

Economies of Prestige: The Place of Iberian Studies in the American University

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This essay analyses the rise of Iberian cultural studies as the latest phase in the long struggle for status and prestige that has marked the institutional history of Hispanism in the American academy. I argue that Iberian cultural studies can in part be seen as an attempt to reinvent and reinvigorate a field that had long found itself marginalized, and to overcome the disciplinary ideologies and practices that contributed to that marginalization. The focus on prestige allows me to highlight the dynamics that help determine the institutional status of different fields: their cultural capital, their power and presence in terms of funding and personnel, as well as the level of their autonomy or dependence vis-à-vis other disciplines. Hispanists in the United States have been quite aware of the precarious institutional status of their field, and concerns about the status of the discipline, as well as efforts to boost it, have long been the explicit focus of discussions and debates in Hispanist journals, books, and conferences. My analysis takes the history of these discussions as one of its main points of departure. I especially focus on the years during which Hispanism was established as an academic discipline, roughly between 1915 and 1925, and on the impact of the Spanish Civil War and its immediate aftermath.

How much and what kind of scholarly attention does Spain deserve? An American college dean faced with the need to reallocate faculty positions might well be asking herself this question. Few people in the American academic world today doubt the validity of learning Spanish. But the notion that linguistic competence should be accompanied by knowledge of the Mother Country has ceased to be self-evident, if it ever was. While Spanish-language enrolments are steady or increasing, Iberian Studies is under a double threat. Not only from utilitarian-minded administrators keener on ‘business’ or ‘medical Spanish’ than on Calderón, Unamuno, or even Almodóvar; but also from competing fields like Latin American and Latino Studies, whose direct

relevance to the United States is more self-evident, and who draw more students.¹ Meanwhile, over the past ten or fifteen years Peninsular Hispanism has been undergoing a transformation of its own, as it is finally being engulfed by the Cultural Studies wave that has transformed most of the western humanities over the last couple of decades.

This essay aims to study the rise of Iberian cultural studies² as the latest phase in the long struggle for status and prestige that has marked the institutional history of Hispanism in the American academy.³ My main argument will be that Iberian cultural studies can, at least in part, be seen as an attempt by leading figures in Peninsular Hispanism — particularly in Britain and the United States — to reinvent and reinvigorate a field that had long found itself marginalized, and to overcome the disciplinary ideologies and practices that contributed to that marginalization. Iberian cultural studies arose, I contend, not only from a desire for a disciplinary renewal that would open up, or re-establish, fruitful connections with other branches of the humanities and social sciences, but also from an aspiration to bolster the field's institutional status.⁴

The belated rise of cultural studies in Anglo-American Hispanism, starting in the early 1990s, followed on the heels of 'theory' in the 1980s, whose impact on Hispanism was itself belated and limited (Jordan 1990). Although cultural studies are notoriously indefinable and some clear regional differences can be discerned among different schools — as is well known, cultural studies in Britain, the US, and Latin America do not generally share the same outlook, institutional status, or disciplinary genealogy — it is worth recalling that their impact in the European and North American humanities can be roughly characterized by five or six general tendencies. These include a move away from the analysis of canonical literature in favour of non-canonical and non-literary texts and topics, and away from literary analysis generally in favour of a much wider conception of culture as historically situated, lived experience; an embrace of interdisciplinarity and comparatism; a focus on the dynamics of identity formation; a keen interest in socially or politically marginalized groups; and a political commitment that, though explicit, tends nevertheless to be ideologically undefined (Graham & Labanyi 1995; Anderson 1996; Jordan & Morgan-Tamosunas 2000).

¹ The areas of Medieval and Golden-Age literature, the field's mainstay until the mid-1960s, have been especially prone to erosion (Cruz 2006: 81–82).

² Since it is the most commonly accepted term, I will use the term 'Iberian' studies throughout this essay to refer to the 'Peninsular' half of Hispanism, although my analysis does not include Portuguese studies. Alternative terms, such as 'Spanish Studies' or 'Peninsular Studies' present problems of their own.

³ Part of this essay is related to a book project dealing with the impact of the Spanish Civil War on British and American Hispanism (*Anglo-American Hispanists and the Spanish Civil War*, under contract with Palgrave Macmillan). I would like to express my gratitude to James D. Fernández and Joan Ramon Resina, whose scholarship and thinking have greatly contributed to my understanding of the institutional history of American Hispanism, and whose presence in this essay is therefore considerable.

⁴ According to Jordan & Morgan-Tamosunas (2000: 5), the new debates that cultural studies have generated within Spanish studies have helped move the field 'from minority to more mainstream and cross-disciplinary curricula'.

While the disciplinary and institutional consequences of the turn to cultural studies have been significant in most of the humanities, they are potentially even more so in Hispanism. In what follows I will argue that the cultural studies approach, while renewing the field of Iberian Studies in important ways, also undermines the traditional foundations of American Hispanists' precarious claims to academic legitimacy and prestige. In a sense, it unsettles the entire field's disciplinary identity. This is not necessarily a bad thing; to the contrary, it is welcome to the extent that Hispanism as an academic field and an ideology was informed by an unquestioned cultural nationalism that celebrated and consecrated a particular version of 'Spanish' culture (Shumway 2005; Faber 2005), while conflating the interests, status, and aims of international academic Hispanism with those of the centralized Spanish state (Resina 2005b). On the other hand, there is of course a certain risk involved when academics start undermining the strategies that have long cemented their own field's institutional status. Whether there are alternative legitimating strategies available for Iberian Studies, and what those might be, is a question I will briefly address toward the end of this essay.

At least two factors explain the rise of Iberian cultural studies in the United States and Great Britain over the last ten years.⁵ On one hand, it can be seen as the academic response to Spain's own reinvention in the 1970s and 1980s as a forward-looking, fully European, cutting-edge nation, re-introducing itself on the international stage after the long, drab years of Francoism. On the other hand, the turn to cultural studies has also evidently been a response to institutional changes in the British and American academy. In this sense, the cultural-studies turn has paradoxically given rise to a widening intellectual gap between literary Hispanism as practised in Spain — still largely organized along the lines of a positivist, national philology — and its disciplinary formations elsewhere (Beltrán Almería 2005: 271). To be sure, one could argue that Iberian studies abroad have finally managed to overcome the intellectual legacy of Francoism, while literary studies at Spanish universities operate under outdated scholarly premises (Resina 2005b).⁶ Still, for all its attention to diverse aspects of social life and politics, ranging from football fan clubs and immigration politics to gender relations and guerrilla warfare, it would be false to say that Iberian cultural studies as practised in the United States or Great Britain is more in touch with contemporary Spain. In at least one sense, in fact, its connection with Spain has become more tenuous, as Iberian cultural studies are largely written in English for an English-speaking scholarly audience, published at steep prices by Anglo-American conglomerates, and hardly distributed or consumed in Spain itself. The number of Spanish universities subscribed to the *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* or the

⁵ Given the leading role of British Hispanism in the cultural-studies turn, and the increasing level of integration between British and American practitioners of Iberian cultural studies (symbolized perhaps by Jo Labanyi's move from the University of Southampton to NYU), they can usefully be grouped together here.

⁶ The crisis of Spanish philology as practised in Spanish academia is ruthlessly analysed by Resina (2005b). One symptom of this crisis is the continued 'brain drain' of young Spanish academics to, among other places, the United States. Although not all of these Spaniards arrive with an academic degree in Spanish philology, many of them do eventually end up as faculty in Iberian or Hispanic Studies programmes. In reality, the influx of Spanish intellectuals into American academia has been more or less constant since the first large injection of Republican exiles in the late 1930s and early 1940s (see below).

Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies, for instance, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. In this sense, Iberian cultural studies in the Anglo-American academy have arguably embarked on a path similar to that of Latin American Cultural Studies as practised in the US, which critics have characterized as an agent of American academic imperialism, completely out of touch with Latin American reality ‘on the ground’, and yet arrogantly dismissive of Latin American academic production (Volek 2006: 44).

Hispanism and the Quest for Prestige

This essay, as said, aims to consider the rise of Iberian cultural studies through the lens of economies of prestige at academic institutions. The focus on prestige — obviously indebted to Bourdieu — allows me to highlight the dynamics that help determine the institutional status of different fields: their cultural capital, their power and presence in terms of funding and personnel, as well as the level of their autonomy or dependence vis-à-vis other disciplines.⁷ Of course, economies of prestige have always been a major factor in the institutional development of structures of academic knowledge production. Prestige does not only influence *what* gets studied and taught at colleges and universities and by whom; it also influences *how* things are taught and studied (Nichols 2005: 255; Beltrán Almería 2005: 275). Hispanists in the United States have been quite aware of the precarious institutional status of their field — it is fair to say that they have felt systematically undervalued — and concerns about the status of the discipline, as well as efforts to boost it, have long been the explicit focus of discussions and debates in Hispanist journals, books, and conferences. My analysis will take the history of these discussions as one of its main points of departure.

In what follows, I make a number of assumptions that it is perhaps best to outline up front. First, I take for granted that there are two fundamental differences between the study of a national language and culture ‘at home’ and abroad. The most important distinction concerns issues of legitimacy: in principle there is little need to defend the importance of studying and teaching a culture within its own national-hegemonic space. It would not occur to anyone to question the academic presence of English language and literature in England, of Mexican literature in Mexico, or of Polish literature in Poland. (Of course, there is plenty to argue about when it comes to defining what forms and samples of cultural production are most appropriate for study or most characteristic of national culture — especially if, as in the Spanish case, the very concept of the nation is under dispute — but that is another matter.) Abroad, by contrast, the academic study of foreign cultures is part of an intense institutional competition in which prestige is at least as important as a field’s purported practicality or relevance. To a large extent, these latter notions are grounded in geopolitical, demographic, and economic concerns: witness the rise of area studies during the Cold War, or the rise of Spanish-language instruction or Middle-Eastern studies in the American academy today.

⁷ Consider, for instance, the changing relationship between Iberian and Latin American studies under the Hispanic Studies umbrella, the place of Iberian studies in European Studies programmes, or of the shifting place of Iberian Studies within the traditional Romance Language structure.

Nevertheless, cultural prestige remains an important factor as well. It is no coincidence that academic disciplines and their institutional structures, including their identification with particular university departments, were born at the end of the nineteenth century, around the same time as the key institutions of international cultural competition such as the Olympics or the Nobel Prize. As James English observes, it is true that economic life over the past hundred years ‘has become increasingly dependent on “cultural” practices’; at the same time, however, ‘cultural practice itself has in its turn become ever more dependent on institutions of cultural competition and award’ (2005: 256). And while these competitions are increasingly global in nature, they are still conceived as taking place among distinct nations and cultures. Pascale Casanova similarly argues with regard to the international literary marketplace that ‘the construction of world literary space proceeded [. . .] through national rivalries that were inseparably literary and political’ (2004: 35). I would argue that the ‘global economy of cultural prestige’, which English describes as ‘deeply interwoven with the international circuits of political, social, and economic power’ (2005: 261), also operates in the academic institutions of the metropolis, as academic fields focusing on foreign nations are constantly forced to prove their *raison d’être* in relation to their peer disciplines. Thus, the institutional history of Hispanism in the United States has been marked by the field’s chronic need to defend its legitimacy vis-à-vis competing areas in the humanities that have always been, and continue to be, seen as more eminent. The first struggle was for modern languages to prove themselves as worthy of formal study as the classics (Graff 1987: 67–73); later, Spanish had to carve out an institutional space for itself in competition with French, German, and English. In fact, the exponential growth of Spanish after 1915, which helped lay the institutional basis for the discipline as we know it, was a direct consequence of the decline of German — the language of the enemy in the Great War — and the rise of Pan-Americanism. Similarly, Spain’s long-term international isolation under Franco had a clear negative effect on the status of Peninsular Hispanism (Kagan 2002: 14).

A second important distinction between the study of a language and culture ‘at home’ and abroad, related to the first, concerns the ideological instrumentalization of academic fields. The study of a particular culture within its own national space has long been mobilized for expressly political purposes, notably the promotion of patriotism and national unity, and the formation of a national citizenry (Ríos Font 2005; Nichols 2005). The ideological objectives inherent in the disciplinary structures dedicated to the study of foreign cultures, on the other hand, have been less openly acknowledged, although they have not necessarily been less important. Edward Said’s arguments with regard to the ideological mobilization of academic Orientalism are too well known to rehearse here. George Mariscal, Richard Kagan, and Joan Ramon Resina have shown a similar dynamics at play for the different traditions of Spanish studies. In the incipient nineteenth-century American Hispanism of George Ticknor, for instance, ‘Spain was to function as the Other for the construction of an American imperial identity’ (Mariscal 1990: 3), much as it did in the work of Prescott (Kagan 2002: 9). In nineteenth-century Germany, on the other hand, Spanish literature served ‘as an ideological bulwark’ both against Protestantism and the Enlightenment (Resina 1996: 90).

At the risk of simplification, one could argue that the relative prestige of an academic discipline like Hispanism is determined by a combination of its perceived scholarliness — that is, its adherence to the hegemonic scholarly norms and methodologies of the moment — and the perceived value of its object of study. This is my second major assumption here: that with regard to economies of prestige in the academic study of cultures, there is an obvious connection between the status of a particular field and that of the culture it studies. (It is no coincidence that national governments are willing to spend considerable amounts of money to promote the academic study of their culture abroad.) In other words, the international status of nation-states like Spain, Germany, and China is directly related to the academic prestige of Hispanism, German Studies, and Sinology (Fitz-Gerald 1917: 122). In this context, it is worth pointing out that while Hispanism might have long thought of itself as a subaltern, undervalued discipline within the Western academy, Spanish has in fact been hegemonic from the standpoint of many other cultural fields — including subaltern fields within Hispanism like Quechua, Catalan, or Basque (Beverly, Diana, & Lecuna 1996: 20).⁸

My third general assumption is that fields like Iberian Studies, German Studies, or French Studies occupy an ambiguous institutional space that is simultaneously national and international. On the one hand, British and American Iberian Studies are part of an international scholarly community, given the strong Hispanist tradition in countries like France, Italy, and Germany — not to mention Latin America and Japan. Moreover, these different national Hispanisms maintain a particularly close and symbiotic relationship with the university system in Spain, whose institutional developments affect them in multiple ways. On the other hand, however, every branch of this international Hispanist network forms part of its own national institutional environment, with its own set of pressures, demands, and rewards (Epps 2006: 19). The power relations between the Spain-based academics and Hispanists abroad are constantly shifting, as is the level of communication and the relative disdain or respect that they hold for each other.

Related to this phenomenon is my fourth assumption: that academics studying foreign cultures are subject to a complex configuration of affective, professional, and political pressures and interests that are likely to enter in tension with the more purely academic imperative of rigorous and objective knowledge production. Despite the wide-spread scepticism about the possibility of objectivity, the commitment to truth in its production of knowledge — in a word, scholarliness — constitutes, in the end, the main basis of a field's claim to institutional legitimacy (Graff 1987: 67–68). But although scholars have, understandably, tended to underplay the factors skewing or undermining a field's perceived rigour, these factors are many and obvious — to begin with, the pervasive concern with the field's institutional status. At the level of motivation, too, there is an obvious slippage between affective drivers and what could be considered pure scholarly interest. Hispanists have tended to be Hispanophiles; and their love of Spain — or, more specifically, their emotional or political investment in a particular representation of Spain — has no doubt influenced the objects and tenor of their scholarship. A related tension can be discerned between Hispanism as

⁸ See note 11 on the status of Basque and Catalan studies in the United States.

a field of knowledge production and as a public-relations enterprise on Spain's behalf. Spanish governments have tended to view foreign Hispanists as cultural ambassadors of sorts, allies in the noble effort to make the world more aware of Spain's great contributions to human civilization. Many Hispanists have seen themselves as such as well. Generally, of course, this arrangement has been mutually beneficial — but also, for that same reason, conducive to conflicts of interest. In most situations, promoting Spain and its culture, promoting the status of one's own field, and promoting one's own career have amounted to much the same thing.

Given these four basic assumptions, my aim in the remainder of this essay is to sketch an institutional history of Iberian Studies in the United States — in a necessarily simplified and incomplete fashion — from the standpoint of academic prestige. I will especially focus on the years during which Hispanism was established as an academic discipline, roughly between 1915 and 1925, and on the impact of the Spanish Civil War and its immediate aftermath. It is my hope that this kind of analysis of the field's institutional history will help put the recent rise of Iberian cultural studies in perspective, and better allow us to evaluate its significance, as well as the gains, losses, and risks involved.

The Boon and Boom of the Great War

Spanish was not entirely absent from the early American colleges and universities, but the real foundations for Hispanism as a widely practised academic discipline were laid in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Although some American colleges had begun teaching Spanish in the late eighteenth century, its introduction in major universities was due to the efforts of American Hispanophile travellers, writers, and diplomats like Washington Irving, Henry W. Longfellow, and James R. Lowell. In 1819 George Ticknor took up an endowed chair at Harvard, where he was succeeded by Longfellow and Lowell. The American Association of Teachers of Spanish (AATS, later AATSP) was founded in 1917, in response to an unprecedented, nation-wide surge of interest in Spanish. In its first year, the AATS had some 400 members; by 1921 this number had tripled (Klein 1992: 1041).

The Hispanist scholarship practised during this time was, like most of the literary research of the period, dominated by philology and literary history. As Graff explains, the first departments of modern language studies, founded in the late nineteenth-century, were more interested in language, culture, and history than in literature as such (1987: 68). Philology — which combined a romantic, Herderian conception of national languages and cultures with a positivist methodology that endowed it with a rigorous scholarly aura — aimed for 'a total view' of a culture, its people, and its language, including a 'grammar, criticism, geography, political history, customs, mythology, literature, art, and ideas' (Applebee, quoted in Graff 1987: 69). While this holistic cultural view encouraged a broad interdisciplinarity *avant-la-lettre*, the dearth of scholarship on Spain forced early Hispanists to be jacks-of-all-trades: bibliographers, travel writers, textbook editors, researchers, cultural ambassadors, and even commentators on current events.

The generation of Hispanists that founded the AATS was quite conscious of its pioneer status, and proud of it. They realized that it was up to them to educate the

American people about the virtues of Spanish culture, to establish Hispanism as a respected scholarly field, and to promote the teaching of Spanish at all levels of education. They were also very much aware of the different forms of opposition, prejudice, and ignorance that had to be overcome for their campaign to be successful (Klein 1992: 1036). In fact, early assessments of the situation tend to employ a remarkably combative language, pointing out the ‘attacks’ on Spanish from different ‘enemies’ (Polinger 1945: 532), as well as the necessity of presenting a united front, embodied in a co-ordinated strategy of defence and public relations. ‘Let us not deceive ourselves’, former AATS president Wilkins wrote in 1923, ‘The battle has not been fully won’ (1923: 29); ‘let us take our position [...], let us “dig in” and “consolidate” and bring up our ammunition in advance of the battle’, Henry Doyle added two years later (Doyle 1925: 25–26). These military tropes were not entirely misplaced; the competition was indeed cut-throat. Moving from the general to the specific, the main battles were defined by institutional rivalries between the humanities and the social and natural sciences; between classic philology and the modern languages; between English and the foreign languages; between Spanish, on the one hand, and French and German on the other; and, finally, between Iberian Studies and Latin American Studies. In all of these struggles, notions of prestige have played a key role — a fact of which Hispanists have been remarkably conscious. In fact, the current status of Iberian Studies in American universities can largely be seen as the result of a series of hard-won (or lost) battles with competing fields.

Generally the foreign languages were united in their struggle against the isolationists and pragmatic ‘educational experts’ opposing language teaching altogether (Lantolf & Sunderman 2001: 5; Doyle 1925: 28). Still, there were plenty of internal rivalries. In the 1910s and 1920s the most important competitors for Hispanism were French and German studies. As pointed out above, the rise of Spanish was a direct result of the Great War, which caused a sharp decline in German enrolments. Between 1915 and 1922 German loses 95 per cent of its secondary-school enrolments (from 325,000 to less than 14,000) while Spanish enrolments increase sevenfold, from 36,000 to 252,000 (Leavitt 1961: 621). For the American case, James Fernández has shown how the founders of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and its journal *Hispania* very consciously cast their subject as an alternative to German language and culture, which had fast become demonized and discredited. In a particularly aggressive address to the National Education Association in the summer of 1918, AATS president Lawrence Wilkins, barely half a year into his tenure, declared that ‘The German language, the German literature, German art, German universities, German science, German culture and the entire German civilization have been vastly over-rated here and in other lands’. He went as far as to suggest a foreign conspiracy at work: ‘We have had far too much teaching of German in our schools. It was fast becoming the second language of our nation. And I personally believe that it was taught chiefly for the purpose of furthering propaganda originating in Berlin’ (1918: 208; quoted in Fernández 2005: 55).

Spanish, Wilkins argued, provided at least as many mental and practical benefits as German. For one, contrary to public opinion, it was not an ‘easy’ language. More important, ‘in the Spanish language is expressed one of the great literatures of the world. It is not inferior even to the boasted German literature, in antiquity, in range,

in depth, in originality, and in present-day wealth' (Wilkins 1918: 213). Wilkins closed his address on the same anti-German note he had started with, warning his colleagues to be on the alert for enemy infiltration:

Already teachers born in Germany are said to be writing Spanish textbooks for use in our schools. Already teachers of German who find themselves without classes are turning to the teaching of Spanish and are going in large numbers to summer schools [...] in order to learn Spanish. I say beware, *if* these teachers are of German birth and German sympathies. Beware of this 'peaceful penetration' lest the teaching of Spanish in this country [...] undergo the fate of Spain, a nation that is inhibited from being herself, because of German influence and propaganda. [...] We do not want Germanic Spanish. We want the Spanish language taught in this country by teachers born and trained either in the United States or in a Spanish-speaking land. (Wilkins 1918: 220–21)

Interestingly, Wilkins's counter-intuitive strategy — mobilizing wartime xenophobia in favour of foreign-language teaching — obliged him to herald Spanish teachers' allegiance to the United States and present the teaching and learning of Spanish as a quintessentially pro-American practice. When, at the same professional meeting, the prominent Dante scholar Ernest Hatch Wilkins haughtily suggested that Italian teaching was naturally more important than Spanish, adducing as one of the values of Italian the ability to communicate with Italian immigrants, his AATS namesake snidely remarked that it would surely be better for immigrants to learn English and become 'good American citizens'. He added that the sole interest of *Spanish* teachers, by contrast, had always been that of the American people (Sherwell 1918: 167–68).⁹ In Wilkins's annual address to the AATS later that year, he assured his audience that 'the teachers of Spanish comprehend clearly that theirs is in essence a patriotic duty at all times', and that '[i]t behooves us, as teachers of Spanish particularly, to ever bear in mind that it is first of all for the good of our own land that we teach Spanish' ('President's address' [1918]: 37–38; quoted in Fernández 2005: 54, 65). Two years later, from the same presidential lectern, he repeated: 'We do not wish our young people to become so saturated with Spanish culture that they will prefer it to that of their own country. [...] If we cannot teach Spanish without unduly lauding a foreign nation to the belittlement of our own, then let us close up shop for once' (Wilkins 1921: 29; quoted in Fernández 2005: 55).

For all its patriotic ostentation, though, the AATS immediately established a symbiotic relationship with Spanish state institutions, most notably the Spanish Junta para Ampliación de Estudios, which had been founded in 1907 and, within it, the Centro de Estudios Históricos, whose directorship had been assumed in 1915 by Ramón Menéndez Pidal. The first issue of *Hispania* opened with a letter of support and encouragement from the master philologist himself, who took advantage of the opportunity to provide a thorough analysis of the differences between Peninsular and Latin American Spanish — which, he argued, were minimal — and to reassert

⁹ Another Hispanist on a panel organized by Wilkins spoke on 'La enseñanza del español como un servicio patriótico'; a Hispanist observer remarked that the speaker's words were 'llenas de una sana devoción a esta tierra y de una lealtad que ha sido hasta hoy, y estamos seguros de que será siempre, característica de los que enseñan la lengua castellana' (Sherwell 1918: 167–68).

Castile's linguistic and cultural hegemony over Spain, and Spain's over Spanish America. Thus, he argued that it was much preferable to speak of 'la lengua española' than of 'la lengua castellana', since the latter term 'induce erróneamente a creer [...] que, fuera de Castilla, no se habla la lengua literaria sino como una importación'. Given that 'desde fines del siglo xv, la lengua comprendió en sí los productos literarios de toda España', it can only be called 'española'. To be sure, the other languages spoken on the Iberian Peninsula are, strictly speaking, Spanish as well; 'pero no son "el español" por antonomasia' (1918: 3). Similarly, Menéndez Pidal affirmed that the linguistic influence of indigenous language on Latin American Spanish had been minimal, given that '[l]a barbarie de las lenguas indígenas y su enorme cantidad y fraccionamiento, no son circunstancias propicias para que cualquier rasgo de sintaxis de esas lenguas suministre un extranjerismo de cierto crédito y extensión dentro del español' (1918: 4). Further, he strongly affirmed the present and future cultural bonds uniting the Spanish-speaking world, assuring his American readers that 'nuevas generaciones americanas esperan con optimismo el porvenir, ese porvenir hermano de España y América' (1918: 9). Finally, he also recommended to his American colleagues to teach Spanish in the Castilian pronunciation, since 'es la que responde más exactamente que ninguna otra a la ortografía secular de la lengua' (1918: 11).

The early leaders of American Hispanism were well aware of the fact that the Great-War boom was conjunctural, and that more was needed for the long-term academic consolidation of Spanish. Fernández cites an early article in *Hispania* that squarely declares the prestige issue to be paramount in this enterprise. 'No matter what the weight of the pecuniary benefits derived from foreign languages may appear to be', writes Professor Warshaw of the University of Nebraska, 'there are other far more decisive grounds which determine the secure position of languages as school-subjects' (Warshaw 1919: 223). The most important of these 'intangible motives', Warshaw argues, is the 'prestige-value' of a particular language. Rather than practical reasons, it is largely their perceived prestige that explains the hegemonic position of French and German in the US educational system. The German case is especially instructive, Warshaw explains, because German did not have the traditional aura of prestige of French, and its rise to popularity has been the result of a well-organized public-relations campaign: 'From an amorphous mass of loose connections held together by a few slender strands, the German-language organization developed into an efficient, smoothly-working machine, directed by leaders in different parts of the country and, not improbably, by some master-minds in Germany' (Warshaw 1919: 228). The situation of Hispanism, by comparison, still leaves much to be desired: 'We do not know much about the prestige-value of Spanish, and it is precisely this prestige-value which is uppermost in any comparisons of the foreign languages as school-subjects' (Warshaw 1919: 226; author's emphasis).

If Spanish wants to secure its position in US education, Warshaw writes, it had better begin developing a similar public-relations structure, highlighting the achievements not only of Spanish and Spanish-American writers, but also of Spanish-speaking engineers, scientists, inventors, and businessmen. After all, Hispanists in the United States have significant cultural obstacles to overcome:

we have a tremendous mass of inertia and a popular feeling of indifference to work against. We are handling the language of a nation whose unfortunate colonial experiences and luckless military conflicts [...] tend to create feelings of repugnance, if not scorn; of races whose psychology, social evolution, and contributions toward progress we do not understand and appear to be in no hurry to understand; of people whom custom persuades us to look upon as backward. (Warshaw 1919: 225; quoted in Fernández 2005: 57)

This call for a concerted campaign to raise the prestige of Spanish by highlighting the contributions to western civilization of the Spanish-speaking world is a recurring motif in US Hispanist discourse throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Interestingly, though, in this fervour of disciplinary self-promotion the relationship between means and ends quickly becomes muddled. If, at first, the idea is that the field should expand because widespread Spanish-learning will help accomplish lofty ideals, the defence and expansion of the field soon becomes an unquestioned end in itself, written into the objectives of professional journals and associations. Consequently, the lofty ideals turned from ends into rhetorical means — arguments that prove more or less effective in the promotion of the field. Fernández points out, for instance, that Warshaw, while calling for a popular campaign to disseminate the achievements of Spaniards and Spanish Americans, admits in so many words that he himself does not really know what those achievements might be. ‘It is incumbent on us’, Warshaw urges, ‘to prepare answers to the “prestige” questions’ — ‘Has the Spanish world ever produced a surpassing genius in any field? Has any remarkable invention come from Spain? [...] Can you point to a world-famous Spanish engineer, chemist, mathematician, physician, artist, poet, zoologist, lawyer, financier, statesman?’ — although ‘[o]f course it would be a great pity if the questions were unanswerable!’ (1919: 227). At the same time, he is confident answers can indeed be found: It would be ‘an anomaly almost impossible to account for’ that ‘the Spanish world should not have produced its fair quota of uncommon men, illustrious deeds, and both practical and theoretical contributions to civilization’ (1919: 234).

The Values of Spanish

While most American and British Hispanists agreed on the need for growth and the corresponding importance of academic prestige, they disagreed over the precise strategies to follow to achieve these ends. The arguments brandished in favour of Spanish in the first half of the twentieth century can be roughly divided into five different categories: aesthetic value, ‘disciplinary’ or mental value, commercial value, international-political or ‘social’ value, and cultural value (Lantolf and Sunderman 2001: 6–12). It is worth summarizing these briefly.

One of the earlier advantages touted for Spanish was the sheer beauty of the language. ‘As a language, Castilian is rich, deep, sonorous, and never fails to thrill a traveller from the north’, William Atkinson wrote in the second issue of Allison Peers’s *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*: ‘A manly tongue, befitting a people of *conquistadores*, in its diction are reflected doughty deeds of chivalry and conquest, and noble aspirations’ (1924: 74). He was echoed in this sentiment by Professor L. E. Hinkle from North Carolina, for whom Spanish was ‘one of the most beautiful and

sonorous, as well as one of the most expressive of modern languages' (1925: 21). A second important argument in favour of language learning, initially used to promote the teaching of Latin and Greek, was that it helped develop intelligence, mental discipline, and capacity for abstract thought (Graff 1987: 68, 72–73). Of the modern languages, German was most directly associated with brain development, whereas Spanish, long considered an easy language, was thought to have fewer neurological benefits. Hispanists, however, pointing out the many complexities of Spanish, argued that it, too, was good for the mind (Wilkins 1918: 213).

In both England and America, the commercial value of Spanish was also widely recognized — given British and American interests in Spain and, especially, Latin America — although many Hispanists were hesitant to emphasize this aspect because they realized that it negatively affected the field's prestige (Doyle 1925; Green 1936: 41). On the other hand, they did like to underscore the value of Spanish for international relations. This argument had the great advantage that it could easily be given a patriotic spin: for the US to maintain their global power, it was imperative that its citizens learn to communicate in a world language; more specifically, American Hispanism could declare itself a champion of the continental values embodied in Pan-Americanism — a concept that is never absent from the pages of *Hispania*.

The value most directly associated with academic prestige, however, was culture, particularly literature. Although, as said, literary analysis was not the primary focus of the early Hispanists, literature written in Spanish did occupy a central place in the curriculum — if largely as a way to learn the language and the culture — and its value was frequently emphasized in support of the Hispanist field. 'Hoy se ha demostrado hasta la evidencia', L. S. Rowe, of the US State Department, wrote in 1920, '[...] que el español como expresión de cultura es digna de colocarse en primera fila entre los idiomas más perfectos del mundo' (1920: 25). In this area, Peninsular literary production long took overwhelming precedence over Spanish-American texts. This situation was part of a larger pattern that James Fernández has dubbed 'Longfellow's Law', according to which 'interest in the American language called Spanish [...] was translated in practice into an interest in the language, literature and culture not of Latin America, but of Spain'. If Americans turned to Spain, in other words, they did so because they were really interested in their Spanish-speaking hemispheric neighbours. As Fernández puts it: 'US interest in Spain is and has always largely been mediated by US interest in Latin America' (2005: 50).

Don't Mention the War

The automatic association of Hispanic culture with Spain guaranteed a de facto hegemony within academic Hispanism of the Peninsular over the Latin American. In the 1920s and 1930s, however, this hegemony began slowly to erode, as Pan-Americanism fuelled increasing scholarly attention for Latin America. In historiography, Eugene Bolton not only helped found Latin American history as an established academic field, but also to legitimize Latin American intellectual production (Irwin 2006); the *Hispanic American Historical Review* was founded in 1918. Gradually, Spanish professors began to take Latin American literature more seriously. '[I]n a large part of Spanish-American literature there is an American spirit that differentiates it from that of the mother country', Professor G. W. Umphrey of the University

of Washington wrote in 1925; hence, the ‘literature of Spanish America should be studied from the American point of view’ (1925: 5).

Although Pan-Americanism was never absent from American Hispanist discourse, it was given an important boost in terms of morale, money, and institutional strength by the Good Neighbour Policy, which President Roosevelt initiated in 1934. Hispanists nation-wide were delighted with the government’s renewed interest in Latin America, and exceedingly proud to be part of hemispheric rapprochement. A key moment for the establishment of the literary-humanistic branch of Latin American studies in the United States was the foundation in 1938 of the Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana and its journal, the *Revista Iberoamericana*. The IILI and *RI* explicitly broke with the hitherto unquestioned notion that Latin American thought and literature should be studied as a variation of its Spanish ‘origins’. Still, as I have shown elsewhere, the founders of the IILI and its journal were prominent members of the American Hispanist establishment, and were as strongly influenced by Pan-Americanism as the founders of the AATS. The IILI and *RI* were driven by the conviction that Latin American and US culture shared basic traits and values, had a common political and cultural future, and were in strong need of deeper mutual acquaintance (Faber 2005).

The stronger focus on Latin America within American Hispanism was further fuelled by the increased political turmoil across the Atlantic, which placed American language teachers generally in a difficult situation. Should Germanists bring up Hitler in their classes? Should Spanish teachers discuss the Second Republic or, after 1936, the Spanish Civil War? At conferences and in the professional journals, the leaders of the foreign-language teaching establishment strongly urged their rank-and-file to reassert the *cultural* value of their subject, and do their utmost to keep politics out of the classroom. One of the reasons adduced was that any form of political position-taking would arouse suspicions about teachers’ patriotic loyalty, likely hurt the profession’s academic standing, and spawn a backlash against foreign-language teaching in general. (The tragic fate of German teachers during World War I was still fresh in the institutional memory.) In 1938 President Hespelt of the AATS — implicitly criticizing the strategy of his predecessor Wilkins — urged the languages to ‘present a united front’, rejecting ‘the tendency to identify support of the teaching of a language with approval of the current political set-up of the country where that language [is] spoken’ (Hespelt 1939: 2–3). In early 1936, F. Dewey Amner warned in the *Modern Language Journal* about the influence of foreign governments in US language teaching: ‘our opinions of foreign national cultures and their relative place in the American curriculum are based in part upon the amount and the skill of their governmental advertising applied to our educational system.’ He also urged teachers to be careful not to identify excessively with ‘their’ culture, letting themselves be turned into ‘the puppets of foreign nationalism’, as other nations tried to import their mutual rivalries into the American classroom (Amner 1936: 408–09).

Nevertheless, throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the rise of fascism and communism, the Spanish Civil War, and World War II forced many US teachers of European languages and cultures to reflect on the place of current events, political conflict, and national loyalty in their teaching and scholarship. In the face of these challenges, the professional modern-language organizations in the US adopted four key survival

tactics. First, they insisted on the intrinsic intellectual benefit of learning foreign languages, regardless of international politics. Second, they claimed that the ‘eternal’ or ‘universal’ value of the languages, literatures, and cultures they taught did not depend on the political regime that happened to rule the countries in question. Third, they urged their members to keep themselves in check and not to address politically controversial issues in their classes. Fourth, they emphasized that the most important concern for all American teachers, regardless of their subject and their own opinions, should be the interests and unity of the United States, to which they should at all times remain loyal. In that sense, then, little had changed since Lawrence Wilkins’s Presidential Addresses to the AATS in 1918, 1919, and 1920.

Thus, in 1939 the influential Hispanist Henry Grattan Doyle of George Washington University, writing in the *Modern Language Journal*, issued a stern warning to his colleagues, emphasizing the need for self-control to protect the status of the profession:

We must set a guard upon our tongues, our pens, and our affiliations, that we may not give any excuse, however slight, for those who would turn mob emotionalism against us. We must remember, every day and every hour, that we are teaching American children in American schools. Especially does this obligation lie heavy upon those among us who are foreign-born. The native-born American — provided his name does not ‘sound foreign’, in which case birth here is no protection — may say or do things that the foreign-born American citizen cannot say or do without being subject to misunderstanding or misinterpretation. But in the last analysis none of us should say or do them. We must all ‘watch our step’. The future of our subjects is largely in our own hands. (Doyle 1939: 92)

‘[T]he most senseless, the most stupid, the most criminal way to waste that time and energy’, Doyle added, ‘is to get involved — we, Americans and teachers of Americans! — in quarrels among ourselves over foreign politics or the rights and wrongs of internecine or international conflicts in foreign countries’ (1939: 93). To be sure, Doyle wrote, faculty serve as ‘interpreters of the culture’ of the nations whose language they teach. But ‘that does not mean that we should let ourselves become in the slightest degree political apologists or — worse still — conscious or unconscious propaganda agents for any foreign nation’ (1939: 93). For Doyle, then, it was crucial for the field’s prestige to separate culture from politics. While he admitted that he personally had ‘as profound a dislike for Hitler and Mussolini and all their ways as anyone’, he also underscored that this did ‘not affect in the least my profound admiration for German or Italian culture’.

Three years later, George R. Havens of Ohio State University similarly reasserted the cultural basis of the field’s prestige. The best way for language teachers to deal with the war in Europe, he argued, would be to focus on the many unchanged advantages of their subject: ‘training in these foreign languages has for our students the same great linguistic values it always had’; ‘French, German, Italian, and Spanish literature’ remain as an ‘enduring heritage’; and ‘the great literatures of the past still remain great and still speak to us with their old power and eloquence’ (Havens 1941: 307–08). The great foreign writers, with their ‘special insight into human character’ still have moral lessons to teach, including the need ‘to hold firmly to our convictions’ (Havens 1941: 309–10).

Henry Doyle, as a Hispanist writing in 1939, was particularly aware of political threats to his own field. The profession could be seriously harmed, he thought, by strained relations between the US and Latin America. (Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas, for instance, had just nationalized the oil industry, to the great irritation of the American business sector.) More insidious, however, was the Spanish Civil War, which posed the even greater danger of undermining ‘our unity as American citizens’:

Even if the Spanish struggle had presented a clear-cut issue of dictatorship *versus* democracy, it would have been important to follow the dictates of good sense and keep the teaching of Spanish free from confusion with the political claims of one side or the other in the minds of our fellow-citizens. But the issues in Spain were far more complicated than that. In the first place it was not a purely national struggle. [...] On the one side was Stalin, on the other Hitler and Mussolini [...] The situation was made worse by the fact that American sympathies divided in some measure on religious lines. (Doyle 1939: 94)

Given these ramifications, and the ‘intensity of feeling engendered’ by the Spanish war, it could well have a long-term disruptive effect not just on the profession but on American society at large. The preventive remedy Doyle proposes is emotional distance and patriotic common sense:

It is no more than reasonable to assume that the right was not wholly on one side or the other in Spain’s tragic and bloody conflict. Moreover, we are supposed to be Americans, not Spaniards. We have no business to allow our feelings about international questions, or our sympathy for one or the other side in a foreign civil war, to divide us as Americans so fundamentally that we can speak or even think of each other in bitter terms. It is our first duty to be Americans, champions of American rights and interests. (1939: 95)

To be sure, Doyle is not proposing any restrictions on free speech; everyone has the right to express their opinion on international issues, in however an inflammatory way. This, Doyle stresses, ‘is a question for everyone to answer *according to his own conscience as an American*’ (his emphasis). But, he adds, ‘even though we may have the right to be imprudent and intolerant in our words and actions and writings as citizens, we have no such right as teachers’ (1939: 95). In support of this notion of self-restraint for the sake of professional respectability, Doyle quotes Chester H. Rowell, a trustee of the University of California, who at the 1937 meeting of the American Council on Education had argued that freedom of *speech* did not include the right to ‘to require anybody to *listen*’ (my emphasis). Particularly in a classroom, ‘where the audience is compulsory’, the right to speak to that audience ‘may properly limit itself to the subject of the compulsion’. Teachers, in other words, should stick to their topic; and those who are unable to should probably not be teaching in the first place. Freedom of speech might well include the right to be ‘fanatical’ or ‘violently prejudiced’; but since ‘men of intelligence and good taste’ refrain from that kind of speech anyway, the person who does indulge in it might well ‘thereby demonstrate his disqualification for a position in which good sense and good taste are primary qualifications’ (Rowell, quoted in Doyle 1939: 95–96).

Doyle’s plea for depoliticization, then, is double. He not only emphasizes the need to separate the ‘traditional national culture’ of Germany, Italy, and Russia from one’s

possible aversion of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin; but also, following Rowell, the need for faculty to separate their ‘rights as citizens’ from their ‘special position as teachers’. If, as private citizens, ‘we have the right to preach any “ism” we see fit’, as teachers ‘we are expected to be impartial, impersonal, objective, unemotional, well-balanced, scientific, skilled in the presentation of conflicting points of view with fairness to all sides’ (1939: 97). In support of his case, Doyle quotes a resolution adopted by the MLA the year before – stating that the Association ‘makes no discrimination among persons based on racial, religious, or political preferences’ – reading it, strangely, not as a statement of democratic principle and free speech but, almost inversely, as an indication of the ‘complete divorcement of American scholarship in the field of the modern humanities from European political, racial, and religious conflicts’ (1939: 97). Doyle’s final argument, though, is not ethical but practical, and directly related to the field’s status. Jobs are on the line: ‘The future of our subjects is at stake. Another body blow, such as that received by German twenty years ago, may be the *coup de grâce* for all foreign language teaching in the United States’ (1939: 97). The threat of politics, then, is staved off not only by the assertion that true cultural value is eternal and universal, not bound to accidents of nation or regime, but also by an emphasis on the proper limits to teachers’ speech, which in turn rely on notions of patriotism, professionalism, responsibility, good sense, good taste, the field’s public image and, ultimately, professional survival.

As an ironic result, it was precisely when the Spanish Civil War began to dominate the US public sphere — with intense interest and involvement from conservatives, liberals, and radicals, including politicians, community leaders, clergy, and public intellectuals — that it became something of a taboo topic for American Hispanists, who increasingly turned toward Latin America (Pattee 1939: 236–37; Swain 1939: 263). The editor of *Hispania*, for instance, declared in the December 1936 issue that he would not print any contributions about the war that he judged to be ‘biased’ (Coester 1936); and indeed the journal would barely mention the Civil War until well into the 1950s. In practice, the war went practically unmentioned in American Hispanist public discourse throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, either in journals or at conferences. It is clear that the discipline’s leadership felt that as scholarly specialists — of Spanish literature, culture, or history — American Hispanists had no business engaging with issues as general, political, and current as the Spanish Civil War — a war that, moreover, could prove dangerously divisive among American scholars of Spain. Much safer in that respect, and much more likely to serve as a unifying force, was Pan-Americanism — ubiquitous in American Hispanist discourse throughout the 1930s and 1940s. The Annual Meetings of the AATS throughout the three years of the Spanish Civil War are replete with enthusiastic references to hemispheric unity.

US Hispanism during the Cold War

This pattern did not change significantly after the Republic lost the war in April 1939. Spain was left in ruins; hundreds of thousands of Spaniards had been killed; five hundred thousand had gone into exile; thousands were held in prisons and concentration camps, thousands more would soon join them, and thousands would be put to

death over the following months and years in a steady stream of daily executions (Richards 1999: 29). Again, though, American Hispanists seem hardly to have taken notice. Eight months after Franco's victory, in December 1939, the AATS held its twenty-third Annual Meeting in San Francisco. As in the three previous annual meetings, the Spanish war was barely mentioned. 'Mrs Maurine Marsh', the report in *Hispania* tells us, 'gave a most interesting travel talk on Spain as she saw it last summer; she said that the important historical buildings were not seriously injured by the civil war, and that the present government had won her admiration' (Colburn 1940: 2). For the rest of the meeting, Pan-Americanism once again displaced Spain to the margins of Hispanist attention (Colburn 1940: 13-15).

In practice, the tendency to bracket off contemporary Spanish social and political reality allowed American Hispanism almost immediately to accept Francoism as the new state of Spanish normality. As early as April 1940, Professor Gordon Brown wrote from Madrid on 'Academic Spain Today' for the *Bulletin* of the South-Atlantic MLA, reporting on the reopening of the University, and noting that 'the present status of university and [...] intellectual life in general' was 'satisfactory if one takes into account the period just traversed' (1940: 1). Although he explains that the new members of the Royal Academy are now required to swear 'an oath of allegiance to the state and to the person of the Caudillo', there is not a word about the effects of state repression, censorship, or exile on Spanish intellectual life. The same is true for Brown's talk on 'Las actividades culturales en España', delivered at the 1941 meeting of the AATS, in which the author only notes that 'contemporary Spanish thought is guided by a profound feeling of nationalism which lays increasing stress on the ideas, ideals and achievements of the Golden Age and seeks to find in their study inspiration and solutions for the problems of today' (Brown 1942: 65).

At the same time, however, the defeat of the Spanish Republic drove hundreds of intellectuals into exile; and scores of Spanish writers and scholars ended up in American Spanish departments as professors of literature, linguistics, and cultural history. Their presence strengthened American Hispanism; and it also, once more, put a tremendous amount of weight on the Peninsular side of the Hispanist scale, largely counteracting the surge in Latin Americanism of the 1930s. This wave of exiles who preferred displacement to living under Franco represented a significant demographic change in American Hispanism. For one, it would no longer be possible to speak of the field as made up of Americans loyal to their own country. Still, the massive influx of Republican intellectuals did not significantly change the fundamental conservatism of the discipline, its wariness of politics, or the way it navigated the economies of prestige of American academia. The Spanish scholars who were admitted to the United States, though anti-Francoist, tended to be moderate liberals or apolitical; and, like their American colleagues, they saw it as their mission to teach the world about the greatness of Spanish culture. They tended to espouse a vision of Spain and Spanish culture that was ideologically *hispanista* or Pan-Hispanist, that is, informed by a notion of the Spanish-speaking world as a cultural unity based in the language and culture of Castile. They celebrated the colonization of the Americas as a triumph for Spain and the whole of humanity, and conceived of Hispanic culture as a source of uniquely 'spiritual' values in an increasingly materialist world. As I have shown elsewhere, a number of prominent exiles believed that the crisis of

1939–45 represented an exceptionally propitious moment for a global rehabilitation of Spain’s cultural heritage (Faber 2002: 43–49). Unlike J. Warshaw in 1918, in other words, the exiled Spanish scholars were quite poised to answer ‘the prestige questions’.

Thus, when the prominent Spanish philologist Américo Castro accepted an endowed chair at Princeton University in 1941, his inaugural lecture on *The Meaning of Spanish Civilization* began by questioning whether the much-touted ‘progress’ of Western European culture and its concomitant ‘material success and prosperity’, ‘may not be, after all, more productive of horrors than of benefits’ (1941: 9). In light of these horrors, the long-derided backwardness of Spain now emerged as an alternative, spiritually richer source of civilization. Europe might have plenty of ‘armaments’, Castro argued, but it lacks the strong ‘inner defence’ of Spanish culture, whose main concern has long been to ‘bring out the essential man, wholly and in strong relief’ (1941: 9–10). ‘At the present time’, therefore, ‘the Spanish way of life needs less than ever before to offer excuses for being as it is’ (1941: 11). ‘I believe’, Castro concluded, ‘that any contact with Spanish civilization will pave the way for a new and fruitful Humanism’ (1941: 29).

Castro’s definition of Spanish difference as marked by spirituality and humanism goes hand in hand with a particular view of Spain’s imperial enterprise. Being the enterprise of a fundamentally anti-materialist people, the conquest and colonization of the Americas had nothing to do with a desire for material gain; rather, it was ‘a creative effort’ through which ‘during more than three centuries, Spain expended the best part of herself’. Hence, ‘Mexico, Peru, Colombia, the Antilles were not colonies, but were, rather, expansions of the national territory that were enriched with rare artistic and ideal generosity’ (1941: 25). ‘Some historians still say that the Spaniards destroyed Mexican civilization’, Castro points out, but they forget that the Aztecs practised human sacrifice and that ‘Mexicans did not know the wheel and the domestic use of light when the Conquistadors arrived’ (1941: 27). Castro questions, in other words, not so much whether there was destruction, but whether what was destroyed is worthy of the term ‘civilization’ at all. Similarly, the Spaniards’ interest in America’s natural riches was devoid of any materialist dimension: ‘The Spaniards exploited gold and silver mines because precious metals were needed for the furtherance of religious, moral and vital ideals.’ Moreover, the Spanish ‘spent most of American gold in such enterprises as churches, palaces, schools, hospitals, printing-presses, etc’ (1941: 27).

The anti-materialist critique of Western modernity, which was part and parcel of Castro’s *hispanismo*, was not out of place in the American academy of the time. In spite of the field’s relative marginality, in fact, the development of Peninsular Hispanism during the first two decades after World War II runs generally parallel to that of the other modern languages, all of which benefited from the general expansion of higher education. The humanities generally followed the example of English, which, according to Richard Ohmann, was characterized by a kind of oppositional conformity that, nevertheless, remained apolitical (1997: 87). While English faculty saw themselves as promoters and defenders of values that were in tension with those embodied by the prevailing tendencies of American society — consumerism, materialism, militarism, and commodification — they were unwilling or unable to translate

that tension into any kind of active opposition. Thus, their dissent ‘found no political expression outside the timid and self-promoting learned societies and professional organizations’ (Ohmann 1997: 87). The profession’s depoliticization was further fuelled by increasing emphasis on disciplinarity (that is, specialization) and institutionality (that is, professional socialization), driven in turn by the desire to legitimate English as a rigorous humanistic discipline vis-à-vis the social and natural sciences. Disciplinarity and institutionality allowed English to define itself as a specific scholarly discourse dealing, in a specialized language, with a discrete set of objects properly isolated from their environment.

Underlying this particular strategy of legitimization, Ohmann argues, was an Arnoldian ‘ideology of culture’ that defined high art and literature as a privileged aesthetic realm in which social and psychological tensions and contradictions were tamed into harmonic wholeness. Linked to this ideology was the notion — key to the New Criticism as much as to myth criticism and formalism — that a rigorous analysis of high-cultural aesthetic objects should bracket material, historical, and social factors. The anti-Communist witch hunts of the 1950s further encouraged academic humanists to internalize the disciplinary and institutional limits to their scholarship and teaching. ‘[A]ctivism was risky’, Ohmann recalls, ‘and membership in at least one political organization [...] was suicidal. By extension, to be a professional was to be nonpartisan, to abstain from historical agency. Practitioners of literary studies, like those in all fields, should stay within their own area of expertise’ (1997: 83). As a result, Ohmann concludes, English and the humanities more generally ‘played a small part in the Cold War [...] by doing our best to take politics out of culture’ (1997: 85). After World War II Marxism as an intellectual approach to scholarship ‘disappeared from the academy’ (1997: 84); and in general the discipline was left ‘with our moral critique of bourgeois society from the standpoint of culture, while excising culture *from* bourgeois society, severing it from its real historical and social relations, and exempting it from historical critique’. Needless to say, ‘the exile of historical materialism [...] also turned attention away from the conditions of our own cultural work and professional consolidation’ (1997: 84).

Joan Ramon Resina persuasively argues that much of Ohmann’s analysis applies to Cold-War American Hispanism as well, and that in effect Spanish exile *hispanismo* dovetailed neatly with the ideology of culture dominating the American humanities in the first two decades of the Cold War (Resina 2005a: 72–73). And while Ohmann suggests that the depoliticization of the humanities in the 1940s and 1950s was part of a particular strategy of disciplinary legitimization closely connected with concerns about academic prestige, Hispanism, doubly in need of legitimization vis-à-vis competing humanistic disciplines, was all the more susceptible to this dynamic, as were Spanish exiles in the United States, for whom the defence of the discipline implied a defence of the greatness of Spanish culture.

The Spaniards’ ideology of *hispanismo*, however, gave rise to two problems. First, it prevented most of them from seeing Latin American culture — past or present — as much more than an extension of its Peninsular mother lode: potentially interesting, but ultimately impure and derivative. (Especially after the influx of Latin American exiles in the 1960s and 70s, this attitude would fuel decades’ worth of departmental tensions between *latinoamericanistas* and *peninsularistas*.) Américo Castro, who

himself professed a lively interest in Latin America, could not help offend Latin American sensibilities at every turn. In his only contribution to the *Revista Iberoamericana*, for instance, he chided the Mexicans for championing its indigenous heritage over the Spanish legacy, claiming the country would not find its much-needed ‘equilibrium’ as long as it refused to acknowledge that it was Cortés who had saved it from a ‘bloody and inert existence’ (quoted in Faber 2005: 77).

Secondly, the Spaniards’ ideological investment in the axiom of Spanish greatness, as well as their methodological adherence to the positivist rigor of national philology, made American Hispanism singularly unreceptive to the changes that, toward the end of the 1960s, revolutionized and politicized the rest of the humanities and social sciences. ‘Locked in the historicist and philological traditions in which it produced its best work’, Resina writes, ‘Cold War Hispanism sidestepped historical materialism, feminism, class, race, and minority issues, all of them congruous with the critique of Spain’s imperial past’ (2005: 72). Hispanists’ stubborn conservatism, then, partly driven by concerns about academic prestige, paradoxically ended up decreasing that prestige. In the end, it would isolate Peninsular Hispanism from the humanistic mainstream for several decades to come. It is this long-term isolation that the turn to cultural studies seeks to break open.

Opportunities and Pitfalls of Cultural Studies

American Peninsular Hispanism after World War II, then, largely based its claims to legitimacy and prestige on a representation of Spanish culture whose principal value was thought to inhere in its being unitary, constant over time, and, through its inherent spirituality, essentially different from North-American culture. The discipline’s continued philological orientation, moreover, encouraged Hispanists to assume that Spain’s cultural values were most clearly embodied in the nation’s language — Castilian, or, as Menéndez Pidal preferred, *español* — and its canonical literature. Cultural studies, by contrast, aims to study Iberian cultures in a global context as sets of material practices characterized by multiplicity, diversity, and constant change (Graham & Labanyi 1995; Jordan & Morgan-Tamosunas 2000). Moreover, where American literary and cultural Hispanism was generally wary of politics, cultural studies places progressive politics at the centre of scholarship. In many ways, then, the paradigmatic leap between Hispanism and Iberian cultural studies could not be greater.

Still, as several commentators have pointed out, there are continuities as well. Anne Cruz argues with regard to pre-modern studies, for instance, that the strong historicist orientation of Peninsular philology makes for a relatively easy transition, via Greenblatt’s New Historicism, to a cultural-studies approach (Cruz 2006: 84). Carlos Alonso, for his part, has argued that Hispanism’s turn to cultural studies was in fact facilitated by its long-standing resistance to ‘theory’ (1995: 141, 150). In a similar way, one can say that cultural studies represent a return of sorts to philology’s broad interdisciplinarity. The real rupture with the disciplinary legacy of Hispanist philology lies in the dissolution of its exceptionalist claims. To be sure, Spain is diverse and changing; but it can no longer be thought of as quintessentially different.

The rise of cultural studies, then, can be seen as a scholarly normalization of Hispanism, an integration into the mainstream of the western humanities in the same

way that post-Franco Spain sought to represent itself as a normal European nation and integrate into the social, political, and cultural mainstream of the western world. That the notion of normalization can be problematic, however, is clear from its use by the historians José Álvarez Junco and Adrian Shubert. In their introduction to a recent overview of Spanish history since 1808, they welcome the transition to a normalizing view of Spanish history which, in their view, dissolves the long-standing stereotypes and misconceptions that undergirded Spain's image as essentially different from the rest of Europe. For Álvarez Junco and Shubert, historians have finally come to see Spain for what it really is. Not by accident, this maturation of the discipline coincides with Spain's belated entry into the European community, where it is poised to occupy its rightful place as equal to the great powers. 'If Spaniards can now accept their country as part of Europe', they write, 'it is time for scholars and their students to do so as well' (2000: 10). As historiography sheds its nationalist bias, which 'valued national histories primarily by their diplomatic clout or by the contribution of a handful of their citizens to European "culture"', and changes its focus, Spain will turn out to be just as interesting and legitimate an object of knowledge as the rest of Europe: 'When historians concern themselves with topics such as international migration, gender relations and popular culture, among many others, there is no reason to assign the Spanish case less importance than those of Britain, France or Germany' (2000: 10).

There is something awkward about the authors' celebratory tone, however. Is normality, a lack of distinction, really something to rejoice in? For Shubert and Álvarez Junco it clearly is, because for them the view that Spain was 'special' meant that the country, as an object of historical study, was unfairly relegated to a secondary status. Seen within the academic economy of prestige, however, it is clear that Shubert and Álvarez Junco are not just celebrating the renewed prestige of Spain; they are also celebrating the promise this development holds for the prestige of their own particular discipline. Recognizing that the exceptionalist claim no longer serves, the new legitimizing strategy is to claim commonality. Spain is just like the rest of the West; therefore, Hispanic Studies is just as important and interesting as French, English, or American Studies. The problem for Hispanist historiography, as much as for literary studies, is that this move toward normalization deprives the field of what it long thought of as its main selling points in the academic economy of prestige. To return to our beginning question: How much and what kind of scholarly attention does Spain deserve — and why?

Like the founders of the AATS, Iberian studies in the United States can of course point to the overwhelming presence and political, social, and economic relevance of the Spanish language. But 'Longfellow's Law' no longer applies. By now Spain has become only one of more than twenty Hispanophone nations, and one that will soon have fewer Spanish-speakers than the United States itself. The fact that the country remains one of the more popular destinations for American study-abroad programmes is more due to its location in Europe and to its relative safety and political stability, than to any lingering notion of its centrality to global Hispanic culture. Latin American studies, meanwhile, has long ceased to need Spain to safeguard its academic prestige. Even in the humanities there are now former Spanish departments that have done away with Iberian studies altogether (the University of Pittsburgh is a case in point).

This situation affects the relationship between the American university and the cultural and educational institutions of the Spanish state, a relationship that until relatively recently was still as symbiotic as it was when the AATS was founded. In spite of the proclaimed patriotism and Pan-Americanism of the early AATS, it is clear that the Spanish state viewed American Hispanism from the beginning as an important ally in its pursuit of greater cultural prestige and, thus, a more prominent position on the global stage. As we have seen, Menéndez Pidal applauded the rise of American Hispanism. So did the author of a 21-column entry to *hispanismo* in the 1926 edition of Espasa's *Enciclopedia Universal*, noting with approval that the field not only exalted 'our literary glories' but also vindicated Spanish history, including the discovery, conquest, and colonization of the Americas, in the face of 'la famosa leyenda negra que nuestros enemigos y envidiosos habían forjado' (Anonymous 1926: 1767). The link between Spanish cultural public relations and American Hispanism was further strengthened by the arrival of the Republican exile scholars, some of the most prominent among whom had been affiliated with Menéndez Pidal's Centro de Estudios Históricos. While it is true that the exiles were opposed to the Francoist state and the image of Spain it promoted, both Franco and the exiles were bent on a worldwide vindication of Spain's many achievements.

The gradual erosion of the status of Iberian studies vis-à-vis Latin American and Latino studies has diminished the grip of the Spanish state on the American university. Of course, Spain is not giving up without a fight (Resina 1996: 86). Its three most important political leaders since Franco's death — Felipe González, José María Aznar, and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero — have all strongly invested in the global promotion of Spain in cultural, political, and economic terms, albeit with different agendas and on different fronts. American academia, whose grip on global knowledge production is still increasing, is too important a battleground to neglect. Hence the continued attempts on Spain's part to claim some credit for — or at least cash in on — the rise of Spanish north of the Río Grande. Spain's awkward position vis-à-vis the 'Latinization' of the United States is exemplified by the ambiguous politics of the Instituto Cervantes, which, in a strategy not all that different from Menéndez Pidal's, attempts to ride the Latino wave while bolstering Peninsular claims to cultural and linguistic hegemony. It is important to recall that the Instituto, founded in 1991 for the worldwide 'promoción y la enseñanza de la lengua española y para la difusión de la cultura española e hispanoamericana', is almost entirely funded with Spanish tax dollars; its 2006 budget was almost 69 million euros (Instituto Cervantes 2006: 68). The Instituto's mission, however, while officially including the promotion of 'Spanish American' alongside 'Spanish' culture, is built on the doubtful assumption that 'la lengua española' — whose protection and promotion is, in the end, the organization's *raison d'être* — can function as the monolingual vehicle for both. Iberian cultural studies should avoid being recruited for this problematic enterprise, as it should generally avoid becoming an agent on Spain's behalf in the global competition for cultural prestige outlined by James English and Pascale Casanova.

Still, provided that the field manages to skirt these and other pitfalls, I would argue that the turn to cultural studies, however vaguely defined, does indeed offer Peninsular Hispanism new strategies for shoring up its position within the savage economies of prestige that govern American academia. In light of the above, however, I would

argue that the field's success will depend less on its skill in 'selling' Spain as such, than on its ability to insert Iberian phenomena into existing or emerging comparative fields, in a transatlantic, European, Mediterranean, or more global framework. Myriad aspects of Spain's past and present provide fascinating case studies for larger issues of wide scholarly interest, ranging from migration and exile to popular religion, cultural production under totalitarian regimes, or the social, cultural, and political dynamics of transitions to democracy. Iberian literary studies, too, would benefit from increased interaction with the new incarnations of comparative literature (now comparative cultural studies), a field in which Spanish and Latin American literatures have been chronically underrepresented (Avelar 1999: 51; McClennen 2002); a similar under-representation is evident in the newer area studies programmes mentioned above, European and Mediterranean Studies.¹⁰ Again, the goal is not to prove that Spanish phenomena are 'just as interesting' as those taking place elsewhere, but to show how Peninsular cultural processes help illuminate — or directly interact with — comparable processes in different geographical contexts.

This also means that an interdisciplinary approach to Iberian cultures — like the collective effort of sociologists, historians, literary critics, and political scientists that gave rise to Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi's groundbreaking *Spanish Cultural Studies* — is important, but not enough. The ultimate goal of Iberian Cultural Studies might well be described as the same kind of 'denationalization' or 'deterritorialization' that James English signals taking place in the economies of prestige of cultural prizes, in which these prizes, and indeed 'symbolic fields as such' become uncoupled 'from particular cities, nations, even clearly defined regions' (2005: 282). This would not mean abandoning notions of scholarly rigor and expertise, or giving up on the idea that scholarship produces and transmits specific kinds of knowledge about specific objects; but it *would* mean a further dissolution of the organic link between language, culture, and discipline. A final break, in other words, with the Romantic premises of national philology. The *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* and the *Arizona Journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies*, both less than a decade old, have been publishing groundbreaking work in this vein. Perhaps the most difficult challenge in this enterprise will be to maintain a commitment to scholarly multilingualism; to resist the enthronement of either English or Castilian as the only legitimate medium for scholarly knowledge production about Iberia;¹¹ and to forge

¹⁰ An extreme example is the University of Pittsburgh, which boasts a 'European Studies Center' while its Department of Hispanic Languages and Literatures has not one Iberian specialist.

¹¹ This is going to be an uphill battle, in part because the presence of Catalan, Basque, and Galician studies has been traditionally weak in the United States. One of the oldest institutions in this respect has been the Center for Basque Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. Interestingly, the Center evolved out of a Desert Research Program, in which it was thought that the emigrated Basque shepherds of Nevada should have a prominent presence. Basque studies at Reno were pioneered by William A. Douglass, an anthropologist, and Jon Bilbao, a bibliographical expert. From the early seventies on, the Center has included literary studies and linguistics as well. Financially, it has relied largely on American foundation funding and private gifts, partly from the Basque immigrant community. (See <<http://basque.unr.edu/o4/4.3.tt/4.3.1.1.history1.htm>>). Catalan Studies is also still largely marginal, in spite of the valiant efforts of people like Joan Ramon Resina (now at Stanford) and Josep Miquel Sobrer (Indiana), or the North American Catalan Society, (NACS), founded in 1978, which since 1986 issues the *Catalan Review* (see <<http://www.nacs-catalanstudies.org>>). The situation of Catalan Studies in the United States differs from that in the United Kingdom, where the field has a longer and stronger tradition.

stronger links both with other area studies and with Iberian Studies practised outside the Anglo-American world — including of course those in Spain itself.

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Este ensayo analiza el auge de los estudios culturales ibéricos como la fase más reciente en la larga lucha por el prestigio académico que ha venido marcando la historia del hispanismo en la universidad estadounidense. Mi tesis central es que cabe ver los estudios culturales ibéricos en parte como un intento de reinención y revitalización de un campo que desde hace mucho tiempo se ha sabido marginal, y como un intento por superar las ideologías y prácticas que contribuyeron a esa marginación. Este enfoque en el tema del prestigio permite resaltar los procesos que determinan el estatus institucional de las diferentes disciplinas académicas: su capital cultural, su poder y presencia en términos económicos y de plantilla, así como su nivel de autonomía o dependencia frente a otras disciplinas. Los hispanistas norteamericanos siempre han sido muy conscientes de la precaria posición institucional de su campo, y el archivo institucional se presenta como una fuente inagotable de debates en torno al prestigio de la disciplina, así como propuestas encaminadas a mejorarlo. El presente ensayo se fundamenta en un análisis histórico de esos debates. Me centro de forma particular en la década entre 1915 y 1925, en la que el hispanismo estadounidense se establece como disciplina académica moderna, y en el impacto sobre el campo de la Guerra Civil Española y sus consecuencias inmediatas.

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