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Martín, Adrienne Laskier. *An Erotic Philology of Golden Age Spain*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2008. 258 pp. ISBN: 978 0 8265 1579 7.

It is most welcome to recognize the newest study from an established scholar as meticulous in her critical research and erudite insights as Adrienne Martín. The groundwork for her present study on Spanish literary eroticism is invigorated by her considerable examination of the subject in previous works that comprise several articles, the edited collection *Poesía erótica del Siglo de Oro. Crítica y antología* (Calíope 2006), and compilations co-edited with J. Ignacio Díez Fernández: *La poesía erótica de Fray Melchor de la Serna* (2003), *Venus venerada: Tradiciones eróticas de la literatura española* (2006), and *Venus venerada II: Literatura erótica y modernidad en España* (2007).

Martín analyzes the representation of eroticized figures found in canonical and less prominent works that encompass the genres of poetry, prose, and drama. She addresses the function of these works as literature and as aesthetic constructs and explores their meanings, both literal and figurative. Her study is informed by Ericson's sociology of deviance that characterizes behavior as normal or anomalous based on its reception in society. The moral stigmas associated with non-normative sexualities are formalized as codifying precepts in law, society and, consequently, literature.

Martín's five-chapter study opens with the chapter "Prostitution and Power" in which she discusses the social and literary frames of prostitution in Cervantes's exemplary novel *La tía fingida* and in the *Quixote*. She describes prostitution as a threat to the existing social order that requires social and financial containment. This prompts municipal and religious authorities to regulate licensed public brothels that, in effect, condone a legal prostitution as a lesser evil through the rationalization of health and morality. Correspondingly, in *La tía fingida* Esperanza creates social disorder in her role of prostitute. Although she is exploited, reified, and dehumanized in a class and gender power system, Martín observes that she is reintegrated into the wider community only through Cervantes's redemption of her through marriage. This chapter concludes with a discussion of rural prostitution that focuses on the *Quixote's* sympathetic character Maritornes. Martín notes that, similar to the urban centers, regulatory laws were passed to control inns and taverns limiting the amount of time public women could spend there. Maritornes is the literary representation of unfortunate, socially marginal women who are forced into prostitution as their only

means of survival. Martín adds that Cervantes's attitude of tolerance toward impoverished women is comprehensible when we recall the suspect behavior of the women in his own family.

In Chapter Two, "Homosexuality and Satire," Martín explores the socio-cultural conditions that determine the reception of homosexuality and she discusses how the concept of sodomy in early modern Europe differs from a single association with homosexuality, a modern social identity. The repression of sodomy by societal institutions and social anxiety about non-normative sexual practices generate antisodomite satire. She analyzes how social attitudes are conveyed in literary terms in Spanish burlesque and satirical verse, a genre representative of the characterization of homosexuals. Martín examines the socio-historical and literary constraints of homosexual discourse in Quevedo's sonnet "Por no comer la carne sodomita," wherein the reference to a triple heretic - Lutheran, sodomite, and witch—links sexual difference and religious anomaly as a threat to social and political stability. Quevedo's epitaph "A un bujarrón" and his poem "A un ermitaño mulato" satirize the Italians and the sinful hermit for their crimes against sexual taboos. The poems reflect the popular sentiment that all crimes against nature are reduced to the *delito nefando* (nefarious sin) of the sodomite. Martín then discusses the polyvalent erotic terminology in Góngora's burlesque and satirical verse that discloses a sociology of early modern sexuality. This again serves to demonstrate the homophobia of Golden Age society that fears non-normative sex as a force for social destabilization and reaffirms that those prosecuted for sodomy were often members of the marginal class.

The *peccatum mutum* or silent sin, a reference to female homosexuality, is explored in Chapter Three, "Lesbianism as Dream and Myth." In Fray Melchor de la Serna's narrative poem, "El sueño de la viuda de Aragón," Martín illustrates that female homosexual desire is dismissed as harmless in a male-centered view of sexuality. The burlesque aspect of the poem depicts a woman's gender transmutation as a simulacrum of conventional heterosexual love that disregards lesbian eros. Cristóbal de Villalón's *El Crótalon*, a misogynistic cautionary tale about cross-dressing twins and the betrayal of friendship in a love triangle, does not negate the possibility of same-sex desire but, as Martín observes, it is again dismissed because it cannot have a natural conclusion without the mediation of the male. This chapter concludes with a discussion of lesbian desire in Jorge de Montemayor's canonical pastoral novel *Los siete libros de la Diana*. Martín's analysis centers on the homoerotic interlude between Selvagia and Ysmenia, who claims to be a man dressed as a woman but is in fact a woman in love with

a male cousin, Alanio. In discussing why the homoerotic content does not raise objections in its day, Martín explains that this episode creates a myth of female-female desire that is assimilated into the heteronormative view of love without a challenge to male sexual hegemony or literary mores. According to Professor Martín's reading, the episode is non-transgressive and escapes the repressive control of social and legal systems because there is no threat to heterosexuality and it conforms to the philosophy of love that allows for female desire based on the Neoplatonist's pursuit of beauty.

In Chapter Four, "Wild Women and Warrior Maidens," Martín explores the legend and literature of the female fighter in varied genres: the balladry of the *doncella guerrera* (warrior maiden); the narrative of the historical Catalina de Erauso, the Lieutenant nun and cross dresser who fought in the Americas; and varied poetic and dramatic manifestations of the *serrana* (wild mountain woman). She describes the *doncella guerrera* ballads as a recognizable tradition with many variations in which the female protagonist disguises the erotic elements of her female identity but not without attempts to reveal her true sex. Martín reads the *doncella guerrera* ballad as the progressive courtship stages between the Prince and the maiden in expectation of marriage. Beyond the aesthetic value of the ballads, the *doncella guerrera* reveals woman's intercession in the salvaging of family honor and her erotic empowerment. Martín focuses on issues of sexual otherness and eroticism in Catalina de Erauso's prose work *Historia de la monja alférez*, which has value as a sociological document. Catalina has been interpreted as a woman who finds the female role limiting and chooses to become hypermasculinized. Professor Martín notes Catalina's paradox of transgression as a warrior maiden and manly woman, but offers that Catalina does not disrupt the social order because she ultimately receives license from the patriarchal hierarchy to live as an honorary member of the masculine gender. Martín ends the chapter with a review of the violent mountain girl known as the *serrana*. She begins with Juan Ruiz's well-known *Libro de buen amor*, then addresses the legendary *serrana* from the ballad tradition, and concludes with Luis Vélez de Guevara's character Gila, the manly murderous woman who is the protagonist of his 1613 play *La serrana de la Vera*. In her analysis, Martín follows the transformation of the *serrana* figure from crude promiscuity in her earliest representation to a sensual performance in Vélez de Guevara's play.

In the last chapter, "Eros and the Art of Cuckoldry," Martín examines the mechanisms of sexual humor in a variety of genres: the world of cuckolds, female tricksters, and erotic tricks in Golden Age poetry, short novels, and dramatic interludes. Erotic humorous poetry functions as a burlesque rebuttal of

the ideal love of Petrarchan poetry and as a repudiation of the moralists of the age. Martín examines the themes of illicit love and trickery in erotic verse novellas. Fray Melchor de la Serna's "Novela de las madejas" and his "Novela de la mujer de Gil," written in a comic tone to amuse rather than edify, portray the conventional erotic deception of the simpleton husband who is deceived by his wife and her lover. The recurrent theme of female adultery precipitated by male jealousy is synthesized in Cervantes's theatrical interlude *El viejo celoso* and his exemplary novel *El celoso extremeño* and is also the subject of María de Zaya's short story *El prevenido, engañado*. Martín's analysis of the charged lexicon reveals a dialogue and imagery replete with double entendres. She frames women within the contemporary revision of Golden Age literary history and identifies them as resourceful leaders in issues of love and free will. In a world upside down these women are not punished for social transgressions as are the women of Golden Age drama.

Martín provides valuable critical resources in an extensive bibliography. Her study does not have a concluding chapter but Martín presents some closing thoughts in Chapter Five. She cites the studies and anthologies on early modern Spanish erotic literature that have been published since 1990. She earnestly recommends future research in this legitimate and incipient field by reminding the reader that early modern erotic texts are abundant and still understudied. These works deserve scholarly attention not only because they are precursors but because they are a unique form of narrative verse that embodies sociocultural context and reception. Golden Age verse reflects the existence of a complex set of tolerant attitudes toward the literary representation of sexuality and eroticism, which the Inquisition did not attempt to censor. Martín's study is an intelligent, well-documented, eloquent, and significant contribution to the growing field that she terms erotic philology. She introduces new perspectives on the Golden Age to encourage and validate an area of investigation that has been on the margin of philological interest and authenticates early modern erotic literature as an integral part of Spain's national literature that enriches our literary and historical image of the past. Martín's exploration of the erotics of sexual transgression goes beyond a literary study to document the sociohistorical circumstances and contexts that sanction the acceptance or rejection of sexualized figures both in society and in literature.

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