I. An Anglo-Spanish eighteenth century?

Comparative literary history has long privileged the category of influence as a means of gauging the relative importance of exporting languages and cultures. This was in turn congenial to received images of the Enlightenment as a paradigmatically French-language phenomenon, cosmopolitan only inasmuch as it irradiated from centres of Francophone publishing. Accordingly, Spanish national literary histories regularly plot such phenomena as the rise of the periodical press in Spain as a series of appropriations and imitations of, say, *Le spectateur traduit* or the *Journal des sçavans*, in accord with the treatment of Franco-Hispanic relations as though they alone determined the existence and character of the Spanish Enlightenment.¹ Yet efforts to correct this simple historiographic account of causality and agency by portraying the alleged object of influence as more robust and continuous in its development, while stressing the integration of foreign cultural elements into a native culture, have failed to question the binomial cultural model underwriting it.² Simply put, what was neither native (for which read ‘Spanish’, itself a reification) nor foreign (i.e. French, including all texts mediated by French translation) cannot be factored into the equation, and so must be consigned to the catch-all category of ‘other’. ‘Otherness’, in such a context, lies behind or beyond mediation.

¹ The *locus classicus* of this account is Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles* (Madrid 1880-1882), which often bristles with hostility to the heterodox writers who populate the narrative. Menéndez Pelayo’s thesis was disputed by Jean Sarrailh, *L’Espagne éclairée de la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris 1954), which remains influential.

² See Pegerto Saavedra and Hortensia Sobrado, *El siglo de las luces: cultura y vida cotidiana* (Madrid 2004), p. 363-379 for a comprehensive survey of recent Spanish historiography on the Enlightenment. Among the scholars treated, Antonio Mestre, whose vast output has centred almost exclusively on the life, writings, and circle of Gregorio Mayans, may be the most distinguished representative of this historiographic school.
A contrasting case for the heterogeneity of Spanish translation culture and readerships in the eighteenth century may be made by profiling readers of other languages (of whom translators of those languages are a subset) and setting aside the notion of influence in favour of that of cultural transfer. Thus approached, the supposed otherness of unmediated Anglophone culture reveals itself to be as much a by-product of historiographical assumptions as a reflection of the documentary record, bringing to the fore a host of questions concerning both the carriers of transfer processes and print as a border-crossing good. Indeed, the grounds for such studies already exist in, for example, profiles of Hiberno-Spanish immigrants, often undertaken from the perspective of economic history, with a special interest in merchant and banker families which perpetuated a knowledge of English through the generations, and in studies of private libraries catalogued as a part of post-mortem inventories of an individual’s assets. The traditional tracing of influence and identification of sources for individual writers, such as José Cadalso or José Clavijo y Fajardo, should thus be supplemented by inquiry into the lives of individual readers, such as Maria Wadding y Asley, who in 1753


6. As the most prominent eighteenth-century text in histories of the essay and journalism in Spain, Clavijo y Fajardo’s El pensador affords an instructive example of how mediation has been taken for granted by historians; and how, consequently, what relationship, if any, the mid-eighteenth century Spanish press may have had with its English counterpart has long been approached in terms of appropriations, imitations, and influence on the development of the genre of costumbrismo. See, for example, Francisco Sánchez Blanco, El siglo XVIII, El ensayo español 2 (Barcelona 1997), p. 41 and p. 243; Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez and Milagros Rodríguez Cáceres, Manual de literatura española (Tafalla 2000-2005), II.206; Ángel Valbuena Prat and Antonio Prieto, Historia de la literatura española (Barcelona 1981-1983), III.85; and Nigel Glendinning, The Eighteenth century: a literary history of Spain (London 1972), p. 57, n. 25.