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Review of *Spanish New York Narratives 1898–1936: Modernization, Otherness and Nation*, by David Miranda-Barreiro

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BOOK REVIEW

Miranda-Barreiro, David. *Spanish New York Narratives 1898–1936: Modernization, Otherness and Nation*. Oxford: Legenda (Studies in Hispanic and Lusophone Cultures, 5), 2014. 187 pp. £55.00 / \$99.00. ISBN 978–1–909662–15–5.

This book analyzes the representation of New York City in the Spanish narrative during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Miranda-Barreiro argues that New York emerges in this literature as a symbol of modernity, as an image of Otherness and a threat to Spanish values and society. The author connects this reaction with the crisis of Spanish national identity triggered by the end of the Empire in 1898, but he also points out that the Spanish case was not isolated, since European texts show similar anxieties about US modernization. One positive aspect of the book is the study of genres and texts traditionally dismissed from literary criticism, such as travelogues and mass-produced popular narratives, which are necessary to complete the understanding of Spain's struggle for modernity. Four main works are analyzed: José Moreno Villa's *Pruebas de Nueva York* (1927); Teresa de Escoriaza's *El crisol de las razas* (1929); Luis de Oteyza's *Anticópolis* (1931); and Julio Camba's *La ciudad automática* (1932). The book follows a thematic approach, so after a first chapter devoted to challenging generational categorizations, the next three chapters compare the works in relation to class, gender and race, respectively. The United States is portrayed as a simultaneously futuristic and primitive society, where masses and mechanization threaten Spain's elitist social structures. Regarding American women's emancipation, some works react negatively against the modern woman, while others support non-traditional images of womanhood. Finally, the United States' multiculturalism based on political citizenship is contrasted with the conception of Spain as a racially homogeneous nation. With the exception of Oteyza's novel, the works show racist attitudes towards African Americans and Jews and a sense of nostalgia for the Spanish colonial past. The brief afterword offers an overview of the presence of New York in Spanish narrative from 1939 to the present. Although the analysis of more works could have enriched the conclusions, the book is a well-organized and clearly argued study that situates Spain's view on modernity within the European context. It will be of interest to scholars on early twentieth-century Spain, Modernism, transnationalism and popular narratives.

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Citation: Iker González-Allende. Review of *Spanish New York Narratives 1898–1936: Modernization, Otherness and Nation*, by David Miranda-Barreiro. *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 51.4 (2015): 502-3; doi: 10.1093/fmls/cqv073