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### Review of Robert Patrick Newcomb, *Iberianism and Crisis: Spain and Portugal at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*

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**Newcomb, Robert Patrick. *Iberianism and Crisis: Spain and Portugal at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. 246 pp.**

In *Iberianism and Crisis*, Robert Patrick Newcomb makes a strong case for the importance of studying Iberianism in the context of the intellectual culture of what can be broadly termed the *fin de siècle* (1868-1910). During the agitated final decades of the nineteenth and the first years of the twentieth centuries, Spanish and Portuguese intelligentsia found themselves confronted with the harsh reality that Spain, Portugal—or perhaps Iberian civilization as a whole—faced an existential crisis. The “crisis consciousness” of these writers and public intellectuals became particularly acute in the wake of especially traumatic and humiliating events, such as Great Britain’s 1890 “Ultimatum” to Portugal, which forced the Portuguese government to abandon territorial claims in southern Africa, and Spain’s loss to the United States of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines in the Spanish-American War (1898).

In an effort to address the perceived malaise and to improve the political and intellectual status of this peripheral region of Western Europe, some of Spain’s and Portugal’s leading intellectuals turned to Iberianism. Iberianism (called *iberismo* in Spanish, Portuguese and Galician, and *iberisme* in Catalan) refers to a body of peninsular thought that sought to disrupt conditions on the Iberian Peninsula by promoting different forms of approximation between Spain and Portugal, and by creating a generally more equitable relationship between the Spanish state’s constituent regions, thus contesting Castile’s traditional dominance. The Iberianist proposals that these celebrated thinkers and public intellectuals formulated, diverged in scope and nature. Some proposed a single federal Iberian republic, a centralized Iberian monarchy, and coordinated Spanish-Portuguese defense, trade, or infrastructure policies. Others suggested arrangements that focused on fostering literary and intellectual exchange across peninsular state, regional, and linguistic borders, and the search for a common Iberian consciousness, either in dialogue with or in contradistinction to Europe. The proposals formulated by Antero de Quental (1842-91), Oliveira Martins (1836-1887-1925), Miguel de Unamuno (1864-), Joan Maragall (1860-1911) and others, prompted many other prominent peninsular figures to engage with Iberianism, either as sympathizers or opponents. Among these are the writers, Emilia Pardo Bazán, Eça de Queirós, Juan Valera; political theorists, Francesc Pi i Margall, Joaquín Costa, Enric Prat de la Riba, Joaquim Cases-Carbó; and the poet, Manuel Curros Enríquez.

Newcomb’s well-written and highly informative study moves between ideas, people, and nations with ease. *Iberianism and Crisis* is organized around

six chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1 explores the different ideas of Iberianism circulating during the mid-nineteenth century. It also delves into the conceptual question of the connection between Iberianism and crisis. The chapter then continues with a discussion of the proposals formulated by nineteenth-century authors in which Iberianism was offered as a solution to a sense of national crisis. Chapter 2 focuses on Antero de Quental, key member of the Portuguese *Geração de 70*. By charting Quental's Iberianist engagement over a period of three decades, Newcomb breaks with the received notion that the author's Iberianism was limited to a brief phase of youthful enthusiasm and instead makes the case that Quental was a committed Iberianist. In Chapter 3 Newcomb turns to the Miño river and the Portuguese-Galician border, often referred to by the writers of the Galician *Rexurdimento*. The chapter draws on reflections by Oliveira Martins, Pardo Bazán, and Unamuno and highlights cross-border cultural, geographic, and linguistic continuities between Galicia and Portugal that complement contemporary Iberianist discourses. Chapter 4 explores how Unamuno followed in the footsteps of Quental and Oliveira Martins. Using the notions of flesh and bone, Unamuno offered a vision of Spain as a dialectical unity—an internally differentiated but ultimately unified whole. Chapter 5 zooms in on the Iberianist views of Joan Maragall, a dynamic thinker, difficult to categorize, as he simultaneously cultivated a Spanish, Catalan, and Iberian self-identity. The chapter then examines Maragall's correspondence with Unamuno, contrasting both authors' Iberianist ideas. In Chapter 6 Newcomb turns to Spanish writer, historian, diplomat and political exile Salvador de Madariaga (1886-1978), bringing his work in dialogue with Oliveira Martins, whose influence is clearly noticeable in Madariaga's work. Although this chapter is certainly not without interest, Newcomb's aim to bridge the century-long gap between the turn-of-the-century and the present is not entirely convincing. This gap is just too big and warrants further careful exploration.

Newcomb's book will be of particular interest for scholars with a solid knowledge of the peninsular *fin de siglo*, providing excellent context for the work of many authors and public intellectuals. Particularly insightful is the Conclusion in which Newcomb brings the Iberianism-informed thought, writing, and public activities discussed in the previous chapters, into dialogue with the emerging field of Iberian Studies. He provides a clear assessment as to how this body of thought offers perspective on the present and has relevance for the ongoing challenge of thinking beyond a series of fixed conjunctures.

The study of the *fin de siècle* Iberianists disrupts received notions of peninsular history, which traditionally have presented Iberia's political division into two sovereign nation states—Spain and Portugal—as self-evident, and have normalized Castile's historical protagonism within Spain. The Iberianists instead

avored cross-border and cross-linguistic dialogues between peninsular writers and cultural actors. This unique historical perspective is of key interest for the current debate about Iberian Studies. In an effort to reimagine and reinvigorate peninsular studies by placing the Spanish and Portuguese canons into critical dialogue with each other, and with Galician, Catalan, Basque and other peninsular texts, cultural expressions, and traditions, Iberian Studies is focused on a more multinational understanding of peninsular literary histories and national and state identities in their various entanglements. Therefore, Iberian Studies will certainly benefit from the three key lessons that Newcomb elegantly distills from his study of Iberianism: an embrace of multilingualism; comparativism across borders and between peninsular states, nations, and regions; and an inclusive non-hierarchical approach to its subject-matter.

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