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Hispanismo. La cultura hisp nica interpretada desde el exterior ed. by Antonio Ni o (review)

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Bulletin of the Comediantes, Volume 76, Number 1, 2025, pp. 161-164
(Review)

Published by Bulletin of the Comediantes
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/boc.2025.a970262>



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Antonio Niño, editor. *Hispanismo. La cultura hispánica interpretada desde el exterior.*

MARCIAL PONS, 2024. 464 PP.

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HISPANISMO. WHAT'S IN A NAME? In 1732, the inaugural edition of the Real Academia Española's (RAE) *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* defined *Hispanismo* in straightforward linguistic terms as a "modo de hablar particular y privativo de la lengua española: como entendido por hombre que entiende." *Hispanismo* was translated into English as "Spanicism" by Pedro Pineda in his Spanish–English and English–Spanish Dictionary of 1740; by 1803 RAE's dictionary, though continuing to define *Hispanismo* as a "modo de hablar peculiar de la lengua española," added that it was also a word or phrase "que se aparta de las reglas comunes de la gramática. Idiotismus hispanicus." Later in the century, however, these pejorative associations were dropped, and in the 1884 edition of that same dictionary, *Hispanismo* remained a linguistic term with three distinctive meanings: (1) "Giro o modo de hablar propio y privativo de la lengua española"; (2) "Vocablo o giro de esta lengua empleado en otra"; and (3) "Empleo de vocablo o giros españoles en distinto idioma." These same definitions still appear in the most recent edition of the RAE's *Diccionario de la lengua española*, complemented by a fourth: "Dedicación al estudio de las lenguas, literaturas o cultura hispánicas," suggesting something tantamount to a scholarly discipline.

This entry, though accurate, fails to reference the ideological meanings currently attached to *Hispanismo* owing to its associations with *hispanidad*, another linguistic term, albeit one that by early twentieth century had acquired racial overtones evoking *Spanishness*, an inherited trait that supposedly united Spanish speakers around the world. *Hispanidad* officially acquired a public face when, in 1918, Spain's king Alonso XIII proclaimed 12 October a national holiday to be known as "Día de la Raza," taking advantage of the longstanding association of this day with Columbus's first landfall in the Americas. That particular designation continued until 1958, when Francisco Franco's government, in keeping with this dictator's long-standing efforts to exalt Spain's imperial and cultural legacy in Spanish America, renamed it "Día de la Hispanidad," though in 1987, the name was changed again to

“Fiesta Nacional de España.” For some the concept of Hispanidad is also integral to the programs and language classes sponsored by the Spanish government’s Instituto Cervantes and its outposts around the world. For this reason, Hispanism—sometimes also referred to as Pan-Hispanism—has evolved into something of a political football, a topic of seemingly endless discussion and debate with its harshest critics regarding it as nothing less than a neo-imperialist ideology whose usage and rapid extinction they heartily recommend.

A succinct introduction to these controversies can be found in *Hispanismo’s* introduction by the volume’s editor Antonio Niño, a historian best known for his pioneering monograph, *Cultura y diplomacia: los hispanistas franceses y España, 1875–1931* (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas – Casa de Velázquez, 1988). But rather than allow himself and this collection of essays to get bogged down in this ideological morass, Niño wisely examines Hispanism as a “categoría científica,” or academic discipline. Towards this end he explains that the volume’s primary purpose is to document various iterations of the discipline’s development in various countries, a phenomenon labeled “international Hispanism,” basically a transnational approach to a field with a complex and changing history.

In keeping with this transnational theme, Jean-François Botrel’s essay (“Las asociaciones nacionales e internacionales de hispanistas y el fomento del hispanismo científico”) offers a detailed account examining Hispanism’s development as reflected in the creation of “associations” of card-carrying *hispanistas* in countries around the world. With their origins in the Société Académique Franco-Hispano-Portugaise (1879) and the American Association of the Teachers of Spanish (1917; hereafter AATS), the number of these associations mushroomed in the decades after World War II, with 1955 marking the creation of the Association of Hispanists in Great Britain & Ireland and a similar organization in Japan. The most recent creation is the Asociación Taiwanesa de Hispanistas established in 2021. While these associations speak directly to the growing global importance of Spanish language study, Botrel fails to compare the chronology and character of Hispanism’s herding instinct to that of specialists in other languages and literatures nor does he analyze the circumstances surrounding their creation. In the United States, for example, the AATI (American Association of Teachers of Italian) dates from 1921; that of German instructors (AATG) from 1926; and that of French teachers (AATF) from 1927. Were these organization’s simply copycatting the AATS, or were other factors involved? The creation of the AATS, for example, can be seen as a response to sharp increases in the number of students studying Spanish, the growing demand for teachers versed in the language, as well as these teachers desire for greater recognition in the Modern Language Association (MLA), until then an institution dominated by instructors in other European languages. Presumably similar conditions factored in the creation of other associations of Hispanists, but this issue is one the essay does not address.

Transnationality also features in “El panteón del hispanismo,” Miguel Rodríguez’s aptly titled essay on the publication of *homenajes*—the Spanish equivalent of *Festschriften*—honoring the discipline’s leading lights. Best interpreted as offshoots of professionalization of academic disciplines,

Festschriften originated in Prussia starting in the 1860s and 1870s, but soon appeared elsewhere in Europe, then the United States. The first Spanish scholar to be so honored was Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1856–1912), whose *homenaje*, organized by the RAE, appeared in 1899. Others soon followed, as indicated by a list of the forty *homenajes* Rodríguez has compiled as representative of the genre. Notably absent, however, are the criteria Rodríguez used to compile the list. For example, it includes Pierre Vilar (1906–2003), a well-known French historian whose *homenaje* appeared in 1993, but omits the volume published in 1996 in honor of the distinguished British historian John H. Elliott (1930–2022) (full disclosure: I was one of the editors of that volume together with Geoffrey Parker).

At this point, the volume's transnational luster begins to fade. Sebastian Faber's interesting essay, "La noción de civilización hispánica y el impacto de los cultural studies," centered on the rise of "cultural studies"—neatly defined as the study of the forgotten—and its influence in widening Hispanism's field of focus, is frustratingly short on specifics, as is Alfonso Botti's "Hispanismo y la historiografía." Óscar Loureda Lamas, in "El español de Europa, hoy," examines Spanish as spoken in Europe today; regrettably, he makes only minimal reference the hispanophone population in other parts of the world. Three other essays offer case studies of specific iterations of Hispanism in individual national contexts: Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez surveys the changes in the character and scope of Spanish literary studies in the Low Countries ("El papel de la historia literaria nacional en el hispanismo: el caso de los Países Bajos (siglos XIX y XX)"), while France features in David Marcilhacy's illuminating discussion of that country's *americanistes* ("Hispanismo y americanismo: convergencias y divergencias") and in Ignacio Peiró's account of the influence of Rafael Altamira ("En el espejo de Francia: Rafael Altamira, los hispanistas y la historiografía francesa [1917–1931]"). Altamira is known in the United States for his role in the creation of the AATS and its house journal, *Hispania*. For his part, Peiró considers his influence on French *hispanistes* in the wake of World War I. Spain occupies centerstage in José Ignacio Pérez Pascual's important essay examining the Centro de Estudios Históricos, a governmental institution established in 1910 and which promoted the study of Spanish language and literature through special classes aimed at bringing interested foreigners, students and teachers alike, to Madrid. In addition, the Centro's in-house journal, *Revista de Filología Española*, dating from 1914, quickly emerged as the country's pre-eminent journal for literary scholarship, attracting numerous subscribers from abroad, including many from the United States.

Rounding out the volume are three insightful and original essays. John Nieto-Philips, in "El auge del español en los Estados Unidos: El hispanismo «fundamentalista» de Aurelio Macedonio Espinosa," explores the work of the famed Stanford University scholar of linguistics and folklore Aurelio M. Espinosa (1907–2004), a self-styled "Spanish American" who, despite his roots in New Mexico's Hispanic community and abiding interest in its language, history, and culture, championed a more general concept of Hispanidad and emphasized in more abstract terms the importance of Spain's cultural legacy in North America. Aurora Díez-Canedo Flores, in "Hacia una

definición del hispanismo del exilio español,” offers a survey focused primarily on Hispanism as practiced by various educators exiled from Spain in the wake of the Civil War and during the repression of the subsequent Franco regime. She also provides a peek into such journals as *España Peregrina* and *Romance*, both published in Mexico City, along with Buenos Aires’s *Revista Iberoamericana* and the *Revista de Filología Hispánica* in New York. Niño rounds out the volume with “La I Internacional del hispanismo y la diplomacia cultural española,” an important essay devoted to the propagandistic efforts of another Francoist institution, the Asociación Internacional de Hispanismo and the efforts of its house journal *Clavileño* (1940) to persuade *hispanistas* in countries other than Spain to regard the Franco regime as the reincarnation of *eternal Spain* as well as its guardian and protector.

In the end, the volume’s emphasis on Hispanism as a discipline as opposed to an ideology will be disappointing to some. On the other hand, its appearance offers a welcome reprieve from these battles while underscoring the need for a similarly objective volume focused on the history of Hispanism and its achievements in North America.