

Post-Colonial Legacies in Seville: Traces of the Ibero-American Exhibition, 1929.

Keywords

Architecture, Memory, Post-colonial, Ibero-American Exhibition, Seville.

Abstract

The Ibero-American Exhibition (IAE), celebrated in Seville in 1929, has endured and survived a number of periods which have affected not only its use, but also its meaning. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the context in which the IAE was designed, highlighting connections with broader international understandings: first, regarding the creation of new identities during the Spanish post-colonial period (in both Latin America and Spain); second, the organisation of international exhibitions, which aimed at showcasing advances (technological and colonial), as well as the construction of colonial identities. These two conditions have a clear impact in the construction and delivery of the IAE project, which can be traced on the legacy that the Ibero-American Exhibition has had in Seville, especially through its pavilions, built as permanent structures. The built environment in Seville will serve to evaluate how it was used in the past, in the present, and how it could become a future environment for a further understanding of the relationships between Spain and its former colonies in Latin America.

1. *Memory and architecture in the long nineteenth century*

The Ibero-American Exhibition opened its doors in 1929; however, the spirit behind its conception – an initiative of Rodriguez Caso from 1908 – is connected with earlier concepts of memory (monuments) and international validation (International Exhibitions). During what has been called the ‘long nineteenth century’, which bridges the period between 1789 and 1920¹, monuments and statues became a significant political message in the built environment². Nostalgic monuments were built trying to retain a past that was disappearing as a result of the new advances in industry, politics, society and culture; they became a sort of ‘identity’s anchor’, an archival memory³.

Most of the monuments built during the nineteenth century responded to a memory crisis by which memory “came to be understood as actively produced, as representation, and as open to struggle and dispute”⁴. According to Hobsbawm, this idea of invention, of artefact, is the foundation

¹ Richard Terdiman, *Present Past. Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 4.

² Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory. The Construction of the French Past*, Volume III (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 615.

³ Terdiman, *Present Past. Modernity and the Memory Crisis*, 29.

⁴ Susannah Radstone, ed., *Memory and Methodology* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 7.

of the making of nations⁵. However, the risk of these ‘imposed symbols’, as Nora called them⁶, is that their meaning is forever changing: the built environment becomes a reminder of the past, a past that without context can easily be forgotten⁷. Monuments and other forms of traces depend on different political practices, which decide if these representations should be erased, preserved or revived, always according to the nature of the traces, and the context in question⁸. The idea of redefining, reusing or destroying heritage shows the importance of the built environment, since it conforms “the possessions that makes us who we are”⁹, embodying our identity.

Time and discourse are crucial components in the construction/destruction of the built environment. Consequently, it is important to recall Halbwachs’ theories of collective memory, how memory recollection “depends on the degree that our individual thought places itself in the [given] framework”¹⁰. In other words, without a context, recollection and discourse are hardly possible. It could be argued then, that one of the main challenges behind architecture is its endurance; since its lifespan is much longer than the context in which it is created. This condition offers the challenge and the opportunity to free the built environment from its past, by re-using it in different contexts¹¹. By doing so, architecture can have numerous lives through its adaptation to different narratives and uses.



Figure 1: Plaza de España. Source Alberto carrero, 2004.

⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Narrations since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 [1990]), 10.

⁶ Nora, *Realms of Memory. The Construction of the French Past*, X.

⁷ Peter Preston, *Political/Cultural Identity. Citizens and Nations in a Global Era* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 15.

⁸ Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (London: Verso, 1981), 32.

⁹ Nora, *Realms of Memory. The Construction of the French Past*, 635.

¹⁰ Halbwachs, Maurice, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992 [1941]), 38.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 182.

It is in this context that the Ibero American Exhibition (IAE) and its built heritage in Seville will be analysed. The IAE, a monumental site built between 1908 and 1929, is now emptied of its original meaning, and yet, it remains a main landmark in the Sevillian urban fabric. Even though the architectural styles of the IAE are neo-colonial, this narrative is not legible any more; it has been buried under new meanings. This paper will analyse how despite the permanent condition of the IAE, the site has evolved and moved away from its original message, becoming a hybrid space that captures old and new memories, but can also become a flagship in the promotion of relationships between Spain and Latin American countries.

The IAE was built in the context of the 'long nineteenth century', in an eclectic-regionalist style and a neo-colonial narrative that followed the model of other International Exhibitions; however, the IAE was not international but only Ibero American. By introducing this difference, IAE's ultimate role was to showcase the relations between Spain and Latin America after the final acknowledgment of the latter's independence. In this sense, the IAE could be interpreted as a memorial of the historical bonds between Spain and Latin America. However, as it will be argued later on, that message is not legible anymore, since, over time, Spanish politics and the relationships with Latin America changed, and consequently, its neo-imperialist discourse faded. The narrative behind the Exhibition that opened in 1929 made too strong an emphasis on a Spanish neo-colonial attitude towards Latin America, an important element behind Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. The buildings designed in 1908 did not support this message, since it was only introduced from 1923, when most of the buildings had already been erected. Consequently, it could be argued that the pass of time revealed the lack of connection between the political and architectural concepts behind the IAE.

In order to understand how the built environment created for the EIA was adapted to new times and uses, which ultimately introduced a change in the conceptual meaning, it is necessary first to offer a general overview of the context in which it was first conceived. It is not possible to explain in detail all the issues that influenced the process of construction of the IAE¹² – therefore, this paper will only touch upon two main elements that unquestionably affected the Sevillian exhibition: first, the construction of new identities after the wars of independence in Latin America and Spain; and second, the influence of the International Exhibitions as a model. In what follows I will analyse the IAE following Peter Carrier's theories in order to understand the changes of re-appropriation it went through. Finally, and in light of the future commemoration of its centenary in 2029, it will be argued that its current use should encourage a reflection on its original meanings.

¹² For more information see Eduardo Rodríguez Bernal, *Historia de la Exposición Ibero-Americana de Sevilla de 1929* (Sevilla: Servicio de Publicaciones del Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, 1994).

2. The context

2.1 The construction of new identities

The construction of identities in both Spain and the new Latin American countries responds to a large extent to parallel historical processes: all these countries went through Wars of Independence; moreover, they all built their own identities based on the same cultural elements: Spanish language, Catholic religion and family-centred customs. On the one hand, in Spain, as Álvarez Junco notes, the new identity forged after 1808, was based on ethnic components, the attachment to Catholicism and ultimately to the War of Independence with France, which “would be the pillar for the century’s most ambitious effort to build a Spanish nationalist mythology”¹³. Spanish nationalism used historical glories from the past in order to reinforce this identity: the centennial of Calderón de la Barca’s death or the so called ‘Discovery of America’ became the basis of the regeneration movement, which aimed to “place the nation-state on a competitive footing internationally”¹⁴.

On the other hand, in Latin America the process of identity building was especially complex since these new nation-states did not only have to start anew after the independence process, but they also had to construct an identity different to the Spanish one, notwithstanding the fact that they shared same language, religion, customs, etc. As a consequence, the construction of a new identity became a challenge, being crucial to combine the indigenous aspects that were banned during the colonial era – which seemed more ‘genuine’ – with the more recent colonial traditions in order to create a new solution for the modern and post-independence situation. As Appelbaum states, this conflict between “sameness and difference and between equality and hierarchy have shaped Latin American nation building”¹⁵. This process was actually one of the triggers for the design of a Spanish-American movement which promoted the idea of a Spanish-American common culture, just as Morote expressed in 1900:

Our language, culture, arts, genius and spirit of race, all of that shall endure and be the reason for being within the planet of Spain, the biggest Spain, moral and spiritual motherland of eighteen nationalities, of almost an entire continent, of a world politically separated from us, but loving and thinking the same things as their august mother, since speaking, writing, praying, singing, loving, will be done by all in Spanish¹⁶ (my translation).

¹³ José Álvarez Junco, “The formation of Spanish Identity and its adaptation to the age of nations”, *History and memory*, 14 (2002), 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

¹⁵ Nancy Appelbaum, *Racial Nations* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 1.

¹⁶ Luís Morote, *La moral de la derrota* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1997 [1900]), 262: “Nuestra habla, cultura, arte, genio y espíritu de raza, eso perdurará y será la razón de ser en el planeta de una España, la más grande España, patria

During the nineteenth century the reconciliation between Latin America and Spain was supported by several factors: first, it was decisive that Spain, after many attempts to regain its lost empire, finally accepted the independence of its former colonies¹⁷. The Spanish defeat during the Spanish-American war in Cuba, which ultimately led to the so called Disaster in 1898 – the date when Spain lost the last remains of its empire – meant that Spain did not represent an imperial threat any longer, circumstance which would have encouraged Latin American republics to accept the invitation to take part in the Hispano American Exhibition in 1908. Second, the support of many private associations and individuals was crucial¹⁸. It could be argued that this new fraternal Hispanic alliance aligned with antiimperialists ideologies, very popular in the 1920s, supported by Vasconcelos and the publication of the *Raza Cosmica*; the “arielista” spirit, as defended by Rodó, Martí, or Darío; panamerican conferences and games; the creation of the Latin American Union, etc¹⁹. Finally, the United States and its Monroe Doctrine (1823) and the Roosevelt Corollary (1904) introduced a patronizing leading role in the American continent which ultimately responded to US’s expansion in Central and South America²⁰. This imperial desires over Latin America offered a significant opportunity for the re-establishment of relations with Spain, but this time on an equal level – as sisters, not as daughters to a glorious mother.

2.2 International Exhibitions

The United Kingdom was the first country ever to organise an international exhibition in London in 1851. This kind of event had already been rehearsed in several European countries at a national level; however, Great Britain was to be the first to invite other countries to participate in an exhibition where each nation would showcase its grandeur – namely their colonial empires and industrial advances²¹, facilitating a plausible scenario for peaceful international trade²². It would be later on, in 1878, that the organization of the International Exhibition in Paris requested that the

moral y mental de dieciocho nacionalidades, de casi todo un continente, de un mundo separado de nosotros, políticamente, pero queriendo y pensando las mismas cosas que su madre augusta, pues al hablar, al escribir, al rezar, al cantar, al amar, habrá de hacerlo en castellano”.

¹⁷ Leopoldo Zea and Adalberto Santana, *El 98 y su impacto en Latinoamérica* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001), 6.

¹⁸ Isidro Sepúlveda Muñoz, *Comunidad cultural e hispano-americanismo, 1885-1936* (Madrid: UNED, 1994).

¹⁹ Juan Pablo Scarfi, “La emergencia de un imaginario latinoamericanista y antiestadounidense del orden hemisférico: de la Unión Panamericana a la Unión Latinoamericana (1880-1913) *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* (2013), 39, 81-104.

²⁰ Thomas E. Skidmore and Meter H. Smith, *Modern Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 340.

²¹ Robert W. Rydell, *The Book of the Fairs. Materials about World's Fairs, 1834-1916, in the Smithsonian Institution Libraries* (USA: Smithsonian Institution Libraries, 1992), 4.

²² Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851. A Nation on Display* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), 187.

pavilions should portray each nation's identity²³. The accomplishment of such a condition became a difficult task to fulfil in architectural terms: an exhibition of industrial advances demanded an architecture of iron and glass which did not yet suit the public taste – a kind of building which would be understood as engineering, far away from the concept of art. Moreover, the translation of identity into architecture could only be fulfilled by looking back at historical models of architecture, hence, using a historicist and/ or eclectic style²⁴.

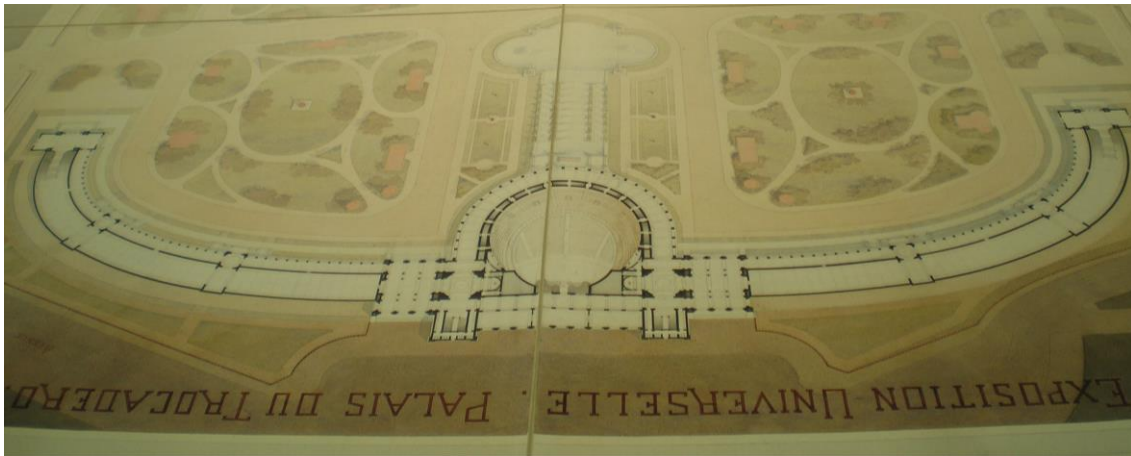


Figure 2: Plans of the Trocadero palace, 1878 by Davioud.

Administrative Library of Paris, Hotel de Ville. Source: Ana Souto, 2006.

Spain participated in most of these events with either reconstructions of representative buildings (the Alhambra when portraying a more exotic image, in London 1851; Monterrey Palace from Salamanca when interested in showing a more intellectual picture of Spain, in Paris, 1900) or with eclectic collages of the most representative Spanish styles (hybrid pavilion of Melida in Paris, 1889). By constantly changing architectural styles, the Spanish pavilions denoted a constant crisis of identity, product of the political instability in which Spain was immersed during the nineteenth century. The objects exhibited in the Spanish pavilions demonstrated a deep crisis in its empire (in the middle of its disintegration) as well as a deficiency in industrial development²⁵.

Nevertheless, the lack of stability in Spain in terms of government, economy, society and identity did not stop it from organising international events on its own territory. Accordingly, Spain held two international exhibitions, both in Barcelona (1888 and 1929), a French-Spanish Exhibition

²³ María José Bueno Fidel, *Arquitectura y nacionalismo. Pabellones españoles en las exposiciones universales del siglo XIX* (Málaga: Universidad de Málaga, 1987), 16.

²⁴ Luciano Patetta, *L'Architettura dell'Eclittismo. Fonti, Teorie, Modelli 1750-1900* (Milán: Gabriele Mazzotta, 1975), 311.

²⁵ Joaquín Costa, *Ideas apuntadas en la Exposición Universal de 2867 para España y para Huesca* (Huesca: n.p., 1868), 74; Juan Valero de Tornos, *España en Paris en la Exposición Universal de 1900: estudio de costumbres sobre exposiciones universales* (Madrid: n.p., 1901), 61.

(Saragossa, 1908, commemorating their reconciliation after the wars of Independence, only a century before), and the IAE of Seville, finally inaugurated in 1929.

Spain adopted the model of International Exhibition and adapted it to its special circumstances since these events offered an opportunity: “[t]o exhibit, showcase, and introduce yourself to the Universe as an example of its greatness, as one of its wonders”²⁶ (my translation). As a result, the Spanish international exhibitions in Barcelona were carried out on a much smaller scale than those of Europe and North America; whilst the other exhibitions (Saragossa and Seville) had to adapt the original model to a completely different level: neither universal nor international.

The French-Spanish Exhibition was an attempt to veil a recent past –the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1802 – building a new relationship based on commerce and trade²⁷. Likewise, the IAE was designed to reinforce the relationships between Spain and its former colonies, hoping that this new approach would encourage more business and transactions between the old and the new world²⁸. However, in the case of the IAE, this pragmatic expectation was combined with (if not overshadowed by) a misunderstood conception of pan-Hispano Americanism, in which Spain, instead of reforming the relationship with Latin America on an equal footing, promoted a sort of new-imperialism in which Spain would be the spiritual leader of its former colonies, aiming at showcasing the truth about the colonisation, its meaning and impact: highlighting how Spain had to balance two faces of the same coin, the fight during the conquest, and the generosity of its educational and Christian mission, which gave life and personality to the young Republics in Hispanic America²⁹.

This arrogant role chosen by Spain was the result of several factors: first the interest of Latin America to maintain bonds with Spain, as explained above; second, Spanish support of this reconciliation being especially strong in the most traditional sectors of society and politics³⁰; and third, the final push by Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship to improve trade relations with Latin America. Consequently the IAE, which was first planned in 1908 by Rodríguez Caso as an attempt to recover the bonds between Spain and Latin America in a fraternal fashion, ended up portraying a very different image of Spain.

This is the context in which the IAE was planned, designed, built and finally inaugurated, a process that took twenty one years, between Rodríguez Caso’s first proposal in 1908, and 1929,

²⁶ Editorial de la Revista Laboratorio, *España: Sus exposiciones Barcelona Sevilla 1929-30* (Sevilla: Revista Laboratorio, 1930?), 10.

²⁷ Carlos Forcadell Álvarez, *La modernidad y la Exposición hispanofrancesa de Zaragoza en 1908* (Zaragoza: Artes gráficas con otro color, 2005).

²⁸ Luis Rodríguez Caso, *Bosquejo de un proyecto de Exposición Hispano-Americana, en Sevilla* (Sevilla: Tip. El Correo de Andalucía, 1909), 7.

²⁹ Jose Cruz Conde, “Alcance político de la Exposición Iberoamericana”, en Unión Iberoamericana, *Libro de Oro Iberoamericano Catálogo oficial y monumental de la Exposición de Sevilla* (Santander: Ed. Unión Iberoamericana, 1929), XXI.

³⁰ Sepúlveda Muñoz, *Comunidad cultural e hispano-americanismo, 1885-1936*.

when King Alfonso XIII marked its inauguration. In this long period, several changes in conception and construction were introduced. First, the direction of the architectural works, under the management of Aníbal González since 1911, replaced after his resignation in 1927. Second, the original urban plan and condition of the pavilions were modified (most of the Latin American countries decided to build permanent buildings instead of temporary ones, and decided to install their pavilions closer to the main squares, instead of around the Conqueror's Square). Finally, the title itself changed in 1922: from Hispano-American to Ibero-American after the inclusion of Portugal, Brazil and the United States.

However important all these changes were regarding the completion of the IAE, it could be argued that the most crucial condition that affected the IAE was actually the passing of time itself. As time went on, and as a result of the world financial crisis and especially during the Second Republic, the US ceased to be perceived as a threat; the government of the Second Republic dismissed the IAE as mere rhetoric from Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, and the Latin American countries were not in favour of maintaining such a neo-colonial relationship with Spain anymore. Second, the architecture of the exhibition – historicist with both eclectic and regionalist accents – was already outdated by the 1930s. The Palace of Trocadero serves as an example of this need for renovation in the field of international exhibitions: the eclectic palace from 1878 was replaced by an art deco building in 1937. Finally, and as a result of the first two aspects, the permanent pavilions built by both Spain and the Latin American countries, which were meant to hold consulates and other institutions (such as an Ibero-American University and Hall of Residence) to reinforce the links between both sides of the Atlantic, were forgotten and neglected until the University of Seville, from the 1970s onwards, acquired some of the buildings and gave them a new use³¹. By doing so, however, the original meaning of the buildings was modified and, ultimately, forgotten. In the following section this process of transformation is analysed following Carrier's theories of monuments and their memories.

3. Different receptions of the IAE: adopting Peter Carrier's analytical method

In his book *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory: France and Germany since 1989* (2005), Peter Carrier explores the production and reception of monuments by analysing three significant moments of a monument's life. First, the historical event that they represent; second, the moment when the monument was conceived and constructed; and finally, the moment(s) of its reception. Despite the fact that Carrier developed this methodology in order to analyse the

³¹ Grupo de investigación TEP 0141/ Proyecto patrimonio, *Universidad y Ciudad. Arquitectura de la Universidad Hispalense. Primer Foro de arquitectura y Urbanismo de la Universidad de Sevilla* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 2002).

Holocaust monuments built in France and Germany after 1989, it can be argued that this model of interpretation can be applied to the analysis of any kind of monument.

3.1 *The historical event*

The IAE, initially conceived as a Hispano-American Exhibition, had its origins in 1908 when Rodríguez Caso, after the successful celebration of the event 'Spain in Seville', in which many Latin American countries took part showing a fraternal interest towards Spain, decided to organise a far more ambitious event which attempted to reinforce the relationships between Spain and its former colonies in an amicable and equitable fashion³². That being the main idea, one could assume that the historical events that the IAE wanted to commemorate would be the wars of independence, or at least the consummation of the processes of independence in the former Hispanic Empire. However, the pavilions of Plaza de America (Square of America), one of the main centres of the Exhibition, were built in architectural styles which reinforced a neo-imperial Spanish attitude³³. The events portrayed by the Plaza de America only relate to the Spanish Empire, from the decisive role of the Catholic Kings in 1492 to the greatness of the Spanish Empire during the reign of Charles I, including the supremacy of the Spanish language embodied in the square which is dedicated to Cervantes. None of the buildings of this square relate to the era of independence; they do not even openly acknowledge the presence of the colonies, inferred from the other historical episodes, and alluded to in the architectural styles.

Furthermore, the neo-imperialist role of Spain was reinforced by the styles chosen by the former colonies: most of them built their pavilions in neo-colonial style, except Mexico which employed a neo-indigenous style³⁴, and Chile, which opted for a topographical pavilion inspired in the Andes³⁵. Mexico had a long history of attending International Exhibitions using historicist and eclectic pavilions³⁶, which included several reinterpretations of indigenous, Moorish and colonial styles. The choice of the Neo-Indigenous pavilion presented by Mexico in Seville, designed by Manuel Amábilis³⁷, was deeply influenced by the indigenous support of the Mexican Prime Minister Plutarco

³² Luis Rodríguez Caso, *Bosquejo de un proyecto de Exposición Hispano-Americana, en Sevilla* (Sevilla: Tip. El Correo de Andalucía, 1909), 7.

³³ Ana Souto, "América en Sevilla: la materialización del espíritu neoimperial en la Exposición Iberoamericana de 1929", *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 22.1 (2009), 39-67.

³⁴ Amparo Graciani García, "Presencia, valores, visiones y representaciones del hispanismo latinoamericano en la Exposición Iberoamericana de Sevilla de 1929", *Iberoamericana*, XIII (2013), 133-146.

³⁵ Sylvia Dümmer Scheel, "Los desafíos de escenificar el 'alma nacional'. Chile en la Exposición Iberoamericana de Sevilla, 1929", *Historia Crítica*, 42 (2010), 84-111.

³⁶ Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs. Crafting a Modern Nation* (London: University of California Press, 1996).

³⁷ Amparo Graciani García, *El pabellón de México en la Sevilla de 1929. Evocaciones históricas y artísticas* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1998).

Elias Calles in the 1920s, which at the time introduced a certain contradiction in the reading of this building: whilst the exterior highlights pre-Hispanic advances in architecture; the interior decoration was a praise for the mixed race, foundation of Mexico³⁸ - as can be seen on the decoration of the door frames -, whilst the interior murals illustrated how indigenous culture was the source of inspiration of modern Mexico³⁹.



Figures 3 and 4: Details of the mexican pavilion in Seville, by Amábilis, 1929.

Source: Ana Souto, 2006.

The inclusion of the ‘current’ colonies, Guinea and Morocco (even though the latter was not legally a colony), demonstrated the Spanish interest in reconstructing an African-American-Hispanic empire⁴⁰, using the patronising colonial ideology of supporting the “helpless indigenous Guinea”⁴¹. This narrative was bound to change in the following years, especially in the aftermath of the Second World War which witnessed the independence of other European colonies, in Africa and Asia. However, in 1929, this discourse was still quite popular in International Exhibitions, whereby European countries would usually include a section of their pavilions to their colonial empires. There were also a number of world fairs only devoted to celebrate colonial empires – such as the International Colonial and Export Exhibition, Amsterdam, 1883; the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London, 1886; International and Colonial Exhibition, Lyon, 1894; Insular and Colonial Exhibition,

³⁸ Manuel Amábilis, *El pabellón de México en la exposición iberoamericana de Sevilla* (México: Talleres gráficos de la Nación, 1929), 55.

³⁹ José Ortiz Gaitán, “Políticas culturales en el Régimen de Plutarco Elías Calles y en el Maximato”, *Arte y Coerción, I Coloquio de Historia del Arte* (México: IIE, UNAM, 1992), 194-96.

⁴⁰ Luís Ángel Sánchez Gómez, “África en Sevilla: La exhibición colonial de la Exposición Iberoamericana de 1929”, *Hispania, Revista Española de Historia*, 56. 224 (2006), 1049.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1050.

Oporto, 1894; Festival of Empire, London, 1911; British Empire Exhibition, London 1924-5, or the Semarang Colonial Exhibition, Java, 1914, to name but a few.

It is worth mentioning a parallelism with the Colonial Exposition of Paris, 1931, not only because they were celebrated only two years apart, but also, because in both occasions permanent pavilions were built and had to be adapted to new political situations. The Palais Permanent des Colonies, built for the Colonial Exhibition in Paris, 1931, was designed around the concept of anthropology (“the science of native mankind”) in a colonial setting⁴², including an exhaustive collection of French colonial anthropological and ethnographic artefacts and research. The same building – which used to host an ethnographic exhibition until 2003, when these collections were moved to the new Museum Quai Branly – was appropriated as a National Museum of the History of Immigration in 2007, dedicated to highlight the positive contribution of immigration to France, a political effort against cultural alienation of immigrants⁴³. However, the reuse of such a symbolic building, decorated with art deco reliefs representing the colonies, is closer to the civilising mission of the 19th-20th century’s narrative⁴⁴, than to current France. Moreover, as Labadi argues, this iconography could be reinforcing a discourse of “superiority of the French over citizens of former colonial countries”, as well as a message that equals immigration and colonisation, which is clearly not the same.⁴⁵



Figures 5 and 6: National Museum of the History of Immigration, decoration from its original design as Palais Permanent des Colonies, 1931. Source: Ana Souto, 2011.

⁴²Benoit de L'Estoile, “From the Colonial Exhibition to the Museum of Man. An alternative genealogy of French anthropology”, *Social Anthropology* 11 (2003), 343.

⁴³ Sophia Labadi, “The National Museum of Immigration History (Paris, France), neo-colonialist representations, silencing, and re-appropriation”, *Journal of Social Archaeology* 13 (2013), 313.

⁴⁴ Patricia A. Morton, “National and Colonial: The Musée des Colonies at the Colonial Exposition, Paris, 1931”, *Art Bulletin* 80 (1998), 357-377.

⁴⁵ Labadi, *Ibid.*, 316.

The Park of Maria Luisa, where most of the pavilions of the EIA are located, was originally built to represent a positive image of a neo-colonial connection between Spain and its former colonies. As a result, the design of these buildings suffered from a high degree of nostalgia in the construction of such an image, an “erroneous representation” that shows a clear disconnection with both the present and the past⁴⁶. Nowadays, these buildings are a fundamental part of a Seville city-tour, and are even understood as a precedent of Expo 92; they are an example of regionalist architecture, of Sevillian identity, but its neo-colonial spirit has disappeared. However, there is room for further questioning this approach, and introduce a more comprehensive understanding of the EIA, and the centennial in 2029 offers the right opportunity to do so.

3.2 Conception and construction

Following Carrier’s theory, the next step leads to analyse the time when the IAE was conceived and constructed. However, as a consequence of the long delays that it suffered, from 1908 to its final opening in 1929, this section needs to be split up into two different periods: the first from 1908 to 1923; the second, covering the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-29).

As stated previously, the IAE was promoted by the private sector, as a result of the individual interest of Rodríguez Caso and his fellow regionalist colleagues and friends. After his proposal in 1908 other intellectuals decided to support the idea, José Laguillo being pivotal as Director of the daily newspaper *El Liberal* – a publication which showcased Rodríguez Caso’s project. *El Liberal* served as a platform from which to exchange ideas and opinions and demonstrate support from both sides of the Atlantic, promoting Seville over Madrid and Bilbao, which wanted to host a similar exhibition⁴⁷. However, after several rounds of negotiations with Bilbao and Madrid, and with the personal support of Alfonso XIII, Seville could finally organise the IAE⁴⁸, and in 1911 a public competition was launched to select an appropriate design for the exhibition. However, this call for proposals was not very successful: the majority of Sevillian architects refused to take part, believing that the money should be invested in improving the city’s sanitation system, which was outdated and below the hygienic standards of a modern city⁴⁹. As a result, only three individuals submitted a proposal, only two of them qualified architects. Given this context it was easy for the jury to select Aníbal González’s project to define the future plans of the IAE⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Maidenhead, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), 3.

⁴⁷ José Laguillo, *Memorias. Veintisiete años en la dirección de El Liberal de Sevilla: 1909-1936* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1979), 284-5.

⁴⁸ José Zurita y Calafat, *En tanto llega... la exposición hispanoamericana* (Madrid: Talleres Tipográficos Fontanet, 1916), 12.

⁴⁹ Antonio Gómez Millán *et al.*, *La Exposición*, I.2 (1911).

⁵⁰ Redacción, *La Exposición*, I.4 (1911).

González's first proposal outlined the buildings for the Plaza de América. In his first draft the square was originally called Plaza de Honor, although he suggested to the Commission that it should be renamed Plaza de España⁵¹, as a result of the main styles chosen. Instead, the Commission decided to name it Plaza de América⁵², underlining the new imperialist approach towards Latin America, by using the neo-gothic style in the Royal Pavilion, emphasising the importance of the Catholic Kings in the Conquest of America and the union of the Iberian Peninsula under the crown of Castile and Aragon; the neo-plateresco style in the arts pavilion, highlighting the most intellectual image of Spain – that of the Universities –, and the Spanish Empire in which “the sun never set” – that of Carlos I –; and finally, the neo-mudéjar style in the industries pavilion, denoting Spain's ability to absorb the Muslim culture after the Reconquista, a rehearsal of hybridism which was to be further developed in the ‘New World’⁵³.



Figures 7 and 8: Royal pavilion and Quixote's square. Source: Ana Souto, 2006.

Most of the projects designed and built during this first period (1908-1923) followed the style and theories of Aníbal González regarding the first regionalist movement in Seville⁵⁴. This style was linked not only with the European eclecticism but to the Spanish regeneration movement concerned with portraying a new Spanish identity after the defeat of 1898⁵⁵. In the field of architecture González and Rucabado tried to explain the reasons why Spanish architecture should go back to its previous traditions, rather than following modern styles which were alien to Spanish identity and

⁵¹ Alberto Villar Movellán, *Arquitectura del regionalismo en Sevilla, 1900-1935* (Sevilla: Diputación Provincial de Sevilla, 1979), 274.

⁵² Aníbal González, “Memoria”, *La Exposición*, I.4 (1911).

⁵³ Souto, “América en Sevilla: la materialización del espíritu neoimperial en la Exposición Iberoamericana de 1929”.

⁵⁴ Villar Movellán, *Arquitectura del regionalismo en Sevilla, 1900-1935*, 215.

⁵⁵ Antonio Palacios, *Discursos leídos ante la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando en la recepción Pública de Antonio Palacios y Ramilo* (Madrid: Talleres Voluntad, 1926), 9.

culture. According to these architects “[f]or the sake of national dignity, it is necessary to impose the resurgence of a Spanish architectural Art”⁵⁶ (my translation).

Regionalism, in this sense, followed the same lines as other European Exhibitions, since this movement can be considered a branch of eclecticism and especially of historicism, which were intimately connected to the architecture of International Exhibitions. The use of this style shows the importance given to portraying national identity: by using historical styles, the architecture creates a connection to the past in which the nation is cemented. Plaza de España is a collage of regional styles that underlines the importance of history as an anchor for the nation, based on the diversity of its different regions, acknowledging the existence of historical nationalisms (Basque, Catalan and Galician), although undermining them just as regionalist movements.



Figures 9, 10, 11: Details of Plaza de España (South Tower, Aragon’s Entrance and ceramics representing the province of Navarra). Source: Alberto Carrero, 2004.

The first project of the IAE was meant to open in 1914. However, as a consequence of the strong links between this event and the works in the new Canal of Corte de Tablada, the inauguration of both pieces of infrastructure was delayed several times⁵⁷. Furthermore, the influence of the international political climate was also determinant, making progress very difficult. The involvement of the US in the First World War was a decisive factor in renaming the Exposición Hispanoamericana (EHA) to Ibero-American Exhibition, acknowledging the participation of Portugal, Brazil and the United States in 1922. As mentioned before, the invitation of the US to the IAE changed completely

⁵⁶ Luis Rucabado and Aníbal González, “Orientaciones para el resurgimiento de una Arquitectura Nacional”, *La Construcción Moderna*, 20 (1915-1916), 305-313.

⁵⁷ Manuel Trillo de Leyva, *La Exposición Iberoamericana de Sevilla: la transformación urbana de Sevilla* (Sevilla: Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, 1980) 36; Alfonso Braojos Garrido, *Alfonso XIII y la Exposición iberoamericana de Sevilla de 1929* (Sevilla, Universidad de Sevilla, 1992), 27-29.

the original approach to the US that Rodríguez Caso and the Latin American countries had in 1908. By doing so, it was made clear that the relations with North America had changed; the US was no longer a threat for Latin American countries, as it had been under the auspices of the Roosevelt Corollary. Now the US was seen as the saviour of Europe after the First World War.

Primo de Rivera's dictatorship brought upon significant changes to the management and design of the IAE in its second period of construction (1923-1929). First of all, Primo de Rivera wanted to take advantage of the IAE to boost his foreign affairs policy. It appeared to be a perfect occasion to strengthen the relations with Latin America, mostly as a commercial expediency⁵⁸. Furthermore, in order to speed the process up, de Rivera's government introduced several changes to the IAE, starting with a new Head of the Commission, in charge of accelerating the process. This new management pressured Aníbal González to resign after more than ten years as the Head of Architecture of the IAE. He was immediately replaced by Vicente Traver y Tomás who followed the directions of Cruz Conde, the new Commissioner⁵⁹.

The new administration team introduced the second wave of regionalist Sevillian architecture, this time based on the Baroque style barely used by Aníbal González during the first period⁶⁰. However, the most important change in terms of the physical aspect of the IAE was the rearrangement of urban planning. González had envisioned a plan with two important centres: Parque María Luisa, where Plaza de América and Plaza de España were; and Sector Sur, where the Latin American pavilions would be organised around the Conquerors' Square. During the early years of the 1920s most of the Latin American countries had agreed to install their pavilions in those plots. However, in 1925, the US refused to build its pavilion there, obtaining instead a much more central location on the edge of Parque María Luisa. Mexico and the other countries followed suit, until they secured better plots around the park⁶¹.

The rejection of the sites around the Conquerors' Square not only affected the urban planning of the IAE: furthermore, the whole new imperialist spirit that laid behind it collapsed, showing a much more independent approach by the Latin American countries towards Spain. This change of plans notably reduced the impact of the plan that González had used as a model: that of the international Exhibitions. The final result was much disorganised, and showed the lack of a general design: the pavilions were built wherever there was a free spot, regardless of its situation or

⁵⁸ Unión Iberoamericana (UIA), *Libro de Oro Iberoamericano. Catálogo oficial y monumental de la Exposición de Sevilla* (Santander: Unión Iberoamericana, 1929), XXXV.

⁵⁹ Nicolás Salas, *Sevilla en tiempos de la Exposición Iberoamericana. 1905-1930. La ciudad del siglo XX. 450 estampas históricas* (Sevilla: rd editores, 2004), 43.

⁶⁰ Alberto Villar Movellán, *opus cit.*, 215.

⁶¹ Comisión IAE, *Concurrencia de las naciones americanas* (Archivo General de la Administración (9) 9.03-51/3478, Anexo 1, 1922).

link with the other structures in the exhibition. Another notable difference is that the Latin American countries decided to build permanent structures instead of temporary ones, which had been the norm at the International Exhibitions. By doing so, the Latin American countries aimed to have a more active representation in Spain, both physically and politically. Somehow the consulates in Seville would leave a footprint on the untouched terrain of the former seat of the empire⁶².

The strict management of Cruz Conde and his team made it possible for the IAE to open in May 1929 together with the International Exhibition of Barcelona, both under the name of *Exposición General Española*. Barcelona had tried to organise its second international exhibition since 1914, after analysing the economic impact that such event had had in Barcelona in 1888⁶³. However, the First World War affected the project as well, and it was postponed during Primo de Rivera's government in order to coincide with the IAE. The government was trying to avoid rivalry between the two cities, reinforcing the idea of a coherent nation-state, and at the same time, showing that Spain was able to recover its links with Latin America without losing contact with Europe⁶⁴.

At this point it is relevant to assess, in line with Carrier's theories, the reasons that supported the existence of the IAE. It is clear that this second stage was mostly defined by the foreign affairs policy of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, as is made clear in the introductory words of *El Libro de Oro de la Exposición Iberoamericana*⁶⁵. Even though the Commission agreed to allow the Latin American countries to disperse around the Parque de María Luisa instead of being organised around the Conquerors' Square, it is necessary to highlight that the new imperialist spirit that ruled the first stage of construction of the IAE was still present although through different means. The publicity posters of the IAE are expressed using that vocabulary: Spain is represented in the centre of the composition as a Sevillian woman, surrounded by indigenous women that embody all the Latin American republics present at the IAE, offering presents to the central figure. The framework for the scene is the Plaza de España with the Giralda tower on the background. Again, Spain is the centre and the Latin American countries show their devotion to their former sovereign land.

Along the same lines the *Cabalgata de la Raza Hispanoamericana* (Parade of the Hispano-American Race) underlined the relevant role of the Catholic Kings, who supported Colón and his 'discovery' of America. Other parts of the parade focused on Philip II, who had sent peacemakers and settlers to America (avoiding the notion of conquerors); Spain represented as a sun, since in its empire the sun did not set; colonisation, as the period which introduced the *Leyes de Indias* (New

⁶² Souto, "América en Sevilla: la materialización del espíritu neoimperial en la Exposición Iberoamericana de 1929".

⁶³ Francisco de A Mas, *Las Exposiciones universales e internacionales. Su estudio económico y administrativo* (Barcelona: Imprenta de Jaime Benet, 1910).

⁶⁴ Rodríguez Bernal, *Historia de la Exposición Ibero-Americana de Sevilla de 1929*, 73.

⁶⁵ Unión Iberoamericana (UIA), *Libro de Oro Iberoamericano. Catálogo oficial y monumental de la Exposición de Sevilla* (Santander: Unión Iberoamericana, 1929), 21.

Laws) and Bartolomé de las Casas, defending the indigenous population. The parade finished with the representation of Spain, the 'Mother', accompanied by twenty Latin American nations portrayed as children, because even though they were already independent, they still were the loving daughters of the Motherland⁶⁶ (Comité de la Exposición 1929). Similar narratives can be found in the Catalogues, Guides and other books written at the time of the IAE, as well as in the films created to reinforce Primo de Rivera's ideologies⁶⁷.

4.3 Reception(s) of the IAE

The third element that Carrier suggests should be analysed is the time(s) of its reception. Since the IAE was opened in 1929, it will be necessary to split the analysis of its reception into at least three moments: from its inauguration to the immediate post-exhibition time, especially during the Second Republic; during Franco's regime; and finally from the start of the Democracy in Spain until today, highlighting especially 1992, when another international exhibition was held in Seville, following similar patterns.

The inaugural ceremony of the IAE took place on the 10th of May 1929, in the presence of King Alfonso XIII. After twenty one years, Rodríguez Caso's project came to reality, although, with significant changes, as pointed out above. In addition to these transformations, the connection with the General Exhibition had a negative impact as well, with Barcelona receiving more attention and visitors. Barcelona's geography and the nature of the exhibition (international and universal, with a few hints on colonialism in its Palace of the Missions⁶⁸) made it more interesting and affordable to visit, rather than the onerous investment necessary to go to Seville from any of the Latin American countries. Rodríguez Bernal explains how this factor and others, such as the deficient publicity, high price of the tickets, and the political propaganda against the dictatorship guaranteed the failure of the IAE⁶⁹.

The debt that the City Council of Seville had accumulated between 1911 and 1929, the rise of unemployment and the ultimate success of the Republicans led to a phase during which the IAE and its remnants were criticized and rejected as a product of the dictatorship⁷⁰. During and after the Civil War the situation was very similar. Moreover, during a flood in Seville in 1936, Plaza de España was used as a shelter and the documents stored there were used as combustive material for fires in order

⁶⁶ Comité de la Exposición, *Cabalgata de la Raza Hispano-Americana* (Sevilla: Imprenta de la IAE, Sección del Libro, 1929).

⁶⁷ Antonia del Rey Reguillo, "El cine como plataforma política, un sueño imposible del general Primo de Rivera", *Iberic@l*, 4 (2013) 11-23.

⁶⁸ Clara González - Garzón Finat, "Evangelización y Exotismo. La representación del indígena americano en el palacio de las misiones de Barcelona, 1929", *Boletín Americanista*, 68 (2014) 145-164.

⁶⁹ Rodríguez Bernal, *Historia de la Exposición Ibero-Americana de Sevilla de 1929*, 355.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 385.

to warm people up. As a consequence, many important documents were completely lost, leaving an incomplete account of how the IAE was managed⁷¹.

During Franco's regime the Neo-colonial spirit that forged the IAE became reinvigorated under the idea of *Hispanidad*, although as Wiarda explains, "its appeal in Spanish America was limited mostly to reactionary elements"⁷². Since then, the architectural legacy of the IAE had to negotiate the new context: the Latin American pavilions were not used as consulates as intended, but for different, and in some cases random purposes, such as the Mexican pavilion, which was used as a Maternity ward until the 1980s, abandoned until 1995 when it was finally acquired by the University of Seville⁷³. The University of Seville played a relevant role in the recovery of the plots and pavilions of the IAE. Since the 1970s the University claimed these spaces to be part of its campus⁷⁴. Moreover, the University not only gave a new use to the pavilions of Mexico, Brazil and Uruguay, but inherited the urbanism of the plots used for the IAE around the Avenue Reina Mercedes⁷⁵.

The Ibero-American Exhibition was once again recalled ideologically, as a model and/ or precedent for the celebration of Expo 92: an international exhibition with a neo-colonial flavour. This international exhibition, which also took place in Seville, encompassed the commemoration of the Fifth Centennial of the Discovery of America. Whilst this centennial in the US focused on Columbus⁷⁶ just like the Chicago's World Columbian Exposition, 1893, when Columbus emerged as a national symbol⁷⁷; in Spain the Expo continued on the same empty, neo-colonial, rhetoric discourse rehearsed in 1929, although this narrative has not been acknowledged by leading Spanish architectural historians like Angel Urrutia⁷⁸.

Firstly, the title of the exhibition only recognizes 1492 as a historical event from a Eurocentric point of view highlighting the "Discovery of America and its significance in terms of European

⁷¹ Ibid., 24.

⁷² Howard J. Wiarda, *The Iberian-Latin American Connection. Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington: Westview Press, 1984), 29.

⁷³ Martha Fernández, "El Pabellón de México para la Exposición Iberoamericana de Sevilla de 1929. Su rescate y restauración", *Imágenes del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, Universidad Autónoma de México*, 2006, Available at http://www.esteticas.unam.mx/revista_imagenes/dearchivos/dearch_fernandez01.html accessed on 26th of March 2009.

⁷⁴ Lucas Ariza Parrado and Alexis Pérez Fargallo, "La configuración del territorio y el espacio urbano por una universidad policéntrica. Descripción del caso de la Universidad de Sevilla", *dearq* 13 (2013) 68-83.

⁷⁵ Grupo de investigación TEP 0141/ Proyecto patrimonio, *Proyecto patrimonio. Universidad y Ciudad*, 141.

⁷⁶ Kathy Chautant, Armelle Martin, Fabianne Moinaud and Anne Nieutin, "El V Centenario del Descubrimiento de América. Estudio comparativo de la apreciación de la prensa francesa y norteamericana (1990-1992)", *Redial*, 2 (1993), 69-90.

⁷⁷ Thomas J. Schlereth, 'Columbia, Columbus, and Columbianism', *The Journal of American History*, 79.3 (1992), 938.

⁷⁸ Ángel Urrutia, "Chicago, 1893 – Sevilla 1992. La Exposición Universal Colombina del siglo XX sobre la era de los descubrimientos", *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*, V (1993), 159-188.

unity”⁷⁹, implying the idea of discovery⁸⁰ instead of “the encounter of two worlds”, as was suggested by Miguel Leon-Portilla in 1984 and reinforced by UNESCO⁸¹; or, an even more controversial understanding of this historical event: “the violent and unfair clash between Spain and America”⁸². Moreover, the centennial not only selected historical events in order to underline the discovery and colonization over the conquest, but also silenced other historical events that also happened in 1492, such as the deportation of Jews and the ethnocide persecution of the Andalusian population⁸³, episodes which were also hidden at the IAE of 1929. Conversely, the celebration of Madrid as the European Capital of Culture in 1992 (same as the Expo 92), included the commemoration of the expulsion of the Sephardis in the Jardín de las Tres Culturas in the Parque Juan Carlos I, a park where conflicting memories are presented in a leisure space, introducing this message into our daily lives, in a similar fashion as the Parque de la Memoria in Buenos Aires.

Secondly, the exhibition seemed to be a mere excuse to reinforce commercial links with Latin America⁸⁴; and finally, and as a consequence of the latter, Expo 92 did not provide the necessary scenario in which Spain and America would face, together, their silenced, traumatic past. Furthermore, the main interest of Expo 92 was to portray a national, modern and united identity to Europe, through its role and contribution to culture in America and the recent achievement of democracy in Spain⁸⁵. By so doing, Expo 92 was repeating the same mistakes the IAE had committed: it played again the neo-imperialist role, highlighting the ‘discovery’ of America and Seville as an “intercultural bridge or meeting place”⁸⁶; and it did not include Latin America in the planning of the exhibition: the organisers had built a pavilion – Plaza of the Americas – in which the former colonies were meant to be displayed together, America as a unit. Mexico, Chile, Venezuela and Cuba opted to build their own pavilions, in an effort to regain their own space, independent from the neo-colonial project and the idea of Latin America simplified in just one pavilion⁸⁷. Moreover, their disagreement with the dominant narrative of the exhibition was embodied in the Mexican pavilion, showcasing the

⁷⁹ Felipe González quoted in Raúl Rispa and Cesar Alonso de los Ríos, *Expo '92 Seville: architecture and design* (Milan: Electa, 1993), 11.

⁸⁰ Antonio Acosta, “América Latina: Historia y Pretexto (el 92 una operación en marcha)”, *Boletín Americanista*, 37 (1987), 5.

⁸¹ Soledad Ambles Rey, “España en América y América en España: un reto escolar”, *Tarbiya: Revista de Investigación e Innovación Educativa*, 40 (2009), 74.

⁸² Isidoro Moreno, “América y el nacionalismo de estado español del IV al V Centenarios”, *Estudios Regionales*, 34 (1992), 55.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁸⁴ Eric N. Baklanoff, “Spain’s Economic Strategy toward the ‘Nations of Its Historical Community’: The ‘Reconquest’ of America?”, *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 38.1 (1996), 105-127.

⁸⁵ Moreno, “América y el nacionalismo de estado español del IV al V Centenarios”, 56.

⁸⁶ Anthony Gristwood, “Commemorating Empire in twentieth-century Seville”, in Felix Driver and David Gilbert, ed. *Imperial Cities. Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 166.

⁸⁷ Penelope Harvey, *Hybrids of Modernity: Anthropology, the Nation State and the Universal Exhibition* (London: Routledge, 1996), 144-8.

relevance of pre-Colombian history and the big “X” on the entrance, which asserted the spelling: Mexico, instead of the Spanish, Méjico⁸⁸; as well as by other comments where they manifested their “revulsion against the Expo and its consequences of neo-colonialism, slavery and waste”⁸⁹.

Nowadays the remnants of the IAE are still present, but its original neo-colonial meanings are somehow silenced, since the context and its usage have changed over time: Plaza de España is part of the Administration of Seville’s City Council and Army; Plaza de America hosts two museums, and other pavilions have been used for many other different purposes. But none of them shows a clear relationship with the original concept and context, failing to be representational spaces, as Lefebvre defines the relationship between images and symbols⁹⁰. However, if we follow Eagleton’s theories of the trace, we will discover that, for some reason, these monuments were preserved and ultimately adapted to new uses⁹¹, and by doing so they avoided being completely erased. In this sense, and even though monuments are meant to be full of meaning and symbols, “corporal reminders of the events involved in their constructions”⁹², the IAE is no more than a flexible shell that has been adapted to different contexts and circumstances.

Nowadays, the architectural legacy of the IAE remains a very popular site for tourism. Within the Top Ten things to do in Seville, most tourist websites include Plaza de España and Parque de Maria Luisa⁹³, and most visitors’ reviews coincide in the significance of the buildings located in this park, a “must-see”, “unique”, “wow!” attraction⁹⁴. These reviews not only mention the IAE, or call it “Expo 29”⁹⁵, to make a connection with the better known Expo 92, but they also highlight the fact that this space inspired and featured in a number of popular and contemporary productions, such as *Star Wars II: Attack of the Clones*⁹⁶, “Lawrence of Arabia,” and “The Dictator” by Sacha Baron Cohen⁹⁷. The appearance in these international and widely recognised films adds once more, multiple layers to the reading of this monument, making it even richer and interesting, posing questions such as how this space could fit in as the scenario of a *Star Wars*’ planet, or the palatial complex of an eccentric dictator.

⁸⁸ Gristwood, “*Commemorating Empire in twentieth-century Seville*”, 167.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 169.

⁹⁰ Henry Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (UK: Blackwell, 1991 [1974]), 39.

⁹¹ Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*, 32.

⁹² Robert Bevan, *The destruction of Memory. Architecture at War* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 15.

⁹³ Expedia.co.uk; TripAdvisor; Viator.com; lonelyplanet.com; virtualtourist.com; touropia.com; Andalucia.com (accessed January 10, 2017).

⁹⁴ Trip Advisor, “Plaza de España”, https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g187443-d246510-Reviews-Plaza_de_Espana-Seville_Province_of_Seville_Andalucia.html (accessed January 10, 2017).

⁹⁵ Andalucia.com, “Top 10, Seville”, <http://www.andalucia.com/top10s/seville.htm> (accessed January 10, 2017).

⁹⁶ Viator .com, “Attractions in Seville”, <https://www.viator.com/Seville-attractions/Plaza-de-Espana/d556-a823> (accessed January 10, 2017).

⁹⁷ Trip Advisor, “Plaza de España” https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g187443-d246510-r358807662-Plaza_de_Espana-Seville_Province_of_Seville_Andalucia.html (accessed January 10, 2017).

5. Conclusion

Memory and architecture play a necessary role in the construction of national identities, since the built environment is the context in which our history develops. These traces narrate memories that are rescued as foundational episodes in our history, but they also remind us of shameful or painful events that are not easy to confront. In some cases the built environment remains silent, as outsider to its context, like permanent structures with temporary meanings that change over time. This emptiness shows how the built environment, by being imposed as official state symbols⁹⁸, embodying clear messages, also suffers modifications as time passes by, its narrative modifying accordingly. The IAE has survived in its material form all these years, and even though its neo-colonial spirit is alien to democratic Spain, it could be argued that it can still serve the nation by introducing a pedagogical use, by narrating what happened in the past, exploring how Spanish and Latin American people feel about it nowadays, and looking for solutions which will reinforce the links between Spain and Latin America.

The built environment can facilitate dialogue, discussion and engagement by showcasing layers of meaning that have been lost or obscured: a proposal for the Valley of the Fallen in Madrid, proposes a permanent exhibition to explain its history⁹⁹, enabling visitors to come to terms with Spain's turbulent twentieth century through its built environment. Similarly, Seville can facilitate further dialogue around its post-colonial condition, rather than an excuse for another neo-colonial narrative (as happened in 1929 and 1992), promoting an equal and inclusive spirit in which Latin America and Spain finally confront each other and their pasts. The presence of the Archivo General de las Indias in Seville, together with the Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, and the revived interest as a result of the forthcoming centennial of the EIA in 2029 offer a great opportunity to revise all these issues and promote further connections and research, to understand better the context of the IAE, and to exploit its infrastructure and iconography.

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⁹⁸ Nora, *Realms of Memory. The Construction of the French Past*, X.

⁹⁹ José Antonio Martín Pallín, 2009. "Eliminación de los símbolos y monumentos de la Dictadura", *Revista Patrimonio Cultural de España*, 1 (2009), 79.

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