

The broken spears by miguel leon-portilla

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In the book originally written by Miguel Leon-Portilla, mirroring the event way back in 1519 when Hernan Cortes sailed from Cuba to Mexico and entered the capital of the Aztecs, there were accounts that he gathered from the basic viewpoint of the Aztec tribe. 'The Broken Spears' talks about the conquest of Cortes, although it dates back ten years before his arrival in the east coast of Mexico, in a place called Tenochtitlan. From the voices of the tribes, there was defeat and destruction with the arrival of the Spaniards... years after they saw eight omens that, for them, were warnings by the gods on the end of the world.

Main Body They first heard the invasion from a common man who reported to King Motecuhzoma: "Our lord and king, forgive my boldness. When I went to the shores of the great sea, there was a mountain or small mountain floating in the midst of the water, moving here and there without touching the shore" (13). Moctezuma, then, sent people to inspect, and when he received word on the beings that appeared on the shores of his land, he was terrified and was sure that this was the god Quetzalcoatl, who had come back from his journey.

Thus, he sent gifts of turquoise and gold to the Spaniards to pay homage to the returning gods. When Cortes recognized this, he frightened the messengers by firing off a canon, and then ordered them to fight in combat to prove their bravery. Cortes announced that he wanted to see Moctezuma. When Cortes, together with hundreds of soldiers, arrived at Tenochtitlan, King Motecuhzoma told Cortes: "Our lord, you are weary / The journey has tired you, but now you have arrived on the earth / You have come to your

city, Mexico / You have come here to sit on your throne, to sit under its canopy" (63).

Moteczuhzoma was frightened and even thought of escaping, which led him to offer human sacrifices with the coming of the gods, against the advice of his counselors, and to the disdain of the Spaniards. He held a meeting with his nephew Cacama, his brother Cuitlahuac, as well as the other lords and leaders of the tribes on whether or not they should open their doors to the new arrivals in their land. In the end, Moteczuhzoma decided to make friends with the Spaniards, and it led to the destruction of his throne, land, wealth, and his people.

It is evident that this book should be required for Latin-American Studies, since it gives a very detailed description of the events. Most of the materials used are on the side of the Spaniards. To present a material that would reveal the side of the Aztecs, and how they viewed the event, would be very helpful because it will dramatize how the Aztecs took the invasion in the light of their beliefs, their culture, and their tradition. The style of writing is not really biased.

In fact, more of the negatives could be drawn on the description of their king, Moteczuhzoma—what his weaknesses were, and which mistakes made him lose his throne and his land. The Spaniards, however, were taken as greed, ruthless men who craved for gold and treasures. It would be best to include this book in Latin-American Studies, but together with the other versions that were written on the side of the Spaniards. This would paint the picture from all sides... for a good sense of balance. Conclusion The story is presented more as a work of literature, with the use of imagery and figures of speech.

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Having been arranged in chronological order, it presents history from the side and beliefs of the ancient Aztecs. It is well written and easy to understand, which ends up being really fascinating because of the descriptions of things that would relay how ancient human beings view things and people, which they have not seen in the past. Having used a constricted point of view, though, it should be regarded more as literature than as history. Works Cited Leon-Portilla, Miguel. *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.