

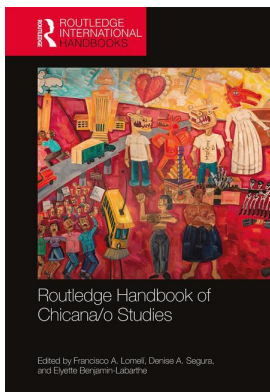
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A trans-Atlantic look at Chicana/o culture and literature from a Spanish perspective

José Antonio Gurpegui

In a conversation with New Mexican writer Sabine R. Ulibarri in 1987 at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, he said: “We have been forgotten by the Spaniards. We were ignored during the time before you got here, and we are even today.” This was not a reproachful remark; he was simply expressing reality as he and others experience it. Upon reflection, it is clear that Ulibarri was correct in that, in academic circles at least, the American population of Hispanic origin has been overlooked for decades, and even centuries, by what some people call the “motherland”. Spanish interest in American economics and politics tended to focus on Latin American countries south of the Río Grande rather than in *el norte* (the United States). Until recently neither academics nor everyday citizens of Spain were interested in cultural expressions of Hispanics whose origins were north of Mexico. However, this situation of benign academic neglect has radically changed in recent years. Chicana/o authors, who are members of the largest subgroup of Hispanics in the United States, now are studied in many programs within newly reconfigured English Studies or American Studies in Spanish universities. Furthermore, the larger and more diverse Latina/o population which includes Mexican Americans/Chicanas/os is often studied within several social science programs in sociology, anthropology and sometimes history. The Spanish government has realized that Hispanic-origin populations in the United States constitute, at minimum, an important potential market for Spanish companies established in the United States, and is encouraging policy and legislation to promote and support initiatives aimed at those with whom they share a common language outside its own national borders.

Spanish interest in Chicana/o Studies is part of an overall dynamic that scholars of U.S. Hispanics have generated in Spain. There was almost no interest in U.S. Hispanics until well into the 20th century. Before this time, the major existing notable works focused mainly on the Spanish conquest, including Ciriaco Miguel Vigil’s *Asturias monumental, epigráfica y diplomática* (Epigraphic and Diplomatic Monuments of Asturias) (1887), Pedro Menéndez de Avilés’s *Noticias biográfico-genealógicas de Pedro Menéndez de Avilés* published by Miguel Vigil Ciriaco in 1892, and in the 20th century the extensive treatise by Carlos M. Fernández-Shaw, *Presencia española en los Estados Unidos* or *The Hispanic Presence in North America from 1492 to Today* (1991). The latter is an enormous work – almost 1,000 pages – focused on the period in which Spain occupied what are now U.S. territories. Fernández-Shaw’s work emphasizes *actividad descubridora y bélica* (activities related to warfare and the discovery of new lands). This impressive history contains only one

page about literature, however, and the word “Chicano” does not even appear. The Introduction clearly mentions what was considered the *Zeitgeist* then in vogue:

Este libro lleva como último destino. . . [a] los españoles, quienes normalmente se sienten ligados por estrechos vínculos con los hermanos de la América hispana y quienes excluyen inevitablemente en tal actitud a los del Norte por varias razones, entre las que destaca su diferencia lingüística. . . . (This book has as its ultimate objective . . . portraying Spaniards, who normally feel close ties with their brothers of Hispanic America, and who inevitably exclude people from the North for various reasons, among others, their language differences.

(Fernández-Shaw 1972, p. 11)

Despite limited reference to Chicana/o literature, this book is a useful and seminal reference. Once dictator Francisco Franco passed away in 1975, the first publications about Chicanas/os and Latinas/os began to emerge and Chicana/o Studies as a field of inquiry began to develop. In this development, we can clearly ascertain three distinct and defined periods: Early History of Chicano Studies (1975–1988); Implementation (1988–2002); and Consolidation (2002 to present). Examination of these three periods follows.

Early history of Chicano Studies in Spain (1975–1988)

Until the late 1980s, sporadic and individual works on the lives of people of Mexican- and Spanish-origin descent were published often by diplomats on historical or language-related issues focusing on different regions of the United States. For example, José Pedro Montero's *Españoles en Nueva Orleans y Luisiana* (*The Spanish in New Orleans and Louisiana* (1979), translated into English in 2000, studies Spanish-origin people in a region with strong European traditions. The aforementioned Carlos Fernández-Shaw served as the cultural advisor of the Spanish Embassy in Washington, José Pedro Montero was an aristocrat (Marqués de Casa Mena) and Ernesto Barnach-Calbó a scholar who published *La lengua española en Estados Unidos* (*The Spanish Language in the United States*) in 1980. Montero's work represents the first work about Spanish Americans (an early identifier for Mexican Americans and other Latinas/os based on their Spanish heritage), which he wrote while serving in the Bureau of Ibero-American Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The development of scholarship on this population, albeit limited, raised the question in Spain as to where to situate these writings within the existing organization of the academy. Ultimately, the decision was to assign them to the Institute for Ibero-American Cooperation and the Ibero-American Cooperation Centre, which published the first works on this population.

How the Spanish-origin population in the United States was identified in Spain fluctuated even as it did in the United States. The first time the identifier “Chicano” appeared was in the 1977 PhD dissertation by Tomás Calvo Buezas at the

Universidad Complutense de Madrid entitled *Los más pobres en el país más rico: mitos, rituales y símbolos en el movimiento campesino chicano*, a research project that offered an anthropological approach. A year later, Marcelino C. Peñuelas, a professor from the University of Denver who was born in Cuenca, Spain, published *Lo español en el suroeste de los Estados Unidos (The Spanish in the U.S. Southwest)* (1977), in the government-sponsored *Ediciones de Cultura Hispánica*. In 1978, a second edition was produced, entitled *Cultura hispánica y Estados Unidos: los chicanos (Hispanic Culture and the United States: Chicanos)*. The inside cover of the book reads: “The Southwest of the United States is an unfairly forgotten corner of the Hispanic world”. Peñuelas’ point of view is similar to that of the previously mentioned Fernández-Shaw. That same year, Luis Navarro García from the University of Seville wrote *La conquista de Nuevo México (The Conquest of New Mexico)* (1978), also through the *Ediciones de Cultura Hispánica*.

In this period, essays and articles that circulated concentrated largely on Spanish-centred questions regarding the centuries and decades of the Spanish presence in the current territories of United States, rather than focusing on questions unique to the population of diverse Hispanic-origin people who had settled there. The content of these early writings was predominantly historical, often focusing on Spanish conquerors in what had become U.S. lands. These writings tended not to analyze the distinctive nature of the historical or cultural experience of diverse Hispanic origin peoples in the United States, but rather on extending Spanish history on the conquest of the Americas.

After the 1980s, sociologists and anthropologists within respected Spanish university centres, such as María Jesús Buxó from the Universidad Central de Barcelona and Tomás Calvo Buezas from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, began to expand their research and publications on Hispanics in the United States. This scholarship was key to the development of the field of Chicana/o Studies in Spain as a distinct area with significant attention paid to their cultural subjectivities and socioeconomic experiences.

Implementation of Chicano Studies in Spain (1988–2002)

The time period wherein Chicano Studies became implemented in Spain is directly related to social-cultural and political developments in the country. In 1988 the Universidad de Alcalá created the CENUAH (Center for North American Studies at the Universidad de Alcalá), currently known as the Instituto Franklin-UAH, which focuses on Hispanic Studies in the United States. In the same year and at the same university, the subject *Tradición y Presencia Cultural Hispana en los Estados Unidos* began to be taught as a compulsory course for students of English

philology. English Philology Studies was instituted in 1985 and refers to the study of language in written historical sources that combine literary criticism, history and linguistics.

Also in 1988, the “III International Conference on Hispanic Cultures in the United States”, sponsored by the Chicano academic Juan Bruce-Novoa and the Spanish scholar María Jesús Buxó, took place in Torredembarra, Spain. This conference became a watershed event where for the first time Spanish interest on studying the history and the culture of those who had Spanish ancestry in United States was analyzed and celebrated.¹ Critical to the development of Chicano Studies in Spain was the new law passed in 2002 for universities in Spain, called the LOU (*Ley Orgánica de Universidades/Organic Law of Universities*), which replaced the former LRU (University Reform Law) that had been in effect since 1983. The new legislation required a restructuring of teaching programs, making possible the integration of new academic content by respective universities. Thereafter, curricula in the subject of American literature included Chicana/o authors as part of their academic programming. During this period, Chicana/o literature in particular and Latina/o Studies in general were permanently established in various Spanish universities, consequently becoming part of the academic landscape.

Beyond historical studies, while still targeting purely philological studies, and especially literary studies, Chicana/o Studies in Spain has advanced exponentially by constituting the field of study as a separate entity onto itself. The contributions of Spanish scholars have positively enriched and enhanced Chicana/o Studies in multiple ways, including: 1) emphasis on internationalization; 2) detached and objective methodologies; 3) critical comparative analyses; 4) the creation of joint research groups; and 5) mediation.

- 1 Internationalization: One of the factors to assess the magnitude and projection of a new discipline largely produced by a social movement is its ability to transcend the boundaries where the movement was created. The active participation of Spanish researchers within this area of knowledge has contributed a unique and necessary international projection to Chicana/o Studies.
- 2 Detached and Objective Methodologies: One noteworthy aspect of Chicana/o Studies noted by Spanish scholars is the degree of commitment to political and social change among Chicana/o authors and critics. The terminology used (Chicano, Chicana/o, Latina/o, Mexican American, etc.) highlights a certain inconsistency based on social context (e.g., region, generation, education), which Spanish scholars have to grapple with. One resolution to this dilemma is to focus more exclusively on philological issues, but a majority of scholars prefers to stand aside on such internal discussions inherent to this group and be attentive to the need for flexibility.
- 3 Critical Comparative Analyses: Spanish researchers’ training is mainly in English philology, that is, they know about a cross-section of Anglo American,

English authors and other ethnic groups. On the other hand, Chicana/o academics tend to concentrate on specific areas within Chicana/o Studies without possessing a broader panoramic view. Spanish scholars can assist in the development of comparative models among writers from different ethnic origins with interested U.S. academics.

- 4 Creation of Joint Research Groups: Conferences and seminars on Chicana/o literature – which will be mentioned later – have propitiated the creation of joint research groups with which the critical corpus has been largely enriched. In some cases co-edited volumes have been produced, such as *Perspectivas transatlánticas en la literatura chicana* (2004), in which Spanish critic Juan Antonio Perles Rochel collaborated with University of California at Santa Barbara professors María Herrera-Sobek and Francisco A. Lomelí.
- 5 Mediation: The prior discussion of the importance of “detached and objective methodologies” noted diversity among different groups of Chicanas/os. There is a group of radical nationalist Chicana/o authors who demonstrate a certain hostility towards Spain, which they consider a “land of conquerors.” This political division creates tension but appears to erode with time and the increasing diversity among Chicanas/os and Latinas/os. However, the integration of Chicana/o literature as a field of study in Spanish universities suggests that Spanish academics can broaden research questions and paradigms in the current historical moment.

The contemporary Spanish interest in Chicana/o Studies in particular and in Hispanic Studies in general is supported by three key pillars: 1) conferences and professional meetings; 2) completion of PhDs; and 3) publications.

Conference synergy

The importance of conferences to motivate and create new knowledge, new sub-fields and new disciplines cannot be understated. Early and subsequent meetings were held more and more often, involving scholars from countries where Mexican Americans/Chicanas/os and other Hispanics were becoming subjects of intellectual inquiry. The first conference in Spain on Chicana/o literature and culture occurred in 1988, organized by anthropologists María Jesús Buxó and Tomás Calvo in Torredembarra near Barcelona. Among the more than 100 participants who attended the conference, Spaniards numbered barely a dozen. Among them were two English philology faculty, Angeles Carabí (Universidad Central de Barcelona) and José Antonio Gurpegui (Universidad de Alcalá), who developed specializations in Chicana/o Studies years after the conference.

In addition to bringing together diverse academics to explore Chicana/o experiences using different disciplinary methodologies, the first conference at Torredembarra resulted in a critical publication, namely *Culturas Hispanas en los Estados Unidos de América* (Ediciones de Cultura Hispánica 1990) by María Jesús Buxó and Tomás Calvo as editors. This publication was followed by work generated at the next such conference, *El poder hispano* (Universidad de Alcalá 1994)

edited by Carmen Flyn, José Antonio Gurpegui, and Alberto Moncada. Both volumes cover different subject fields and disciplines (politics, sociology, history, literature, etc.).² Generally, most of the publications that appeared in university publishing associations, including the monographic ones from Chicano literature, have been developed under the aegis of conferences sponsored by HispaUSA, in which Spanish and North American contributions of scholars are combined. The two volumes published in this period were *Chicano Literature* (2000) edited by Manuel Villar and Rosa Sánchez, and *Aztlán: ensayos sobre literatura Chicana* edited by Federico Eguíluz et al. (2001). Spanish contributions are also noteworthy in a variety of Spanish, European and American magazines. Among the Spanish outlets, they have appeared in: *REDEN* (*Spanish Journal of American Studies*); *Atlantis* (official publication of AEDEAN); *Revista de Estudios Ingleses* (Universidad de La Rioja); *BELLS* (Universidad de Alicante); and *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses* (Universidad de La Laguna) in the field of English philology.

Two years after the Torredembarra conference, ADECHAN (Association for Dialogue and Study of Hispanic Cultures in North America) was created, chaired by Professor Buxó. In 1992, ADECHAN and CENUAH organized the 5th International Conference of Hispanic Cultures in the United States at the Universidad de Alcalá with the general title of “El poder hispano” (Hispanic Power). At this juncture, the number of Spanish scholars increased considerably, encompassing almost half of the participants. The participants were very heterogeneous: historians, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists and philologists.

In the following five years, various meetings and seminars were organized throughout Spain, most of them promoted by the CENUAH and celebrated in the Casa de América in Madrid. A significant step forward occurred in 1998 when the First International Conference of Language and Chicano Literature in Spain took place at the Universidad de Granada, heir of the old conference of Hispanic Cultures in the United States. A new generation of Spanish professors and researchers in the field of English philology participated with communications and presentations in this conference, and later occupied notable positions in their home universities throughout Spain. Increasingly Spanish scholars in the area of Chicana/o Studies actively work and collaborate in the United States with a number of American colleagues.

The success of the First International Conference of Language and Chicano Literature in Spain, which had been an “experiment”, encouraged participants to replay it two years later in Vitoria in 2000 at the Universidad del País Vasco. From that time forward, a series of conferences focusing on Chicana/o language and literature has been undertaken every two years at the most outstanding Spanish universities: Universidad de Málaga in 2002; Universidad de Seville in 2004; Universidad de Alcalá in 2006; Universidad de Alicante in 2008; Universidad de León in 2010; Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha in Toledo 2012; Universidad de Oviedo in 2014; Universidad Complutense de Madrid in 2016; and the following one, in 2018, will take place at the Universidad Salamanca.

The succession of these 10 conferences has been instrumental to the consolidation of Chicano Studies in Spain and for different initiatives and projects. From these meetings, Spaniards have been able to witness first-hand the avant-garde artistic unfolding of Chicana/o creativity, due in great part to the participation of renowned American scholars. In these meetings, it is possible to have face-to-face contact with authors, critics and artists who are discussed in classes, as well as having access to the newest critical approaches. International interest in the field of Chicano Studies has motivated the participation and scholarship of eminent European scholars such as Heiner Bus, Horst Tonn and Wolfgang Binder from Germany; Annick Tréguer and Elyette Benjamin-Labarthe from France; Catherine Leen from Ireland; Sophia Emmanouilidou from Greece; and others. These scholars have advanced a series of critical approaches to Chicana/o Studies that strengthen links, partnerships and a dialectic that overcomes the

officialdom of other actions. As a result of these conferences, Spanish, American and other international scholars have frequently come together to collaborate on mutual projects, visiting seminars, investigative tours and joint research with the intent to cross-pollinate their scholarly interests.

In addition to conferences, numerous Spanish universities have also arranged a broad array of seminars and meetings about Chicana/o Studies. In 1988 José Antonio Gurpegui presented at the 6th Conference of AEDEAN (Spanish Association of American Anglo Studies) a paper entitled, “¿Qué es la literatura chicana?” (What is Chicano Literature?). This presentation represented the first time a Chicana/o Studies topic was given at the most important association of English philology in Spain. The presentation concentrated on the work of foundational authors José Antonio Villarreal, Rudolfo Anaya and Tomás Rivera. Other sessions interrogated postcolonial literature and cultural studies. In subsequent meetings, authors such as Alejandro Morales and Ana Castillo have been invited as plenary speakers, which heightens the visibility of Chicana/o literature.

In Spain there is another important association exclusively devoted to American Studies, SAAS (Spanish Association of American Studies). This association offers multiple panels focused on topics related to Hispanic peoples in the United States. In addition to the aforementioned authors, it is not unusual to see papers about other Latina/o writers such as Junot Díaz or Julia Alvarez and lectures by Richard Rodríguez, María Herrera-Sobek and Alejandro Morales, among others. Moreover, various scholars from Spain have presented papers on Chicana/o Studies at international conferences throughout Europe, mainly those of EAAS (European Association of American Studies).

Alongside these conferences, new academic associations have emerged. The old ADECHAN gave rise to the creation of HispaUSA (an association that promotes the study of the Hispanic-origin population in the United States), whose members are researchers and scholars – Spanish, Europeans and Americans – unlike ADECHAN, which only admits Spaniards. This association introduced in 2012 the Award D. Luis Leal to honor the memory of this distinguished scholar by recognizing the lifelong work of one of the premier scholars of Chicana/o literature in the United States. In its three occasions, the award has been granted to Nicolás Kanellos (2012), María Herrera-Sobek (2014) and Gary Francisco Keller (2016).

A stream of PhD dissertations

Dissertations are key sources of new knowledge. In Chicana/o Studies in Spain, the pioneering doctoral work by Tomás Calvo in 1977 is an excellent example of an interdisciplinary project incorporating both sociology and anthropology. Since then, the emergence of a new generation of teachers and researchers has produced widespread interest in Spanish academic circles. Many of the scholars who became professors at various universities in the field of English Studies started to shift their scholarship towards the study of Hispanic peoples of the United States.

For example, Lucía V. Aranda – from California, who is of Spanish descent – did her entire university studies in Spain and, after teaching at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, moved to the United States, where she currently teaches at the University of Hawaii. She wrote her dissertation at the Universidad Complutense on “La alternancia lingüística en la literatura chicana: una interpretación desde su contexto sociohistórico” (Linguistic Shifts in Chicano Literature: An Interpretation from a Socio-historic Context) (1992). Two years later Juan Antonio Perles Rochel at the Universidad de Málaga completed his study “Una propuesta de revisión de feminismo ginocéntrico a través de la narrativa chicana: Sandra Cisneros, Montserrat Fontes and Rudolfo Anaya” (A Proposal of Revising Ginocentric Feminism through the Chicana/o

Narrative: Sandra Cisneros, Montserrat Fontes and Rudolfo Anaya, 1994). The topics covered in the dissertations of this period were diverse, although it is not easy to ascertain a clear line of interest for a specific topic, aside from noting that a general commonality is the literature by Chicanas/os. Whether directly focused on a specific author or indirectly on several writers, a strong penchant for authors like Sandra Cisneros and Ana Castillo stands out. Other writers who received strong consideration are Rudolfo Anaya and Alejandro Morales, such as Camino Bueno's "La problemática existencial de las novelistas de minorías étnicas en EE.UU: las chicanas" (The Existential Problematics of Ethnic Minority Novelists in the United States: Chicanas, 1995) from the Universidad del País Vasco; Herminio Núñez's "Las novelas de Rudolfo A. Anaya y la posmodernidad" (Rudolfo A. Anaya's Novels and Postmodernity, 1997) from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid; Julio Cañero's "Rudolfo Anaya: aspectos sociales de su narrativa" (1998) from the Universidad de Alcalá; and Juan Antonio Sánchez's "La evolución narrativa en la obra de Alejandro Morales" (The Narrative Evolution in the Work of Alejandro Morales, 2001) from the Universidad de Alcalá. Another significant development within this line of research contributes to comparative literary studies wherein Chicano literature is a key component alongside African American or Native American authors. One such thesis was written by Ruth Noriega in "Between Worlds: A Comparative Study of Magic Realist Strategies in African-American, Native-American, Chicano, and Mexican Contemporary Women's Writing" (2001) from the Universidad de Valencia.

Consolidation of Chicano Studies in Spain (2002–present)

As already mentioned, a critical change in legislation, commonly referred to as the LOU (Organic Law of Universities) authorized modification of the study schedule in Spanish universities, which allowed inclusion of new subjects or to change syllabi that formerly had guided coursework. The previous study schedules had required students to study the same subjects as they had been done for years. The new legislation allowed academic departments to introduce new and optional subjects that could be chosen freely by the students. Because of this innovation, many universities introduced subjects related to Latina/o and/or Hispanic cultures in the United States, especially within the field of literature. The LOU positively affected the development of Chicana/o Studies in Spanish universities and resulted in the growth of literature, history, politics, and economics centred on Hispanics in the United States. Curricular changes in Hispanic Studies and Chicana/o Studies could now be incorporated into the English philology degree as well as the Spanish philology degree where it had previously been situated. Until the LOU, it had not been clear which "Área del Conocimiento" (Area of Knowledge, or nomenclature used in Spanish universities for the approval of a given subject) could include the study of Chicana/o Studies scholars.

The growing production of Chicana/o literature, literary criticism, and history, as well as empirical studies by social scientists, sparked increasing interest among Spanish students in this area of inquiry. For example, graduate students as well as newly minted and established PhDs could develop Chicana/o Studies, which motivated many scholars, as they worked to achieve the level of tenure in universities. Such scholars expanded further the number of doctoral dissertations in the area of Chicana/o Studies. In Spain there currently are about 50 PhD dissertations on Chicana/o or Latina/o literatures, which is second only to the United States. In some cases, scholars from foreign universities have come to Spain to produce dissertations about these authors, such as Georges Moukouti Onguedou, currently a professor at the Université du Maroua in Cameroon who wrote *Modelo de interrelación espacios-personajes en Bendiceme, Última, Nilda, and Hija de la fortuna* (2009) while at the Universidad de Alcalá, or British scholar Alana

Jackson, *A Mixed-method Approach to Chicano/a Identity: Discourses on Language, Literature and the Border* (2011) at the University of Lleida.

Academic output, beyond doctoral dissertations, is also varied and extensive. Since 2009 the Instituto Franklin of the Universidad de Alcalá has published the journal *Camino Real* which focuses exclusively on the study of Hispanics in the United States. It is a journal that deals with a wide variety of fields of knowledge beyond literature. The last three issues, for example, dealt with authorized immigration to the United States (Alcalde 2014), Hispanic exiles in the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries (Poyo 2015), and Spanish in the United States (Moreno 2016). Each publication also includes a paragraph about “Creative Fiction” identifying unpublished novels, chapters and essays of Latina/o authors as well as interviews. The journal also offers book reviews.

Other significant publications include conference proceedings of HispaUSA such as *Crossing the Borders of Imagination* (del Mar Ramón Torrijos 2014) and *Geographies of Identity: Mapping, Crossing, and Transgressing Urban and Human Boundaries* (Álvarez López 2015). Both volumes were published by the Instituto Franklin of the Universidad de Alcalá, which is the only University Institute for Research on North America in Spain. The Instituto Franklin was founded in 1987 and generates postgraduate research and publications in American Studies and on bilingual education.

A number of conference proceedings have been published outside of Spain, such as *Interpreting the New Millennium* edited by José Antonio Gurpegui (2008) by Cambridge Scholars, United Kingdom; and *Landscapes of Writing in Chicano Literature* (Martín-Junquera 2013) published by Palgrave Macmillan, New York. These are but two examples of published work that seeks to disseminate Spanish interpretations of Chicana/o literature internationally. The growing interest in Spain on Chicano literary criticism is exemplified by Julio Cañero and Juan Elices’s co-edited *The Chicano Literary Imagination: A Collection of Critical Essays by Francisco A. Lomelí* (2012), which collected the most important articles and essays by the critic from the University of California at Santa Barbara.

With the new millennium, outstanding Spanish publishing houses – such as Seix Barral, Alfaguara, and Muchnick – began to publish novels written by Chicana/o writers including Sandra Cisneros, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Daniel Alarcón and Ana Castillo.³ Moreover, small publishing houses such as the Port-Royal from Granada and Ediciones Bassarai in Vitoria, published, respectively, *El sueño de Santa María de las Piedras* by Miguel Méndez⁴ in 2000, and a Spanish-language edition of *The Road to Tamazunchale (El camino a Tamazunchale)* by Ron Arias in 2002. This book was first published in 1975 and nominated for the National Book award in the United States. These book titles just scratch the surface of the literary production in Spain and the United States regarding Chicana/o literature. Despite this high level of literary output, few among the general Spanish public are aware of what Chicana/o or Latina/o literature is. With this in mind, the Instituto Franklin-UAH launched in 2009 the “Colección Camino Real” with the objective of publicizing quality works by Chicana/o authors while making them more readily available to a Spanish readership.⁵

Beyond Chicana/o literature, the amount of research and publications exploring the relationship between Spain and the United States is vast in four different categories: language, history, sociology and politics. Within the field of history scholars as well as non-academic diplomats have prioritized the study of key Spanish colonizers. For example, the diplomat Eduardo Garrigues (2012) wrote about Pedro Baptista del Pino from New Mexico who was a representative in “Las Cortes of Cádiz”, where the Spanish Constitution of 1812 was drafted. A Spanish perspective of the colonization of Florida was documented by Borja Cardelús y Muñoz-Seca and Antonio Fernández Toraño’s *La Florida española* (2013). Luis Laorden’s *La vida y el recuerdo de*

Fray Junípero Serra offered an account of the exploits of the Franciscan colonizer (2014). Among the historical accounts, the work by Carmen Gómez-Galisteo is a critical account of early exploration accounts *Early Visions and Representations of America: Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca Naufragios and William Bradford's of Plymouth Plantation* (2013). These works share a methodology that examines Spanish relevance in the history of the United States, while enhancing the importance of the studied historical characters.

With regard to scholarship related to the Spanish language in the United States, the most important are *Valor económico del español* (Economic Value of Spanish) (García, Alonso & Jiménez 2012); and *El futuro del español en Estados Unidos: la lengua en las comunidades de migrantes hispanos* (The Future of Spanish in the United States: Language in migrant Hispanic communities) by José Antonio Alonso, Jorge Durand and Rodolfo Gutiérrez (2014). What is being studied, however, is not linguistics but rather strategies to maintain Spanish-language use. The authors concentrate on the social importance of Spanish and the economic benefits for those who speak it in the United States. This analysis is affirmed by a number of sociological studies (e.g., Romero de Terreros 2004; Garrigues 2008). Interdisciplinary approaches are also developing such as *Norteamérica y España: una aproximación interdisciplinaria* (North America and Spain: An Interdisciplinary Approach) edited by Emma Sánchez and María Eugenia Sánchez (2010).

Examples of key research in the respective fields of politics and economics include: *España y Estados Unidos en el siglo XX* (Spain and the United States in the Twentieth Century) edited by Lorenzo Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla and María Dolores Elizalde Pérez-Gruoso Century (2005); *España y Estados Unidos: en busca del redescubrimiento mutuo* (Spain and the United States: In Search of a Mutual Rediscovery) by William Chislett, a researcher at the Real Instituto Elcano (2005); and *España y Estados Unidos en la era de las independencias* (Spain and the United States in the Era of the Independence Movements) edited by Eduardo Garrigues and Antonio López (2013). These are studies of international relations between Spain and the United States.

In the first two decades of the 21st century, Spain and the United States developed closer political ties. The economic relations between both countries are developing higher levels of mutual cooperation and partnerships. Currently there are more than 700 Spanish companies⁶ operating in the United States, while the latter is the leading foreign investor in Spain. Government agencies in both countries strongly support initiatives aimed to foster stronger relationships between the United States and Spain.

Conclusion

For decades, the United States in general and U.S. Hispanic populations in particular have been virtually non-existent to a Spanish audience. Only after the death of Francisco Franco did publications emerge because of the personal interests by some scholars. It was not until well into the 1990s when university professors from several disciplines began serious investigative work on Hispanic cultures in the United States, especially Chicana/o worlds. At the same time, conferences about Chicana/o literature proliferated at various fronts throughout Spain. For example, activities funded by HispaUSA, the association which brought together academics interested in this subject, began to produce concrete and variegated results. This also served as a catalyst in conjunction with the Instituto Franklin-UAH to further develop and cement academic interests in Chicana/o Studies. The university reform in 2002 was a major factor that promoted the development of new areas of study including Chicana/o Studies in Spanish universities as part of the general English or American Studies areas. Such an initiative favored scholars who wished to promote the field by supporting doctoral dissertations about a wide array of Latina/o topics. In addition, the most renowned Chicana/o authors have also appeared in Spain in the last two

decades via important publishing venues. Despite this high level of literary productivity, non-university Spanish readers do not yet have a strong perception of what is Chicana/o literature. Nevertheless, the rising numbers of PhDs with research that is centred on Chicana/o Studies, together with critical publications in monographs and prestigious journals, demonstrate the growing interest in Chicana/o Studies in Spain. It is only a matter of time before the novels of Sandra Cisneros or Rolando Hinojosa, or feminist theory by Gloria Anzaldúa, among others, reach the general public in Spain.

Notes

- 1 On 5–9 July 1976, a “Conference on the History of the United States” was celebrated at La Rábida in Huelva, Spain, but it was not exclusively about Spain nor about the Spanish presence in the United States.
- 2 Following the impact of the first publications before 1988, this volume was also published by Editions of Hispanic Culture (ICI).
- 3 By Ana Castillo, *Tan lejos de Dios* (Muchick. Barcelona: 1996); by Jimmy Santiago Baca, *En suelo firme* (Alfaguara. Madrid 2002); by Sandra Cisneros, *Caramelo* (Seix Barral, Barcelona 2003), and *La casa en Mango Street* (Seix Barral. Barcelona: 2004); by Daniel Alarcón, *El rey siempre está por encima del pueblo* (Alfaguara. Madrid 2010).
- 4 By Miguel Méndez, also published in Spain as “Río Santacruz” (Ediciones Osuna. Armilla, Granada 1997).
- 5 Thus far, the titles that were published are: Alejandro Morales’s *El olvidado pueblo de Simons* (2009); Graciela Limón’s *Los recuerdos de Ana Calderón* (2010); Américo Paredes’s *George Washington Gómez* (2011); Lucha Corpi’s *Loa a un ángel de piel morena* (2012); Tino Villanueva’s *Así habló Penélope* (2013); and Ana Castillo’s *Guardianes de la frontera* (2016).
- 6 There are an estimated 85,000 U.S. citizens working in Spanish companies with an annual turnover of 65,000 million.

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