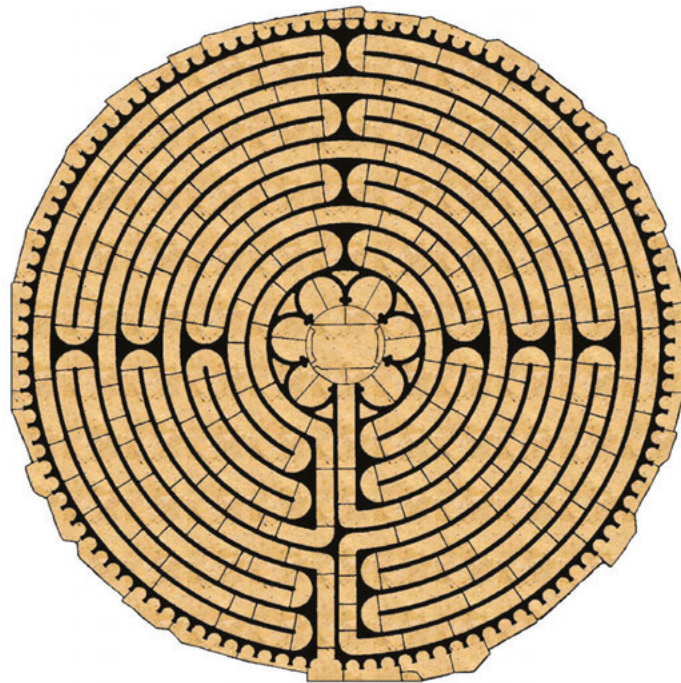


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Victoria M. Muñoz, *Spanish Romance in the Battle for Global Supremacy. Tudor and Stuart Black Legends*. London: Anthem Press, 2022. ISBN: 1-78527-330-2. 231 pp.

In this book Victoria M. Muñoz offers a compelling series of analyses that illustrate the undeniable importance of translation. Recalling Antonio de Nebrija's dictum that translation forms part of cultural imperialism, she demonstrates in six intriguing chapters, how translating was clearly an act of cultural appropriation in the case of Spanish romance repurposed by early modern English authors. Muñoz strategically demonstrates that the lure of English translation of Spanish romance was "an act of rejecting and replacing the primitive Other."

The number of Iberian chivalric romances circulating in 16th- and 17th-century Europe—both in the Spanish original and in translation—is quite remarkable. And the author seeks to determine why this is so in the case of England, with its strategies of cultural appropriation but also "occlusion or erasure" given the anxiety of the English empire with respect to Spain. Muñoz, referencing the power of the Black Legend along the lines traced by Barbara Fuchs in *The Poetics of Piracy*, details the fear experienced by Spain's influence throughout Europe, as well as the fear of "miscegenation of Spaniards with non-Christians and with non-European ancestors."

Harkening back to the Arthurian world, Muñoz, in line with Geraldine Heng, observes that fiction "has always served (on one level or another) to disseminate the operative logic of an English empire as natural and predestined, perhaps no more so famously than in the foretold second coming of Arthur against the new Rome." Yet while Spain is overtly vilified by the English, who savor the providential escape from the Hapsburg menace in 1588, its authors demonstrate a keen desire to emulate Spain's ruthless *conquistadores*.

It is important to note, moreover, that Muñoz analyzes English texts that appropriate Spanish material by offering nuanced readings. She notes "the humanist depiction of Spain as a cultural void that could be alternately looted, ignored or scapegoated with impunity." In the category of "ignored" texts, she offers a number of high-profile examples such as Eslava's *Noches de invierno* frequently mentioned as Shakespeare's source for *The Tempest*, for the lost *Cardenio* that he coauthored with Fletcher, Montemayor's *Diana* as the inspiration for his *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, while Sidney also took inspiration from Montemayor's text for his *Arcadia*. One of the key points that *Spanish Romance in the Battle for Global Supremacy* makes is that *Don Quijote* was not the Spanish text that began England's fascination with Spanish literature. As

Victoria M. Muñoz, *Spanish Romance in the Battle for Global Supremacy. Tudor and Stuart Black Legends*. London: Anthem Press, 2022. ISBN: 1-78527-330-2. 231 pp.

Muñoz explains, “It simply put a time stamp on a phenomenon of eager Spanish romance reading that had been playing out across England, Europe, and the Americas for around a century.”

This is an illuminating and well documented book.

Marina Brownlee
Princeton University