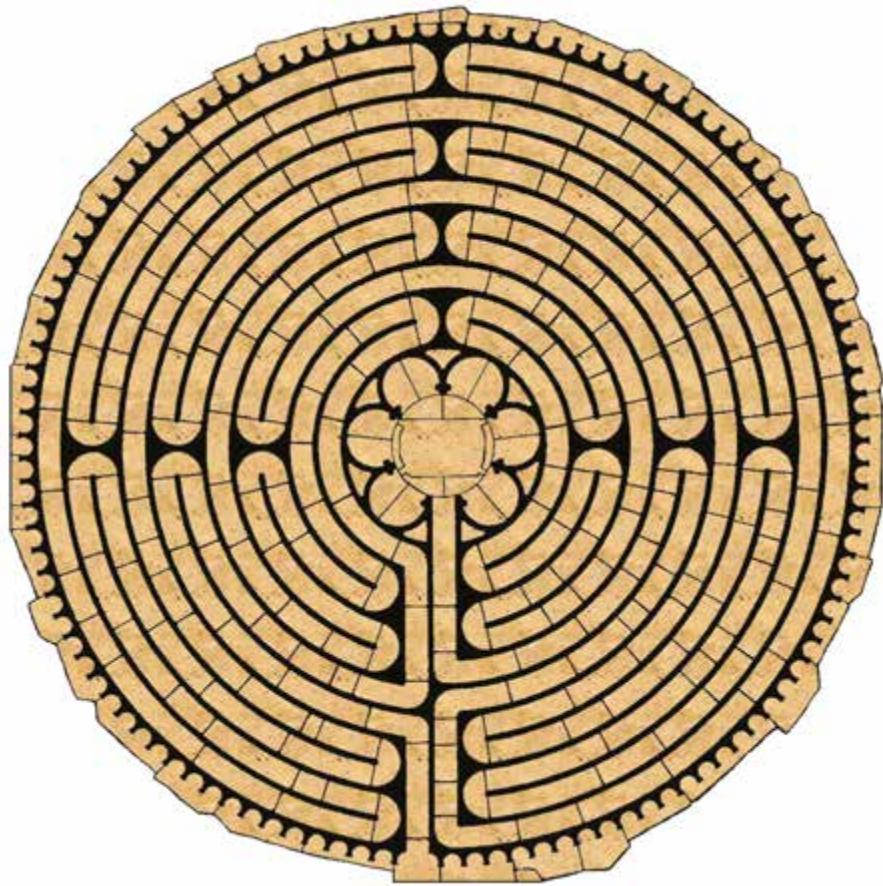


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Special Issue: Early Modernity in Arizona State University

Table of contents

Articles

Sor Juana's Birth and the Mexican Racial Imaginary: The Enigmas of her Family, Putative "Sisters" and other Blind Spots in Criticism

Emil Volek, Arizona State University ..... 4

*El Festejo de los Empeños de Una Casa*: The Negotiation of a Social Contract for the American Colonies of Spain

Dulce María González-Estévez, Arizona S. University.....23

Slumming *Don Quixote* in Luis Lucia's *Rocío de la Mancha* (1963)

Daniel Holcombe, Georgia College & State University  
(Alumnus, Arizona State University)..... 54

Barroco, amistad y metonimia en "El Licenciado Vidriera"

Juan Pablo Gil-Osle, Arizona State University.....103

Reviews

*The Spanish Pacific, 1521-1815: A Reader of Primary Sources*. Ed. Christina H. Lee and Ricardo Padrón. Amsterdam University Press, 2020. 249 pp. ISBN: 978-94-6372-064-9.

Robert Richmond Ellis, Occidental College .....131

Vélez de Guevara, Luis. *La conquista de Orán*. Edición crítica y anotada de C. George Peale y Javier J. González Martínez. Newark, Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta-Hispanic Monographs, 2020. 210 pp.

Ana M. Rodríguez Rodríguez, University of Iowa.....137

*Pornographic Sensibilities: Imagining Sex and the Visceral in Premodern and Early Modern Spanish Cultural Production*. Ed. Nicholas R. Jones and Chad Leahy. Routledge, 2021. 269 pp. ISBN: 978-0-367-50353-6.

Daniel Holcombe, Georgia College and State University .....141

*Cirigliaro, Noelia S. Domus. Ficción y mundo doméstico en el Barroco español*. Tamesis, 2015. 197 pp. ISBN: 978-1-85566-293-3.

William Worden, University of Alabama.....144

*Faraway Settings: Spanish and Chinese Theaters of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Juan Pablo Gil-Osle & Frederick A. de Armas, editors. Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2021

Dakota Tucker & John Beusterien, Texas Tech University.....147

Cirnigliaro, Noelia S. *Domus. Ficción y mundo doméstico en el Barroco español*. Tamesis, 2015. 197 pp. ISBN: 978-1-85566-293-3.

Despite Lope's pronouncement in his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* advising "no gaste pensamientos ni conceptos / en las cosas domésticas" (71), early modern Spanish playwrights and authors working in other genres did indeed often focus on what happens inside the house in their writing. The domestic world as shown in three genres—"la novela barroca, la comedia de capa y espada y un tipo especial de teatro breve con temática urbana" (11)—is the subject of this fascinating study that establishes a dialogue between theory and criticism related to early modern Spain and the emerging field of domesticity studies. In the introduction Noelia Cirnigliaro explains that her book "investiga prácticas nacidas en el terreno de lo habitable, la organización del espacio interior, las dinámicas de género y la utilización de la cultura material de la casa barroca" (2). She also defines the polyvalent term "casa barroca" as a theoretical and analytical concept and adds that the Spanish Baroque saw an interaction in two directions between life in the home and literature characterized by a domestication of theatrical works and literature as well as a dramatization of domesticity. A wide variety of domestic spaces are discussed in the six chapters and the brief concluding section that follow the introduction, including "*casas a la malicia, casas de aposento, casas de pisos, casas famosas, casas de alquiler, casas principales, casas lóbregas, casas de muñecas y casas de(l) placer*" (2).

Chapter One examines several plays by Tirso de Molina that feature "casas a la malicia," seventeenth-century houses in Madrid disguised to appear smaller than they were so that the owners were not forced by law to share their living quarters with bureaucrats working for the Spanish Court. The analysis in this chapter shows that in the hands of playwrights like Tirso the growing numbers of these kinds of deceptive houses became "un tropo teatral multifacético para denotar la práctica doméstica (y no doméstica) asociada al engaño de los sentidos, al ilusionismo urbano y a las tácticas de la ficción" (40). This focus on "casas a la malicia" serves as a particularly apt topic for the first chapter of the monograph given that the very existence of these houses "representa una de las realidades históricas más teatrales de la ciudad de Madrid" (25). The second chapter looks at three works of "teatro breve," a genre that rarely receives sufficient critical attention, and shows the ways in which they depict the city of Madrid filled

with new construction and new communities that resulted from the establishment of the Court in the city. These short works both appealed to the pride that theatergoers felt for their city and at times criticized the growing metropolis, offering “vistas madrileñas que combinan, sin contradicción, la exaltación y la sátira” (48).

The third chapter analyzes two “comedias de capa y espada” by Tirso de Molina—*Por el sótano y el torno* and *En Madrid y en una casa*—with a focus on how the playwright portrays domestic life in “la casa de alquiler y la casa principal” (71). By interrogating “las imágenes del trampantojo que propone Tirso” (72), and there are many such images in both plays, Cirnigliaro demonstrates how this extensive use of *trompe l’oeil* functions as an expression of subversive feminine practices in daily life. The fourth chapter makes deft use of Gaston Bachelard’s ideas about space and Norman Bryson’s commentaries on still-life paintings to analyze the “estética tenebrista” (118) present in two of the stories in María de Zayas’s *Desengaños amorosos*. The analysis highlights the “ambientación lúgubre, mortuoria y horrorosa” (94) in the *novelas* and shows how Zayas makes use of darkness and confined spaces to create a horrifying world in which women need to be protected from men.

Chapter Five analyzes *Las muñecas de Marcela* by Álvaro Cubillo de Aragón in order to demonstrate how this play makes explicit the connection between the theatrical and the economic. Using *La perfecta casada* as an example of an important “libro de economía” of the time, this chapter convincingly argues that Cubillo de Aragón uses the metaphor of the house as a book in which the action of the play serves as “un dispositivo pedagógico para todos personajes de la comedia” (138). The sixth chapter considers “una de las casas más complejas de todas las que edifica la narrativa española” (20), the literary academy established by four students from the Universidad de Salamanca in Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo’s *Casa del placer honesto*. Cirnigliaro’s analysis here perceptively examines the economics and the masculine nature of this academic community while also showing how both the house itself and the narrative structure employed by Salas Barbadillo in the work function as an “espectáculo de curiosidades” (164). The brief concluding “Coda” offers some final observations on “la teatralidad del mundo doméstico” (169) while relating the analysis carried out in the monograph to such present-day phenomena as home improvement reality shows and the technology that

makes a normal home what is now called a smart home. This clearly written and well-organized monograph, with its persuasive use of domesticity studies as a lens through which to analyze works in a variety of genres, is a valuable contribution to the field of early modern Spanish literature.

William Worden  
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