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**The Contribution of Alexander Mackenzie and
Washington Irving to the Image of Spanish
Orientalism in the 19th Century**

Jesús Merchán López

Tutor: José Manuel Eduardo Barrio Marco

Departamento de Filología Inglesa

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The work presented in this MA thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text. The work in this thesis has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

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Jesús Merchán López

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Resumen

Alexander Mackenzie y Washington Irving son considerados los primeros viajeros americanos que publican obras completas y detalladas de sus experiencias por la España de principios del siglo XIX. Su contribución a la imagen del orientalismo español solo es comparable a la de Lord Byron, que tiene una gran fascinación por España y sus romances. Estos autores comparten una visión idealizada y romántica de España, además de un interés por la otredad que este país representa. Sin embargo, Mackenzie rompe con esa línea inmediatamente llegado a España, donde se encuentra de frente con la dura realidad del momento, la llamada “Década Ominosa”, en la que España se ve sumergida en una grave crisis institucional y un gran despotismo. Todo ello lo reproduce con gran exactitud en sus libros de viajes. Irving no comparte el discurso pesimista de su amigo. Su fascinación por el pasado glorioso español deriva en el uso de la imaginación para crear historias exóticas cargadas de estereotipos que mezclan la realidad con la ficción.

Palabras clave

Mackenzie, Irving, Byron, Romanticismo, Orientalismo, España, Otredad, Romances.

Abstract

Alexander Mackenzie and Washington Irving are considered the first American travellers to publish complete and detailed works of their experiences in Spain in the early 19th century. His contribution to the image of Spanish Orientalism is only comparable to that of Lord Byron, who has a great fascination for Spain and its romances. These authors share an idealized and romantic vision of Spain, as well as an interest in the otherness that this country represents. However, Mackenzie breaks with that line when he first arrive in Spain, where he experiences in first person the harsh reality of the moment: the so-called “Ominous Decade” when Spain endures an institutional crisis and great despotism. All this is reproduced with great accuracy in his travel books. Irving does not share the pessimistic speech of his friend. His fascination with the glorious Spanish past results in the use of imagination to create exotic stories loaded with stereotypes that mix reality with fiction.

Keywords

Mackenzie, Irving, Byron, Romanticism, Orientalism, Spain, Otherness, Romances.

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Alexander Slidell Mackenzie



Washington Irving

I. Introduction

In the Middle Ages, the Iberian Peninsula was a melting pot of different cultures: Asian, European and African. But it would be with the Christian Reconquest when a great step was taken in the development of Hispanic Orientalism, especially with the well-known *Cantar del Mio Cid*. However, it was not until the Renaissance and the Hispanic unification movement that non-Christians were segregated and expelled, thus orientalising those who remained. As a result, the Moors were no longer considered enemies and a process of romanticization began, “a further reinvention of the Other that led to the acceptance of such Orientalized, non-threatening Muslim in the popular mentality of the time. The Moor became more of a fairytale character than a historical figure” (Tyutina 43). The reader accepts the Orientalized as it does not represent any danger and even “recognizes his own values in the Other's” (Tyutina 45). In this period the Moorish protagonists are of noble origin in the same way as their Christian counterparts, usually descendants of the king of Granada in the so-called "romances fronterizos" (frontier folk poetry). In short, after the Reconquest a new concept of Moorish was created, romanticized and domesticated, which shared Christian values and habits. This Europeanized version "who speaks like a Christian, feels like a Christian, even reads the same books and operates with the same imagery seen in chivalric novels" is the one we are going to find in American and English literature (Tyutina 50).

One of the most transcendent Spanish historical ballads is *A Very Mournful Ballad of the Siege and Conquest of Alhama*, which was translated into English in 1818 by Lord Byron, who was quite fond of romantic foreign poetry. The conquest of the Kingdom of Granada began in December 1482 and, after ten years of military campaigns, it concluded with the capture of the city in January 1492, when King Boabdil of Granada surrendered the keys of his town to the

Catholic kings Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, ending the last bastion of Moorish command in the Iberian Peninsula. It is worth mentioning that the point of view of these romances is not triumphalist but instead enter into the feelings of the conquered, describing the Moorish king's sadness.

The context surrounding Byron is based on the construction of the nineteenth-century British identity. The nineteenth-century discourse of Orientalism was based on the prevalent discourse of Empire, representing the East as fallen and thus needing to be controlled and guided by Western, imperial powers despite the former advancements and ancient civilizations of its people. It refers to a “form of cultural projection based on power relationships that subjugated the non-European other” (Radhwi 7). Lord Byron, a member of the British nobility, was interested in observing the way identity functioned on different cultural, ethnic and religious levels and comparing and contrasting the identities which he was taught to perceive as different (Radhwi 19). According to Radhwi, “Byron represents the self as referring to those belonging to the nineteenth-century British version of Protestantism, and the foreign/other as those residing in the lands outside of Britain whether Europe or the lands under Ottoman rule” (24). The victory over the Spanish Moors reflects certain parallels with the long Ottoman presence in Greece, lasting from the mid-15th century until the successful Greek War of Independence in 1821 and the proclamation of the First Hellenic Republic in 1822.

This 19th-century nationalist bent will elevate Spanish exoticism in Europe, followed by a change in attitude toward Spain. The interest in Spanish romances grew exponentially among many writers expressing their fascination with Spain throughout the 19th century, with Lord Byron (1788-1824) being the most famous. The first Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* was constructed as a kind of fantasy or gloss by Byron on his experiences on his journey to southern

Spain in 1809. Byron's fascination with Spain, which led him to travel through the Peninsula for several months, passing through the most iconic points of Andalusia, before continuing his trip to Greece and then to Turkey, would result in a clear political commitment with Spain. He was transformed, through his poem, into Childe Harold, a fictional gentleman who was revealing, in a narrative and autobiographical way, the experiences lived during his trip. The poem was thus wholly contemporary, and decidedly political. It detailed many incidents of the brutality of the war with France and evoked the knights of the Reconquest to exalt the Spanish in their fight against France. Despite his strong political charge, Byron captured the attention of his public with the introduction of Spanish topics within the reach of a bourgeois public: he described, in great detail, a bullfight in Cádiz and idealized Spanish women, especially all Andalusian, as a representation of seduction and courage. The idea of exotic Spain was shaped from a wide variety of sources. For the new Romanticism, travel would be the most direct way of encountering the otherness that distant and exotic Spain could offer. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* had been a chronicle, poeticized and idealized, of one of the first romantic travellers who had sought inspiration from him in the first person. Byron's romantic idealization motivated other poets and writers to make their own trips to Spain, and the stories and works resulting from such "real" approaches served to fuel the romantic imagination about Spain. However, the Ballads and the references to the medieval romance gradually dissipated in favour of a more picturesque vision of Spain. If Lord Byron and the poets of early Romanticism handled the iconography of the Cid, Don Pelayo and Boabdil in order to represent the values and qualities of courage and passion of the Spanish, the authors of the new romantic poetry would look for these values in more modern and picturesque characters: smugglers, bandits, gypsies, bullfighters, etc.

Byron included, as an appendix to the poem, the romance *A Very Mournful Ballad of the Siege and Conquest of Alhama*, which became the most famous version. According to Pérez de Hita, who had inserted the romance into the then new genre of historical novel, it had its origins in an Arab romance. When we talk about this romance, it is almost mandatory to quote the words of Pérez de Hita about it:

“Este romance se hizo en Arábigo, en aquella ocasión de la perdida de Alhama, el qual era en aquella lengua muy doloroso y triste. Tanto que vino a vedarse en Granada que no se contasse, porque cada vez que lo cantaban en cualquiera parte, provocaba llanto, y dolor, aunque después se cantó otro en lengua Castellana, de la misma materia que decía...”

The romance, organized in groups of 2 or 3 stanzas of 4 lines, interspersed with the chorus, receives different emphasis in Lord Byron's translation. Despite being octosyllabic, it changes the stress, turning the line into 4 iambic feet. Regarding the translation, Byron was very concerned about its reliability and so ordered it to be published along with the original Spanish text. According to Saglia, “Byron's version is in fact a personal adaptation of the metre and the narrative of the Spanish romances” and even “a radical adaptation and one which, on account of its mixed provenance, occupies a variable position between creation and transmission” (48). Byron maintains only the Moor's reply to the king's accusations, very consistent with the ideals of the illustration of his time, giving special prominence to his rebellion and the injustice of his fate:

'Cavalier! and man of worth! Let these words of mine go forth; Let the Moorish Monarch know, That to him I nothing owe': Woe is me, Alhama! (Byron 521).

One of the most notable variations of Lord Byron is that the old Moor and the alfaqui are merged into one person:

“Diziendo assi al hacen Alfaqui,” / “And as these things the Old Moor said” (Byron 521).

The tone of Byron's translation is that of his *Oriental Tales* written in the first decade of the 19th century which functioned in the same way as the Spanish-Moorish texts because they "often recounted conflicts between Christians and Muslims in a Mediterranean setting" (Saglia 50). Byron wanted to cultivate a sense of otherness in his translation by constantly reminding that the text comes from the Arabic oral tradition and moving away from Pérez de Hita's version, which his predecessors had already translated.

The importance given to these romances in the orientalist period of English literature further increased interest in Moorish Spain and established new icons in the British imaginary such as the Alhambra in Granada, whose constructions are replicated in various pavilions of some English aristocrats. According to Saglia, “the translation and appropriation of Spanish-Moorish ballads was more than just an act of cultural encroachment, for it blended inextricably with that growing awareness of the past pervading British culture in the last third of the eighteenth century” (52). Therefore, the incorporation of Islamic Spain in the literary discourse not only helped to forge the British identity but also to find the place of British culture in the world.

Not only laid Byron the foundation for the later American travellers that I am going to focus on in this thesis, but also Mordecai Manuel Noah (1785-1851), who was the first American traveller to visit Spain. According to Gifra-Adroher, he “disseminated a stereotyped image of Spain as a picturesque land of romance that had its epicenter in the Spanish works of Washington Irving” (Introduction 11). Noah mentions Andalusia in his travel book published in 1819 *Travels*

in England, France, Spain and the Barbary States, but its references are too general and bookish.

The following passage collects his impressions on the Spanish population in detail:

The Spanish women, and particularly the ladies of Andalusia, constitute the most important, and influential part, of the population of that country. It is incredible, what real difference exists, and what disparity is evident, between the men and women; whether this arises from the known want of stamina and character, on the part of the men, their little acquaintance with arts and science, their bigotry, or rather the intolerance in their faith, I cannot say ; but there is a coldness about them, a saturnine indifference, not discernible in the females. The men, though reserved, are excessively polite, full of compliment without meaning, and of professions without sincerity. We hear much, and read more, respecting the jealousy of the Spaniards; of their suspicious nature; their bais and bolts; their Duennas and grated windows; all this is romance ; there is less jealousy evinced in Spain, than in any other country I have visited. (Noah 85).

In addition, Gifra-Adroher points out that “Noah believed that Roman Catholicism was one of the most important causes of national backwardness in Spain and even though he admired the people's pious daily vespers, he saw in the numerous religious ceremonies a mind - shackling power, epitomized by the Inquisition” (75).

The Inquisition, a curse to humanity, and to that country, though stripped of a portion of its former cruelties, still retains sufficient power to awe the freethinker, or curb the rebellious spirit of religious independence. (Noah 87).

Alexander Slidell Mackenzie (April 6, 1803 – September 13, 1848) and Washington Irving (April 3, 1783 – November 28, 1859), both diplomats and historians, started a friendship in Spain that continued into the following decades when they were neighbours in Tarrytown, New York (Sánchez 33). Both were New Yorkers belonging to a small, influential, and well-connected cultural elite who have in common a great adventurous spirit and dare to discover a country that tended to be avoided by American travellers until they start the trend. The connection between both authors gives rise to feedback in their works that can be seen not only in the naval suggestions that Mackenzie makes about *Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, but also in Irving's review in the English edition of Mackenzie's *A Year in Spain* (London, 1831). Irving "read and reread Mackenzie on Spain" until his death (Sánchez 35) since he was amazed with the very visual descriptions and the narrative style of Mackenzie. Although Irving supported Mackenzie's literary career, "he tried unsuccessfully to convince his publisher to print *Spain Revisited*", the sequel to *A Year in Spain* (Gifra-Adroher 26). It is true that Mackenzie's work has been undervalued to this day, but it is essential to fully understand Irving's work.

From 1823 to 1833, the well-known "Ominous Decade" unfolds in Spain and a dark period of political repression begins with the presence of foreign occupation forces in Spain, such as the French in Catalonia, which is one of the first things that discourages Mackenzie. On this period, "we witness a transition from an enlightened to a romantic representation of Spain" (Gifra-Adroher 18). It should be noted that both writers draw on the same sources to create their romantic idea of Spain, such as the book by Ginés Pérez de Hita, *The Civil Wars of Granada, Don Quixote, Gil Blas, Gonsalve de Cordove*, etc (Gifra-Adroher 98). However, they take different paths in the development of their idea throughout their work. According to Gifra-Adroher, "Mackenzie and George Ticknor are the first travel writers to develop the alluring and

primitive underside of Spain for American audiences ... permeated with didactic and political concerns characteristic of the 18th century mindset” (29). That means that they break with the romantic visions of the medieval Spanish past and focus on describing the historical events of Spain at the time. On the other hand, Irving does not continue this trend of travel books and completely changes the perspective of the previous writers. Gifra-Adroher states that Irving “opened the unbounded escapist possibilities of the voyage to edenic Spain to the imagination of many readers in the United States” (29). Irving follows Byron's line and mixes in his work a romantic and adventurous style with the factual discourse of history.

The aim of this thesis is to highlight the importance for the concept of Spanish Orientalism of the images of Mackenzie and Irving on Spain. In the pages that follow, I will claim that both writers were benchmarks for future American travellers due to their complementary points of view that range from Mackenzie's harsher realism to Irving's escapist and romantic tone. Both coincide in a staunch anti-Catholicism and their orientalist discourse is manipulated by the Spanish socio-political reality of the time, although Irving develops it in a more optimistic way than Mackenzie.

- **State of art**

A great deal has been written about Washington Irving and Orientalism, albeit there is not much research on Mackenzie. As is common in travel literature, Mackenzie highly contributes to the construction of the Other. In his account we find a paradox: “on the one hand the Spaniards are nearly seen as bodies, as Others circumscribed to their physical state ... on the other hand, he presents indefinite citizens as people with their own voices and concerns” (Gifra-Adroher 120). According to Boone, American travellers like Mackenzie were able to be exposed to Spanish entertainment and religion, “emotional forms of expression denied bourgeois American society” and “if they later criticized the proceedings, they simply laid claim to their own superior moral position” (10). Kagan states that Mackenzie “arrived in the country without any knowledge of Spanish and armed with a preconceived notion of Spaniards as standing halfway between “a bloody-minded grand inquisitor and an illustrious hidalgo” (37).

Regarding to Irving, Kagan states that he “offered an orientalist interpretation of the Spanish character” (250). Pere Gifra-Adroher points out that he succeeds in “constructing Spain in terms of a grandiose medieval past bound to a permanently primitive present people with tattered hidalgos in the timeless setting of the Alhambra” (123). Irving “makes the palace of the Alhambra stand for the whole country” against the position of the present Catholicism that seems to ensure only the benefits of the Spanish authorities (124). Herlihy-Mera goes further by labeling Irving a Hispanophobe and an Islamophile. He argues that Irving “is committed to developing a literary dimension of the Black Legend by engaging a mythic Islamic-Catholic polarity in order to tease out new ways to celebrate the anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish sentiment of his era” (132). Specifically, Irving is positioned against the Spanish Catholics, since he applauds the work of the French Catholics for their better conservation of the Alhambra during

the French occupation. According to Herlihy-Mera, “in his pattern of praise, Catholic images are a manifestation of backwardness, idleness, lethargy, and indolence, and his fervor for things Islamic adds only depth to this pattern” (130).

- **Justification and Methodology**

I will analyse the first books of Mackenzie and Irving dealing with the Hispanic theme in order to highlight their contribution on the Spanish Orientalism. Regarding Mackenzie, I will focus on *A Year in Spain. By a young American* (1829), which is the first travel book that an American has ever published about Spain. This book is crucial to realizing how preconceived romantic ideas change when they come up against reality. Regarding Irving, I will place particular emphasis on *The Student of Salamanca* (1822), which is his first tale full set in Spain, albeit at that time he had not yet visited the country. The reason for focusing on this romance-tale by Irving is that it was not yet contaminated by the impression of the Spain that the author found when he arrived in Spain and therefore reflects his most unaltered Orientalism. Both are not available in Spanish despite the topic they deal with as well as they are not well known outside of the academic sphere, thus my intention is to recover them in order to open the door to future research on them. The method used in this thesis is comparative-contrastive on the vision that both Irving and Mackenzie project on Spanish Orientalism and I address it by dedicating a specific chapter to each of them.

II. Alexander Slidell Mackenzie (1803-1848)

That liberty made Spain, and that despotism has marred her, let no one doubt.

Pioneer in publishing a complete travel account of Spain in the United States, Mackenzie was honoured by Irving and other Hispanists for describing with naturalness and rigor the reality that happened to Spain in the Ominous Decade. As Gifra-Adroher points out, he only “was a young lieutenant wandering in Spain with a leave of absence from the navy” (26) but who nevertheless makes a detailed description of a large part of Spain in his travel book *A Year in Spain. By a young American*, beginning with Catalonia, continuing through Madrid and both Castiles, and culminating his trip in the exotic Andalusia. According to Boone, “Mackenzie’s narrative flair, his enthusiasm for the rougher side of Spanish life, and his propensity toward provocative political and religious pronouncements assured the popularity of his work for several decades after its publication” (9). However, he is best remembered for his dark episode as captain of the USS Somers, when he had to face an attempted mutiny that resulted in three midshipmen being executed, one of them the son of the US Minister of War.

A Year in Spain reflects the decay of Spanish imperialism and the rise of Anglo-American rule in the world. He crudely and contemptuously exposes King Ferdinand VII and his absolutist regime full of arbitrariness, despotism, and frequent and crowded executions in the squares of the main cities. Gifra-Adroher argues that “whether in its role as a political instrument denouncing the Ancient Régime or perhaps as a text attempting to reform the course of events in Spain, it emerged as a transgressive book whose high-flown anti-absolutist attacks must have made the domestic republican reader nod in affirmation with its author” (109). After the publication of his book, there was a protest from the Spanish royal house to the book's publisher, John Murray of

London. The king issued an order against Mackenzie in 1832 that the author proudly shows in his second book about his second voyage to Spain in 1834, *Spain Revisited* (1836), denying him entry into Spain and ordering the withdrawal of the first book. *Spain Revisited* describes now Spain “torn by a bloody civil war between the apostolical followers of Don Carlos and the constitutionalist supporters of the Queen regent, Maria Cristina” (Gifra-Adroher 98). In chapter 1 he tells us about the consequences of the publication of his first book:

A royal order of Ferdinand, directed to the agents of the government in every part of Spain, had, been issued some two years before, describing me by name as the author of the "Year in Spain", and stating that it was my intention to return to the country, in which case I should immediately be conducted to the nearest frontier and dismissed. The work itself was to be seized wherever it might be found. The reasons given for this exclusion were, that this ill-digested production contained injurious expressions concerning the king and royal family of Spain, and sacrilegious mockery of her institutions and laws. (SR 13).

The change to a liberal government and the instability of the country allowed Mackenzie to return to Spain and continue with his accurate descriptions of Spanish political and social reality as well as visiting Zaragoza or Pamplona (perhaps he should be considered the first “Hemingway”).

Going back to his first book, Mackenzie consolidated his prejudices regarding the Spanish political system on his trip: "royal despotism, national isolation and economic mismanagement" together with "the later repression of the liberal opposition" (Gifra-Adroher 110). Mackenzie, unlike Irving, avoids focussing on the romantic past and underlines the harshness of the present and encourages the reader to “try at least to see the spectacle through Spanish eyes” so that “description is subordinated to narrative” (Sánchez 32). He reports the lack of law and order in

Spain, especially describing the dangers that awaited travellers who often saw how a gang of thieves attacked their diligence and killed whoever got ahead. He denounces that in Spain there is a “horrid state of crime” and points out that “the diligence from Madrid to Barcelona was robbed no fewer than ten times” (YS 270). On many occasions the author lets us understand a possible way out towards political subversion:

It would, perhaps, be better for Spain if she were without government, without law, and if each individual were left the guardian of his own rights and safety. He might lose a little protection, but would be sure to escape from a great deal of plunder. (YS 269).

Noteworthy two passages dealing with hanging: firstly, that of the bodies hanging from the gallows in Granada and secondly, that of the public execution in Madrid:

In crossing the square our road led us immediately by the gallows; the crowd which must have witnessed the execution had disappeared entirely; and the children, frightened from the spot, had carried their joyous revels to some other scene; no animal, no man, not a sentinel to guard the victims, was anywhere to be seen; ... and their faces, though livid and blackened, wore no peculiar expression of malignity. This singular blending of associations of ordinary life with the repose and still silence of death, overcame the mind with gloom and confusion. (YS 135).

Sánchez states that “he conveys fascination as well as horror” (33) and “in death they represent the pathos of the ordinariness of life (35). On the one hand, death brings freedom to those executed, who are left in peace and eternal rest. But on the other hand, nobody seems to care after the terrible event that just happened. According to Gifra-Adroher, “by describing execution scenes carefully, he not only augmented the existing myth of Spanish lawlessness and insecurity

but emphasized that these took their toll on the bodies of real Spaniards” (110). The common Spanish citizen was unprotected against the accusations that the church or the state could pour against them, usually with some hidden intention. And within common citizen we can include greatly influential people as we can see in the execution of masons in Madrid:

They were tried without delay, and, with the exception of the youth, were all condemned to die like the vilest criminals. Among them were a colonel, a lieutenant-colonel, and a marquis; the rest were likewise noble, and though as such they were all rich in property or in influential connexions, no intercessions, however powerful, not even in one instance the tears and wailings of a mother, who pleaded with a mother's eloquence for the life of her son, could avert their fate. (YS 136).

Before the execution, the Masonic insignia was hung around their necks and the friar who witnessed the execution blasphemous about the Masonic institution to avoid public sympathy, which the author considers a ruse by the clergy to make it unpopular “an institution which has the character in Spain of being friendly to freedom in politics and religion” (YS 137). Mackenzie is critical not only of this high-handed government way of deterring violence, but also of “Church's opposition to constitutionalism and its parasitic sapping of the economy” (Boone 33). Mackenzie recounts that “in Spain the long-established usage of the land awards to the church one tenth part of the gross produce of agriculture”; therefore, “every one who is in any way connected with the hierarchy, is concerned in the abundance of the crops” (YS 153). In his account, he denounces how, against the will of the peasants, the state breaks the tendency of the previous government to take away privileges from the church, characteristic of its feudal regime, and returns the union of the clergy and the monarchy as a symptom in favour of the Ancien Régime and clearly against a

constitutional system. In the following quote from the text we can appreciate how Mackenzie highlights the interference of the church in politics:

We are not, therefore, when we see a decree of the Spanish government breathing a spirit of bigoted intolerance, to ascribe it to this or that minister, but rather to some unseen bishop, or father abbot behind the curtain. (YS 284).

Focusing now more on Spanish Orientalism than on politics, Mackenzie goes beyond otherness giving an overview of the stereotypical average Spaniard. For this, he brilliantly includes in his account the differences by regions that are so important to understand the cultural melting pot present in the Iberian Peninsula. The descriptions of him are very detailed and range from his appearance or the way he dresses to the character and personality of the people. These are not far from what a Spaniard can think even in our times, as Castilians can fathom by noticing how he portrays our ancestors:

The Castilians are generally esteemed for their uprightness, strength of mind, and solidity of character. Like their neighbours of Aragon, they are haughty, and like the Portuguese, idle. They are also the most profoundly grave, the most obstinately taciturn, the most blindly attached to their ancient customs, of all the people of the Peninsula. But, though they speak little, and deal little in professions of friendship, yet are they often friendly, and unaffectedly kind; they are also notoriously honest, and of unshaken fidelity. (YS 287).

In detail, Mackenzie contributes to the account of the Other with revealing characters that produce empathy despite their nature. A deep reflection is generated with the episode of the murder of the bishop of Vic by the constitutionalists: "the upholders of democracy commit the

same abhorrent political crimes of their absolutist opponents" (Gifra-Adroher 110). The violent nature of the Spanish is noticeable with the case of Felipe Cano, "a former guerrilla soldier, constitutionalist, and Freemason escaped from a penitentiary" who "can only exist outside the law and against" (Gifra-Adroher 112). This leader of the robbers can cause sympathy in the reader since he is the product of the political degeneration of a country that does not offer him any other way out than crime. Social degeneration is also due to legal injustice: "none of the travellers who subsequently passed by the scene of the crime stopped to succour any of the victims for fear of being questioned about the murder" (Gifra-Adroher 112). Little stories like the one about the officer on hunger strike or José, the 12-year-old orphan whose mother was murdered by paramilitaries, provide sentimentality in the portrait of the Spaniards as opposed to Mackenzie's realism in other scenes. According to Gifra-Adroger, he "was using sentimentality not only as an appeal to the reason and feelings of his domestic readers but as a political tool that might bring about social change" (120). In *Spain Revisited*, he will further reinforce this strategy to treat the social cruelty of the Carlist Wars. Finally, it is worth mentioning two characters that are the closest to the concept of Spanish picaresque: Don Valentin Todohueso (his landlord) and Don Diego Redondo (his language professor), who are "tragicomic figures trying to dodge the disciplinary rules that constantly maintain them in a rut" (Gifra-Adroher 119).

To continue Mackenzie's romantic line, it is worth mentioning the role of Byronic hero that the author assumes from the beginning of his tour of Spain. It is no coincidence that in the Preface to the book he encourages future travellers to leave behind their identity to get into the skin of a Spaniard and see the events through the eyes of a Spaniard. Therefore, Mackenzie assumes a new Spanish identity in the role of a young Byronic hero who in turn presents a clear Byronic gesture: "pride in his own militancy" (Gifra-Adroher 109). This is reflected in the

strongly nationalistic and patriotic bias of the author. Gifra-Adroher points out that “the sharp contrast between the state of affairs in Spain and the United States instilled, in essence, a self-gratifying jingoistic message for which the travel writer became a keen yet subtle agent” (96). The author possibly wanted to convey to the American reader the image of a violent and outdated Spanish nation as opposed to a new-born American nation that was enlightened and governed by law and integrity. The author extols the American democratic system inherited from its British predecessors and insists that Spain, or any country descended from it, is incapable of establishing that same form of government, as it can be seen in the failed attempts by South American countries to copy the American regime.

Our form of government is beautiful not merely in itself, but because it has its strong foundations in our national character, in the love of order and sense of probity bequeathed to us by our British ancestors, in the condition of property, in habits of self-government as old as the era of our origin as colonies, and in universal intelligence, fostering and fostered by the system under which we live. (YS 319).

Mackenzie blames the lack of freedom and the despotism established in the institutions in Spain for impeding the progress of the country and the continuity of the empire. He emphasizes that the past times were better, however, Spain continues to be endowed with a strong romantic attraction influenced above all by its most emblematic heroes and legends.

If there be a force in freedom, there is also a withering power in the touch of despotism. Turn from these happy lands to Spain; the very fairest country of Europe; the birthplace of a Cid and a Guzman; the nation that sent Columbus forth to search for new worlds, and Cortez and Pizarro to conquer them! Behold her dwindled and impoverished, stripped of

her possessions, reduced to the mere productions of her own soil, and no longer fit, even at home, to maintain her sovereignty; by turns a prey to the rival cupidity of Gauls and Britons, and openly despoiled by her own children! (YS 260).

The author ends his book with a pessimistic message that blames the peasantry's opposition to change, the instability of the Liberal Party, the foreign interference, and the bad practices of the royal house for the failure of a revolution that would have tried to put the country at the height it deserves. However, Mackenzie expresses his love for Spain from the voice and duty of an American to transmit a message of freedom and independence: “We wish her, then, in conclusion, domestic peace, as the greatest of all blessings in itself, and the fruitful mother of so many others; we wish her, too, national independence, without which a nation can neither be dignified nor happy” (YS 320).

Making way for Irving, I am going to end this section focusing on Mackenzie's exotic trip through the lands of Andalusia. In the third volume of *A Young in Spain*, he dedicates nothing more, nothing less than 5 entire chapters to his stay in Granada. Coming from Gibraltar, where at first, he thought of leaving for his homeland, Mackenzie entered Granada from Malaga through Alhama on a horse trail. Despite being a key point for the orientalist discourse of romantic travellers, Mackenzie describes Granada with rationality and pragmatism by recognizing the achievements of the Nasrid kingdom that makes it worthy of a different consideration as a geographical, historical, and political area from the rest of the kingdoms of Spain. He extols the times when the Moors ruled the city, a past in which poets from Granada were inspired by the brave Saracen warriors to create the famous ballads, and he states that “though in our day its institutions would be useless, and its usage absurd, it forms a generous and redeeming feature in the picture of a less civilized age (YS 64). According to him, Moorish Granada was “strong in its

industry, wealth, and immense population, in the wisdom of the kings who governed it, and in the spirit of unity which animated all, it was able for centuries to maintain its ground, and carry on an almost uninterrupted war” (YS 64). However, the author “rejects romanticism” and “employs the culturalist rhetoric of eighteenth-century travel writing”, as Gifra-Adroher points out (105). He complains about the romantic stories that are used as historical texts of the Saracen domination and compares them with Homer's *Iliad* because they produce fantasy in the reader instead of historical rigor. Furthermore, he makes a defence of one of the most realistic works of his friend Irving, *Chronicles of the Conquest of Granada* (1830), despite its poetic and picturesque tone:

The "Conquest of Granada" has been neither appreciated nor understood. It contains the most faithful record extant of that romantic war, which is not embellished, like the civil wars of Granada, of Perez de la Gita, from the creations of a sickly imagination, but from abundant and varied research, and intimate acquaintance with the feelings and manners of the age. Hence the "Conquest of Granada," in becoming poetical, does not cease to be true, containing, as it does, no fact unsubstantiated by historians and chroniclers. (YS 65).

Indeed, Mackenzie doubts that the victory of Ferdinand and Isabella was in favour of Christianity and questions the usefulness of such a great bloodshed:

If the philanthropist or the colder economist, speculating with a view to utility alone, were to inquire what use Christian Spain had made of her dear-bought conquest, and how far the aggregate happiness of mankind and the interests of civilization had been promoted by the extermination of an heroic, ingenious, and industrious people, a picture of fraud, cruelty, and oppression would be presented, as frightful as the world has ever witnessed,

and followed by consequences equally ruinous to the oppressors and the oppressed. (YS 66).

Mackenzie's social vision is that of a young liberal, with a Protestant education, sympathetic to Freemasonry, who enthusiastically observes a people who, despite being suffocated by an absolutist repressive system, try to lead a normal and happy life. He is aware of its great past and hopes that one day its decline will be recoverable with honest leaders. An episode that transmits hope is that of the blind ballad singer, who “in spite of his misfortune, he was ever in a merry mood” (YS 34). These more sentimental scenes are the ones that give orientalist and nostalgic overtones to Mackenzie's normally realistic and hard speech, by including these characters that lift the spirits of an oppressed population that seeks in them airs of liberation.

The rencounter with this old acquaintance was full of gratification, and I lingered long round the spot, listening with delight, as by turns he sang of war, of love, and of devotion. There was much in all this, in the scene and in the circumstances, to carry one back to heroic times, and the days of the troubadour. (YS 35).

Mackenzie's personal experiences are enlarged with precise descriptions of places frequented by the people of Granada, where they develop their hobbies such as Rossini's operas or walks along the Salón, an emblematic boulevard in the south of Granada:

The concourse there, upon a feast-day, is very numerous, and I have scarcely ever witnessed a gayer scene than is found there on such occasions, when the eye is delighted by the added attractions of trees, fountains, and statues, and of beauty arrayed in smiles and clad for the occasion in gay attire. (YS 162).

Finally, it is worth noting the importance of the Alhambra in Granada for the writer, to which he dedicates the entirety of Chapter 4. It was fulfilled his dream of visiting a place that he had longed for since he was a young sailor reading Florian's *Gonsalve de Cordove* "over and over again on shipboard, when shut up for years among sailors" (YS 34). However, Mackenzie abandons his romantic idea as soon as he realizes the sorry state in which the Alhambra is:

I saw, immediately beneath my feet, the house and grounds of the Generalife; below it the irregular, crumbling walls and towers of the Alhambra; while still lower lay a portion of Granada, situated upon the lowest range of the mountain, and descending a little into the plain. That portion of the ancient city which, in consequence of its difficult access, has been abandoned by the mass of its population... (YS 87).

These realistic descriptions concerned about the state of conservation of the most emblematic places of Spanish Orientalism are as important for it as the most idealized ones that Irving will offer in his work. The author constantly reports the decline of the city:

Part of the ancient constructions have yielded to their own frailty, part have been overrun by the patched rookeries of the present inhabitants, and part removed to make room for the proud palace of the Cesar. (YS 97).

Although the author offers orientalist passages when he connects the past and the present of the Granada landscape and symbols. For this reason, it is important to highlight those of the Tower of Tribunal, "connected with an oriental custom", and the views it offers of Granada:

... once the noisy arena of the lombard and the arquebuse, now the most peaceful as well as most beautiful of belvideres, we were again delighted with the display of the surrounding scenery; the mountain of Alhambra, the ravine of the Daro, and the snow-

clad Sierra, are rich enough in mere picturesque attractions; but the Vega is, after all, the object of which the eye never tires. (YS 95).

On these occasions, Mackenzie can present a certain Islamophilia when remembering Granada's glorious past, and a certain Hispanophobia when blaming the present Catholic civilization, which he considers inferior, for the decline of the place.

Time, neglect, and desolation, have dealt roughly with the Alhambra; and the gorgeous colouring, the gold, the silver, and the enamel, are now covered with whitewash, filling up the interstices of the fretwork, and rounding all into uniformity. And yet the Saloon of Comares, with its fretted walls, its lofty roof, and numerous windows, overlooking one of nature's fairest pictures, cannot even now be contemplated with indifference. What then must it not have appeared to an age of inferior civilization, when all the splendour of contrasted colouring enlivened the present monotony; when those mysterious characters, which now baffle the curiosity of the unlearned, spoke in golden poetry to the beholders, and when this naked and solitary apartment was provided with the luxurious conveniences of an oriental people, thronged by obsequious courtiers, and hallowed by the presence of royalty! (YS 100).

Mackenzie evokes an idyllic past that he could not know first-hand but found in the books charged with romanticism with which he formed his image of Granada. When he notices, seeing it with his own eyes, a reality that is far from his preconceived image, Mackenzie feels disappointed and blames the Catholic society of the time for not having properly preserved the revered Moorish legacy.

III. Washington Irving (1783-1859)

The Spanish music is wild and plaintive, yet the people dance to it with spirit and enthusiasm.

Washington Irving was fascinated by the exotic and oriental image of Islamic Spain even before having visited the Mediterranean country. Note that the image that Americans could have in the United States about Spain was not far from the topics created in Europe and manipulated by the Black Legend. Irving collected a great deal of material on his frequent travels, which he later poured into his work adding details provided by his fertile imagination, so that, as he states in *Tales of a Traveler* (1824), the border between the real and the imaginary was blurred in his mind. Irving's journey is a romantic journey (in the literary sense of renewal) through the difficulties of the road through Andalusia during the first third of the 19th century, the stay in inns and even inside the Alhambra and the legends of Arab sultans and princesses.

The Tales of the Alhambra, published in 1832, present the author's orientalist vision of the Andalusian traditions and cultures of Spain. Irving describes the typical Spaniard as proud, frugal, robust, and modest. According to the stories, most of the Spaniards lived from their cattle and crops. Irving illustrated that everyday life was monotonous work, but it could also be difficult and dangerous. The stories talk about bandits and thieves in the countryside, which adds a touch of adventure to his work. Aside from descriptions of the day-to-day life of the Spanish, *The Tales of the Alhambra* also details the variety of environments in Spain. The land of Granada reflects the robust character of its inhabitants, and it is described as a boundless and bare country, without hedges or gardens like European countries. Irving makes a connection between the Spanish countryside and the vast expanses of Arabia. From his point of view, the inhabitants and the country had an Arab character, representing an allusion to the struggle between Muslim and

Christian kingdoms in the history of the Iberian Peninsula. Irving offers a description of Spain similar to the western frontier of the United States but with a racial aspect, the Arab aspect. In addition to his interpretation of the constant dangers and sense of savagery of country and inhabitants, for Irving at that time Spain has an element of exoticism, attributed to its roots in the Arab kingdoms that once ruled most of Spain and left their unique architecture. The focal point of the exotic element of Spain and its Orientalism is the Alhambra palace, which serves as a pre-modern world wonder, underlining the beauty of Spanish culture, but also serving as a symbol of deterioration. Spain in the mid-nineteenth century represented a binary opposition to Western civilizations and served as a foil to European nations (without the Arab influence or color). In this sense, Irving perpetuates the stereotyped idea of Orientalism and emphasizes the wild, and less sophisticated, of Spain.

1824 is the year in which he arrives in Spain; nevertheless, the interest in our country in its historical-literary aspect comes from further back, as well as the imagery that Granada exerts on it. It is not surprising, therefore, that *The Student of Salamanca*, the first of his Hispanic romances, developed in the time of the Habsburgs, was set there. As a romance-tale of romantic loves with a happy ending and full of commonplace clichés, it nevertheless constitutes a very significant precedent. Despite the fact that at that time his mind was still full of images taken from the work of Pérez de Hita or Florián, who are authors whose evaluation will radically change over time, and regardless of stereotypes and obvious errors, Irving was able to capture in this story vignettes of intense “local color” not lacking in credibility. *The Student of Salamanca* is included in his main book of European tales called *Bracebridge Hall*, published in 1822. It presents an important intertextuality with Hita’s descriptions of the landscape and settings in *Historia de Las Guerras Civiles de Granada* (1595/1604). Perez de Hita makes here very deep

and detailed descriptions of Granada, including its inhabitants, traditions, customs, legends, illustrious characters, etc.

It can be said that Irving inherits from Cervantes the technique of metafiction that we can see from the beginning of the story. The narrator “clarifies that he had obtained a copy of the narration and therefore, he was able to make us (the readers) know about it” (Farah 19). Alluding to ancient texts, Irving gives the story a historical and exotic character, such as those investigated by the old alchemist: “works treating of the occult sciences, and that he was particularly curious in his inquiries after Arabian manuscripts” (43). The protagonist of the story is Antonio de Castros, a student who travels from Salamanca to Granada to learn about the city's Arab past. The venture of this young adventurer can not only remind us of the Cid because of his Valencian lineage, but also of Irving himself, who travels from a much more distant place to live and learn from his adventures in Moorish Spain. From the beginning of the story, when the young man follows the old alchemist to his old mansion, the most typical places of the romantic orientalists appear, such as the banks of the Darro and the Darro valley, Sierra Morena and even the Maestranza. They are places that Irving will turn to throughout history and these, together with his detailed and precise descriptions of the landscape and of the Alhambra, will encourage the creation of the imaginary of the city of Granada in literature:

He passed several days wandering among the mouldering piles of Moorish architecture, those melancholy monuments of an elegant and voluptuous people. He paced the deserted halls of the Alhambra, the paradise of the Moorish kings. He visited the great court of the lions, famous for the perfidious massacre of the gallant Abencerrages. He gazed with admiration at its mosaic cupolas, gorgeously painted in gold and azure; its basins of marble, its alabaster vase, supported by lions, and storied with inscriptions. (Irving 44).

The story is not set in the 19th century, but we can contextualize it in the Renaissance and therefore elements as typical of this period as the Spanish Inquisition appear. This Catholic court accused Felix of Vasques of witchcraft:

Felix de Vasquez, formerly of Castile, to answer to the charges of necromancy and demonology. He was told that the charges were amply substantiated; and was asked whether he was ready, by full confession, to throw himself upon the well-known mercy of the holy inquisition. (Irving 58).

The Spanish Inquisition is one of the most recurrent topics in the Black Legend. Protestant countries, especially the Netherlands and Great Britain, resort to demonizing the Catholic religion and its court of public order for propaganda purposes in times of war. Irving inherits from the American Protestant character this topic and its most inhumane practices, not very different from those of other European countries:

The tide of secret testimony, however, was too strong against him; he was convicted of the crime of magic, and condemned to expiate his sins at the stake, at the approaching auto da fé. (Irving 60).

The institution of Spanish power is reflected as cruel and ruthless, which oppresses the diverse inhabitants that make up the Spanish territory:

The rabble murmured compassion; but such was the dread inspired by the inquisition, that no one attempted to interfere. (Irving 65).

The Student of Salamanca is in the form of a romance tale in which Irving introduces elements of Romanticism. Not only do the idealized descriptions of the landscape lead us to think of this idea, but also the allusions to medieval elements such as witchcraft:

It was perfect witchcraft to hear her warble forth some of her national melodies; those little Spanish romances and Moorish ballads, that transport the hearer, in idea, to the banks of the Guadalquivir, or the walls of the Alhambra, and make him dream of beauties, and balconies, and moonlight serenades. (Irving 51).

Not least are the allusions to the "gitanos" (a Spanish word that Irving uses instead of gypsy), a very exotic race for foreigners, closely linked to the Middle East, nomadic and anchored in the oldest traditions and customs, which also contributes to Spanish culture:

He found there a group of Gitanas, a vagabond gipsy race, which at that time abounded in Spain, and lived in hovels and caves of the hills about the neighbourhood of Granada. Some were busy about a fire, and others were listening to the uncouth music which one of their companions, seated on a ledge of the rock, was making with a split reed. (Irving 45).

The role of the Spanish woman, brave and beautiful, is very important in the romantic imaginary. This woman is far from the frigid and cold Protestant woman and has very exotic features that make her a motive of desire for those men of noble lineage, who cannot resist her charms:

But then the Spanish females were so prone to love and intrigue; and music and moonlight were so seductive, and Inez had such a tender soul languishing in every look. (Irving 50).

The characterization and mythologizing of the Spanish woman is typical of romances such as *El Mio Cid*, whose wife Jimena is very important in the collective imagination. She was neither in a

convent nor was she a submissive wife nor did she ever remain in the shadow of her husband. The legend had drawn a portrait of a resigned and docile wife, however, Doña Jimena turned out to be a brave woman, with courage, who was never cloistered in a monastery during the exiles and campaigns of her husband, who administered the Cid's estate in his prolonged absences and that at the death of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar she was Lady of Valencia for three years. Irving reflects in his story that exoticism of the Spanish woman in the character of Doña Inez:

With a sudden paroxysm of fury, she snatched a sword from one of the familiars. Her late pale countenance was flushed with rage, and fire flashed from her once soft and languishing eyes. The guards shrunk back with awe. There was something in this filial frenzy, this feminine tenderness wrought up to desperation, that touched even their hardened hearts. They endeavoured to pacify her, but in vain. Her eye was eager and quick, as the she-wolf's guarding her young. (Irving 65).

These women are the object of desire for the most typical and famous men in Spanish places, characterized by their hedonism and Machiavellianism to get everything they want, breaking down any obstacle that may arise along the way. This is the case of Don Ambrosio de Loxa, whose despotic character does not prevent him from having Doña Inez's father killed in order to get this woman as his personal triumph. Irving gives a very precise description of this character:

Antonio knew him, by report, for one of the most determined and dangerous libertines in all Granada. Artful, accomplished, and, if he chose to be so, insinuating; but daring and headlong in the pursuit of his pleasures; violent and implacable in his resentments. (Irving 53).

The lineage of the characters is something that is continuously present in the work, as we have said of Antonio, it cannot be less that of Doña Inez:

Her descent, by the mother's side, from one of the ancient Moorish families, gave her an interest in this once favourite seat of Arabian power. She gazed with enthusiasm upon its magnificent monuments, and her memory was filled with the traditional tales and ballads of Moorish chivalry. Indeed, the solitary life she had led, and the visionary turn of her father's mind, had produced an effect upon her character, and given it a tinge of what, in modern days, would be termed romance. All this was called into full force by this new passage; for, when a woman first begins to love, life is all romance to her. (Irving 55).

With these descriptions, the melting pot of cultures that existed in the Peninsula after centuries of coexistence between various races and religions remains present. In this territory, marriages between people of different lineages were always very common, as they also occurred in the New World, a Hispanic tradition that the Protestant countries did not always see favourably, since they despised races considered of lesser value, such as we can see in their discrimination against Native Americans or African blacks until almost today. However, Irving presents an ambiguous position when dealing with this issue:

Felix de Vasques, the alchemist, was a native of Castile, and of an ancient and honourable line. Early in life he had married a beautiful female, a descendant from one of the Moorish families. The marriage displeased his father, who considered the pure Spanish blood contaminated by this foreign mixture. It is true, the lady traced her descent from one of the Abencerrages, the most gallant of Moorish cavaliers, who had embraced the Christian faith on being exiled from the walls of Granada. (Irving 48).

The Student of Salamanca follows the line of romance tales with the love story between Antonio and Inez. According to Farah, “the story deals with all the aforesaid love elements about the ‘heroine and hero’ between Inez and Antonio defined in *A Natural History of the Romance Tale* by Regis” (25).

The meeting between the heroine and hero; and an account of their attraction for each other; the barrier between them; the point of ritual death; the recognition that feels the barrier; the declaration of heroine and hero that they love each other; and their betrothal. (Farah 25)

The two protagonists have to cross all the barriers that are in the exotic path to make their love story succeed. The adventures they live to achieve it cultivate the romantic character of the tale and make room for descriptions of Spanish society, landscape and customs. One Catholic tradition seen through Irving's captivated eyes is that of the courtship process:

He waited at the door of the church, and offered her the holy water, in the hope of touching her hand; a little office of gallantry common in Catholic countries. She, however, modestly declined without raising her eyes to see who made the offer, and always took it herself from the font. She was attentive in her devotion; her eyes were never taken from the altar or the priest; and, on returning home, her countenance was almost entirely concealed by her mantilla. (Irving 46).

To conclude, we cannot forget the subtle irony that characterized Washington Irving. His love for Granada caused it to be named an 'earthly paradise', which distanced the author from the negative image that Spain dragged along over time. However, whether out of nostalgia or out of pure romantic passion, Irving denounces the lamentable state of the invaluable Arab treasures that

once shone on the Peninsula under Islamic rule and to which the Spanish institutions did not give them enough value:

Alas! how has the prophecy been falsified! Many of the basins, where the fountains had once thrown up their sparkling showers, were dry and dusty. Some of the palaces were turned into gloomy convents, and the barefoot monk paced through these courts, which had once glittered with the array, and echoed to the music, of Moorish chivalry. (Irving 44).

We cannot ignore the fact that Washington Irving is an iconic figure of Protestantism and that his point of view is inevitably influenced by "feelings and prejudices fueled – in the case of Protestant travelers – by an unflinching belief in the superiority of Moorish civilization over Spanish Catholicism." (Stevens 83). Noteworthy is the quote from Boston diplomat, politician, and man of letters Alexander Hill Everett: "The expulsion of the Moors from Spain, and of the Protestants from France...have commonly been considered as among the most impolitic measures that ever were adopted" (Stevens 147). Therefore, it is hard to believe that Irving had an impartial character when writing the story only because of his romantic interest in the exoticism of Islamic Spain.

IV. Conclusion

This MA dissertation has been concerned with the invaluable contributions to the image of Spain, its orientalism and its representations in literature by Washington Irving and his friend Alexander Mackenzie. Both authors venerate the Spanish Arab past, above all for its valuable legacy in Andalusia, and blame Spanish Catholicism, and its representatives, royalty and the church, for having spoiled it. In their works they show the decadence of the Alhambra as a metaphor for the Spanish people, who continue to be exotic and yearn for freedom from the previously mentioned oppressors. Their descriptions of the landscape and the characters follow a clearly romantic and orientalist line of otherness. Spanish society is represented as a backward society of peasants and thieves who live dangerous adventures every day to fight for their survival. The exotic Spanish woman is far from the Protestant because of her strength and bravery.

Mackenzie and Irving are two sides of the same coin. Both Protestant American writers share literary backgrounds in the creation of their Spanish orientalist idea such as Lord Byron or Noha, who enhance the Spanish romantic vision. Since their youth they yearn to visit the country that is the protagonist of the romances that cultivate their imagination. Heroes and legends, dream places, bullfights, gypsy dances and Catholic celebrations are a great contrast to both bourgeois American writers who are attracted by its exoticism. However, when they visit Spain for the first time, they do not share the same impressions.

Mackenzie presents a pessimistic romantic vision that converts him into a Byronic hero, who away from his homeland has less and less hope that social and political change can be brought about in his beloved host country. He rationally uses a sentimentalist discourse for

political purposes: to encourage a political subversion against the despotism of the institutions that keep Spain violent and lawless. Mackenzie's vision is not as romantic as Irving's, because although the two have read almost the same works before coming to Spain, this is altered by his vision and socio-political analysis when visiting Spain, something that Irving does not do, which leads him to be more realistic and critical of everything he had read and of the very reality of the Spain he knows. This leads him to look at everything around him with suspicion, and to be much more pragmatic.

On the other hand, Irving replaces the tone of his friend, whom he has read so much and with whom he has shared many impressions, with an optimistic and idealized one. He follows the romantic Byronic line and idealizes his stories through the use of clichés while he continually invokes the exotic Arab past of the Spanish character to justify the behaviour of its people. As has been said before, the Alhambra was, apart from a dangerous place, almost a ruin when Irving visited it, but he intentionally ignored it to cover everything that did not interest him. In addition, he went too far in terms of his romantic vision of Spain, which was quite a strategy on his part. Irving was never a pure romantic, far from it.

Despite their differences, both share their intense love for Spain and they record in their work that they enjoy their stay in Spain despite the deterioration of the emblematic romantic symbols which they describe in detail. Irrefutably anti-Catholic, they criticize the delay caused by the religious institution in the country's progress and defend the melting pot as essential part of Spanish identity. And all this with a costumbrist portrait that could turn a Murillo painting into prose.

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