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Fictions of Containment in the Spanish Female Picaresque: Architectural Space and Prostitution in the Early Modern Mediterranean, by Emily Kuffner. Gendering the Late Medieval and Early Modern World 6. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019. Pp. 222. ISBN: 9789462986800; e-ISBN: 9789048538171.

In this complex and thoughtful book, Emily Kuffner returns to the well-known Golden Age Spanish genre of the pícaro to examine the interconnectedness of space and sexuality within real and literary attempts to define and control access to the female body. In focusing on the lesser known pícaras—antiheroines in their own right, who relied less upon their wits than upon their ability to negotiate their sexual value in order to get by in the world—Kuffner permits herself license to slip into the world of symbolic and supposed prostitution, test possible relationships, and play with metonymic devices for female promiscuity and morality. Kuffner's presentation of her selected texts is meticulous, and the construction of her argument tight and well-focused, leading to a highly specialized, yet compelling study. Though dense, this book guides us through the literary mechanisms with which to "think" about how early modern people imagined how "housed" or contained women symbolized order, while mobile women communicated disorder and sexual availability.

As Kuffner acknowledges, defining what constitutes the Spanish picaresque is tricky, and deciding which texts (inside and outside the genre) constitute the female picaresque is even more difficult. Kuffner thus approaches the genre generously, including early works like Fernando de Roja's classic *La Celestina* and precursor texts like Francisco Delicado's *La Lozana andaluza,* which with the protagonist's forays into the underworld of Roman prostitution, helps Kuffner make connections between Spain and Italy. Most of the rest, such as Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo's *La hija de Celestina,* Alonso de Castillo Solórzano's *La niña embustes*, and Francisco López de Úbeda's *La pícara Justina,* are solidly within the genre, and Kuffner draws upon them heavily. As Kuffner acknowledges, Castillo Solórzano's *Las harpías de Madrid* is usually not included among the pícaras, but incorporating this text allows the author to effectively transpose her arguments about physical containment to mobile camouflage, such as carriages and veils. She also turns frequently to several *entremeses* and short novellas, including Miguel Cervantes's *El vizcaíno findido* and *La tía fingida.*

Using the picaresque as an entrance into evaluating real attitudes towards prostitution—let alone real practices—requires substantial grounding and a number of disclaimers. Just as Kuffner's reading of her selected picaresque and

prostibulary texts is meticulous and creative, her engagement with secondary literature and theory is very strong. Drawing upon perspectives ranging from Leon Battista Alberti's architectural theory to Foucault's theories on premodern sex to ample modern scholarship in Iberian history and gender studies, Kuffner builds a base with which to argue that architectural metaphors of open and closed spaces are a historically accurate way for viewing control of or access to women's bodies and sexuality. Similarly, Kuffner deftly tackles the related problem of the relationship between what sexual attitudes say about actual sexual practices in past times: she is careful to provide the disclaimer early on that premodern sex does not equate with premodern sexuality, and just as it is hard to determine what sex meant to premodern people, it is likewise hard to tell what didactic or fictional depictions of loose women have to say about actual sexual practices. As she makes clear, since the picaresque novels were written by men, we see only what men thought was erotic, and by extension, we hear only the male perspective on contained women.

The book itself is divided into five main body chapters. Chapter 1 surveys the sex trade and courtesan culture in Italy and Spain, particularly the rhetorical strategies used to regulate and contain female sexuality, as well as the social policy and responses to prostitution, including criminalization, tolerance, and institutionalization. Twin chapters 2 and 3 examine forays and movement into the wider world, particularly involving the metonymic association between public space and public women and fortified houses and honest women. These are probably the strongest chapters of the book, and present truly clever readings of the deceptive nature and associated anxieties about veiling (veils hid as well as ironically indicated sexual availability), as well as the illusory protection of carriages. Carriages, which were introduced at Carlos V's court, were at once wildly popular and necessary for communicating wealth and style, yet also laden with anxieties: coaches afforded women a semblance of protection, allowing them to live both in and apart from the world, "encoached" in protective, yet fragile shells; Kuffner compares them to anchorites (112). Carriages thus earned themselves the reputation of façades that could falsify social status, much like prostitutes who dressed like elite women or women who hid behind veils.

Chapters 4 and 5 turn to physical architectural spaces, exploring doorways and windows as potentially traversable and permeable orifices by which to enter the female body. The associations between windows and doors and prostitutes (or open women) are so ingrained in even modern language, Kuffner asserts, as to hardly need defining: *rameras* referred to prostitutes who advertised their trade by hanging branches (*ramas*) outside their windows, much in the way

that "windowing women" was also synonymous with prostitution (145). These were not merely linguistic games: attacks on windows and doors symbolized the attack (or actual penetration) of the female inhabitants, thus by extension, dishonor to all inhabitants of the house. Kuffner contextualizes these metonymic associations with contemporary medical and humoral theory about open or closed vaginas, as well as with suggestive hagiographical references to Mary Magdalene and Mary of Egypt.

Kuffner is on sure footing when she leads readers through close readings of the texts as well as through metonymic identification. She is less precise in her use of concurrent history, particularly with the introduction of moral and religious policy. For instance, she conflates promulgation with compliance of religious reforms, especially regarding the regulation of prostitution post Council of Trent. She does not consider how reforms were enforced—if at all—and tends to suggest that once decrees were passed their intended goals were de facto. She makes similar simplifications about shared perceptions and fears concerning prostitution in Italy and Spain, presumably because the same decrees and reforms were introduced in both countries. Ultimately though, these are quibbles coming from a historian, and they should not distract from the fact that I thoroughly enjoyed this book. As I was reading it, I thought continuously about how I could incorporate more of her method of thinking and observations about the metaphorical relationship between architectural enclosure and sexual availability into my undergraduate class on women in early modern Europe.

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