gómez (2008) reminds us, after this first trip to Spain, Darío would start to collaborate more frequently with the Spanish press, especially in magazines such as La Ilustración Española y Americana, Revista Nueva and El Álbum de Madrid and more sporadically with newspapers such as El Imparcial, El Heraldo de Madrid, Diario Universal and ABC. These strategic interconnections between networking and publication help explain Darío’s effort to please all parts in España contemporánea and even in the mentioned biography that he wrote for the Argentinean magazine Caras y Caretas – which also had a large circulation in Spain- when he was already a consecrated author.

I argue that in examining Darío’s approach to Hispanism, it is important to consider the impact that the professionalization of the literary market exercised upon the poet’s identity affiliations. As Ángel Rama (1968), Noé Jitrik (1975, 1978) and Francoise Pérus (1976) have examined, Latin American modernism represented the “poetic autonomy” of the continent as well as the conversion to a professionalized system of literature production. While exhibiting a clear aversion to the petty bourgeois, Rubén Darío showed a great ability in understanding his new position as producer in and for the market, an understanding that he translated into his transformation into a journalist and writer of social and cultural chronicles (Rama 1970). I suggest that the mobility of Darío’s identity was a consequence of his immersion in a transnational market; indeed as Julio Ortega has observed (2003), Rubén Darío was probably the first truly Atlantic
writer. As a Latin American author, Darío was aware with some of his Spanish peers that the transformation from patronage to professionalization in societies without enough demand of artistic production could be alleviated by the expansion of the market to a transatlantic level, and in doing so, the development of cultural alliance was key. Likewise, the collaborations he acquired with a diverse body of Latin American and Spanish publications lead him to adjust to their agenda and publics.

During 1892, Darío wrote a manuscript with the title of España whose first chapters were sent for publication without success. While the original manuscript has been lost, Díaz-Canedo (1975) and Rivas Bravo (1998) argued that Darío drew on this first work for many of the chronicles that he wrote for La Nación between 1899 and 1900, which were published a year later as España contemporánea. During 1892 he started process of reflection on the Hispanist union that would culminate with the particular vision that he articulated in España contemporánea. I am going to move to analyze Darío’s promotion of transatlantic trade in this collection of articles as a continuation of an awareness of Hispanic commerce initiated in the Centennial of 1892.

53 Apart from the Spanish publications mentioned above, Darío collaborated with a diverse number of Latin American magazines and newspapers, and even directed some: In Nicaragua he collaborated with El Termómetro, El Ensayo, La Verdad, La Gaceta, El Ferrocarril and El Porvenir de Nicaragua, in Chile with La Época in Argentina with La Nación and El Tiempo, in Salvador with La Unión, in Guatemala with El Correo de la Tarde and El Imparcial. Also, directed the magazines Mundial and Elegancias owned by the Uruguayan businessmen Rubén and Alfredo Guido.

54 In his transnational profile, we could add his institutional employment that connected him to several nations. Secretary of the Nicaraguan delegation in Spain in 1892 and in Brazil in 1906, Consul of Colombia in Buenos Aires in 1893, Secretary of the Argentinean Postmaster Officer in 1895, Consul of Nicaragua in Paris in 1903, Ambassador of Nicaragua in Spain in 1907, Nicaraguan Representative in Mexico in 1910.
España contemporánea: A Utilitarian View of Hispanism

Darío explains in his Autobiography that in December of 1898 he was sent to Spain as correspondent of the Argentinean newspaper La Nación, a convenient way for him to return to Europe:

Conversando, Julio Piquet me informó de que La Nación deseaba enviar un redactor a España para que escribiese sobre la situación en que había quedado la madre patria. “Estamos pensando en quién puede ir”, me dijo. Le contesté inmediatamente: “¡Yo!” Fuimos juntos a hablar con el señor De Vedia y con el director. Se arregló todo en seguida. “¿Cuándo quiere usted partir?”, me dijo el administrador. “¿Cuándo sale el primer vapor?” “Pasado mañana.” “¡Pues pasado mañana!” (99)

Dario’s account of the interest of La Nación in describing the state of Spain after its defeat in the Spanish-American war reveals the interest, even solidarity arisen in Latin America towards that rehabilitated “madre patria.” Argentina, with a growing Spanish immigrant population, was witnessing the emergence of a press focused upon the immigrant public, and publications such as El Correo Español showed an interest in strengthening ties with Spain (Garabedian 2009). In a parallel way, newspapers such as La Prensa and La Nación, which addressed a primarily Argentinean public from a landowner class and related to the Catholic church, showed an increasing interest in Spanish affairs and started to identify with the tenets of Hispanism. The conservative La
*Nación* in particular, hired many Spanish intellectuals as collaborators—Valera, Pardo Bazán, Palacio Valdés, Unamuno, Castelar—and in the 1920s the newspaper would support the flourishing of Hispanism, counting among its contributors Argentinean Hispanistas as Ricardo Rojas and Manuel Gálvez. The Hispanist approach became a key element in Darío’s professional career not only as a means to reach a transnational market and consolidate his relationship with press, writers and publishers across the ocean, but also in response to the demand of a particular sector of the Latin American press such as *La Nación*. This newspaper, with which Darío maintained one of his most long-lasting journalistic collaborations, provided him in 1898 not only with a travel opportunity but with two years of financial security, something he had lacked since he moved to Buenos Aires in 1893.

Darío’s increasing politicization after the Spanish-American war led him to see in the transatlantic rapprochement not only a means to provide a larger market for professional Latin American authors, but also a way to create a Hispanist protectionist front for the peripheral economies of Latin America and Spain. While his interests in the Spanish market clearly appeared in articles such as “Libreros y editores” and in his correspondence of that time period, when writing about a Hispanist association he mainly focused on the benefits that such union would provide for the different nations involved.

---

55 Although funded by the liberal Bartolomé Mitre in 1870, the newspaper would progressively acquire a more conservative character, becoming the representative of the Catholic church and the armed forces.

56 Darío struggled during this Argentinean period. In 1893 he was appointed consul of Colombia in Buenos Aires, a position that was cancelled in 1894. The following years, Darío published *Los raros* (1896) and *Prosas profanas* (1896), but as we know from his autobiography, they did not alleviate much his economic situation, leaving Darío quite dependent on his articles for *La Nación*. 
in the association. Hoisted as a Hispanist flag, *Cantos* presented an exaltation of the Hispanic race and a warning concerning the US threat, but did not articulate a concrete plan about how to materialize this defensive union. As if exercising a kind of division of contents according to genres, Darío circumscribed his practical vision of Hispanism to his journalistic articles for *La Nación*, in which he envisioned Hispanism as a strengthening of commercial ties that could elevate the deteriorated economies of Spain and Latin America and that could lay the groundwork for later cultural rapprochements.

Between January 1899 and May 1900, *La Nación* published fifty chronicles of Dario’s impressions on the state of Spain after the war, which the poet would later put together under the title of *España contemporánea* (1901). The variety of topics that the articles covered -the socioeconomic and political life of Spain as well as its literary and artistic scene- surprised some of Darío’s contemporaries, such as Miguel de Unamuno who criticized the lack of articulation of the work as a set. Recent critics like Iris Zavala have also called the work a compilation of notes, more an unstructured set of notes than a mature book. It can be argued, however, that *España contemporánea* responded to the original intention of the editor of *La Nación*: to present a diagnosis of the state of Spain and describe the cultural, economic and political life in the peninsula.

---

57 The first edition of *España contemporánea*, by the brothers Garnier in Paris in 1901, only included forty-two of the fifty original articles. In his excellent edition of this work, Rivas Bravo suggest that this might be due to the author missing these eight articles when outlining the manuscript. Unfortunately, following Garnier’s volume, most of the editions of the 20th century did not include the articles in its entirety.
While Darío’s articles presented themselves as having an unbiased tone in depicting Spanish reality, he also approached this trip with a feeling of solidarity towards Spain after the US’ victory. In his first article to *La Nación*, he would write:

> De nuevo en marcha, y hacia el país maternal que el alma americana - americanoespañola- ha de saludar siempre con respeto, ha de querer con cariño hondo. Porque si ya no es la antigua poderosa, la dominadora imperial, amarla el doble, y si está herida, tender a ella mucho más. (“En el mar” 73)

The affiliation with Spain is clear in talking of a “Spanish American soul” and in calling that nation “the maternal country.” Interestingly, while he was at the same time inverting his relationship with the “mother country,” assuming a maternal and protective attitude with an ex-metropole that had become more worthy of affection after turning “post”-imperial.

With the beginning of the Spanish-American war (April-August 1898), Dario started to promote the establishment of transnational alliances against the US’ growing interest in the area. In May 1898, he published in the Argentinean *El Tiempo* one of his most famous journalistic pieces, “El triunfo de Calibán.” The emphatic opening of the article, “No, no puedo estar de parte de esos búfalos de dientes de plata. Son enemigos míos, son los aborrecedores de la sangre latina, son los bárbaros” (85), depicted the conflict as a racial struggle highlighting the separation between the “Yankees,” and the “Latin.” Indeed, the article called for *latinidad* to stand up and assist Latin America against the US threat. The concept of Latinidad, first developed in Europe, later expanded to the former colonies of Spain (Litvak 1980) and was highly promoted in America.
during the French intervention in Mexico. After the Spanish-American war, this concept underwent a revival and Darío himself embraced this concept of *latinidad*, which offered him a link with the French culture he admired so much. Indeed, at the Panamerican Congress of 1898, he would qualify the Argentinean Saenz Peña, the French Paul Groussac and the Italian Antonio Tarnassi\(^\text{58}\) as “hombres representativos de nuestra raza” (86). To this Latin race, Darío conferred some of the characteristics that he would later endow to the Hispanic in *España contemporánea*, depicting the “Yankees” as Calibans only concerned for “la bolsa y la fábrica” and investing the “Latin” with a sentimental value, nonexistent among the “Yankees:”

> la raza nuestra debiera unirse, como se unen alma y corazón, en instantes atribulados; somos la raza sentimental, pero hemos sido también dueños de la fuerza: el sol no nos ha abandonado y el renacimiento es propio de nuestro árbol secular. (“El triunfo de Calibán” 88)

After exalting the common spirit and the call of blood, Darío would emphasize that in the name of these common characteristics, the racial union should be translated into a concrete Latin front. But while asking to stop conceiving of the Latin Union as a Utopian project, Darío himself obliterated the reality of European political affairs and the conflicting interests of the countries included in this Latinist vision. The European Latin nations did not hold any common project and in the case of France and Italy there was even political tension after the Italian alliance with England, France’s colonial competitor

---

\(^{58}\) The politician and later president of Argentina, Roque Saenz Peña, the French writer settled in Buenos Aires, Paul Groussac, and Antonio Tarnassi, the Italian lawyer and professor of Law at the University of Buenos Aires.
(Robles Muñoz 1997, 2001). Recognizing the unfeasibility of a Latin Union, Darío would redesign this model of transnational association to focus on the links between the Latin American republics and their former metropole. The characteristics that Darío would confer to the Hispanic race were strikingly similar to the Latin but he would frame Hispanism, or Pan Hispano-Americanism as he also called it, in more practical ways. While referring to the common bonds of culture, Darío envisioned a union based on commerce that could render benefits to the peripheral economies of Latin America and Spain and form a protectionist front against the US influence.

From the early 19th century, racial ideologies had promoted the idea that Latin catholic nations, and in particular Spain and its former colonies were “malos negociantes.” With the popularization of Darwinist and evolutionist theories in the 1860s, the dichotomy between Latin and Anglo-Saxon races was reinforced: Anglo-Saxon countries were naturalized as industrious and enterprising while Latin race was conceived as anti-mercantile. Hence, in the commercial imagination of the 19th century, Spain and Latin America occupied a peripheral space, representing the “Otherness” of capitalism.” These stereotypes were very strong not only abroad but also in Spain, where it was generally viewed as an unavoidable feature of the national character or in Latin America where it was often conceived as a biological trait unfortunately inherited from the Spanish.

During the time that Darío was in Spain as correspondent of La Nación, the debate was at its height. In 1897, the French Edmond Demolins published A Quoi Tient la Superiorite des Anglo-Saxons (1897) a work that was translated and appeared in Spain
in 1899. From Spain and Latin America many voices criticized this adverse depiction and vindicated the virtues of their nations opposed to Anglo-Saxon materialism. In “La ‘Sarmiento’ en España” an article from March 1900, Darío referred to this debate and quoted an unnamed journalist who questioned US civilization in comparison to theirs:

Un notable periodista ha hecho un paralelo entre la civilización norteamericana, tocándonos a nosotros, en un desarrollo más lento, la gracia de un bienhechor equilibrio, en que, por virtud del temperamento artístico de la raza, se contrapesan el ímpetu utilitario, el afán mercantil y el crecimiento industrial. (433)

From the context of the article, we infer that the “nosotros” that Darío employs here refers both to Latin America and Spain, establishing the notion of a “Hispanic race” in opposition to the Anglo-Saxon race epitomized in the US culture. In claiming here that the artistic spirit inherent in the Hispanic race serves to counterbalance the utilitarian inclination, Darío is going against the anti-commercial portrait of the Hispanic race by asserting the existence of an entrepreneurial spirit embellished, but not eliminated, by its counterpoint, the artistic temperament. Darío’s statement is representative of the project he would propose among many of his articles in España contemporánea: he defended a shared artistic and moral superiority over the Anglo-Saxons, but he aimed to insert Spain and Latin America in the commercial imagination of the 19th century, transforming their solidified image of being poorly gifted for business. His praise to the “beneficial balance”

---

59 In 1900 also appeared León Bazalgette’s *A quoi tient l’inferiorité française* and G. Sergi’s *La decadenza delle nazione latine* that were not translated into Spanish until 1904 and 1901 respectively. In 1903 appeared Colajanni’s *Latinos y anglosajones, razas superiores e inferiores* that appeared in Spain one year later and tried to offer a counterargument to the Latin pessimism but reversing the values associated to these two fronts.
between artistic and commercial disposition reveals that Darío aspired to integrate both, the balance being key to achieve a slower but more positive development.

After assigning this balanced character to the Hispanic race, he would move to promote a renewal of the Hispanic bond based on more “vital and practical” basis, a statement that reveals that Darío considered that up to that moment, the commercial exchange across the Atlantic had not been enough:

La prensa en general ha declarado la conveniencia de un mayor acercamiento con América y en especial con la República Argentina. Ha llegado el momento en que los vínculos morales se afiancen por otros más vitales y prácticos; y luego, en otro terreno, quizá no sería mala idea la de un panhispanoamericanismo por emergencias más que probables en lo futuro. (“La ‘Sarmiento’ en España” 435)

Concerning the threat of US imperialism, Darío is suggesting here a Pan-Hispanic alliance sustained on material ties. It is quite paradoxical that he employs the euphemism of “practical bonds” to refer to commerce, when he assigns such an important role to it. Commerce is described here as the best means to consolidate the ground for strengthening the transatlantic relations, a conception that resembles Montesquieu’s *doux commerce*, a doctrine that proposed that trade supported cultural exchange and could soften international conflicts. In a daring supersession of the antithesis of morality and commerce, Darío would claim that moral bonds should be consolidated by these “practical” means. In supporting this argument, he recalled the opinion of the general press, a call that together with the promotion of the conciliatory character of commerce, could be interpreted as an insinuation about transferring the debate on the Hispanic bond
from the academies to entrepreneurs and the press, a sphere more explicitly inscribed in the market economy.

Indeed, Darío argued that a new set of agents should be appointed in order to fortify the economic relationship between the two sides. In supporting commerce as a solid means to strengthen this relation and providing examples on how to expand this commercial exchange, he criticized previous approaches based on mutual praises that proved to be empty and inefficient:

Tales formas de relación entre España y América serán seguramente más provechosas, duraderas y fundamentales que las mutuas zalemas pasadas de un iberoamericanismo de miembros correspondientes de la Academia, de ministros que taquinan la musa, de poetas que “piden” la lira. (“Madrid” 95)

Although it is not stated explicitly, the reference to this academic flattery might very well stand for many of the poems and discourses read in 1892 at the Ateneo or in any of the multiple conferences. Darío aimed to take the leadership of the transatlantic approach away from institutions such as the Academy or the Ateneo, which he portrayed as ossified. Instead, he called for the intervention of the government in supporting entrepreneurs, industrialists and artists: “El gobierno, pues, es quien debe ayudar a los industriales, comerciantes, artistas y hombres de pensamiento a estrechar, o a crear esas relaciones que se desean” (“La ‘Sarmiento’ en España” 435). He wanted to deacademize the debate on the Hispanic union and move it beyond discourse to material measures. Among writers, he would especially acknowledge the importance of journalists in achieving this goal:
Lo que resultó claro entre nosotros, que si algún elemento dirigente puede llevar por buena dirección la deseada unidad de miras ideales en España y la América española, es la prensa, son los hombres de idea y de pluma. Primero, conocerse; después, comprenderse; después, estimarse y unirse. Quienes disponen de la publicidad forman la atmósfera. Una visita de elementos intelectuales españoles a la República Argentina, sería un gran paseo. El congreso que se proyecta en Madrid, otro; como en él se trate de algo más que de dar salida a preparadas oraciones. (“La ‘Sarmiento’ en España” 435)

The congress Darío mentioned here was “El Congreso social y económico ibero-americano” to be celebrated in Madrid in November, 1900. Darío would indeed devote a whole article to this congress for which he held great expectations given its socio-economic theme. The reference in this quotation to the congress not getting dissolved into mere speeches highlights his desire to transcend inefficient discourses on Hispanic solidarity and seal Hispanic feeling through economic measures and commercial treaties. In this new direction, we see how Darío appointed the press as an agent of change. With this appointment, Darío was conferring himself a position of authority in leading this association as well as giving more legitimacy to the transatlantic proposal unfolded in his articles from España contemporánea. While criticizing the unviability of purely culturalist discourses, he appealed to the men of “idea y pluma,” the artists reconverted into journalists who in their professionalization knew how to write within and for the market.
He himself as a journalist provided concrete ideas on how to strengthen the Pan-Hispanic commerce, charting a pragmatic vision on the transatlantic relationship that sharply contrasted with the epic tone of *Cantos*. While “Salutación” encouraged the union of so many “vigores dispersos” (38) through an evocative but abstract language, his journalistic work was characterized by its dynamic rhythm and its specialized vocabulary in defining in precise steps how this union should be carried out. A great example of this pragmatism is his article “Madrid” where Darío forged a strong proposal of exchanging Argentinean meat for Spanish textile. For Darío, this exchange would consolidate the transatlantic relation and improve the economy of both countries. Hence the article provided precise details in carry the enterprise:

Mucho podría ser el comercio hispano-argentina, y al objeto, según tengo entendido, no ha cesado de trabajar el señor ministro Quesada. Aquí podrían venir las carnes argentinas, ya que no en la común forma del tasajo, conservadas por los procedimientos hoy en uso; y la mayoría de este pueblo que tiene casi como base principal de alimentación el bacalao, que importa de Suecia y Noruega, comería carne sana y nutritiva. Luego sería cuestión de ver si se adaptaba para el consumo del ejército y marina. Por lo pronto, la Sociedad Rural de Buenos Aires podría hacer el ensayo, enviando en limitadas cantidades la carne conservada, y por los resultados que se obtuvieran, se procedería en lo de adelante. España enviaría sus lienzos, sus sederías, sus demás productos que allí

---

60 Vicente G. Quesada, Argentinean writer, historian and politician who attended the celebrations of 1892 and who became the head of the Argentinean delegation in Madrid. As appears in his autobiography, Darío would frequented him quite often when visiting the Argentinean delegation during his second stay in Spain.
The vocabulary deployed, rather than poetic, appears specialized in his enumeration of the economic and sanitary advantages of the importation of Argentinean meat in exchange for Spanish textiles. Furthermore, his interest in maximizing the exchange by making a charter to transport commodities in both directions also displays a commercial vision in obtaining maximal productivity. This insistence on a multilateral exchange between Spain and Argentina shows his commitment to create a protectionist Hispanic alliance that would avoid the economic dependence that both countries sustained with foreign nations. In his scheme, Argentina remained as an exporter of raw materials while Spain appeared as the manufacturer of products, a vision that contrasted with Martí’s Pan-Latin Americanist protectionism and his emphasis in “Nuestra América” on Latin Americans developing as creators and manufacturers. Darío was expanding here Martí’s geographical area of action to promote a Hispanist instead of Pan-Latin Americanist protectionist front, and hence did not seem concerned with the roles - extractor or manufacturer- that countries acquired within the Hispanic community. Indeed, these roles could even be quite fluid, as Darío proposed in the same article that Spain import Argentinean cows to repopulate the empty Andalusian prairies. Although he seemed not to care about the distinction between manufacturing and extracting raw materials.

---

61 On Spanish economy and foreign debt, see the work of Joseph Harrison (1978). For an introduction to Latin American export boom of raw material see Topik and Wells (1997)
materials, he would be quite clear that Latin Americans were the leading contenders in literary production.

In his article “El Congreso social y económico ibero-americano,” Darío called for a rapid solution to solidify relations with Latin America through tangible, material means, commenting that the leadership that Latin American literature was achieving should help in reinforcing social and economic ties: “En lo social, se podrán crear nuevos y más estrechos vínculos, sobre todo ahora que la producción intelectual americana empieza, primeriza y todo, a imponerse” (382). Darío was definitely referring to the Spanish American modernismo which had reversed the flow of cultural importation. While Ricardo Palma warned that the Peninsular tendency to presume cultural authority could create “susceptibilidades de nacionalismo” (Epistolario 2: 161) and hence embitter the Latin American markets, Darío -carefully avoiding any directly controversial statements such as Palma’s- implicitly suggested that the preeminence of Latin American literature would dismiss any Spanish aspirations of cultural leadership. Throughout España contemporánea, we find Darío convinced of Latin American cultural superiority over the decayed Spanish literary scene that for the author, could not possibly exercise its influence in Latin America. However, he concluded with the positive assertion that Spain could still retain a certain influence by promoting a commerce based on Hispanic solidarity: “La influencia española, perdida ya en lo literario, en lo social, en lo artístico, puede hacer algo en lo comercial, y esto será a mi ver el alma del futuro congreso” (“El Congreso social y económico ibero-americano” 382).
The previous quotation seemed to be addressed to a Spanish public to which the author intended to provide advice. Although these articles were written for the Argentinean *La Nación* -as seen in his favoring of the Spanish-Argentinean commerce over Spanish transatlantic exchanges with other Latin American nations- he was also concerned with the Spanish public. Darío was aware of the growing number of Spanish immigrants in Argentina and that his impressions, especially if collected in a volume as ultimately happened, would also be of special interest in Spain.\(^{62}\) Hence, although he envisioned transatlantic commerce as a multilateral exchange with benefits for all actors he would devote great part of his attention to suggesting ways of improving the deteriorated Spanish economy. As such an economic diagnosis required a systematic delineation of the flaws of the Spanish financial and commercial state, Darío felt the need to assert his affection for the country: “no creo que sea yo sospechoso de faltos de afectos a España. He probado mis simpatías de manera que no admite el caso discusión. Pero por lo mismo no he de engañar a los españoles de América y a todos los que me lean” (“Madrid” 97). Indeed, in writing about the special advantages that transatlantic commerce would render to Spain, he had to address the post-98 situation as well as the financial administration of the colonial period, two delicate subjects revealing the less glorious aspects of the country.

---

\(^{62}\) Indeed, *España contemporánea* would be reviewed by Unamuno, Emilia Pardo Bazán and Leopoldo Alas, Clarín. Although Unamuno considered that the work lacked coherence, his review was quite positive. Regarding his portrait of Spain, Pardo Bazán judged Darío as objective but sympathetic. On this vein, she would make a very interesting comment on Darío being “hispano” but not “español:” “Rubén Darío, que es lo bastante *hispano* para conocernos rápidamente y asimilarse a esta atmósfera, no es español, por esas invisibles mordazas de la *camaradería* y la complicidad periodística” (“Embajadas”). Clarín, on the contrary, would consider that *España contemporánea* showed the diplomatic character of his author: “se ve un hombre listo, práctico, de gusto, que sabe de liotes y de eufemismos, que calla cuando quiere y habla cuando le conviene” (“La publicidad”).
Darío would extensively write about these two points in “El Congreso social y económico ibero-americano,” the conference we mentioned above whose purpose was to increase transatlantic commercial relations. He would highlight here the benefits that this relationship would bring to a post-98 Spain, which the author examines with certain compassion:

Después del desastre, recogida en su propio hogar, piensa con cordura en la manera de volver a recuperar algo de lo perdido, ya que no en imposibles reconquistas territoriales, lo que pueda en el terreno de las simpatías nacionales y de los mercados para su producción. (376)

The personification of Spain as defeated and self-reflective at home reveals a certain sympathy for Spain, which Darío portrays as sensibly thinking after the “disaster.” By this depiction of Spain thinking “con cordura” Darío referred to the Spanish acknowledgement of its current postcolonial status, a situation in which the only feasible aspirations vis-à-vis Latin America were those in the terrain of commerce and diplomacy. Darío echoed Valera when the later commented in 1892 that a Hispanic union could never again be based on territorial dominion but only achieved through cultural and commercial exchange. The difference however is that while Valera believed that the idea of a common Hispanic race could encourage transatlantic commerce, Darío seemed to regard commerce as a vehicle to promote a sense of common identity.

In this same article, Darío embarks on an economic diagnosis of Spanish colonial history and the effects that colonization brought to the peninsula. Darío shows an impressive knowledge of economic history, quoting an abundant list of historians -Weiss,
Agustín García, Moreau de Jonnès, Gestoso y Pérez, de Ustáriz\textsuperscript{63} to elaborate a thesis on Spain’s financial decay as the result of a negligent economic administration during the colonial period. In contrast to Spanish authors who claimed that the Spanish had invested their blood as capital in America,\textsuperscript{64} Rubén Darío recalled the extractive activity of the Spanish and pointed out that their massive importation of American gold destabilized the economic and social life of the peninsula. Darío’s thesis about the negative impact of the American gold in Spanish economic structure surprisingly preceded future classic economic works such as Earl J. Hamilton’s \textit{American Treasure and the Price Revolution in Spain, 1501-1650} (1934) and influenced by Ustáriz,\textsuperscript{65} pointed to the British, French and Dutch as the main beneficiaries of the American gold. Although Darío referred to the Spanish extraction of metals in the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} century, he added that Spain did not participate in the commercial exploitation that other European nations had undertaken from the 18\textsuperscript{th} to the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Paralleling Ricardo Palma’s statements, Darío pointed out that Spain had missed out until only very recently on the profitable American market:

\begin{quote}
También es cierto que la antigua metrópoli no se ha acordado de que existíamos unos cuantos millones de hombres de lengua castellana en ese continente, hasta
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{63} See Charles Weiss, French Historian \textit{L'espagne Depuis Le Rgne De Philippe II Jusqu'a L'avnement Des Bourbons} (1846), Juan Agustín García \textit{El régimen colonial} (1898), Alexandre Moreau de Jonnès \textit{Statistique de l'Espagne: Territoire, population, agriculture, industrie, commerce, navigation, colonies, finances} (1834), José Gestoso y Pérez \textit{Las industrias artísticas antiguas de Sevilla} (1899), Jerónimo de Ustáriz \textit{Teoría y práctica de Comercio y Marina} (1724)

\textsuperscript{64} See the excellent article of Loureiro (2003) on Galdós’ articulating this discourse on the Latin American debt in exchange for the blood capital.

\textsuperscript{65} Ustáriz’ \textit{Teoría y práctica de Comercio y Marina} (1724) recommended controlling the flight of metals to Europe as well as the promotion of the national industries to reduce the importation of Northern European manufactures.
Darío’s comments on the disastrous commercial trajectory of Spain in Latin America presents a certain damaged pride at the lack of attention from the former metropole but also adopts the neutral tone of an economic commentator who points out the serious mistake of not taking advantage of a propitious market.

The convenience of regaining a market with whom Spain shared language is frequently repeated by Darío, who sees in Latin America the remedy for the Spanish decline:

España quiere levantarse; quiere volver a ser grande y la orientación que le conviene seguir es la que hacia las naciones nuestras la atrae. Económicamente se va rehaciendo en lo relativo, poco a poco. El continente nuestro, al que la unen idioma y una parte de la raza, tiene que ser uno de sus principales campos de acción. (“La ‘Sarmiento’ en España” 435)

Darío’s interest in watching over Spain’s interest confirms his commitment to a Pan-Hispano-Americanist union from which he believed all parties would benefit. Although the convenience of an association of that kind was frequently framed for an Argentinean or Spanish audience -as they were of the most interest to La Nación- he considered this commercial movement beneficial for all Latin American nations, especially those like Mexico or the Central American republics that were closer to the US:

La expansión futura del imperialismo anglosajón no es un sueño; y la probabilidades de una lucha de razas tampoco. Los países débiles, que están cerca...
As in “El triunfo del Calibán,” Darío articulates the US-Latin America relationship as a racial conflict, but this time he presents it as a Hispanic and Anglo-Saxon confrontation. In “El triunfo del Calibán” the Latin American people were classified sometimes as Hispanic and sometimes as Latin, that is, restricting the affiliation to Spain and its former colonies or expanding it to Latin countries such as France and Italy. The relation with France implied in the definition of Latin made this a very seductive category for Darío but In España contemporánea, -either because of his public or because of the lack of action in creating a transnational Latin alliance as he suggested in the Panamerican Congress- he focused on the relation between Latin America and Spain.

Darío did not escape from the construction of Hispanic idealism and in this and other articles would appoint Spain as the moral counterpoint that Latin American republics needed to counter the threat of the US’ growing influence. Similar to the way that Acosta de Samper employed the symbol of Spain to diminish the French impact on Colombia, Darío envisioned Spain as the “spiritual” safeguard of Latin American nations. Spain was ultimately endowed with that spiritual character that represented one of the best assets of the Hispanist proposal but which at the same time conflicted with the presentation of Hispanism as a commercial and modernizing project. The “spiritual”
feature that Acosta de Samper identified as the element that would prevent the corrupting effects of modernization problematized Darío’s commercial vision.

Darío reached a point of contradiction. Aiming to promote the commercial life of Spain and Latin America, he still needed to establish certain discursive limits, insisting on the importance of preserving a spiritual character. In “La Pardo Bazán en París” Darío criticized Pardo Bazán for questioning the benefits of the Golden legend that praised Spanish spirituality, arguing that on the contrary, Spain ought to revisit and preserve that line of spirituality which he also called “idealism” in opposition to Anglo-Saxon materialism:

España será idealista o no será. Una España práctica, con olvido absoluto del papel que hasta hoy ha representado en el mundo es una España que no se concibe. Bueno es una Bilbao cuajada de chimeneas y una Cataluña sembrada de fábricas. Trabajo por todas partes; progreso cuanto se quiera y se pueda; pero quede campo libre en donde Rocinante encuentre pasto y el Caballero crea divisar ejércitos de gigantes. (“La Pardo Bazán en París” 180)

As he states in this first sentence, Darío believes that for its subsistence, Spain has no choice but to be idealist. By referring to the role of Spain in the world, Darío was subscribing to the vision of writers such as Valera, who aimed to vindicate the historical

66 Opposed to the Black legend, this Golden legend praised Spanish colonization and insist on the Spanish spirituality brought to the continent during it. Dario comments in this article that Pardo Bazán gave a conference in Paris about the Black and Golden legend. Although Dario praises her questioning on the Black, he completely disagrees with her interpretation of the Golden legend: “La primera [the Golden legend], dice la señora Pardo Bazán, ha sido la causa de los desastres actuales. […] formó un pueblo optimista, quijotesco, vanidoso, que con castillos en el aire compensaría su decadencia y su pobreza” (179). For Darío, this Golden legend, reminds citizens of the values of spirituality and idealism.
past of Spain as a work of progress and moral teaching. Spain became the capital or “safeguard” of Hispanic spirituality. We see Darío struggling to reconcile spirituality with economic development as he depicted the later possibly threatening the existence of the former. And while the text intended to integrate spiritualism and commercialism, the tension between the two was revealed in the author’s warning concerning the Basque Country and Catalonia, whose commercialism and progress could endanger Don Quixote’s idealism. Although he admired the dynamism of the industrial regions, he found that a certain quixotian character was needed to reach that “beneficial balance” which for Darío distinguished the Hispanic from the Anglo-Saxons. Although in different ways, Darío was trying, like Valera and Acosta de Samper, to combine the unceasing paradigm of progress with the idea of a Hispanic spirituality that marked their cultural difference as a community.

**Conclusion**

In December of 1932, Ramiro de Maeztu published a review of Rubén Darío’s work in Acción española, focusing on the years in which, according to Maeztu, “el tema de la defensa de la Hispanidad llena el alma del poeta.” The article, called “Rubén Darío y los talentos” acknowledged the enormous authority of Rubén Darío as the most prominent figure of the modernismo and precisely celebrated the Hispanist shift of the author who had led the very literary movement which Maeztu qualified of anti-Spanish. Maeztu would even characterize the poet as a “profeta del Hispanismo,” qualifying some of Dario’s verses as a magical type of poetry that encouraged the defense of the Hispanic front:
En la emoción de la España vencida se inspiró Rubén para sus _Cantos de Vida y Esperanza_. […] El primero de esos Cantos es la «Salutación del optimista», único himno hispanoamericano que tenemos. Si un instinto de salvación nos quisiera mover a preparar el espíritu de las nuevas generaciones para la defensa de las tierras hispánicas, no habría ceremonial en que no se recitaran las mágicas estrofas:

¡Ínclitas razas ubérrimas, sangre de Hispania fecunda,
espíritus fratemos, luminosas almas, salve! (103)

As we see here, _Cantos de vida y esperanza_ (1905) played a decisive role in Darío’s hispanization. This collection of poems became almost a foundational work, some of his images being employed as mythical, heroic verses of the Hispanic union. Employing poems such as “Salutación del optimista” Peninsular Hispanists would portray Darío as an emblem of Hispanism, promoting the movement with the appeal of a figure such as Darío and presenting a narrative of Hispanic rediscovery after a period of deviation.

However, literary criticism has been more careful in its treatment of the Hispanic character and the critical concentration on _Cantos_ has diverted attention from Darío’s experience in 1892 and his ensuing work _España contemporánea_ which offers us a new dimension of Darío’s interpretation of the transatlantic relation. While Darío praised the common Hispanic blood and race in his poetry, his discourse on transatlantic trade shows us that the author considered commerce the strongest means to put Latin America and Spain in communication. Although Darío believed that Latin America had diverged from Spain at a linguistic, cultural and racial level, he still believed that Latin American
nations and their former metropole shared a spiritual and artistic character that could balance commercial activities and hence could develop a slower but divergent progress from the Anglo-Saxons. He also envisioned that this Hispanic commerce would reduce Latin American and Spanish economic dependencies, creating a front of solidarity between their peripheral economies. Furthermore, the literary production of Latin American and Spanish authors, a production little known outside of their respective nations, could benefit, if not from broader markets, at least from all the Hispanic public. As a professional writer who moved in a transnational market, Darío envisioned Hispanic commerce as the vehicle to consolidate transatlantic relations and to provide benefits to their nations and their intellectuals, who needed broader markets in an age of literary professionalization.
CONCLUSION: 1492, 1892, 1992 AND BEYOND

The varied interpretations of Hispanism studied in this dissertation reveal that the idea of a Hispanic bond holds a semiotic multiplicity that allows this discourse to survive through time and to embody diverse ideologies. Furthermore, the adhesion of so many different agendas to the claim of common language, blood and spirit, reminds us of the persuasive and fruitful character of writing in producing national or transnational identities and promoting political and economic enterprises through discourse. Invoking these powerful but abstract categories of race, culture and spirituality, the Hispanism that emerged on the occasion of the Centennial should be conceived not as a homogeneous movement but rather a series of interpretations that even clashed with one another while proclaiming their unity. However, these tensions do not diminish the potentiality of Hispanism to revive itself time and again in different fashions. Indeed, these tensions, a product of divergent interpretations of the Hispanic bond, show Hispanism as a multiple and on-going articulation, as a flexible signifier whose malleability endows it with a considerable longevity.

By focusing on 1892, I wanted to detach Hispanism from its common association with 1898, showing that rather than being a reaction to a single historical event, Hispanism was already an on-going articulation. 1892 provided me with a perfect case study because of the flourishing of Hispanist discourses due to the significance of the date, an anniversary that made this transatlantic study even more suitable. 1892 obviously recalls the originating event of 1492, moment with which all the transatlantic remain in dialogue and from whence identitarian rewriting begins. The first anniversary of the
colonization with the colonies having achieved an independent political identity is also paradigmatic of a new stage in the transatlantic dialogue: a stage in which regardless of political union and territoriality, discourse on the abstract bonds mentioned above would proclaim the existence of a transnational community.

To conclude this study and show Hispanism as a flexible, on-going articulation, I want to finish by drawing out the continuities in the discursive practices surrounding the celebrations of the 5th Centennial, examining how the idea of a Hispanic bond continues to influence and shape the transatlantic exchanges of the present day. The Hispanist discourse that thrived in the early 20th century and our contemporary transatlantic exchanges seem to share lines of continuity with 1892 in their employment of the idea of common heritage, language and culture to serve multiple agendas while favoring investments and economic transactions.

In May of 1976, Juan Carlos I made his first official trip as king of Spain to the Dominican Republic, a visit without precedent, making him the first Spanish monarch to visit Latin America. In his speech to Joaquín Balager, the president of the Dominican Republic, Juan Carlos I praised the common characteristics of Spain and his host country, an enumeration quite familiar to us by the end of this study: “la lengua, la cultura, la historia, la sangre, la arquitectura de las ciudades y el estilo de vida.” As María Escudero (1996) has analyzed, the post-Franquist discourse on Latin America maintained many striking similarities with the Falangist rhetoric of the transatlantic bond, and indeed the speech sounds surprisingly conservative and old-fashion for being the mid-1970s. The resemblance of this speech to the Falangist Hispanist discourse appears less striking
however, when considering that the recipient of it was the intimate associate of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, Joaquín Balager, who as president of the Dominican Republic, distinguished himself for his authoritarian methods and undertaking visible projects highly advertised by government-controlled media.

After repeated signs of affection, the king concluded by calling for the help of the Dominican Republic in organizing in Spain the Third Ibero-American Exhibition, an event that was being conceived as part of the celebrations of the 5th Centennial:

Reanudando una noble tradición familiar y monárquica, desearía que se celebrase en España, si todos me ayudáis, la III Exposición Internacional Iberoamericana.67

[…] Nuestros pueblos están a punto. Pueden hacer un alarde. Tienen que hacerlo. Sólo precisan demostrar lo que son, demostrar lo que hacen. Para mí, personalmente, nada más alentador que iniciar mi reinado con esta empresa y convertirme en patrocinador de vuestro esfuerzo y en portavoz de vuestro espíritu. […] quiero proclamar desde esta ciudad primada de América mi fe en el futuro de la República Dominicana, que se abre lleno de esperanza ante nosotros, y nuestra firme decisión de mantenernos fieles al mundo hispánico al que, en frase de Vuestra Excelencia, nos sentimos para siempre vinculados por obra de la sangre y por mandato de la historia.

For Spain, at the time one of the poorest countries in Europe and barely starting its transition to democracy (1975-1982), the idea of a future exhibition implied a significant

---

67 In his speech Juan Carlos referred to the two exhibitions promoted by his grandfather, Alfonso XIII, in Sevilla and Barcelona as Ibero-American but actually only the one in Sevilla in 1929 (May 1929-June 1930) hold such title. The one in Barcelona took place almost simultaneously (May 1929-January 1930) but was announced as “Exposición Internacional de Barcelona.”
economic and institutional challenge but also an opportunity to show that the country was expected to be reintegrated into democratic life. At the same time, for Juan Carlos I, who referred to the exhibition as a “monarchist tradition,” it also represented a means to reaffirm the constitutional role of a monarchy that had been eliminated with the advent of the Second Republic. Like in 1892, the anniversary of 1492 became for the Spanish government an occasion to “hacer un alarde,” to promote a favorable portrayal of the country, a display of modernization that would present Spain as just one more prosperous European nation. And in a parallel way to the instrumentalization of the 4th Centennial, the 500th anniversary became an ideal occasion for that display, revealing that at the end of the 20th century, Spanish national representation still drew on rewriting the colonization and on preserving a close relationship with Latin America. While not aiming to revive colonial domination itself, this “close relationship” has allowed Spain to present itself internationally as a mediator with Latin America, with presidents and politicians from the two main parties, having referred to Spain as a bridge between Europe or the US with Latin America.

The organization of the 5th Centennial took off right at the beginning of the Spanish transition, at the same time that a strong diplomatic approach was being implemented in Latin America. The post-Franquist Spain aimed to be both “europeista” and “iberoamericanista,” turning this duality into an asset: a mediator with Latin America for Europe, and a gate to Europe for Latin America. As we see in this quotation, Juan Carlos I was recovering the idea of the community of the “mundo hispánico” (as he himself called it) through this “iberoamericanismo”, a discursive frame that repeated so
many of the iterations of surrounding 1892. Typical of a century before, he would employ the possessive “nuestros” to reinforce the idea of shared community, finally offering himself as the representative of the efforts and more importantly, the “spirit” of the Dominican Republic. By employing the alleged words of Balager -the powerful resource of quoting a Latin American who shares and takes part in the same discourse- the monarch’s speech defended the idea that blood and history united Spain and the Dominican Republic, ultimately implying a supranational identity, that of the “Hispanic world,” to which Spain was going to remain faithful.

The project of the Third Ibero-American Exhibition that the quotation referred to would ultimately transform into a more ambitious project, the Universal Exhibition in Sevilla in 1992, envisioned as a spectacle of the progress and modernity of a post-franquist Spain integrated in the European Union. Taking advantage of the anniversary to gain supporters in the International Olympic Committee, Barcelona organized the Olympic Games while Madrid asked to be the European Cultural Capital in 1992 for the year of the 5th Centennial. The anniversary of the commencement of American colonization was chosen as the occasion to present Spain as a modern and prosperous society that had overcome the Spain of the dictatorship, an choice that speaks of the enormous symbolic value that this date, with its potential to be repeatedly rewritten, still holds for the national and international imagination. Indeed, in an article published in El País in January 1992, the president of the National Commission of the Fifth Centennial, Luis Yáñez-Barnuevo, proposed to face the commemoration without shame, an attitude that pervades the whole article in its embellishment of the date. In “En el año del quinto
“Centenario” Yáñez-Barnuevo manipulated historical memory, evading the violence of the early conquest and the cultural isolationism of the colonization to present 1492 as a key event in human progress as a whole. Paralleling the commemorative bills that presented the conquest as a scientific venture, aligning Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro with José Celestino Mutis and Jorge Juan y Santacilia (see figs. 21, 22, 23 & 24), Yáñez-Barnuevo’s article reconstructed 1492 as a quest of exploration. Recycling and updating some of the strategies that we found in Valera’s texts of 1892, Yáñez-Barnuevo’s article and many of the discourses and advertising around the 5th Centennial would emphasize the character of adventure and exploration of colonization. But unlike the 4th Centennial, the celebrations of 1992 in Spain would refer to a bidirectionality in this encounter, responding to a claim that became strong in the 20th century, of acknowledging the impact of America on Spain and Europe. However, as we see in the article by Yáñez-Barnuevo, this claim of bidirectionality would be employed to present Europe as indebted to Spain for having “discovered” a continent that would transform European reality.

This misuse of historical memory around the 5th Centennial definitely shows a continuity with the Centennial of 1892, revealing a recycling and transformation of the Hispanism. Eduardo Subirats even referred to Maeztu’s Hispanidad when commenting that “la celebración del Centenario implicitamente perfila, […] una línea continua con respecto al ideario protofascista de la hispanidad” (1994: 15). The line of continuity that Subirats establishes here with the Hispanism of the 1930s, could also be extended to earlier interpretations of Hispanism, showing this endurance of this kind of writing. Apart from Subirats, the celebrations of 1992 have been analyzed and criticized by several other
critics such as Perla Petrich (1994) and Marina Pérez de Mendiola (1996). Critics coincide in pointing out that the celebrations lacked serious historical revision and that instead, which was replaced instead by a media spectacle that connected the historical moment -renamed as “La Era de los Descubrimientos”- with a post-modern and technological country, a new post-Franchist Spain integrated in the European Union. Once again, the Centennial works as a stage in which the capitalization of the past serves to appoint the country as a progressive, path-breaking nation.

On the other hand, what was the evaluation of the 5th Centennial and the transatlantic relationship by Latin Americans? Around 1992 an extensive bibliography appeared reflecting on these issues; among others, Eduardo Galeano’s El descubrimiento de América que todavía no fue (1987) compilations by Mario Benedetti, Nuestra América contra el V Centenario (1989), Adolfo Colombres, A los 500 años del choque de dos mundos: balance y prospectiva, (1989), Gioconda Belli, 1492-1992, la interminable conquista: emancipación e identidad de América Latina (1991) and Leopoldo Zea, El Descubrimiento de América y su impacto en la historia (1991). These works shared concerns about the representation of conquest during the celebrations of the 5th Centennial, and converged in highlighting the bidirectionality of cultural influence. Several of these works also criticized the employment of the term “Discovery” promoting instead, the idea of “Encounter,” and influenced by theories of development, authors like Galeano and Belli analyzed the contemporary situation of Latin America as a product of a repeated plundering initiated with the Spanish colonization.
This historical review undertaken in Latin America aimed to serve as an exercise for understanding and reflecting on contemporary problems of the Latin American countries, with an approach to the colonization that in most cases tried to be unruffled. As Eduardo Galeano synthesized, “ni leyenda negra, ni leyenda rosa” (“Los quinientos años” 375). Indeed, this historical review did not seem to affect their evaluation of the contemporary relationship with Spain. Through the compilations mentioned above, articles in magazines and a series of conferences organized in Spain, “Tribuna 92,” we see that most Latin American authors considered the relationship with Spain under a positive light. Between the period of our study and this 5th Centennial we must take into consideration several other elements that shaped the transatlantic relation: the considerable and uninterrupted Spanish immigration from the turn of the century to the end of Franquism, the solidarity that the Spanish Civil War germinated among the Latin America left, and finally the reverse exile of Latin American authors taking shelter in Spain during the rise of Latin American dictatorships in the seventies. And so, although the inflated rhetoric of a century ago was mostly overcome, we still find references to the “madre patria” or the “patria de las patrias.” Galeano himself would talk of dos hispanidades, one that he identifies with the Falangists, and another one that he appoints as a possible model of transatlantic “rediscovery:”

La otra hispanidad, la de las trincheras democráticas, puede encontrar ahora, en la España actual, nuevos cauces de realización. […] Esta otra hispanidad puede abrir inmensos espacios de encuentro y de reencuentro, de descubrimiento y de
This mutual transatlantic “rediscovery” seemed to be desired by a generation of Latin American intellectuals who, influenced by the theories of dependency from the 60s and outraged by Reagan’s foreign policy, positioned themselves once again against the US government and ready to reconsider their relationship with Spain. Galeano speaks here of promoting a new transatlantic solidarity under the name of “hispanidad.”

This idea of transatlantic solidarity can also be found in Mario Benedetti’s article “La América por Descubrir,” in which he criticized the aspiration of the United States to once again organize an Exhibition in Chicago to parallel to the one in Sevilla.68 The writer argued that the United States would reappropriate the Centennial while Latin America would remain the “undiscovered” continent. In the predicament of observing the US’ attempt to monopolize the celebrations while Europe remained distant from Latin America, Benedetti says that he has high hopes that Spain, unlike Europe, would “discover” them: “Del resto de Europa no esperamos mucho; de España, sí. Ojalá que algún día zarpe una Pinta II, y cuando algún marinero (o piloto o cosmonauta, da lo mismo) descubra, por fin, esa América inédita, dé el aviso con salvas.” While this should not be understood as colonial nostalgia, it indeed represents a great predisposition for strengthening bonds with Spain, whose democratic transition and its entrance to the European Union improved the image of Spain at the same time that the country was

---

68 Like a century before, the celebrations were also coveted by France and the US but unlike in the past, this time only Spain finally organized the commemoration. For quite some time in the 20th century, such exhibitions started to be seen as an obsolete and quite wasteful system of representation, and the US and France decided not to embark in the project.
preparing for the 5th Centennial. Like a century ago, *hispanidad*, as Galeano puts it, is considered as an mutually beneficial alliance in a world system which the author feels ignores or threatens Latin America.

While at the turn of the 19th century the Hispanist discourse on common bonds would not translate into a concrete political rapprochement, the idea of an Ibero-American Summit of Heads of States and Governments would be forged through a transatlantic dialogue promoted by the imminence of the 5th Centennial. During his visit to Mexico in January 1990, Juan Carlos I was promoting the idea of organizing an Ibero-American Conference in Spain in 1992, while reiterating his commitment to consolidating a transatlantic alliance. This alliance would intervene in conflicts of countries that, in the words of Juan Carlos, “sentimos como hermanos nuestros,” an effort that he explained as a Hispanist urge: “no sólo nos lo demanda una historia, una lengua y una sangre común, sino nuestra propia razón de ser, nuestro más íntimo compromiso con lo que es nuestra esencia más recóndita.” The bonds of language, history, blood and essence or spirit reappear here to justify a transatlantic summit that would face political and economical questions on the American continent. The Mexican president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, proposed this meeting to be celebrated annually with the first summit taking place in Mexico in 1991 and the second one in Spain in 1992.

Then and now, the celebrations of the “discovery” came accompanied by economic projects. The 1990s became the golden decade of Spanish investments in Latin America (Casilda Bejar 2002) with companies such as Telefónica, Repsol YPF, Iberdrola, Endesa SCH, BBVA and many others benefiting from transatlantic approaches
that had been articulated through the recycled and renovated rhetoric of the Hispanic common bond. But as Javier Noya has studied, the idea of sharing culture and values created a series of expectations from the Spanish corporations that were not fulfilled:

Como consecuencia de la lengua, hábitos y valores compartidos entre América Latina y España se pone de manifiesto un umbral de expectativas muy alto hacia la inversión española en términos de compromiso con el bienestar de la población y la modernización de la región. Se esperaba de España que contribuyese más activamente a la mejora de las condiciones de vida de los países latinoamericanos.

(58)

In a parallel way to Benedetti’s expectations of Spain “discovering” an America unknown to the US, Noya’s market studies point out that Latin Americans expected Spanish companies to be more philanthropic than those of the US. The imagination of a transatlantic solidarity continued one century later, permeating economic transactions across the Atlantic.

As a polyvalent signifier, Hispanism has persisted through history since 1892, representing multiple and contradictory ideological projects across the Atlantic, projects that have stimulated economic transactions, the creation of national histories and even the alliance of the “Hispanic” nations in the international scene. The disparity of projects promoted under the Hispanist flag have endowed the signifier “Hispanismo” with both the ability to estrange and bring together the set of nations claimed as “Hispanic;” leading writers such as Galeano to talk of a “good” and a “bad” Hispanism. Regardless of what is “bad” or “good” or how many versions of Hispanism we can encounter, the fact that
multiple and completely distant ideologies have been channeled through the same
Hispanist discourse leads us to face the appeal of the concept in terms of its very
polysemous indefiniteness, an interesting reflection on the postcolonial predicament.
Figures

Fig. 21. Hernán Cortés

Fig. 22. Francisco Pizarro

Fig. 23. José Celestino Mutis

Fig. 24. Jorge Juan Santacilia
BIBLIOGRAPHY


---. Biografías de hombres ilustres ó notables, relativas á la época del Descubrimiento, Conquista y Colonización de la parte de América denominada actualmente EE.UU. de Colombia. Bogotá, 1883.


---. Memorias presentadas en Congresos Internacionales que se reunieron en España durante las fiestas del IV Centenario del Descubrimiento de América, en 1892. Chartres, 1893.


*Almanaque platense*. Montevideo, 1892.


*Blanco y Negro*. Madrid, 1892.


*Congreso Pedagógico Hispano-Portugués Americano de 1892.* Madrid, 1894.


Diccionario de literatura española. Dirigido por German Bleiberg and Julián Marías.


Fox, Inman E. y Vicente Cacho Viu. “La Generación del 98: Crítica de un concepto”


Ganivet, Ángel. *Idearium español*. Granada, 1897.


González-Stephan, Beatriz. “¡Con leer no basta! Límites de la ciudad letrada (la cultura de las exposiciones).” *Revista Iberoamericana* 73.214 (2006) 199-225


Hernández Prieto, María Isabel. _Relaciones culturales entre Madrid e Hispanoamerica de 1881 a 1892._ Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1981.


*Ilustración Artística, La*. Barcelona, 1892.

*Ilustración Española y Americana, La*. Madrid, 1892.

*Ilustración Ibérica, La*. Barcelona, 1892.

*Imparcial, El*. Madrid, 1892.


Lázaro Carreter, Fernando. “Las academias y la unidad del idioma” *Boletín de la Real Academia Española* 76.267 (1996): 35-54


Madrid Cómico, El.


<http://www.lablaa.org/blaavirtual/publicacionesbanrep/boletin/boleti1/bol39/bol2b.htm>


Palma, Clemente. Excursión literaria. Lima, 1895.

---. “Inauguración de la Academia” Anales de la Academia Correspondiente. Lima, 1887.


---. *Rubén Darío y el modernismo (circunstancia socioeconómica de un arte americano)*. Caracas: Ediciones de la Biblioteca de la Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1970.


---. *Nuevas cartas americanas.* Madrid: Librería de Fernando Fé, 1890.


<http://www.elpais.com/articulo/opinion/V_CENTENARIO_DEL_DESCUBRIMIENTO_DEL_DESCUBRIMIENTO_DE_AMeRICA/ano/quinto/Centenario/elpepiopi/19920123elpepiopi_9/Tes />


