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**IBERO-AMERICAN INTERSECTIONS:
Constructing (Trans)National Imaginaries
in Spain and Latin America, 1898-1938**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Spanish,
The University of Auckland, 2009

Abstract

This study explores the ways in which Spain and Latin America have represented each other culturally, and the so-called singular cultural space of Ibero-America, through essays and travel narratives produced between 1898 and 1938. In particular, it reflects on the supranational contexts in which (trans)national identities are negotiated and defined. Intellectual representations of Argentina and Mexico are offered by three Spaniards: Miguel de Unamuno, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez and José María Albiñana Sanz. From the other side of the Atlantic, imaginative constructions of Spain are provided by five Latin Americans: Rubén Darío (Nicaragua), Alfonso Reyes (Mexico), and Manuel Ugarte, Ricardo Rojas and Manuel Gálvez, all from Argentina.

Spain's newfound interest in its former colonies after 1898 was orchestrated in official circles through the ideology of *hispanoamericanismo*. As Spain's postimperial project, intent on national regeneration and securing renewed influence by proclaiming the allegedly shared spirit uniting all Ibero-America, it sought a cultural reassertion of Spain's hegemony. In contrast, while Peninsular regenerationists looked to rekindle their nation's authority, the emergent hegemony of the United States drew Latin American intellectuals towards Spain. In consideration of their renewed mutual interests, this contextualised study traces what I deem are reciprocal gazes projected back and forth between Spain and the Americas, given that each is drawn to the other so as to reassess postimperial/postcolonial realities.

Although the Peninsular writers analysed in this study showed little faith in the rhetoric of *hispanoamericanismo*, I argue that their individual and national aspirations in Latin America are equally evident of Spain's postimperial inability to approach the former colonies without reviving its imperial myths. In contrast, the recourse by Latin American intellectuals to Spain allows for an often overlooked opportunity to map the cultural significance that the ex-Metropolis held for them, articulated in response to the threat of US cultural and economic neoimperialism and what were perceived as the ill effects of modernity.

*For Luisa and Luca,
and in loving memory of my father, Owen*

Acknowledgements

It is with great pleasure that I am able to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Christine Arkinstall, who has been an endless source of wisdom and encouragement, a first-rate editor and decipherer of my early drafts, and unfailing in her smiles and support not only during the last four years but throughout my undergraduate and graduate years at The University of Auckland. I would also like to offer my heartfelt thanks to my co-supervisor, Walescka Pino-Ojeda, whose guidance and insightful comments were instrumental in the completion of this project, as was her positive attitude. Thanks must also go to Kathryn Lehman, who very kindly read sections of the thesis and whose suggestions were of tremendous value to the final version.

I am indebted to my friend and office companion, Gwyn Fox, who, sitting opposite me for the last four years has been an unending source of moral encouragement and good humour, and whose editing prowess was invaluable. I would also like to express my gratitude to the staff of the Spanish Department and the School of European Languages and Literatures at The University of Auckland. My positive experiences as a student and tutor at the university owe a lot to an amazing group of very encouraging and professional people. Thanks must also go to fellow graduate students, Íñigo and Marisol, for their friendship.

I would especially like to thank my mother, Marion, for always encouraging me in the things that I have pursued and for always being proud of her son.

I feel very privileged to have had financial support from the Tertiary Education Commission of New Zealand and The University of Auckland, and to have been the recipient of the generous funding of Antonio and Jayne from the Regueiro-McKelvie Foundation and their warm hospitality both here in Auckland and in Spain.

Last, but always first, I must express my deepest appreciation to my wonderful wife, Luisa, who has always stood by me with love and support, and has been amazing during the last, often difficult, stages of this project with our newborn son, Luca. At only three months old, his determination to master that elusive thing we call sleep so that his Dad might finish his thesis, is surely no mean feat and is equally deserving of more hugs and kisses than I could possibly give.

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“El pintor que quiere retratarse, tiene que ver su imagen reflejada en un espejo.
Algo semejante les sucede a las naciones. Para conocerse,
no les queda otro recurso sino mirarse en estos espejos
lucientes y claros—los escritores de fuera—.”
(Pardo Bazán 313)

“La práctica de la idea de nuestra renovación tiene un precepto máximo: el viajar.
Reformarse es vivir. Viajar es reformarse.”
(Rodó, *Motivos* 412)

“A manera de ejercicios espirituales, al americano debiera imponerse la meditación
metódica de las cosas de España, y al español la de las cosas de América.”
(Reyes, “Ventana” 572)