

Unreadable Books: Early Colonial Mexican Documents in Circulation

Dissertation Abstract

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The documents that record the past change as they move across borders and are reshaped by mechanisms of textual reproduction, with consequences for historical memory. In the context of colonial history, these changes are informed by the sociopolitical conditions of empire and conquest. Focusing on documents from the first century of the Spanish presence in Mesoamerica, *Unreadable Books* shows how textual reproduction inscribes the changing ideologies of language, race, class, and nation onto the very pages of our historical past, and how it can be used to reshape the future of historical memory.