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Review of Richard Kagan, *The Spanish Craze: America's Fascination with the Hispanic World, 1779-1939*

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Spanish scholars. While undoubtedly many of the quality contributions to the debate originate in Spain, some authors could perhaps integrate more of the international historiography, such as the work of Anne Dubet in France or Felipe Castro in Mexico. This observation does not apply to all chapters. Roberto Quirós Rosado, for example, used letters from State Archive in Vienna, while Álvaro Sánchez Durán draws on global publications to great effect. Furthermore, the editors could also consider connecting the dots among the chapter arguments to flesh out important changes over time and highlight the differences in the concept of corruption in Spain and the overseas kingdoms. This would have made this solid book even more fascinating. On a final note, one may doubt Gil Martínez's assertion in his otherwise fine piece that there "was no crime of corruption as such" (23). At least Carlos Garriga takes a different stance by analyzing the legal doctrines on the *crimen corruptionis*. Despite these minor caveats, the editors have gathered thoughtful and well-written accounts of a topic that merits urgent attention, and students and specialists will find the book equally stimulating.

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Kagan, Richard L. *The Spanish Craze: America's Fascination with the Hispanic World, 1779-1939*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019. xvii + 612 pp. + 89 ill. + 8 pl.

With his latest book, Richard L. Kagan, whose work on early modern Spain is well known, ventures deep into modernist territory. Although his narrative begins circa 1779 – the year that Spain entered the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) on the side of the future United States – his analysis focuses on the period 1890 to 1930, when, following the Spanish-American War (1898), a sort of rampant Hispanophilia took root in the United States. Characterized in epidemiological language as a "fever" or "disease," and even, at one point, as a "pandemic" (13), Kagan chronicles the route whereby "Americans" – U.S. nationals – fell victim to the exotic lure of Europe's most beguiling nation and, especially, its arts and culture.

Kagan's work on American historians writing about Spain has appeared in the *American Historical Review*, in 1996, and the edited volume *Spain in America* (2002). Part of the argument presented here also appeared in the *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* under the title "The Spanish Craze in the United States: Cultural Entitlement and the Appropriation of Spain's Cultural Patrimony, ca. 1890-ca. 1930" (2010). Of these publications, Kagan's *AHR* article on William Hickling Prescott, has received extensive attention. Kagan avoids rehashing "Prescott's Paradigm" in this book. Importantly, his writing broadens the

attribution of anti-Spanish sentiment to early American politicians like John Adams, John Jay, James Monroe, and John Quincy Adams. These voices crowded out those of Thomas Jefferson and others to cast Spain as the quintessential political foil of the United States, virtually destroying all memory of Spain's support for U.S. independence. Significantly, Kagan's writing explored how positive views of Spain lost ground in the United States during the latter half of the nineteenth century, just as the two nations seemed destined for war with one another over the fate of Cuba.

Historians of modern Spain will recall the "two Spains" paradigm. Kagan offers another conceptualization of this idea as applied to Americans thinking about Spain. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, visions of a backward Spain framed in the mold of the Black Legend were juxtaposed with a White Legend of "Sturdy Spain" and "Sunny Spain." The image of "Sturdy Spain" framed the Spanish empire as a bringer of civilization, learning, and religion, especially in the Americas, while "Sunny Spain" depicted a romantic and picturesque country uncorrupted by the modernizing forces of industry and urbanization. Taken together, these cultural tropes served to reinforce one another and furthered widespread embrace of Spanish arts and culture in the United States.

Less an account of popular American fascination with Spain, the book pays great attention to the influences of social and cultural elites – William Randolph Hearst and Archer Milton Huntington, among others, feature prominently. Limited exploration of Spanish style homes, advertised and sold in Montgomery Ward and Sears, Roebuck & Co catalogs, and the proliferation of Spanish-themed movies suggested that the mania was likely widespread across class and geography. However, Kagan presents portraits of Charles Deering and the Lost Generation, both more exceptional than representative subjects, more thoroughly. Visits to Spain by U.S. presidents Ulysses S. Grant and Theodore Roosevelt offered fascinating anecdotes. Readers will find explanations for impressive Spanish-style architectural projects throughout California and places such as Saint Augustine, Florida; Kansas City, Missouri; and New York City. The existence of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture dating to the period 1929-1941 at my home institution has found new meaning.

The book is not without a couple of factual errors and at least one overreaching claim. Kagan confuses Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos and José Moñino y Redondo, the Count of Floridablanca, as the same person (37-38). A map on page 50 wrongly identifies the Colorado River as the Columbia River. Frustratingly, Kagan uses Walt Whitman's panegyric on Spaniards in a special letter composed for the Tertio-Millennial Celebration of 1883 to apply to all "Latinos or Hispanics" (115). Notably, Whitman derided Mexico as "contemptable in many respects ... a nation of bravos willing to shoot men down by the hundred in cold

blood,” in the run-up to the U.S. war against Mexico (1846-1848).¹ The evolution of Whitman’s thinking in this regard could have used greater nuance and might well have demonstrated the sudden American embrace of all things Spanish in starker fashion.

The timing of the Spanish Craze could use further reflection as well. Kagan draws an obvious parallel with American exploitation of Native American culture during the same period (10-11). Nonetheless, he concedes that the craze did not owe to romanticism alone. Other forces were clearly at work. Kagan is right to center sturdy and sunny visions of Spain at the heart of the country’s cultural recovery in the United States. Nonetheless, the political importance behind U.S. inheritance of Spain’s imperial mantle warrants closer attention, as does the idea that Spain became “safe” in defeat and thus open to exploitation. The tacit decision on the part of the American public to “forgive and forget” Spain’s enemy status was certainly quite exceptional.

According to Kagan, the Spanish Craze peaked in 1928 with the construction of Addison Mizner’s final Spanish fantasy home in Pennsylvania, the departure of George Merrick from his role on the Coral Gables Development Commission, and the death of Charles Lummis. Kagan contends that the advance of fascism with the victory of Franco’s Nationalist forces in 1939 placed the United States out of step with Spain at a political level. By that time, U.S. cultural currents had migrated towards a new interest in Mexican culture. That shift was facilitated, in part, by the Spanish Craze, which offered clear precedents in terms of architectural styles and linguistic appropriation.

Perhaps the greatest strength of Kagan’s book is his assessment of how U.S.-based impressions of Spain were shaped by what Americans thought of themselves. In that regard, this book ought to be required reading for all U.S.-based historians of Spain. Contemporary scholarship on Spain owes something to the Spanish Craze, which drew from and supported the expansion of courses in Spanish “civilization” and language at U.S. universities. For all of their blind spots, many of the personalities examined in *The Spanish Craze* possessed what they saw as dispassionate, objective, or even merely professional interests in Spain and Spanish culture. Kagan invites us to question how far certain forms of nostalgia and Orientalism continue to influence the writing of Spanish history in the present.

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¹ Walt Whitman, “War with Mexico, May 11, 1846,” in *The U.S. War with Mexico: A Brief History with Documents*, ed. Ernesto Chávez (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008), 82-83.