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## Review of Sarah Finley, *Hearing Voices: Aurality and New Spanish Sound Culture in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*

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**Finley, Sarah. *Hearing Voices: Aurality and New Spanish Sound Culture in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019. “New Hispanisms” Series. ix + 237 pp. + 7 ill.**

Sarah Finley’s *Hearing Voices: Aurality and New Spanish Sound Culture in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* comes at an important time for Colonial Latin American Studies, as well as for early modern Hispanic and European Studies. Indeed, an important contribution to these fields of study, her book “attend[s] to the underdeveloped areas of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s [aural and] acoustical inheritance” (8). In doing so, referencing music and sound in Sor Juana’s complete works, the author provides original analyses of the nun’s engagement with music, harmony, and other auditory themes. Of particular interest to readers will be the advances Finley makes throughout *Hearing Voices* that lend her musicological readings to the following seemingly nonauditory fields: mathematics, natural science, rhetoric, and visual iconography. In my view, *Hearing Voices* stands as a solid piece of scholarship that achieves its broad and straightforward exploration of establishing new paradigms for listening to Sor Juana’s oeuvre that exceed textual and linguistic limits.

Over the course of its introduction, five chapters, and coda, Finley’s monographic study attends to “a separate strand of the poet’s aurality and seeks to contextualize it with broader discourses in New Spanish sound culture” (9). To that effect, the author, more importantly, identifies sound as a vehicle for women’s agency, thereby attending to “feminine voices that were perhaps less audible during Sor Juana’s time” (6). Chapter 1 pushes for a careful study of harmonic representations of civic order, obedience, and tempered government in understudied loas and occasional pieces that honored viceregal authorities. Chapter 2 attends to another type of aural representation: “musicopoetic portraits that explore links between sight and sound through polysemy, puns, and other poetic devices” (9). To explicate this consideration of “musicopoetic portraits,” Finley studies closely Sor Juana’s inheritance of the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher’s acoustical and musical treatises *Musurgia universalis* and *Phonurgia nova* (1673). Moving forward, chapter 3 “situates feminine sonorities from the villancicos and other imaginings of ritual music within the New Spanish soundscape” (10). Centering female agency, chapter 4 focuses on Sor Juana’s “reimaginings of Echo and Narcissus in *Romance 8* and *El divino Narciso*.” As explained, Finley argues that “these pieces draw on correlations between seeing and hearing as well as voice’s physical and pathetic effects to refigure women’s aurality as counterpoint to patriarchal visuality” (10). Turning to silence, chapter 5 “attends to early modern representations of women’s silence and draw[s] out inherent tensions” (152). The author’s contention is that “anxiety surrounding sound’s absence in religious institutions and elsewhere in early modern culture is similarly palpable in Sor

Juana's engagement with the theme, which can be interpreted as affirming and challenging dominant constructions of female voice" (152). The author's closing remarks appear in the book's *coda* titled "Re-sounding Voices." Here Finley reflects on *Primero sueño*'s aural themes and sonorities, which ultimately "[attend] more fully to sonorities in the nun's oeuvre [that deepen our] understanding of how Sor Juana experienced and re-sounded aural discourses" (192).

The intellectual labor operative throughout *Hearing Voices* undoubtedly merits our undivided attention, as Finley exposes her readers to a new aural and sonic atmosphere of New Spanish sound culture. That being said, however, a few methodological and theoretical matters grabbed my attention while reading the book in its entirety. For instance, chapter 3, on "sound and music making" (93) proves the most problematic for me as a reviewer. What remains curious about the work done in this chapter is the anecdotal and peripheral way in which Finley writes about non-European sonic presences and realities in Sor Juana's villancicos. If, in *Hearing Voices*, she dedicated ample study of musical categories and terms such as "dysphonia," "aphonia," and "silence" (11), I wonder why, in her consideration of black voices, Sor Juana's apt use of "antiphony"—call and response—is not sufficiently examined. In addition, this issue most notably appears in the author's citing politics and the textual rigor with which the book overall neglects to take into consideration bodies of scholarship that are not entirely Eurocentric nor conventional in the ways in which aurality and sound are conceived. In the recent years, leading up to the publication of her 2019 monograph, a handful of scholars from a variety of disciplines have analyzed Sor Juana's "aurality" in her villancico corpus. Some of them, who do not perpetuate the accepted, canonical reading of Sor Juana's representation of non-European personas are omitted. At times, the author's critical readings of concepts such as "aurality," "sound studies," and "voice" become cyclical and repetitive, therefore needing more rigorous theorization. Aside from what Finley clearly articulates in the book's introduction and very well-structured chapters, I am still left wondering: how does she define and situate her scholarly interests and origins for crafting this fascinating topic? What is at stake for such a potentially impactful monographic study? Further, when I say "citing politics," my critique here also extends to the book as a whole. As a reader, I would have appreciated a sustained dialogue with critical thought from theorists in ethnomusicology, critical race studies, as well as a conversation with the latest current trends developing in gender and sexuality studies throughout Latinx and Latin American Studies. For instance, *Listening in Detail: Performances of Cuban Music* by Alexandra T. Vazquez and Licia Fiol Matta's *The Great Woman Singer: Gender and Voice in Puerto Rican Music* come to mind.

To be fair, I fully recognize that Finley's book does not focus on race studies in early modernity nor colonial studies. However, my contention remains that *Hearing Voices* does not consistently live up to the critical edge and theoretical

agility that I had expected from its eye-catchingly seductive title, table of contents, and thematic material. Nonetheless, Finley's volume demands and deserves our attention and respect. It is a must-read work that should be required reading for specialists and non-specialists alike. I applaud the author's efforts for catapulting Sor Juana's oeuvre in a provocative and new direction.

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**Gil Martínez, Francisco, and Amorina Villarreal Brasca, eds. *Estudios sobre la corrupción en España y América (siglos XVI-XVIII)*. Almería: Editorial Universidad de Almería, 2017. 384 pp. + 5 tables + 1 fig.**

The study of historical corruption has regained much ground in Spain, especially after the economic crisis of 2008 triggered a round of judicial and journalistic investigations. María Pilar Ponce Leiva and Francisco Andújar Castillo, among others, have led the way in Spain. Two of their students have now edited a worthwhile book that studies historical corruption from various perspectives, both Spanish and Spanish American. Many historians of the field emphasize that charges and convictions for corruption in the early modern period often depended on the social or political circumstances or that the phenomenon did not even exist because of a profoundly differing mentality. Yet the editors and most of the authors depart from this view and take a robust stance. They argue that abuses could well result in censure, punishment, or even death. In their introduction, the editors intend to show the "similar dynamics and variations" of the "royal administration and the ecclesiastical hierarchy" (14). Francisco Gil Martínez then defines corruption as any exercise of power for self-benefit that damaged the common good or the royal treasury (*bien común / real hacienda*), which contemporaries viewed negatively. Even the king could unfairly seize property from the vassals and become corrupt. After this refreshing reminder, Gil Martínez shows that it was not Father Antonio Vieira who published the treatise *Arte de Furtar* in 1652, but rather the Jesuit Manuel da Costa. Gil Martínez clarifies in this regard the claims made by Stuart Schwartz in his 1973 book, *Sovereignty and Society in Colonial Brazil*. Gil Martínez then avers that there "was no crime of corruption as such," though the legal historian Carlos Garriga takes a somewhat different stance on this point.

In the following chapter, Rubén Gálvez Martín examines Luis Cabrera de Córdoba (1559-1623), *Relaciones de las cosas sucedidas en la Corte de España*. Cabrera chastised embezzlements and fraud in government. He hoped that the jailing of the courtiers Alonso Ramírez de Prado and Pedro Franqueza in 1606 and 1607 and the death sentences for other defendants for forging coins or decrees