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Review: Transforming the Enemy in Spanish Culture: The Conquest through the Lens of Textual and Visual Multiplicity by Lauren Beck

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REVIEWS

Prepared by **Domnita Dumitrescu**



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Pan-Hispanic/Luso-Brazilian Literary and Cultural Studies

Beck, Lauren. *Transforming the Enemy in Spanish Culture: The Conquest through the Lens of Textual and Visual Multiplicity.* Amherst: Cambria, 2013. Pp. 324. ISBN 978-1-60497-854-4.

With *Transforming the Enemy in Spanish Culture: The Conquest through the Lens of Textual and Visual Multiplicity*, author Lauren Beck offers an exhaustive study of various subjugating discourses used to define the enemy in Spanish culture. Exploring both textual and visual resources and both archival and mass-produced sources, and with a strong reliance on primary sources, Beck offers an examination both broad and deep. Her study encompasses a wide range of history, geography and people: biblical and Roman times, Muslims during the Spanish *Reconquista*, the Crusades, Jews, New World indigenous peoples, Turks, black Muslim slaves from Africa, German and Dutch Protestants of the Reformation and Counter Reformation, Portugal, colonial Brazil, and hunters from Virginia. It traces the evolution of Spain's conception of her enemies through a process of islamification and orientalization—a construction of otherness—in the Old World and the New; further, it demonstrates how, after the sixteenth century, this same “process of deoccidentalization” was co-opted by northern Europeans and used against Spain in the creation of a non-Spanish version of the conquest of the New World (2).

Thus, the text endeavors to highlight and explain the uses of various and sundry names for the enemy: *moros*, *moriscos*, *árabes*, *piratas*, for example; depictions of black Muslim devils and Protestants wielding scimitars; the labeling of Aztec temples as *mezquitas*; crescent moons in the Americas; the yamur (an architectural element found on the roofs of buildings from North Africa and al-Andalus); cannibalism; the work of Theodore de Bry and the creation of the Black Legend; representational descriptors of good and evil—Jerusalem, Babylon, the cross, the arch, white, black, Christian, Muslim, European, Indian, helmet, turban—all “visual abbreviation[s] distinguishing the faithful and the infidel” (161). Of particular interest is chapter 5, “Transatlantic Travels of Muslims in the Sixteenth Century,” in which the author turns to archival sources to counter the popular misconception that Muslims were not present in the Americas after the conquest. She argues convincingly that Muslims came as slaves at first and later defied the many edicts against their presence to live and work as explorers and settlers in the New World.

It is clear that this work has been extensively researched. Each of the six chapters of the book is replete with several pages of bibliographical and explanatory endnotes and color and black-and-white plates depicting artwork, maps, charts, and other visuals in support of the study, and Beck accessed sources in languages as varied as Spanish, Portuguese, Latin, German, Dutch, Italian, English, and French, as evidenced by the text's many quotes and lengthy bibliography. Additionally, it should be noted that the book is presented in a very nice sturdy hardcover edition, something that is a bit of a rarity in today's publishing climate.

Unmistakably, as evidenced by *Transforming the Enemy in Spanish Culture: The Conquest through the Lens of Textual and Visual Multiplicity*, Beck is an expert in the representation of otherness. She has made a complex, wide-ranging study very interesting and accessible by including many visuals and defining what may be unfamiliar words to some ("yampur" for example) and properly contextualizing terminology to account for historical or geographical changes in meaning (*morisco*, for example). Therefore, the appeal of this book should be as broad as its subject matter; it could easily find a home on the bookshelf of the specialist, the student or just the interested reader in such far-flung fields as Latin American history, European history, comparative cultural studies, religious studies, or art.

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Callahan, Laura, ed. *Spanish and Portuguese across Time, Place, and Borders: Studies in Honor of Milton M. Azevedo*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Pp. xxi + 239. ISBN 978-1-137-34044-3.

Dedicated to Milton M. Azevedo, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of California, Berkeley, with individual chapters authored by his former students, this *Festschrift* constitutes a collective scholarly testament to his enduring professional and personal impact on them during their graduate student years and beyond. Those who know Professor Azevedo can attest to his ability to exert a constructive and positive influence on the people who surround him. In her introduction, Laura Callahan includes her own testimonial on the effect of Professor Azevedo on her own career as well as glowing tributes by the contributors to this volume, all of whom confirm his amiability, accessibility, good humor, dedication to academic rigor, and his role as a consummate model of professional conduct.

Callahan deserves praise for assembling this anthology because it entails a significant amount of logistical effort and the deft coordination and gracious cooperation of all fourteen authors situated on three separate continents. Moreover, this anthological tribute to a great scholar and linguist possesses all of the hallmarks of a carefully edited and integrated professional collection of individual chapters including a list of figures, a list of tables, acknowledgments, notes on contributors, introduction, and an index.

Spanish and Portuguese across Time, Place, and Borders: Studies in Honor of Milton M. Azevedo consists of two parts: 1) "Linguistics and Literature: Translation, Society, and Language Variation" (which includes eight chapters); and 2) "Language Change, Language Contact, and Language Users" (which includes six chapters). In what follows, the contents of each study will be briefly noted in the order of their appearance. The excellent studies in this volume reflect Azevedo's multiple academic interests and keen intellectual curiosity about various facets of language and linguistics in both Spanish and Portuguese.

Part 1 addresses literary language and its various manifestations. In the first chapter, Ricardo Muñoz Martín ("Ah jist likes, dinnae ken how ye do it': Translating the Literary Dialect of *Trainspotting* into Spanish") expounds on the complexities of translating two dialects (Scots and English) into Spanish while trying to capture that same distinction in the target language. As Muñoz Martín observes, literary dialects are evocative rather than replicative of the dialect imitated. Next, Anna E. Hiller ("Queer Geographies: Federico García Lorca's 'Oda a Walt