

RESEÑAS

XABIER GRANJA IBARRECHE. *Protecting the Spanish Woman. Gender Identity and Empowerment in María de Zayas's Works*. Reno & Las Vegas: U of Nevada P, 2023. 262 pp.

In his preface and Introduction, five chapters and a helpfully detailed index, Xabier Granja Ibarreche employs a gender studies approach to examine the Early Modern Spanish concept of masculine identity and its impact on women. He draws on Baldassare Castiglione and other conduct manuals to do so, and to contextualize the representation of those roles in Zayas's novellas. Pointing out that she was among the first women to publish literary works in Spanish, Granja reviews the scant information about her life. He regularly notes how she departs from masculine dogmas of her day. Not wanting her views to be dismissed, she "anchors her work in a dual dialectical discourse" that recognized Spanish traditions while proposing an alternative that subverts patriarchal hierarchy (5). She creates shocking scenes in her novels to expose masculine licentiousness, to create an emotional response in readers, and to incite noblemen to allow empowerment of women in a more equitable Spain. He references other modern critics' work on Zayas and her feminism and contrasts her work with a considerable number of Early Modern Spanish judicial cases. Women did not have authority but did have power, say historians, which her heroines use to reach for safety, while female spirituality destabilizes patriarchal power. Zayas opposes the patriarchal oppression of women and connects it to the sins of lust, avarice and ire, betrayals of the courtly ideal, Christian morality and national stability.

In Chapter 1, "Man Redefined – Hegemony, History and Refashioning," Granja names the "masculine gaze" as the most relevant assumption about Zayas's social context. He adopts Laura Mulvey's valuable insight from psychoanalytic and film criticism regarding the pleasure of looking and the orientation of narrative film toward a sexualized satisfaction of heterosexual masculine scopophilia. In patriarchy, he says, "women do not create meaning, but instead receive it" as created by men (17). Yet in the hegemonic culture of masculine domination in which she wrote, Zayas managed to invert the masculine gaze and give her heroines an authoritative voice. He draws on Raymond Williams, Pierre Bourdieu, Norbert Elias, Stephen Pinker and other modern critics, and returns to Aristotle, Galen and authors of Renaissance conduct manuals from Castiglione through Lucas Gracián Dantisco, following the refashioning of the model man.

Contrasting his approach to that of Lisa Vollendorf, in his second chapter, "Woman Nullified – The Gendered Dangers of Noblemen's Despotism," Granja argues that Zayas seeks to open a dialogue about the need to refashion masculine hegemony to allow women to survive. Men violate the courtly code that men should protect honest women, instead seducing women as they seek material benefits and sexual variety. Zayas acknowledges sexual impulses in women and women's fallibility but also shows men violating Christian moral codes and concealing their flaws as they pursue variety and power. Whereas Juan Luis Vives instructed women to remain silent, Zayas liberates the female voice. Juana speaks in self-defense in "El desengaño andando y premio de la virtud" and enters a convent on realizing that her suitor, Fernando, would not marry her. Zayas thus acknowledges the power of masculine dominance, and the difficulty of cultural change; but she has Fernando die at the end along with his lover. Zayas underlines masculine despotism in her second volume stories, "Tarde llega el desengaño" and "La inocencia castigada." In the former, Jaime tortures Elena at length after she has been raped, and Diego in "La inocencia" hires a sorcerer whose candle-driven spell allows Alonso to rape Inés until a female neighbor overhears her laments and pleas for confession. In neither case is the ignoble husband similarly punished.

In Chapter 3: "Woman Victimized – The Sexual Assault in Patriarchal Oppression," Granja shows Zayas undercutting the myth of masculine superiority and advocating social change to prioritize female safety. In "Aventurarse perdiendo," she gives readers an admirable heroine, Jacinta, whose loyal suitor Felix dies, leaving her prey to Celio's deceptions, until she is rescued and delivered to a convent by Fabio. Laura in "La fuerza del amor" repeatedly tries to reform her adulterous and abusive husband Diego. Zayas includes a positive model of masculine respect for women in Laura's loving brother Carlos, but she rejects her repentant Diego's pleas to reunite and becomes a nun while Diego dies in battle. Pedro, Aminta's uncle and guardian in "La burlada Aminta y venganza del honor" dies when he discovers that Jacinto has dishonored her, but she achieves her own revenge and recovers her honor in marriage. "La esclava de su amante" fits the title of Granja's Chapter 4, "Woman Brutalized – The Bodies Broken by Masculine Violence." As Zayas's tone darkens, male violence escalates, and although her virtuous female protagonists survive in "El juez de su causa" and "La perseguida triunfante," they do not outlive that brutality in "Mal presagio casar lejos" or "El traidor contra su sangre." Granja concludes in Chapter 5 that Zayas leaves unresolved the tension between her defense of women and her representation of the patriarchal injustice they suffer.

Overall, I found Granja's readings of Zayas tales accurate and on point, despite his often-awkward writing style. That style I consider flawed by

frequent imprecise use or misleading choice of words. However, he enriches his study with abundant incorporation of supporting evidence he found in archival records of suits brought against masculine abusers of women in Early Modern Spanish courts. That evidence makes his study valuable even for those with great familiarity with Zayas's dramatic writings, and invaluable for those only now discovering them.

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ANA LEÓN-TÁVORA AND ROSALÍA CORNEJO-PARRIEGO, EDS. *Colonialist Gazes and Counternarratives of Blackness: Afro-Spanishness in 20th- and 21st-Century Spain*. New York and London: Routledge, 2024.

Colonialist Gazes and Counternarratives of Blackness is a critical contribution to the growing effort to study race in contemporary Iberia beyond the dominant framework of immigration. The collection focuses specifically on Blackness, defined by editors Ana León-Távora and Rosalía Cornejo-Parriego as a non-essentialist, heterogeneous and diasporic concept, to lay to rest popular constructions of Spain as a raceless or race-blind, society (4). Situating the intervention within the broader geographic field of Afro-European Studies, they argue that Blackness is an integral component of the material and imaginary construction of Europe in general and Spain in particular, informed by the nation's specific situation as a crossroads of the European Union, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic community. The authors open with an overview of salient critical conversations related to Blackness in the region, including the absence or deliberate ignorance of the category in national histories and discourses, the relegation of Black subjects to the status of "forever newcomers" in the Spanish national context, and Spain's position within the Black European Diaspora. The volume's contributions, they assert, participate in an "(Afro) European dialogue regarding amnesia, belonging, and empowerment" (3).

The book is organized according to two broad themes. Chapters 1-5 bring together studies that take up the question of knowledge and representation of Blackness, with contributors delving into the role of race in colonial systems of power, and its resonance in contemporary society. In the first essay, "From Negrophilia to Necropolitics: Anti-Black Racism in Spanish Avant-Garde Humor," Ana León-Távora analyzes anti-Black racist graphic humor in *Buen Humor* and *Gutiérrez*, two prominent early twentieth-century journals. She argues that these texts highlight Spain's racist mentality and colonialist complex during this era, particularly