The cultural discourse of contemporary Portuguese Iberianism

ABSTRACT
In contemporary times, Iberianism has been one of the most important themes in the relationship between Portugal and Spain. But there are few words as ambiguous in the peninsular history and culture as the word ‘Iberianism’. Aside from traditional political or territorial Iberianism, and often in a critical reaction against it, there exists a less-known cultural, spiritual or civilizational Iberianism, striving for an approximation between the two countries and its peoples that excludes all kinds of state fusion and border suppression, and aims to strengthen the Iberian relationship through unity in diversity, differentiation with complementation, independence with alliance and neighbourhood with friendship. The aim of this article is to explore the cultural discourse of contemporary Portuguese Iberianism, drawing on the reflections produced on the subject by such authors as J. P. de Oliveira Martins, Teixeira de Pascoaes, Fernando Pessoa, António Sardinha, Almada Negreiros, José Saramago, Eduardo Lourenço, Natália Correia and Miguel Torga.

KEYWORDS
Portugal
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INTRODUCTION: IBERIANISM AND IBERIANISMS IN THE HISTORY AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE PENINSULA

Portugal and Spain are two contiguous countries, set within the same geographical unit called the Iberian Peninsula. Everything that has occurred since the political separation of Portugal from León and Castile (the medieval kingdom that served as the embryo for the future Spain) in the twelfth century has not to date destroyed the special nature of the Iberian relationship – of brothers face to face, of enemy friends or of neighbours turning their backs on each other – which always went beyond the diplomatic, political, economic and social domains, taking on an intense sentimental dimension of loves and hatreds and giving way to an interchange between moments of approximation and convergence and others of separation and rivalry. At its origin, Portuguese independence was an act of political voluntarism and a rebellion against the peninsular geography, and not the result of a natural difference between the two neighbouring Hispanic kingdoms. In that sense, the state came, in the Portuguese case, before the nation, as the ‘nation’ was the speech with which the young state had to cement its specificity against its stronger neighbour. Consequently, Portuguese independence was very often seen, in Castile/Spain, as an unacceptable mutilation, as a geographical error, giving rise to Iberianist tendencies and plans in Madrid that aimed to incorporate Portugal in the whole of the peninsula. Aside from the Philippine period (1580–1640), such a wish has always proven impossible, precisely because Castilian (or Spanish) appetites reinforced in Portuguese nationalism a suspicion and a resistance that always prevented any Iberianist projects for union from succeeding. From Zamora to Aljubarrota, from Tordesillas to Philip II, from Olivares to the Restoration, from Manuel de Godoy to Alfonso XIII, from Francisco Franco to Serrano Súñer, eight centuries of anti-Castilianism, if not outright Hispanophobia, were accumulated in Portugal, turning the so-called ‘Spanish danger’ into a key component of Portuguese nationalism. The theme of the peninsular relationship has thus become a hot topic that stirs not just academic debate but informal conversations as well, arousing emotions that have little to do with objective knowledge or unbiased consideration.

Throughout the contemporary epoch, but not solely, the theme of Iberianism or, as it should really be said, of Iberianisms has been especially important in the bilateral relationship (see Torre Gómez 1998; Queirós 2009 or Sardica 2013). The central argument of this text is that there are few words as ambiguous or equivocal in the peninsular history and culture as the word ‘Iberianism’. In its most common definition – that which helped to foster commonplaces on both sides – Iberianism is synonymous with Iberian union, that is, of suppression, be it by voluntary fusion or by annexation through conquest, of Portugal’s independence, with the consequent dilution of borders and the integration of the smaller Portuguese state into the sovereignty of the larger Spanish state.

Such was the meaning that the main Portuguese dictionaries gave to the word throughout the twentieth century. In 1899, the Novo Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa did not yet include ‘Iberianism’, but stated that ‘Iberian’ was ‘the partisan of the political union between Portugal and Spain’. In 1953, the Grande Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa gave a similar meaning to the word ‘Iberian’ and it already included ‘Iberianism’ as ‘the party of those who advocate the political union of Portugal with Spain’ and ‘Iberianist’ as ‘the person who is a partisan of the Iberian union’. More recently, the Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa
from the Sciences Academy of Lisbon classifies ‘Iberianism’ as the ‘doctrine or movement of those who advocate the political union of Portugal with Spain’. Even the more specialized *Dicionário de História de Portugal*, although signalling the different meanings that the word ‘Iberianism’ had, defines it as ‘the tendency to integrate Portugal in a peninsular whole’, adding that, ‘with this aspect, it becomes an issue of political importance’ (Carvalho 1984: 237).

Throughout history, from both sides of the border and for several reasons, many wanted this to become a reality. What one could define as *unionist* Iberianism, or the political integration of the peninsula, was the understanding most commonly shared by political, diplomatic and military agents and public opinion. It is true to say that for Portugal, given its size, annexing its Iberian neighbour, or even leading a political union, would be unrealistic. But that did not prevent the Iberianist temptation in Lisbon, mainly through strategic royal weddings (between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries), or later on during the nineteenth century (with kings Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg and Louis I, who were offered the Spanish throne during the revolutionary interim of 1868–70). In Madrid, however, the idea of unionist Iberianism was stronger and had more continuity, seen as a way of solving the question of the missing and separatist link of Hispania and as a way of enhancing and improving the image of Spain in the international system. ‘It is not a question of different morals and ethics’, stress two historians, ‘it is simply a question of different relative weights’ (Telo and Torre Gómez 2000: 320). Portugal could hardly do it, and so it hesitated in wanting it; Spain wanted it, whenever ruling Spaniards thought they could do it.

Unionist Iberianism, that is the political fusion and integration of the peninsula in one single state entity, could assume *unitarianist* variants – the simple junction of Portugal and Spain – or *federalist* variants – the junction of all Hispanic nations in a new political aggregate, its institutional design varying a lot. In any case, whether under the same king for the whole peninsula or in a decentralized and joint set of democratic republics, it would always mean a loss of sovereignty and an alteration of borders. Thus defined, Iberianism had its greatest impact during the second half of the nineteenth century, when voices from both sides of the border felt that joining forces would be the best way for the peninsula to gain critical mass and recover from its backwardness, or when, simply, the advocates of the realpolitik of the states looked at the Italian and German unifications as an inspiring sign to put an end to the independence of the narrow Atlantic Iberian strip (see Matos 2006 and Pereira 2010). With the advent of the twentieth century, political Iberianism takes a militarist twist with territorial ambitions by Alfonso XIII, whose monarchic conservatism hated the new Portuguese radical republicanism of 1910. This was the political or territorial Iberianism followed by Francisco Franco, the victorious *caudillo* of the 1936–39 Civil War (who had graduated in 1912 with a thesis entitled ‘How to Occupy Portugal in 28 Days’), and by the *Falange*, which dreamed of using World War II to absorb its peninsular neighbour into the ‘vital space’ of the new Spain.

As an alternative, and quite often even in a critical reaction against it, there were several nuances of a less well known Iberianism, which could be termed *cultural*, *spiritual* or *civilizational*, almost never mentioned in dictionaries but adopted in contemporary times among intellectuals on both sides of the border (see Marcos de Díos 1996; Matos 2007 or Lourenço and Dotras Bravo 2010). Several Portuguese authors wrote positively about the relationship with Spain, helping to forge that extra-political Iberianism and to defend an approximation that excluded a complete fusion. This was better
known as ‘peninsularism’, ‘Hispanism’ or ‘alliancism’, and it was in truth a
cultural, spiritual and mental ‘pan-Iberianism’, of discovery, empathy and
approximation to Spain (or ‘Spains’). Their aim was the achievement of a new
synthesis of Hispanic thought and action, respecting historical and political
borders, enhancing what, over all dividing factors, was aggregative – common
government, similar population, parallel historic origins and evolution, linguistic
contiguity, an identical civilizational genetic code – in order to make a whole
that was greater than its parts, in a healthy fraternization which would ulti-
mately project the Hispanic civilization in Europe, in Africa and in the Iberian
America. This Hispanic/Hispanophilic Iberianism developed into a form of
post-Iberianism, renouncing old quarrels about politics and annexation issues
and searching for an unprejudiced cultural, mental, social and even economic
relationship going beyond traditional nationalisms. In reference to this reality,
several authors stress how many soft forms of Iberianism sprang up, from the
joint accession of the peninsula to the EEC, in 1986, until today, un tarnished
by the shadows of political unitarianism but rather fed by the mutual respect
of ideas and people: the economic Iberianism of the ‘peninsular Benelux’, the
border Iberianism of the portunhol (Spanish badly spoken by the Portuguese),
the technocratic Iberianism, the artistic Iberianism, the student Iberianism, the
informative Iberianism (of the multimedia groups with joint participations),
even the aristocratic Iberianism (the ‘juan carlista’ affection the Portuguese
elites feel for King Juan Carlos, whom they consider the most ‘Portuguese’

THE CULTURAL IBERIANISM FROM OLIVEIRA MARTINS
to ALMADA NEGREIROS

Along with diplomatic intrigue, the rhetoric of politics and military move-
ments, the history of contemporary Portuguese Iberianism has to emphasize
the cultural discourse which lent an alternative meaning to that same word.
This understanding was launched and cemented in the later part of the nine-
teenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth century, quite often
against the disagreements and ambitions of politicians, by notable figures of
the Portuguese intelligentsia, with the particularity that this cultural Iberianism,
precisely because it went beyond politics, united monarchists and republicans
in the same cause (with nuances that went from democratic federalism to
catholic integralism, or from modernism to conservatism). Their views were
expressed through essays, historical prose, journalism, literature, poetry or the
visual arts. Any anthology or history of the Portuguese cultural Iberianism of
contemporary times has to include, among others, Oliveira Martins, Teixeira de
Pascoaes, Fernando Pessoa, António Sardinha or Almada Negreiros. Although
not exhaustively covering this issue, these were the authors who, in a more
structured form, gave shape to a cultural interpretation of Iberianism which
excluded all the anti-national annexation ideals or all the dilution of borders in
a simple Iberian democratic federation, in favour of a project of convergence
and solidarity with the purpose of attaining cultural, economic and political
modernization (the order is not random) for the people of the peninsula.

Oliveira Martins gave a long explanation in his História da Civilização
Ibérica, published in 1879, coin ing the defence of a strategy of peninsular
approximation, of Iberian ‘alliancism’ (aliancismo), which excluded the fusion
of states or the annullment of nationalities. According to his perspective, there
had always been a ‘peninsular genius’, like a ‘moral physiognomy common
to all the population of Hispania’ (Martins [1879] 1918: 20). Through cultural alliancism it would be possible to rediscover it, giving expression to a sort of pan-Latinism projectable into the world. This would be especially beneficial to Portugal and Spain as an instrument of common rescue from the decadence into which the peninsula had long sunk ([1879] 1918: 322, 359). In 1890, following the ultimatum,¹ during a special moment of national anguish and when the prevailing Anglophobia further reinforced the Hispanophilia of the intellectuals, Martins would bring up the theme once more: ‘It is to Spain that we have to turn ourselves’, he said, adding that

It is with Spain that we have once again to unite our strengths with the aim of a common defence, because it is only with her that we have relationships that are progressively more ingrained … Disconnected, we will vegetate miserably; allied, we can make ourselves be respected by the strong, because we will be among the first.

([1890] 1957: 261–62)

Facing the competitive world of the powers at the end of the nineteenth century, Martins was an enthusiast of a peninsula united in one voice. But with that he did not intend to resuscitate the Iberian union with the dissolution of political borders. On the contrary, the alliance would strengthen each one, and that would be ‘the only way to avoid being absorbed by Spain, and for that reason it is the only way to reinforce our national strength’. Alone or under what he feared to be the yoke of the English, the Portuguese people would fall into an ‘anarchic disorder’, which would eventually make the union inevitable, ‘not because our neighbours so wanted, but because they would be forced into that for their own preservation’ (Martins [1890] 1957: 266–67).

The defence of Iberian civilization and a peninsular alliance based on culture dominated Iberian reflections at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The ‘Martinian’ Hispanophilia found its corresponding feeling in the Lusophilia of Juan de Valera or Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, both supporters of cultural and spiritual pan-Latinism, who believed in the Hispanic unity of thought and action while respecting the political borders of both states (Ferreira 2007: 27–31). Miguel de Unamuno, rector of the University of Salamanca, a friend of Oliveira Martins and Teixeira de Pascoaes, one of the most devoted Spaniards of all things Portuguese, surpassed all his fellow citizens in the defence of sentimental Iberianism. In 1907 and 1908, Unamuno visited Portugal, writing a travel journal where he expressed his fascination for his peninsular neighbours, with whom it was urgent to strengthen relationships and a mental union. ‘Being our countries neighbouring countries and being both separated, in a certain way, from the rest of Europe, I do not understand what kind of absurdity has kept us spiritually apart’ (Unamuno 1911: 7–8). That state of affairs only existed due to idiosyncrasies provoked by politics or unjustified stereotypes. But nothing could, and nothing should, erase the feeling of proximity and hospitality that all well-intentioned Spaniards had when crossing the border. In a popular passage in his work, he confessed:

What has this Portugal – I wonder – to attract me so much? What has this land, cheerful and gentle on the outside, tormented and tragic on the inside? I do not know: but, the more I visit her, the more I wish to return. (Unamuno 1911: 113–114)

¹ The ‘ultimatum’ was a British diplomatic note issued by Lord Salisbury’s government to Portugal on 11 January 1890, stating that the Portuguese government should immediately instruct the Governor of Mozambique to withdraw any military forces stationed in the area of Africa roughly occupied by present-day Zambia and Zimbabwe. Acceptance was to be signalled within a matter of hours or else the ambassador would leave Lisbon and open war would surely follow. Unable to challenge the Victorian giant, the Portuguese government had no choice but to surrender to British demands, abandoning the much-cherished plans, laid down in the ‘rose-coloured-map’ of 1886, of uniting Angola and Mozambique through a corridor in the African hinterland.
In a letter sent to Teixeira de Pascoaes, in 1908, Unamuno summarized the mission to which he wanted to dedicate part of his efforts as an intellectual, stating:

It is a work of love and culture to make Portugal and Spain know each other mutually. Because to know is to love. Knowledge generates love and love generates knowledge. They are, in essence, one and the same thing seen from the outside or from the inside.

In his answer, Teixeira de Pascoaes, the patriarch of Portuguese nostalgia, agreed with his friend: ‘It is really necessary that Spain and Portugal know and love each other so that one day they can do something great and heroic in this world’ (quoted in Bento 1986: 31, 69).

Less than ten years later, in 1917, it would be Fernando Pessoa, the great poet of Portuguese modernism, who would lend his pen to the Iberianist cause. The moment was special: after the initial period of the First Portuguese Republic, which sparked in the Spanish monarchy the ambition to tame Portuguese radicalism through annexation, World War I altered the European scenario, forcing Alfonso XIII to moderate his plans and giving rise to a new climate of peninsular friendship or Iberian harmony. It was in part motivated by this turn that Fernando Pessoa set out in search of a strategy of friendship which did not involve absorption, but which was, in his own words, ‘something that on a state level will bring Spain and Portugal closer together’ ([1917] 1987: 195). The central point of his argument was the perception that both countries were lacking ‘a civilizational sense’. Fernando Pessoa talked of ‘Iberia’ as ‘civilization’, as ‘spiritual Ibericity’, attainable through a ‘confederation’ of the three nations that made up the peninsular space: Catalonia, Castile and ‘the Galician-Portuguese state’. Pessoa’s reasoning was neither political nor institutional, but cultural and mental. Looking at history and at other European civilizations, he distinguished the centuries-old existence of an ‘Iberian spirit’, born from the fusion of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic spirits. Accordingly, his ‘two columns’ were Catalonia and the ‘natural Galician-Portuguese state’. Castile was only ‘a region of stabilization of those two border influences’, and for that reason Madrid’s centralism looked to him like ‘Iberia’s great enemy’, for wanting to stifle Catalonians’ freedom of expression and misconstrue Portuguese independence ([1917] 1987: 183–86). From history also came the golden period of discoveries, ‘which marked what we are; but we were that incompletely, because we acted uniberically’. And he concluded:

all of us from here – Portuguese, Castilians, Catalanians – must be aware that our civilisation will only come of age when, confederated in Iberia, we will be able to face Europe once again, [and] reconstruct our predominance of those times when the world was ours.

(Pessoa [1917] 1987: 189, emphasis added)

The message was clear: Iberia, as the sum of parts (i.e. Portugal and the various ‘nations’ encompassed inside the Spanish state), was greater than the parts, for the parts were just national and Iberia was a project of civilization open to the world (America and Africa) and in competition with other European identities. The peninsula would again become great when the Portuguese and the Spaniards could agree on ‘where should there be separation between us and where should our efforts combine’. ‘We should be separate’, specified Pessoa,
'in everything that includes national problems, and together in everything that tackles issues concerning civilisation. Institutions and customs should be different in each people. Orientation vis-à-vis Europe should be the same for both.' To those who accused him of sponsoring an Iberianism of treason against his own country, as a mere union to Spain, he would answer:

Since there should be a tendency for some kind of Iberian unity, at the same time it must be noted that such unity should be composed of peoples as divergent as possible within that unity. Therefore, any attempt to delineate a plan of absorption of a country by another immediately disappears, for being absurd, for being Iberically criminal … because – shall we never forget! – it is neither a union, nor a federation, but only a confederation.


The Iberian project of Fernando Pessoa, along the same lines of that of Oliveira Martins, was thus one of the construction of a spiritual unity, for it was historic, among the peoples of the peninsula, based on the mental approximation between Portugal and Spain. Far from trying to be an Iberian union, ‘Iberia’ would be the synthesis of ‘a process of spontaneous combination’ that should be everyone’s initiative and not the hegemonic and political state ambition of no one in particular (Pessoa [1917] 1987: 201).

The 1920s were a golden period of the peninsular friendship, a time when cultural relations between both countries were quite intense and when an active intellectual elite worked to promote a broad understanding. In June 1921, the University of Porto organized a meeting that was symbolic of these new times – the Portuguese-Spanish Scientific Congress, which brought together many scholars from both countries, all reinforcing the urgency to promote common knowledge and to strengthen cultural relations, reinforcing a Hispanic spiritual community that had nothing to do with illusions of political unity among states (Sardica 2013: 80–3). The effort at ‘hispanology’ of Porto’s congress (to use the term coined by Doctor Ricardo Jorge, at the conference on Iberian ‘interculturality’) (Jorge [1921] 1925: 220–25) would gradually find corresponding echoes in Madrid – even in Alfonso XIII. In 1922, the Spanish monarch conveyed to a Portuguese minister: ‘each one of the nations, when isolated, is worth nothing. Together, in a loyal understanding, they would signify an enormous value’ (quoted in Vicente 2003: 216). This time he was not referring to annexation plans but to an alliance within mutual respect for sovereignties. In that same year of 1922, the architect and man of letters José Pacheco launched in Lisbon the magazine Contemporânea, which, among other publications that (already) did it, advocated cultural Iberianism, wanting to promote close relations in the ideological, literary and artistic areas, not just among Portuguese and Spanish authors, but also among peninsular and Latin American authors (Ferreira 2007: 8–10). In the very first edition, José Pacheco proposed the creation of a ‘Sociedade dos Amigos de Espanha’ (Society of the Friends of Spain), in response to one that already existed, ‘Sociedade dos Amigos de Portugal’ (Society of the Friends of Portugal), in Madrid (Ferreira 2007: 96; Molina 1990: 98–9).

Among the illustrious Portuguese who wrote for this magazine, there was, right from the beginning, António Sardinha. The leader of Lusitanian integralism had been, in the past, a Hispanophobic nationalist, and had spoken in defence of such views in 1915, during the famous Conferences of the Naval League on the ‘Iberian issue’. Until then, Sardinha feared any
approximation to Spain because he hated the attempts by Alfonso XIII to meddle in Portuguese politics, theorizing on the territorial, racial and even psychological specificity of the Portuguese people (Sardica 2013: 66–8). Exile in Spain, between 1919 and 1921, turned him, however, into a growing admirer of the local history and culture. Without renouncing his anti-Iberianism, he converted to Hispanism, or to peninsularism, understood as the defence and promotion of peninsular cultural unity over the political duality of the Iberian states (Matos 2007: 178–79; Vicente 2003: 21). This new understanding of the issue and of the Iberian challenges was presented for the first time in Madrid by Sardinha, in April 1921, during a conference at Unión Ibérica Americana, later alluded to in the essay ‘Pan-Hispanism’ published in the second issue of Contemporânea, in June 1922 (Ferreira 2007: 83, 105–06). These ideas would be developed still further in an extensive book on the Iberian question, published in 1924 with the title A Aliança Peninsular. Antecedentes e Possibilidades.

For António Sardinha, fear of the Spanish was irrational, a danger that did not make sense, and unitarianist or federalist Iberianism an act of treason. To believe that Portugal could become ‘a simple Spanish province’ in the future was, in his own words, ‘the worst obsession of Portuguese patriotism’, an obsession that ‘diminishing and concealing all that there is of universal in our genius, seems to institute as a fundamental condition of our independence a deep-seated hatred, an irrational hatred of Spain’. It did not have to be that way. The ‘present hostility towards Spain’ was a false patriotism: Sardinha (1924: I–II, XIX) thought it dishonourable to believe in any instincts of conquest on the part of Spain, ‘because to conceive it means to have no confidence in Portugal’s own vitality and genius’. Fear was a bad counsellor and nationalist hatred a false guide for the Iberian relationship: ‘I repeat: – there is nothing more distressing nor more humiliating for our patriotism, when clear-sighted, than the irrational hatred of Spain, denouncing with it, in its apparent nationalist praise, a formal and irreducible negation of the Portuguese homeland’ (1924: XXXIV). Sardinha wished to strengthen fraternal ties that could enhance the ‘superior unity’ of the peninsula and bring them closer under a single civilization and culture. That unity consisted in a ‘harmonious political dualism of both sovereignties, in which Portugal and Spain express themselves to guarantee their common interest – that of the peninsular interest, superior to Portuguese and Spaniards, but their indivisible possession’. The peninsular unity was then ‘a cultural, moral and sentimental unity’, something very different from ‘a unity geometrically accomplished within the framework of an exclusive dynastic centralism’ (1924: V). Achievable through a peninsular alliance, Iberian unity thus understood was the only way both countries could be prominent in Europe and the world. Together, struggling for a new Iberian tutelage over the Atlantic, Portugal and Spain would be great again and respected. That is why Sardinha thought that, through Hispanism and the peninsular alliance, Portugal would strengthen Iberia and itself, and only that would be the safe way ‘to avoid Spanish absorption’ and ‘forever exorcize the perfidious phantom of the Iberian union’ (1924: LVII, LXI).

In 1924, the First Portuguese Republic was coming to an end. In Spain, the constitutional monarchy of Alfonso XIII had just been transformed into a military dictatorship led by Primo de Rivera, whose diplomacy, searching for peace in the peninsula, made him repudiate any temptation of
interference in Portugal. Closely echoing the influence of António Sardinha’s indoctrination, Primo de Rivera would reveal himself a respecter of Portuguese sovereignty, especially from the moment, in 1926, when Portugal also embraced right-wing politics, with the military dictatorship that toppled the First Republic. The political and diplomatic animosities between Madrid and Lisbon would still emerge again between 1931 and 1936, when Spain made its Second Republic alongside a Portugal where Salazar’s Estado Novo had been established, but this inconsistency would be attenuated by the tactical entente established between the Portuguese dictator and his Spanish counterpart, Franco, after his victory in the Civil War (see Sardica 2013: 77–122; Torre Gómez 1985, 1988).

In the context of these political zigzags, and at a time, in 1934–35, when the Second Spanish Republic showed some moderation towards the Portuguese right-wing Estado Novo, intellectuals from both sides of the border returned to the eulogy of Iberia’s cultural and spiritual convergence. In 1934, Ramiro de Maeztu published Defensa de la Hispanidad, refreshing the thesis of his friend António Sardinha. The work stimulated Almada Negreiros to examine this path thoroughly. Arriving from Madrid in 1932, after five years of active intervention in the Spanish art scene, Almada published in 1935, in the magazine Sudoeste, a manifesto of extra-political Iberianism, entitled ‘Portugal’s 5 Unities’. One of those unities, theorized Almada, was ‘Iberia’s peninsular unity’. It was not a political unity of sovereignties, but one of civilization and culture, based on the sharing of common geography. The motto was simple: ‘Iberian civilisation, yes. Always. Iberian union, no. Never. The Iberian Peninsula is equal to Spain plus Portugal.’ To better clarify his defence of unity within duality, Almada looked at the history of the peninsula, updating once more the alliancism and pan-Iberianism defended by Sardinha and the magazine Contemporânea, where he also participated:

The duality of Portugal and Spain is, after all, the secret of the vitality of the Iberian Peninsula and its civilisation. Portugal and Spain are two opposites and not two rivals. Opposites are equal complements of a whole. This whole is geographically represented by the Iberian Peninsula and in spirit by the Iberian civilisation.

(Negreiros [1935] 1971: 35)

Accomplished, throughout the centuries, the first part of the Iberian mission in the world, spreading through the continents ‘the Portuguese and Spanish blood’, there was still the second part of the mission, which would be ‘to create a culture of Portuguese and Spanish understanding’. That was, concluded Almada Negreiros, the responsibility of the Iberian generations of that time. But that did not come from the dilution of borders or the erasure of one nationality by another: ‘Each Portuguese will have to be more Portuguese than ever before the Spaniard who is more Spaniard than ever, and especially, Portuguese and Spaniards will have to be more Portuguese and Spanish than ever’, before the German, the English, the French, the Italian or the Russian ([1935] 1971: 36). In his own peculiar phrasing, Almada Negreiros was calling for both Iberian countries to strengthen their national cultures whilst rediscovering all such elements that brought them closer to a Hispanic civilization, historically different from other strong national communities perceived throughout Europe.
CULTURAL IBERIANISM FROM THE END OF ESTADO NOVO TO EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY

Once the dictatorial regimes in both countries were stabilized, the promotion of a discourse on Iberian culture and civilization hibernated for some decades. Two reasons can explain this phenomenon: on the one hand, the decrease of the rhetoric of Portugal’s ‘annexation’ or ‘satellization’ by Spain after 1945, when Francoism was in search of a new image (see Jiménez Redondo 1996); on the other hand, Salazar, in spite of his official understanding with Franco, was always reserved about authorizing cultural meetings, conferences, visits or interchange of intellectuals or writers, being reluctant about the promotion of any cultural peninsularism – all in the name of ‘the irreducible fact of peninsular duality’, as he himself theorized in a speech in 1938, against which ‘the federalist traditions of the two republics were impotent, as much as the imperialist tradition of Phillip II’ (1938: 84).

It would be under the governance of Marcello Caetano (Salazar’s successor), at the turn of the 1960s into the 1970s, that the cordial but reserved attitude of the Estado Novo towards Francoism would be replaced by another, more open and cooperative one. This owed much to the similarities between the desired marcelista renovation and the desarrollismo and aperturismo of the young Francoist technocrats (Jiménez Redondo 2010; Sánchez Cervelló 2002: 283). Following the industrial, commercial and economic interconnections in general, and the opening and mutual discovery of the Portuguese and the Spaniards due to Iberian mass tourism, the signature of the bilateral protocol in May 1970 foresaw, contrary to the Iberian Pact of 1939 and the additional protocol of 1940, a growth in cultural, scientific, artistic and social relations, in addition to the political channels. It was in this spirit that, in 1970, the ‘Câmara de Comércio e Indústria Luso-Espanhola’ was created (it still exists); it was also planned, in an innovative manner, that each of the two states would try to develop the teaching of the language, literature and civilization of the other Iberian country in its school system (Oliveira 1995: 190–91; Torre Gómez 1998: 146–47).

With the Portuguese revolution of 1974–76, which overthrew the Estado Novo and paved the way for the democratization of Portugal, there was a growing Spanish popular curiosity about what was happening to its Iberian neighbour, and the interchanges between the democratic intellectuals of both countries multiplied; the Portuguese rupture served as an inspiration for the Spanish Transición, accelerated after the death of general Franco, at the end of 1975 (see Sánchez Cervelló 1993 and 2001). In November 1977, the governments of Lisbon and Madrid signed a new Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, no longer uniting two dictatorships but two democracies, with the intention of promoting a true healthy peninsularism among the Portuguese and the Spaniards, who should mutually discover themselves in all possible areas, with no fears or unconfessed ambitions of any Castilian annexation. The path to EEC accession, which both countries followed side by side until 1985, helped to reduce distances and to strengthen convergences. After 1985, integrated into the European Community, Portugal and Spain inaugurated a new period of bilateral relations, which the Spanish ambassador in Lisbon in 2010 qualified as ‘la mejor etapa de nuestra historia común’ (quoted in García Pérez 2011: 163). Thanks to the European influence, Iberian coexistence led to an unprecedented integration, based on the normalization of political and diplomatic contacts and on the multiplication
of commercial and financial exchanges and social, cultural and artistic dialogue. Powers and citizens became aware of each other and came to know each other – at summits and bilateral agreements, through imports and exports, through cross-border cooperation plans, in knowledge networks and student and university exchange, through tourism or in reciprocal shows in the arts and culture, through sports competitions and mimetic consumption patterns (Sardica 2013: 283–309). All this reawakened the peninsular friendship beyond politics, and none of this led to resuscitation, aside from a few extremist voices of Hispanophobic nationalism, of fears that Portuguese identity or independence were at risk.

With no surprises, in the last decades, the Portuguese intelligentsia proclaimed itself heir of the peninsularist and alliancist visions of the cultural Iberianism that had marked the entire period from the end of the nineteenth century until the advent of the Estado Novo. The famous novel A Jangada de Pedra, published in 1986 by José Saramago ([1986] 1999), was the starting point for the new Iberianism characteristic of the democracies in the peninsula. While he mistrusted the Europe of the common market, the future Portuguese Nobel for literature appealed to the deepening of the cultural, linguistic, historic and sentimental Ibericity, beginning a pan-Iberian or trans-Iberian path of reflection (as he himself defined) (Saramago 1996: 49–50, and his preface ‘My Iberismo’ to Molina 1990: 5–9).

In 1988, other voices from the Portuguese cultural scene would lend their contribution to the cause of Iberia’s mental convergence. Essayist Eduardo Lourenço, in a text entitled ‘A Espanha e Nós’, revisited the history of Portuguese-Spanish relations from a civilizational point of view, stressing how much ‘our destinies were always either parallel or crossed, never opposites in terms of cultures’, rejecting reasons for the Portuguese to be suspicious vis-à-vis their neighbours. ‘The anti-Spanish feeling’, concluded Lourenço, ‘is the childhood disease of our nationalism, which is far from being the radical complex-free love of ourselves’ ([1988] 1994: 82–3). He was followed by Natália Correia, with a small book called Somos Todos Hispanos, a true manifesto to celebrate the Hispanic cultural nation that pre-existed the peninsular political states. To promote or recover the intimate cultural relationship between the two peninsular countries, it was imperative that the two societies, Portuguese and Spanish, were willing to realize that ‘they have their roots buried in the heart of a very ancient and future common time’ (Correia 1988: 62). Thus, Natália Correia believed that all the inhabitants of the peninsula, from Lisbon to Barcelona, through Madrid or Seville, were Hispanic and that their future mission should be to enter an ‘Iberian-Afro-American community’, enhancing a postcolonial Latin and Atlantic ecumenism between Portugal, Brazil and Lusophile Africa, alongside Spain and the Spanish-speaking Americas. For the Portuguese part, that day would only come if ‘the infected ideas of Hispanophobia’ were attacked, expelling from the national identity the ‘terror of the Spanish danger’. And Spain and the Spaniards should do the same in relation to Portugal, so that no identity on either side became ‘a declaration of war to the affinities that should be congregated in an embracing project’ (1988: 11, 68). Also, in that year of 1988, Miguel Torga, in a conversation with his Lusophile friend César Molina, defined what should be understood as healthy Iberianism: ‘The peninsula works for me as a continent. The peoples don’t have visible borders, but they have individual borders, and within them they are unyielding.’ It so happened that the peninsular peoples were ‘all linked by historic
and cultural ties, although they have a specific personality’ (Molina 1990: 190–96). With that in mind, Torga’s Iberianism was

The platonic dream of peninsular harmony of nations. All sisters and all independent. But it is also a passion that cools down as soon as there are signs in the horizon of a political or economic hegemony; which demands reciprocity in its good faith; which only wants to fraternally share a longer space of spirituality.

(quoted in Álvarez 1996: 385)

A quarter of a century after these manifestos, and through the cosmopolitan reinforcement of the Schengen generation or the Erasmus generation, which brought the circulation of ideas, people and knowledge, unprejudiced interchange between the two countries is a reality. In other words: Iberianism definitely took on the status of a ‘culture’ or a way of being. In 2007, Saramago reappeared on the public scene to explore the essential polysemy of the word ‘Iberia’. According to him, the old Portuguese patriotism identified ‘Iberia’ as a political union, with the abolition of state borders and the consequent fusion of homelands, all resulting in the de-nationalization of Portugal. Saramago identified ‘Iberia’in exactly the same way that the Hispanophile Portuguese intellectuals had always done through peninsularism, understood as a strengthening of Hispanic cultural and sentimental ties, now reinforced by economic globalization. That is, Portuguese sovereignty did not consist in having a border, but rather in the historic, linguistic and cultural identity of the country; feeling that it is a part of Iberia, Portugal would never lose this, in the same way that Catalonia or the Basque Country showed, and still show, their sovereignty and identity although both have no political and state border with the Castilian plateau. In sum: all Hispanic nations had the same common background which facilitated convergence and approximation, without the excesses of an asphyxiating political unitarianism. Former president of the republic Mário Soares, a long-time friend of Felipe González and of King Juan Carlos I, supported Saramago, stating that Iberian thought should be understood only as ‘the recognition of unity in diversity’. ‘Political integration is something else’, he added, and that was not ‘in sight’ nor was it ‘desirable’ (Soares 2007).

CONCLUSION: THE PERMANENCE OF IBERICITY IN THE PRESENT AND FUTURE PORTUGUESE–SPANISH RELATIONSHIP

The global financial and economic crisis that started in 2008 and the consequent uncertainty felt by the political leaderships of the peninsula introduced new dynamics into the Iberian dialogue, sometimes bringing with it forms of division and the public invocation of asymmetries and distances. At a time of generalized difficulties, the costs of international competition and, due to them (and to geography), the strong presence of Spanish interests in Portugal, can feed once more the prophets of anti-Spanish nationalism. However, time is not favourable to the resurrection of past fears and hatreds, and perhaps it may even advise on an Iberianist strategy of convergence to face the crisis. It is thus of the utmost importance to reinforce the idea that now, as ever, Spain is not ‘a threat to Portugal’s sovereignty’ but maybe ‘part of the escape from the periphery’ (Antunes 2003: 305). None of this means that the cultural approach to Iberianism, which always propped up the true peninsular friendship, is in danger, nor that it is possible to imagine
that identity or independence are being threatened. It should be added that, if top decision-makers were capable of cultivating this prudent and enlightening attitude, the anonymous citizen would perhaps feel motivated to take the simple step, but of enormous Iberian meaning, as it was one day imagined by José Saramago: ‘if we, the Portuguese, decided to like Spain, if they, the Spaniards, decided to like Portugal, the consequent feeling of mutual gratitude would reduce to nothing yesterday’s fears and today’s suspicions’ (1996: 131) (emphasis in original).

The great majority of Portuguese intellectuals never felt fear or suspicion towards the benefits of peninsular friendship and of Iberianism as an extra-political instrument and expression of that same friendship. Almost one hundred years ago, in the aforementioned 1917 essay, Fernando Pessoa declared, on the Spaniards and the Portuguese, that ‘regardless of the many differences that may separate us, we are psychologically closer to one another than any of us to any other extra-Iberian people’. Because of this, which common geography and history would never erase, he added: ‘we have the right to expect that everything should lead to an Iberian civilisation that, although common to the countries of Iberia, yet transcends them all’ (Pessoa [1917] 1987: 195). Portugal did not want to be Spanish, nor did the Spaniards want to politically seize the Portuguese. And, believing in that, Fernando Pessoa left a challenge that is still valid today: that the two countries and both peoples become aware

That one border, although it separates, it also unites; and that, if two neighbouring nations are two because they are two, they can morally be almost one because they are neighbours. This mental approximation does not mean a reciprocal abdication of anything regarding the independence or the personality of each nation. It simply means the establishment of understanding and friendship, natural in the case of Portugal and Spain, nowadays not separated by any conflict of ambitions, and that a common traditional civilisation brings closer ([1917] 1987: 201).

Through the elegant prose of the greatest Portuguese poet, it is possible to grasp the essence and recurrence of what was the cultural discourse of contemporary Portuguese Iberianism. Less studied and less well known than the political-diplomatic Iberianism of a unionist or annexationist nature, cultural and civilizational Iberianism tried, for more than a century – through so-called peninsularist, Hispanicist or alliancist discourses and strategies – to strengthen the Iberian relationship in a different manner, lending it a dynamic of unity in diversity, of differentiation with complementation, of independence with alliance and of neighbourhood with friendship. This cultural and civilizational Iberianism, as an intimate approximation without any fusion, was a critical reaction against all those who had the ambition of an Iberian union sensu strictu, whether to correct the geographic anomaly of Portuguese independence, to avoid subversive dissimilarities between opposing political regimes or to equip the peninsula with a more unified and competitive political-economic body to face Europe and the world. Opposing all this, through culture and not through politics, a Hispanic Ibericity could spring up that was not just Portuguese, nor just Spanish, nor just a mere juxtaposition of both, but rather a new synthesis placing the peninsula once again at the forefront of civilization, and projecting it especially towards the Iberian-American link, the vast world created by the Portuguese and the Spaniards
during the overseas expansion and the Siglo de Oro. At present, it is generally thought best that the future of Iberianism should be able to reconcile its joint peninsular membership in Europe with the rediscovery of that pivotal place among continents, which could well be the key to Iberia’s competitive specialization in the near future.

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