
THE SPANISH BLACK LEGEND

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Abstract

The Spanish Black Legend is a demonstration meant to educate the community about the topic of the same namesake. The following demonstration features interactive components meant to engage the general public and pique their interest in learning more about this delicate subject. The demonstration will include interactive features through a timeline-based strategy where the user will see their progress increase as they move through their story. The goal of this platform is to educate and share thoughts so there will be an opportunity for users to share their thoughts and experiences with each other once they've finished the story walkthrough.

Author Keywords

The Spanish Black Legend; Discrimination; Anti-

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Hispanic Rhetoric; Education; Learning

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous; See <http://acm.org/about/class/1998> for the full list of ACM classifiers. This section is required.

Introduction

I was first introduced to the Spanish Black Legend during a class at UC Davis taught by the head of the Spanish department. Once I learned about it I was itching to tell other people about it and wanted to seek out a way to educate the community about something very pertinent today. The Spanish Black Legend is this idea that there is inherent bias towards Latinx/Chicanx individuals presently due to propaganda of the past towards the Spanish. Many people are aware of this bias, but they do not realize where it stems from or why it exists. This need for education was something I soon found myself very passion about.

Background Research

In researching about the Spanish Black Legend, I was able to learn much about its histories and how it affects the educational system. The legend focuses on how Latinx/Chicanx individuals are described with bias and prejudice, especially in our classrooms. I found that

when people look back to their US history they remember a Eurocentric version, that focuses on our great founding fathers and all their wondrous contributions in pioneering and cultivating North America into the great country we know today. Most people know that the path to that point was bloody and led to the disappearance of many different peoples and their cultures, but they don't realize, however, is how biased and discriminatory our histories remain today, in their telling of this story. In fact, many recollections of the histories of Spain, Latin America, and the US describe Spanish-speaking people and their descendants as uniquely lazy and cruel. There are records of Spanish-speaking people being described as primitive and needing to be helped / saved, despite the fact that their civilizations were both innovative and advanced. These discriminatory histories have affected the way we continue to teach our students and affect the ways in which Latinx/Chicanx residents of the US are viewed and treated today. These histories create and perpetuate something researchers refer to as the Spanish Black Legend. This term describes the discriminatory histories of Hispanic and Latinx peoples wherever they live. This includes the histories of Spaniards and the descriptions they receive in relations to their conquest of Native peoples. These descriptions in turn have had lasting effects on Spanish-speaking people today, especially Mexican Americans. The Spanish Black legend ultimately ties back to one small mistake by a man named Bartolomé de las Casas. After spending time in Hispanola, what is the present-day Caribbean, and experiencing colonization before him, de las Casas decided very quickly to become a priest and do something in response to what he saw. He wrote, a brief account of the destruction of the indies, detailing what he saw. Despite his good intentions in

wanting to help the Native people, his documentation of the people described them as weak and in need of salvation and portraying the Spanish as savage and animalistic. What essentially happened is Las Casa created a black and white version of history in which the Natives are sheep and the Spanish are wolves. His recount attributed these cruel actions to be unique to the Spanish and perpetuated anti-hispanic stereotypes. When the reality was all countries were participating in colonization and had hand in the decimation of Native peoples. Jealousy and rivalry led to other countries perpetuating the legend further, culminating it into what we know the Legend to be now. Countries like England and France loved the negative description of Spain and Portugal, who were gaining wealth from their colonial efforts. Protestants also loved de las Casa's negative depiction of Catholics such as the Spanish who believed they were imparting salvation. The establishment of the superior and the inferior soon emerged with this and we soon saw Spanish speaking individuals painted as the inferior individual. This association brought about ignorance and preconceived notions of all Spanish speaking individuals, most notably Mexicans residing in California and Texas. In the Tree of Hate, Powell discusses this and explains that "...many people in the United States...gained the impression... that most Latin Americans are ignorant, lazy and incapable of governing themselves, and that their countries are rich but fallow ground awaiting cultivation by the superior and enterprising people of the United States." This sad truth and these sad ideals continued with westward expansion and instigated the racist treatment of Mexican and Latin American people in the US. Today, we are still feeling the effects of the Spanish Black Legend, most notably in our textbooks. In all, the Spanish Black Legend is important especially

for future educators to be aware of. Many articles called for reform and action. Many agree that teachers need to be aware of the legend's role within textbooks and need to edit their curriculum accordingly. Teachers need to be aware of any bias they may have because of the education they were brought up with and work to amend this and influence the future generations for the best. This perspective is one that I look more closely into as I move forward with my project and in seeing how the legend affects the educational system.

Project Development

In seeking out comparable works around the topic, I found little to no options. Even when looking for educational content about the subject such as a YouTube video, I was only able to find some with excerpts of the material included. One comparable video I did find was a [Crash Course video](#) produce by John Green. With this lack of work in the field, I found it even more so pertinent to move forward with this project.

Audience

I next established my audience to be as general as possible, honing it in to students or young adults who want to learn more about a subject they are unfamiliar with. I decided that my platform is not meant to change the minds of people who already have bias or prejudice, my platform is meant to educate the people who want to know more and who can make a difference in the community with this new set of information.

Visual Research

The next process was to conduct visual research and narrow down my aesthetic for the demonstration to two possible identities. The figure to the right demonstrates

the first approach to with a more historical / illustrative feel. And the second, on the next page demonstrates my second approach to do more infographic illustrations.





Wireframe

Will insert wireframe once I fix it

First Composition



References

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3. Amago, Samuel. "Why Spaniards make good bad guys: Sergi Lopez and the persistence of the Black Legend in contemporary European cinema." Film Criticism 30.1 (2005): 41-63..