

The uninitiated, like your reviewer, may require more than the usual number of rereads, but Peters's tome, with a helpful index and copious biographical notes, is an astute and insightful journey into an immensely significant era. Its esoteric subject can lead to wording that could lose the reader (cf. Aristotle's idea of *topos* 102). And some potentially appealing parallels between Peters's work and Barthes's reader of a "texte scriptible" from *Le Plaisir du texte* remain unexplored. Nonetheless, *The Written World* is a rich and enriching book, offering a fresh and illuminating approach to some of France's most influential Early Modern works. It is well worth the time of any serious researcher of the period.

Émilie Picherot. *Les Musulmans d'Espagne dans les littératures arabe, espagnole et française, XVème–XVIIème siècles*. Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2019. 591 pp. €59. Review by DAPHNE MCCONNELL, BENEDICTINE COLLEGE.

In the introduction to this examination of the place of the Muslim in the literary imagination of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spain and France, Picherot draws a comparison between the early history of the "Espagne des trois cultures," which experienced eight centuries of religious tolerance and a resulting cultural richness ("culture de mixité"), and the role of Islam in contemporary Europe (7). The author underlines the very different literary perspectives of Grenada, the Alhambra, and the Muslim presence in Spain, depending on the literary context. In French romantic literature of the nineteenth century, the "Maure de Grenade" is an exotic figure, without nuance. From the perspective of Spanish literature, the representation of the Muslim in Spain is much more complex, ranging from the noble characters and brilliant culture represented in the *romancero*, to the "Other" that figures in the literature of the period of the Reconquista (8). For the Arab-Muslim reader, the Muslim of Spain was a figure who was chased from the land that he loved above all else, a paradise that was praised by generations of poets, and Al-Andalus serves as a symbol of the injustice of Christianity (8), but also as a symbol of a period of decadence in the Muslim-Arab world (9).

The author states in the introduction that the original intent for this analysis was to examine the intertextuality between Arab, Spanish and French literatures in the evolving figure of the *romancero* through the differing linguistic, historical and literary contexts (9–10). However, upon examining the corpus of literature included here, the author realizes that this is, in fact, the wrong question and elects, rather, to examine the role of the *Moro*, the common figure in this entire body of literature, from very different ideological perspectives (10). Peninsular literature, whether from the Spanish or Muslim perspective, can be divided into categories of before and after 1492 (13). Spanish literature of the Golden Age examines the question of Spanish identity through the figure of the *romancero* (13). Prior to 1492, Spanish-Arabic literature sought to establish its legitimacy in relation to the rest of the Muslim world; after 1492, Spanish-Arabic authors seek to establish their legitimate right to exist in a Spain that is attempting to erase their presence (13). The *Moro* begins to figure in the literary imagination of France of the seventeenth century for several reasons. At the time, France experienced a certain fascination with Golden Age Spain and its economic and cultural flourishing (14). But also, the Andalusian context served as a framework for examining questions of national identity and religious tolerance within France after the wars of religion and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (14). Also through its expanding colonial empire and its alliance with the Ottoman empire, France in the seventeenth century was confronted with the need to understand Islam and the Muslim world, and the figure of the *Moro*, which arrives in France through the filter of the corpus of Spanish literature, was at the same time familiar and “other,” and thus was an object of literary fascination (15).

Picherot points out that previous studies of these literary works have focused on the evolutionary aspect. How does the figure of the *Moro* evolve from the Arabic context, to the Spanish, to the French (16)? The subject of this work is different: here the character of the *Moro* serves very different functions in different contexts. Spanish-Muslims and Spanish-Christians are telling very different stories about the history of Spain, and both are staking a claim to their legitimacy through these literary works (18–19). The *Moro* serves the same purpose in the French literary imagination of the seventeenth century,

which also seeks to understand self in relation to the Other.

The first chapter of this book, “Définitions, contextes et corpus,” addresses the degree to which the bodies of work it considers engage with the question of “Hispanité” or Spanish identity. It addresses at the outset a previous debate that took place during the 1960s and 1970s, between the theorists Américo Castro and Claudio Sánchez Albornoz (23). Castro’s position is that “hispanité” rests in the moment of cultural symbiosis among religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) in the peninsula, and that in expulsing Muslims and Jews, Christian Spain destroyed an element of its own self or identity (24). Sánchez Albornoz’s position is the contrary and insists on the impossibility of the coexistence of these three faiths (24). Picherot asserts that these definitions of “hispanité” represent a false dichotomy (25) and that the question that this work seeks to address is that of how these different authors or literary contexts express Spanish identity from their own cultural perspective or try to carve out a sense of belonging (31). The author seeks to counter the historical tendency to oversimplify the three cultures (citing, for example the Arabic-speaking Christian Moor) (38) and rather seeks to explore these literatures with a view into the nuance and complexity of cultural identity (39). To this end the author primarily considers the representation of “Los Moros” in the *romance fronterizo* and the *romance morisco* (49–50) and the degree to which these texts express ambivalence or sympathy towards “los moros” (49–50).

The second chapter, “Homogénéité ou Hétérogénéité,” challenges the notion (as mentioned in the introduction) that the representation of Spanish Arabic identity evolves, or that of tracing the origins of myths of “los moros;” rather it suggests looking at representation as reflective of its historical and social context. “Il faut donc construire un outil d’analyse propre au corpus et qui permette de rendre véritablement compte de cette impression de lecture qui fait que l’on ne ressent pas les Moros des *romances* du Cid de la même façon que ceux du *romance fronterizo* » (77). This chapter highlights the complexity of the relationship to “los moros” in Spanish literature. For example, Picherot suggests that, in the case of the *romanceril*, the Muslim is considered as an “Espagnol possible,” (107) or that the corpus of the *romances fronterizos* can be divided into two groups, interpreting events

from either a Christian or Muslim point of view (108). Rather, this work compares the ideological discourses in these works in order to move beyond mere research of literary origins and to analyze more profoundly the differing and complex perspectives regarding the presence of Muslims in the peninsula (172).

The third chapter, "Le lieu comme légitimité," engages with the question of Spanish Muslim and Christian relations to geographic space. Picherot asserts that, for Spanish Muslims, their "Arab-Muslim" identity has always been problematic as they are on the fringes of the Muslim world, and that they identify as truly Spanish and emphasize their relationship to the land in order to defend this identity (175). "La littérature arabo-espagnole puis morisque est une littérature directement liée au pays » (177). The Christian perspective is to establish an authentic or legitimate relation to the land after the expulsion of Muslims, particularly through the theme of "la limpieza" (262). This chapter includes an in-depth analysis of the cycle of "el rey Rodrigo" as "une propagande vieille chrétienne" (269).

The final chapter, "Travestissement et identité," primarily addresses the place of the "moro" in the French literary imagination of the seventeenth century. Picherot states that "le roman français du XVIIe pose la question de l'appartenance européenne d'une façon différente» (348). As mentioned in the introduction, in seventeenth-century French literature, the question of the role of the Muslim in Spanish history addresses contemporary questions such as "la mixité religieuse," and gaining a greater understanding of Muslim culture through the relatively familiar context of Spain in order to better understand the culture of the Ottoman empire, with which France was allied at the time. "Ce personnage miroir offre au romancier français non seulement l'occasion de trouver un décor romanesque codifié et immédiatement identifiable mais aussi de s'interroger sur ce qui fonde l'identité sociale et communautaire» (348).

This work provides a contemporary perspective on complex identities and the tension between their connectedness and difference in popular Spanish literary works; it also engages with lesser-known texts in Spanish and Arabic from this perspective. It is relevant in our own times as we face complex questions of national identity and relation to the other, and the role of literature in the construction of identity.