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Fuchs, Barbara.

The Poetics of Piracy: Emulating Spain in English Literature.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. Pp. 186. ISBN 978-0-8122-4475-5 (hardcover) \$45.

Reading national literary canons as solely “national” products obscures the origins of literary development and the importance of cultural and transnational dialogue. With this in mind, Barbara Fuchs invites us to re-think the English literary tradition in *The Poetics of Piracy: Emulating Spain in English Literature*. Using the lost Shakespearean play *Cardenio* as a fulcrum, Fuchs asks to what extent the literary production of Golden Age Spain presents itself in English literature—especially theatrical production. Developing the concept of *imitatio*, Fuchs traces the development of an English national canon in the context of an imperial and cultural rivalry with Spain. English writers constructed a rhetoric to appropriate Spanish literary sources, allowing them to claim a purely English tradition of letters while simultaneously disavowing the influence of Spanish literary production.

While Fuchs sees the link between Spain and England as crucial, she is also asking for a reassessment of basic tenets of the English literary tradition. For *The Poetics of Piracy* what this means is conceptualizing the interest in the lost *Cardenio* as a form of “Foucauldian Orientalism” (127). Fuchs seeks to step outside what she sees as a powerful discourse of Spain that conditions our understanding of a unique culture as it appears on the English stage, itself an embodiment of grand gestures. To do this, Fuchs turns to our own understanding of the Anglo-Spanish connection and deconstructs a tradition of disavowal concerning Spain. This process is twofold, involving the constant search for the hand of Shakespeare in the reproduction of the *Cardenio*, and asking to what extent the Spanish debt, or lack thereof, has created a discourse of stereotypes that colour the Anglo-American literary and dramatic heritage. Essential to Fuchs’s understanding of this dilemma is the search for the historic roots of the Spanish denial, which she sees as a product of the political and military rivalry with England. The concept of *imitatio* becomes a practice situated in historical necessity. Appropriation becomes central as the development of an English literary identity that stressed ownership while minimizing influence. The goal of *The Poetics of Piracy* is a re-orientation of the English canon as a historically situated dialogue and not the result of spontaneous creation.

The book itself is relatively short, covering no more than 130 pages, but is best approached as two discussions: one outlining the appropriation of Spanish source material and the other tracing consequences of a historical desire to “discover” Shakespeare. This first discussion encompasses the first three chapters and has three distinct stages, all of them aiming to emphasize the concept of *translatio*.

The first stage of this discussion is broad in order to approach the respective literary offerings of England and Spain. Conjoining politics and literature, Fuchs identifies a period of crisis in English letters and suggests that a ready-made solution existed in plain sight: Spain. The legacy of imperial Spain and its English conflict allow Fuchs to demonstrate convincingly the willingness of the English, especially Ben Jonson (10), to emulate Spanish success and begin the process of creating an English literary tradition out of Spanish parts.

With Spanish parts assembled, the conversation turns to the process of English-ing Spanish plot narratives. To argue for simple transposition of Spanish devices onto English works downplays the subtle process of turning these devices into truly English creations, an argument Fuchs explicitly avoids. Moreover, deconstructing this process also allows Fuchs to highlight the uncomfortable relationship English writers had with the legacy of Cervantes (42). When Fuchs presents Beaumont it is to illustrate this twofold process of English transformation and English denial of the Spanish debt.

The first discussion thus ends with *translatio* placed on the nationalist stage of Jacobean England. Politics returns with the question of Spanish marriages for the heirs of James I looming large. Doing so allows for a deeper understanding of the political and social conflicts emulated on the Jacobean stage, especially the device of the plotting Spaniard, specifically the Jesuit order so consummately identified with Spanish foreignness (59). Thomas Middleton becomes the emblematic poetic pirate and the symbol of an allegorical victory over Spain (78).

The second part of Fuchs’s book, encompassing the final two chapters, takes us into the theoretical discussions of what the lost *Cardenio* means to a modern audience. In challenging Stephen Greenblatt’s recreation of *Cardenio*, Fuchs reminds us that claims to ownership reveal a discontinuity of indebtedness of original source material. Greenblatt acknowledges his own pillaging of Shakespeare while conveniently minimizing the Spanish influence. This is symptomatic of a larger trend of looking for Shakespeare and negating the

Spanish influence. By labelling this obsession as Foucauldian Orientalism, Fuchs deftly illustrates that the search for the hand of the bard is evidence of the tenuous relationship English literary history has with its Spanish debt. The search for Shakespeare thus takes the form of a desperate attempt to supplant the evidence of Spain within English letters.

The Poetics of Piracy is a welcome addition to a growing body of work that emphasizes the cultural relationships of imperial Spain with other European nations. Fuchs's work should come as a rallying call to specialists and non-specialists alike to examine cultural borrowings and to re-evaluate the relevant literary traditions. If this book is short it is because it needs to be so; a truly systematic treatment of literary appropriation is not conceivable in a single volume. Fuchs's work should be the springboard for the rest of us to begin our own researches into transnational cultural transference.

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Fuchs, Barbara, Larissa Brewer-García, and Aaron J. Ilika, eds. and trans.
“The Abencerraje” and “Ozmín and Daraja”: Two Sixteenth-Century Novellas from Spain.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. Pp. x, 139. ISBN 978-0-8122-4608-7 (hardcover) \$39.95.

This book offers a combination of a critical study and a very careful translation into English of two sixteenth-century Moorish novellas from Spain: *The Abencerraje*, anonymous text, and *Ozmín and Daraja*, an intercalated story from *Guzmán de Alfarache* by Mateo Aleman.

The book presents these two novellas as part of the traditional idealized relationship between Moors and Jews. These texts circulated extensively throughout Europe during early modern times; they influenced the expansion of European Orientalism while permanently connecting Spain to its Moorish traditions. According to the study, the two novellas “may have helped popularize the notion of an exotic Spain abroad, however, within Spain they played a very different role, insisting on the quotidian reality of Moors and Moorishness and on their indisputable place in the Spanish imaginary as in its society” (8).