Hispania Guest Editorial:
Why Should You Review?

John K. Moore Jr.

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Before accepting the role of Book/Media Review Editor for Hispania, I discussed the possibility with a colleague who asked, “Why should Hispania have a review section at all?” My friend—a noted scholar whose opinion I could not easily dismiss—raised this issue because, given the scope of our field, it is challenging to cover even half of the major works in the journal’s limited number of pages. Why not do away with the section altogether and let the more specialized journals review books and media items within their respective subfields of Hispanic and Lusophone studies? Here is why: book and media reviews connect readers of all stripes to important works that are likely to be of interest and use, and Hispania’s exceptionally large subscriber base and readership (for an academic journal) means that the review section is likely to have an impact on the profession as a whole.

The outstanding curatorial work of my predecessors, Book Review Editors Genaro Pérez and Ricardo Landeira, certainly enhanced my understanding of the field as a reader of and reviewer in their review sections. I remember being impressed by the tight format, wondering how certain review authors seemed to say so much in so few words. The 800-word limit forces a condensation of form that verges on the poetic: Hispania’s book and media reviews are the haiku of the genre. (As a review author myself, I used to play a game trying to meet the word limit exactly.) This compact format is something I wanted to maintain moving forward. As the saying goes: “Lo bueno, si breve, es dos veces bueno.”

The new Book/Media Review section presents a different way of organizing and conceiving of reviews. The heading itself is a nod to the ever-receding boundary between print and electronic media items, which were formally separated in the pre-2010 numbers of the journal. Indeed, we have included so far and will continue to include reviews of web pages, electronic databases, and videos alongside coverage of printed books.

The Book/Media Review section is now divided into these parts: Pan-Hispanic/Luso-Brazilian Literary and Cultural Studies; Linguistics, Language, and Media; Fiction and Film. Placing Peninsular and Latin American topics in separate categories represented a false dichotomy to my mind, which is why scholarship on the Pan-Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian worlds is now contained within a single subsection. One benefit of this reformulation is that the burgeoning corpus of trans-Atlantic scholarship now has a logical home.

All book and media reviews now benefit from an anonymous peer-review process. This requirement increases the rigor and enhances the integrity of the section. Any of you can participate as a peer reviewer and/or as a review author.

Please register in our ScholarOne electronic system (http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/hispan) if you have not already done so. This database is effective at helping match your interests with the subject areas of the item being reviewed. Whether you teach at the secondary or post-secondary level, I appreciate your collaboration in crafting a meaningful and innovative Book/Media Review section.

John K. Moore, Jr.*
Book/Media Review Editor
Hispania

*Due to unforeseen circumstances, John K. Moore, Jr. has resigned his position as Book/Media Review Editor. Given that this occurred after the March content for Hispania was finalized, the preceding editorials have not been altered. All future correspondence regarding book/media reviews should be directed to the incoming Book/Media Review Editor, Domnita Dumitrescu at ddumitrescu@aatsp.org.