

INTRODUCTION



The concept of ‘bridging’ evokes several different images. The one that first comes to mind is a materially visual and tactile structure that links spaces: the bridge. This structural construction prompts, in turn, mental representations commonly associated with the bridge: a pathway or roadway over a depression or a body of water, a device used to connect, allowing for transit between spaces. The sight of a bridge linking different places is always a comforting one since it implies conciliation, collaboration, contact, and communication. In times of conflict, the bridge is usually the first strategic “location”¹ coveted by the warring factors and, therefore, secured and guarded against occupation or destruction.

The constructional metaphor of the title of this collection first points to the bridge the Iberians threw across the Atlantic in 1492, a roadway open only to the conqueror to carry back to the Peninsula the gold extracted from the “New World.” However, it also calls attention to the steady yet varied intellectual and historical relations between Spain and Latin America over the centuries. Heidegger reminds us that

a bridge does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream. . . . One side is set off against the other by the bridge. With the banks, the bridge brings to the stream the one and the other expanse of the landscape lying behind them. It brings stream and bank and land into each other’s neighborhood. (Heidegger, 152)

The essays in this anthology problematize the “setting off against each other” of two banks, namely Spain and Latin America. The collection delves into the terrain “lying behind” both banks and yet accessible only through multiple bridgings. One of the aims of the anthology is to sustain the critical interest in Iberian and Latin American cultures beyond the quincentennial celebrations. After the publication of numerous anthologies commemorating the quincentennial on both sides of the Atlantic,²

we want to situate these essays as part of a post-1992 reflection. This calls for a reassessment of Latin America's and Spain's past and present cultural ties, which is necessary to enhance our understanding of the future of intellectual production and artistic expression encompassing the Iberian and American world. Bringing together a diversity of scholarly views, this collection of essays will try to show that the bridging over an ocean of history and history of ideas is a complex and intricate process that elicits a plurality of viewpoints. Each chapter brings a different disciplinary perspective and invites a diversified theoretical outlook on what Remiche and Scheier have defined as "the double tie of consanguinity and estrangement which has united for over half a millenium the two continents" (7). Accordingly, these studies on the interaction of the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas in the area of intellectual and cultural production over the centuries not only seek to provide a valuable insight into the history of ideas but also examine literary, sociopolitical, and philosophical issues. Moreover, the essays cover an extensive geography and take heed of a wide range of historical periods. The texts challenge, as Fernández put in chapter 2, "the boundaries set up between Peninsular and Latin American studies and eschew the conventional categories and attitudes that too often circumscribe the discourse around those disciplines" (29).

In our attempt to bridge fields of study, continents, countries, critical approaches, and historical moments, we hope to "gather" in the Heideggerian sense but do not seek a circumscribing unity. This anthology is distinctive for its hybridity and collaborative tensions. By "collaborative tensions" we are referring to the divergent positions the contributors take in their respective studies—a divergency that suggests new questions, inviting the reader to engage in further examinations and discussions beyond those in this book. The essays in this collection shed light on some of the most complex questions that have been set off by the relationship between the Americas and Spain: the effects of Hispanic liberalism in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century on the development of Latin American postcolonial thought; nationalism versus universalism in Latin America; Iberian idealism and American *nostalgias*, or Hispanism versus Panamericanism; the problem of *caciquismo* and its presence on both sides of the Atlantic; and the elaboration of national and cultural identities as a result of the interaction of Spain and Latin America. Although Hispanism does not constitute the main theme of the book, it operates, nonetheless, as the common thread running through the chapters. They all address, by different means, the multiple

figurations of the concept and outline some of its cultural and philosophical implications on both sides of the Atlantic.

The history of the initial and uneven bridging between Spain and Latin America is a dark and violent one. In chapter 1, John Tolan's reading of the writings produced by Spanish-born author Bernardo de Balbuena while in Puerto Rico in 1624 takes the reader back in an unusual way to the period of the conquest. In his analysis, Tolan shows how Balbuena manipulated history to vindicate the rights of empire and to justify Castilian rule in the Americas. He argues that Balbuena revived and romanticized the Iberian victory over the French in the Battle of Ronçeveaux, placing it at the root of the Spanish Empire and therefore justifying the conquest and subsequent Christianization of the natives. While Doris Sommer in her provocative study of the nineteenth-century Latin American romance novel reminds us of the "inextricability of politics from fiction in the history of nation-building" (Sommer, 75), Tolan's analysis calls attention to the fact that "foundational myths" such as the one Balbuena elaborated were also used in the early periods to legitimize Spanish presence and the colonization of Latin America. Balbuena's epic poem shows that the dissemination of Spain's legitimate "membership" in the world of empire builders was not only made possible through the use of arms and violence but through a vehicle that would have long-lasting and insidiously persuasive effects—language.

The linguistic planning process and the evangelizing mission implemented by the Spaniards in Latin America beginning in 1492, made language and religion the kernel of the colonial mold. It is precisely, as A. Remiche-Martynow and G. Schneier-Madanes have argued, this colonial mold that, thus far, has denied Latin America's plurality (Remiche-Martynow and Schneier-Madanes, 7). By doing so, it has also kept alive the idea of a "Latin American unitary expression" in the Spanish mind. Indeed, this idea is widely shared by Spaniards. José Prat, for example (the lawyer and politician who is affiliated with the Spanish socialist party and who spent thirty seven years in Colombia), recently made reference to "the natural communication between Spain and Latin America born from the language identity, a spiritual identity signified by the Spanish language" (González Gómez, 316–17). Another recent declaration by Nicolás Sánchez Albornoz emphasizes this position. He writes: "Demographic and political reasons, as well as reasons of communication secure the *supremacy* of the Spanish language. This *ascendancy*, achieved throughout the centuries, *put an end to the desire* of those who wish to see the Spanish language broken off into national idioms" (*El País*, 11

December 1992, 11; my emphasis). However, the Argentinian writer Alicia Duvojne Ortiz in her article "Spanish a Fan-Shaped Language," adopts a more radical stance. She attests to the difference in the Spanish language spoken in different regions of Latin America. She provides examples of semantic differences and predicts that in a century we will no longer refer to the language as Spanish but, rather, as Puerto Rican, Argentinian, Mexican, and so on.

The pride Spaniards take in this colonial legacy was clearly indicated in the fourth room of the Spanish Pavillion at the 1992 Seville Exposition dedicated to the Spanish language. Its aim was to remind the visitor that Spanish is the second language spoken in the world of global communication. Accordingly, the audio-visual display of this room was there to prove that technology *also* speaks Spanish. Moreover, we should point out that The Plan Quinto Centenario supported the creation of The Cervantes Institute, which would "oversee the proper usage" of the Spanish language. Spain's emphasis on the unifying force of the Spanish language corroborates the significance of language as an assimilative force in the Iberian neocolonial dream.

In chapter 2, James Fernández addresses the issue of the "human" imports during colonial times. He studies another kind of bridging through the literary construction of the figure of the *Indiano*—the Spaniard who emigrates to the New World and later returns to Spain—during the nineteenth century. Fernández's reading of Clarín's "Boroña" sheds light on the ambivalence with which nineteenth-century Spain perceives the *Indiano*. He argues that the *Indiano* embodies the destabilization of Spain's insularity and social immobility. Fernández also discusses how the *Indiano* allows for the examination of Spain's problematic relationship, first to "modernity" and "desire" as signifiers of the "New World," and second to the notions of "identity" and "autochthony," considered specific to Spain.

Virginia Gibbs goes on to emphasize in chapter 3 the difficulties that arose from what she defines as "Spain's public and intellectual crisis in the concept of authority" during the second half of the nineteenth century. She is mainly concerned with the problem of *caciquismo* as a reflection and consequence of this crisis. In her exploration of Valle-Inclán's work, Gibbs contends that the writer's interest in the Hispanic tyrant did not originate with Valle-Inclán's sojourn in Latin America as other critics have argued. Rather, she sees it as an inspiration that grew out of his study of *caciquismo* as a power structure first present in the Iberian Peninsula and not as an exclusive Latin American phenomenon.

On the other side of the Atlantic the nineteenth century was also a period of great political turmoil. Many Latin American intellectuals of that time would have agreed with Gibbs, since they considered the *cacique* to be the product of Spanish colonization and in great part responsible for Latin American political, social, and economical “unrefinement” and backwardness.

Katra, in chapter 4, further develops this issue by examining the different beliefs of key thinkers of the 1837 generation in Argentina—Sarmiento, Gutiérrez, Alberdi—regarding the necessity for Latin America to turn away from the Spanish colonial legacy and to break all ties with a Spain that occupied a peripheral position within Europe at the time.

Yet, toward the end of the nineteenth century not all Latin American intellectuals sought the same solution—a “revisionism” inspired by France and England—to satisfy their desire for regeneration. In contrast to Sarmiento’s generation, other intellectuals refused to see Spain in a negative light.

Jeane Delaney documents the shifts that took place in the way Argentina viewed Spain during that period. In her study on Manuel Gálvez’s *hispanismo* in chapter 5, she explains that the revival of Spanish values and traditions—cultural as well as religious—sprung from Gálvez’s fear of modernization in Argentina and, likewise, of the ensuing destabilization of the hierarchical social order. However, Delaney also argues that the renewal of ties with Spain allowed Galvez to posit himself and his fellow intellectuals as the ideal promoters of *hispanización*; they succeeded at the same time to redefine their precarious role and identity as “intellectuals.”

Writing about Spanish *Krausismo* in chapter 6, O. Carlos Stoetzer focuses on a different type of Spanish influence in Argentina. He suggests that Spanish Krausismo had a positive influence on the development of political liberalism first in Spain and later in Argentina and Guatemala. He describes how a number of recently established social democratic governments in Latin America were founded on the basis of Krausian philosophy.

Examining *Ariel* (by Uruguayan writer José Enrique Rodó) in chapter 7, Jaime Concha points to another issue that preoccupied many intellectuals near the end of the nineteenth century in Latin America: the proximity of North America and the threat its materialism posed to Latin America’s emerging identity. This study of *Ariel* explains how Rodó’s concern sprung less from a facile “anti-Yanquism” than from

a genuine intellectual preoccupation about Latin American cultural identity. Concha is committed to elucidate what he calls Rodó's "physics of ideas," a synthesis of scientific materialist positivism and Spanish philosophical idealism. He also asks, "How is it possible that such a spiritual text as *Ariel* gives rise to a "Newtonian" conception of physics?" Through a shrewd deconstruction of *Ariel*, Concha redefines Rodó as someone who hoped for a reconciliation between the fulfillment of the European humanistic reasoning and the North American utilitarian values.

The Southern Cone and Central America were manifestly not the only Latin American regions to waver back and forth between the desire for restoration of Spanish values and traditions and, at the same time, their repudiation during a period that saw new cultural and political expressions emerging.

Taking the Island of Puerto Rico in the 1930s as a case study, Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo demonstrates in chapter 8 how Pedro Albizu Campos, while struggling for independence from the United States, adopts concepts of nation and culture developed by the Catalán cleric and Catholic apologist Jaime Balmes. Stevens-Arroyo raises essential questions about the process of decolonization, nation building, autonomy and independence. He studies the links between Albizu's nationalist party (inspired by Balmesian conservative philosophy) and what he calls "The Mother Country"; namely Spain and the "*nacionalismo hispanizante*"³ resulting from it. In her recent study *Colonialism and Culture*, Iris Zavala shows how part of the modernist project was "to activate productively the Christian and Latin part to reveal the material interest of North America" (Zavala, 98). Of particular interest in Stevens-Arroyo's contribution is his analysis of Albizu's return to the implementation of Catholicism in the thirties in the building of national identity—the means par excellence of Spanish colonization—in order to oppose North American imperialism and Protestantism. One could indeed see this "return" as "imperial nativism" (Deane, 9). By relying on the Spanish colonial legacy and cultural continuity to resist a neocolonial situation, Puerto Rico found itself caught in a vicious circle that would amplify and deepen the problems intrinsic to its quest for emancipation.

By the end of the 1930s a new type of bridging took place between Spain and Latin America. With the Republicans fleeing from Francisco Franco's dictatorship to settle in the Americas, the increasing presence of a growing Spanish intellectual diaspora exiled in Latin American countries such as Mexico, Argentina, and Venezuela greatly contributed to the creation of new links in the area of Iberian and Latin American thought.

Several studies have shown that Spanish intellectuals exiled in the Americas considerably changed their views of Latin America; they also came to question and reassess their own culture and country, Spain.

In chapter 9, Santiago Daydí-Tolson's analysis of Luis Cernuda's writings about Latin America illustrates how, in spite of his genuine interest and attraction for Latin American culture and life, the Spanish poet ultimately viewed the "New World" as a mere object of desire, which paradoxically could constitute a reality only if seen as an extension of Spain. Daydí-Tolson's study undermines the romantic idea that the Republican in exile was first and foremost Republican, and secondarily a Spaniard. He calls attention to the fact that even Republicans could be overcome by neocolonialist sentiments.

Ironically, Cernuda's view of Latin America as an intrinsic part of Spain is not that different from the myth of *Hispanidad* disseminated by Franco's regime. Escudero's chapter complements Daydí-Tolson's analysis in that it deconstructs the rhetorical framework through which Franco's regime articulated its idea of *Hispanidad*.

Studying, in chapter 10, the evolution of Hispanist thought from the Franco era until today, María Escudero takes the journal *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*—the vehicle for articulating the ideology of the Franco regime regarding Latin America—as her point of departure. She draws a parallel between the ideology underlying *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* and the one patent in speeches of eminent Iberian political figures in the last twenty-five years, constructing a juxtaposition that leads her to a disquieting conclusion. She contends that under the cover of a "democratic gloss" the post-Franco regimes have perpetuated the idea of a "Hispanic community of Nations" as it was first conceived during the Franco era. Escudero imputes this situation to Spain's unswerving attempt to be granted full membership in the exclusive Western European unity and North American clubs.⁴ Furthermore, she adds that by accepting the role of mediator between Europe, North America, and Latin America, Spain abandoned the search for less corrupted "rapports" with Latin America.

In the same vein, Marina Pérez de Mendiola's work may be seen as paradigmatic of Escudero's theories, providing, in chapter 11, a critical analysis of the representation of Latin American countries at the 1992 Seville Universal Exposition. In her essay, Pérez de Mendiola explores the logic underwriting Spain's articulation of the Latin American presence at the exposition and shows that Spain required the "presence" of Latin

America as its *former colonies* in order to reaffirm herself, as physical evidence of her past accomplishments and glory.

Ofelia Schutte rounds out this collection in chapter 12 by offering a reflection on the state of Latin American cultural identity. She asks, "how could a discourse on Latin American cultural identity position itself five hundred years after the conquest?" Building on Nietzsche's, Sarmiento's, and Martí's analyses of culture, she denounces "technological determinism" as a force that plunges historically underdeveloped regions into a deeper state of dependency. She urges the Western hemisphere to go beyond the traditional and orchestrated showcase of technical know-how, as exemplified by the Universal Exposition, and argues for the creation of new criteria to define people and civilization, Spain and the Americas.

Bridging the Atlantic cannot exhaustively cover each aspect defining the long-lasting and problematic relationship between Spain and Latin America since 1492, and it is not concerned with conclusiveness. Rather, it invites others to challenge this work, to generate alternative positionings while pursuing the many questions that have been raised and merit further reflection. Heidegger in his essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" asserts that to think of a bridge from where we are

belongs to the nature of our thinking of that bridge that in *itself* thinking gets through, persists through, the distance to that location. . . . From right here we [with these essays] may even be much nearer to that bridge and to what it makes room for than someone who uses it daily as an indifferent river crossing. (Heidegger, 156)

This selection of historical, philosophical, sociopolitical, and literary essays aims to alter broader debates, and to intrigue a wider audience. The last ten years have been marked by an increasing interest in colonial and postcolonial studies. However, one could question the dearth of anthologies in English chronicling the complex relationship between Spain, Latin America, and its colonial legacy. *Bridging the Atlantic* intends to stimulate new "dialectical encounters" and more comparative research on postcolonial questions.

Notes

1. According to Heidegger a bridge is a location, and a location "proves to be a location because of the bridge . . . a location comes into existence only by

virtue of the bridge" (*Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. by Albert Hofstadter [New York: Harper & Row, 1975], p. 155).

2. The body of work published around the quincentenary is too extensive to be fully represented here. I have, nevertheless, compiled a select list of magazines, journals, and newsletters published between 1986 and 1992. This should provide a good source of biographical information for scholars interested in analyzing different commentaries and opinions voiced on the quincentennial of the European arrival in the Americas. See the addendum following the works cited.

3. See Emilia de Zuleta's article "El hispanismo de Hispanoamerica". *Hispania* 75, 4 (October 1992): 950-65.

4. The creation of new journals such as *Encounters* and the proliferation of Spanish foundations in the U.S. as a result of the bilateral treaties of cooperation signed in 1989 between Spain and the United States is indicative of Spain's need to disseminate its new (?) message. In his presidential greeting to the readers of *Encounters*, H. E. Felipe González of Spain writes, "Spain has a long history of relations with the United States, from the Spanish pioneers of the sixteenth century to the crucial moments of American independence. We understand that the new bilateral treaties of cooperation signed in 1989 mark the beginning of an era rich in cultural and economic exchange. *Spain '92 Foundation* and *Encounters* are clear examples of this new spirit" (González, 5).

Works Cited

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Addendum

Quinto Centenario, published by the Department of History of America at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid. It covers all aspects and periods of Ibero-American history.

The journal of the *Asociación de historiadores latinoamericanos europeos* published two issues respectively entitled "History of Latin America in European Research and Teaching" and "America in the Material Civilization of Europe, Sixteenth–Twentieth Centuries." Both issues were edited by Dr. Horst Pietschmann.

Encounter '92, newsletter of the quincentennial of Columbus's landfall in the Bahamas, Star Publishers, Nassau.

Latin American Archivist Association (ALA), published in Mexico City).

Columbus 92, monthly magazine published in Italian (1987–1992) in New York and Genoa.

Ideas '92, biyearly academic journal created to clarify the historical, cultural, and diplomatic perceptions that Spain, Latin America, and the U.S. have held of one another. Published at the University of Miami, Coral Gables.

Nueva sociedad, published in Caracas, Venezuela, this magazine published eight essays between 1989 and 1992 under the general title of "Lo propio y lo ajeno, 500 años después".

Latin American Population History Newsletter (LAPH), published by the Department of History at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

The Courier, monthly magazine published by UNESCO in thirty-five languages. See in particular the April 1989 issue "Portuguese Voyages of Discovery."

Sevilla Universal, magazine on the preparations for Expo '92.

Place, special 1992 issue from Partners for Livable Places, published in Washington D.C.

América indígena, journal published by the Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia in Mexico City.

Five Hundred, quarterly magazine published by the Christopher Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee Commission, Washington D.C.

The New World, the Smithsonian Institution trilingual quarterly newsletter on the Smithsonian's quincentennial program, planning, and research.

Quinto Centenario, bimonthly newsletter published in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

América Latina, a journal published by the Russian Academy of Sciences. See in particular issue 5, published in 1988.

Océanos, triannual magazine published by the National Commission of Portugal (Lisboa).

1992 Columbus Newsletter, biannually published by the John Carter Brown Library.

The Journal of the Society for Renaissance Studies produced a special quincentennial number in 1992. Published at the University of Glasgow, Scotland.

Rábida, semiannual publication produced by the Provincial Foundation for the Quincentennial of the Discovery of America. Published in Huelva, Spain.

Archeology Magazine published several issues around the quincentennial. See issues of September/October 1990, May/June 1991, September/October 1991, January/February 1992, May/June 1992. Journal published at the University of Boulder, Colorado.

América '92, published a special supplement entitled "IV Centenario del Descubrimiento de América", which describes the celebrations of 1892. Published by Sociedad Estatal Quinto Centenario in Madrid.

Aurora, newsletter published by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops V Centenary Committee.

Borinquen 500, newsletter published by the Puerto Rican Commission for the Celebration of the Quincentennial.

North American Congress on Latin America 1991-1992, published a special issue "Reports on the Americas."

Encuentro, biannual academic review published by the Association of Spanish Professors in Puerto Rico (San Juan).

La Española, newsletter published by the Dominican National Commission for the Celebration of the Quincentennial.

Encuentro de dos Mundos, magazine published by the Honduran Department of Culture and Tourism (Tegucigalpa).

Revista Texto y Contexto, published by the History Department at the University of the Andes. Several issues were published over a three-year period (1989–1992) under the title “Discovery and American Identity” (Bogota, Colombia).

Notas Mesoamericanas, a journal of Meso-American anthropology. See special issue on the quincentennial in 1990 (Universidad de las Américas, Puebla, Mexico).

Ecos del V Centenario, published by the Honduran National Commission for the Celebration of the Quincentennial.

Daybreak, published by the Indigenous Press Network, Highland, Maryland.

Boletín del V Centenario, published by the Peruvian National Commission for the Celebration of the Quincentennial.

Cuadernos Americanos, devoted a special issue in September/October 1988 on the quincentennial. Published by La Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico.

Encuentro: A Columbian Quincentenary Quarterly, published until 1988 by the University of New Mexico and replaced in 1988 by *Encounters: A Quincentenary Review*, published by the Latin American Institute, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

500 Magazine, official magazine of the U.S. Commission, Miami, Florida.

Native Nations, magazine published in New York City. Reported primarily on Native American's preparations for the quincentennial.

Sephardic Highlights, monthly newsletter of the American Sephardic Federation. Provided worldwide coverage of the 1992 commemorative activities of Sephardic Jews. Published in New York City.

Amate, newsletter publication created in a related effort to conserve the vast quantity of documentation in archives throughout the Americas. Published by the Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City.

Indigenous Thought, magazine created to serve as a principal source of information for individuals and groups interested in objecting to the celebrations of the quincentennial.

For more details on these publications and other sources see *Quincentennial of the Discovery of America: Encounter of Two Worlds*, a newsletter produced by the General Secretariat of the Organization of the American States, Washington, D.C.