



The Spanish American Roots of William Carlos Williams

Julio Marzán

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As David Ignatow's foreword notes, the time is ripe for a multicultural canonical modernist, and Marzan himself, a poet with Puerto Rican roots, has produced an insightful study of Williams' sometimes hidden, sometimes obvious debt to his Spanish American heritage. At the same time, Marzan raises serious questions about how 'ethnic' literature shapes the modern canon. --American Literature I have been waiting for some time for a study of Williams's Latin American roots, and this book fills that bill. . . . It's a significant addition to the Williams canon. --Paul Mariani, author of *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked* William Carlos Williams wrote from an all-encompassing American vision that recalls the spirit of Walt Whitman. Paradoxically, though, this most-American poet sprang from foreign roots--a Puerto Rican mother and a father who was an English-born Caribbean islander. In this poetically evocative work, Julio Marzan explores the Latin American roots of Williams' poetry. In particular, he focuses on the dualities and contradictions between Williams' public, North American persona, Bill, and his private, poetically encrypted Latin persona, Carlos. He shows how Williams' poetry draws on Latin American and Spanish sources, particularly the poetry of Spaniard Luis de Gongora, to encode a Latin subtext in poems that ostensibly present a mainstream, Anglo vision. These explorations uncover a wealth of complexity in Williams and his poetry. Reflecting the experience of many immigrants, his life and work embody the unreconcilable desires to assimilate and win acceptance in a new land while remaining separate and immersed in the beloved culture of one's birth. A published poet, Julio Marzan is also editor of *Inventing a Word: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Puerto Rican Poetry*.

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