

Yet I believe that any reader, student or specialist, will be mightily compelled by the Sor Juana that Luciani's book itself fashions. Given its guiding theme and close readings, the study could easily desiccate Sor Juana into calculated, proliferating textual selves, formalistically examined. Instead, by rendering the existential issue of the nun's self-fashioning through her situations of 'existential crisis' (151), and thanks to his intimate engagement with his subject and her texts, Luciani reaches the human Sor Juana far more convincingly than do many of Octavio Paz's pseudo-psychanalytical biographical explorations.

Luciani's remarkable 'Conclusion' on Sor Juana's final penitent years humanizes her most poignantly; it adds dimension to a period we tend to dismiss as a flat tragedy. In accord with the inspirational 'liberation script' that frequently runs recent apologetics of the nun's life, Luciani wishfully 'speculates that [during her final years] she colluded with her oppressors to present a conventional, ascetic self-image to the world as a cover for the private moral and intellectual autonomy that she enjoyed' (160). He views 'the ritualistic marking of the body' that she enacted in penitence as Sor Juana's last act of self-fashioning—'a final deviation, a pious lie, an ironic joke, camouflage' (160). Luciani's concluding assertions, no less rich than those that fill the book, deliver Sor Juana with and unto a profound new grace.

Reference

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Women Who Live Evil Lives: Gender, Religion, and the Politics of Power in Colonial Guatemala

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The historical record, in the case of colonial Spanish America written almost exclusively by men for the most part in the interests of men, lends itself to the study of women, in whatever capacity, only by dogged persistence, patient application, and creative use of the often paltry and tricky sources at hand. We now have a number of landmark works, produced by the likes of Ruth Behar, Alexandra Parma and Noble David Cook, Asunción Lavrin, Barbara Potthast, Irene Silverblatt, Susan Socolow, Steve J. Stern, and Ann Twinam. To the efforts of these established and recognized scholars a new generation is making significant contributions, Martha Few prominently among them.

Having culled chapters from her doctoral dissertation and published them in reputable fora by way of announcing her arrival on the scene, Few then availed herself of a fellowship from the Newberry Library in Chicago, which afforded her the luxury of time to reconfigure her previous endeavors in book form. *Women Who Live Evil Lives* is the impressive result, impressive if for no other reason than the fact that Few dedicates herself to investigating how certain women fared in the colonial scheme of things not in Mexico or Peru but in and around Santiago de Guatemala, the capital city of Spanish Central America.

Few examines 'the lives and practices of so-called *mujeres de mal vivir*, or women who live evil lives,' a turn of phrase she attributes to 'Inquisition sources and other colonial-era documents' that identify as such 'female sorcerers, witches, magical healers, and leaders of clandestine religious devotions' (ix). At the outset, Few acknowledges that consulting Inquisition records and basing interpretations of society upon them is problematical. Nonetheless, she proceeds to reconstruct, at times in vivid detail, nuanced scenarios that depict 'the rich discourses and practices of ritual power found in women's cultural roles in colonial Santiago' (x). Few establishes that people from all walks of life sought the advice and counsel of *mujeres de mal vivir* 'in sexual and familial relations; in disputes between neighbors and rival shop owners; in instances of abuse by colonial officials, employers, and husbands; and in cases of bewildering and often bizarre illnesses' (2–3). Consultation in these regards, however, placed *mujeres de mal vivir* in a dilemma. 'On the one hand,' Few observes, 'women's use of ritual practices to intervene in community conflicts and earn money despite the dangers reveals the crucial but often overlooked gender dynamics of power within the broader framework of ethnic and cultural contestation of colonial rule.' Then again, she cautions, 'women's public roles in local religious cultures left them vulnerable to accusations of sorcery and became opportunities for the Spanish state to re-inscribe colonial rule at the community level through institutions such as the Inquisition' (3).

The life of anyone considered a *mujer de mal vivir* was definitely not without incident. Take Gerónima de Barahona and Cecilia de Arriola for example, two 'ethnically and economically marginalized' *mulatas* who 'became notorious public figures in Santiago de Guatemala' after they conspired to cast a spell on Cecilia's husband, Juan de Fuentes, bewitching him 'so that he could not be a man on all the occasions he desired' (32). Juan's disclosures to Inquisition authorities in Santiago, made after Cecilia had pulled a knife on him, resulted in his wife being jailed and Gerónima fleeing, according to her neighbors, to a salt-making community on the Pacific coast, 'where most of the people have little fear of God and their custom is to hide criminals so they cannot be found' (33). A region-wide witch-hunt ensued, culminating in 'the public confiscation of Gerónima's home and material goods'—when she was not engaged as a *mujer de mal vivir* Gerónima worked as a meat seller—which in turn 'left her children homeless.' Forty-seven people were questioned 'until the case ended with Gerónima's death while she was imprisoned

in the city hospital,' with Cecilia transferred from custody in Santiago 'to the Inquisition jail in Mexico City' (34).

Though Few revels in showcasing the fine-grained peculiarities of her archival labors, she takes pains 'to avoid exoticizing Guatemalan women as historical subjects' (x) because this is precisely the narrative and representational emphasis of her sources. Instead Few tries at all times to situate her *mujeres de mal vivir* in larger contexts, especially Santiago's 'multiethnic social milieu of Indians, Blacks, Europeans, and castas' in which the actions and behavior of Few's protagonists was 'reinforced through the movement of people in and out of the capital and through ties of kinship, sexual relations, trade, and healing shrines that crossed urban-rural boundaries' (130). What could easily have become a parade of off-beat characters strutting their stuff on a parochial stage Few deploys to portray how a loose-knit body of women registered, resonated, and left their mark. To the pioneering work of Christopher H. Lutz (1994) and the more recent elaborations of Robinson Herrera (2003), Few adds to our growing understanding of just how lively and eventful colonial life could be in a Santiago de Guatemala that was anything but the sleepy backwater we may have thought it was once upon a time.

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Sceptres and Sciences in the Spains: Four Humanists and the New Philosophy (ca. 1680–1740)

RUTH HILL

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Sceptres and Sciences in the Spains es un libro de importante alcance para el hispanismo del Barroco Tardío, período que se sitúa entre los años 1680 y 1740. La profesora Ruth Hill, al acercarse simultáneamente a las producciones literarias de Hispanoamérica y España de esa época estudia la modernidad filosófica y estética alcanzada en ellas a través de las múltiples influencias ejercidas por la 'filosofía nueva.' Su estudio se centra en cuatro autores del momento: la mexicana Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, el español Gabriel Alvarez de Toledo, el peruano Pedro de Peralta Barnuevo, y finalmente el portugués—residente de España—Francisco Botello de Moraes y Vasconcelos. Estos autores lograron mantener una posición mediadora, una 'vía