

proposed in the book. These are perhaps questions for other works and maybe other critics, for whom this book will be an unavoidable interlocutor.

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Casuistry and Early Modern Spanish Literature. Marlen Bidwell-Steiner and Michael Scham, eds.

Foro Hispánico 66. Leiden: Brill, 2022. xi + 206 pp. Open Access.

This wide-ranging essay collection investigates casuistic discourse in some prominent literary texts of early modern Spain. Collectively, the studies argue that casuistry emerged to engage with the complex world in this period, and it informed the forging of new literary genres as a response to that world. Casuistry has roots in classical rhetoric and medieval theology, but is formalized as a defined set of moral, pedagogical, and theological practices due to the Jesuit refinement of it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Previous scholars have argued that theologians, educators, and writers in Spain drew on the language and mental structures modeled in casuistry in presenting and deliberating on specific cases of moral complexity in their texts. For instance, Hilaire Kallendorf, who is also featured in this volume, investigates the presence of casuistic discourse in a vast corpus of Spanish drama (*Conscience on Stage: The "Comedia" as Casuistry in Early Modern Spain*, 2007).

The present collection encompasses more genres of fiction and nonfiction texts that span 1500–1629, a key period of textual production and innovation in Spain. Individual essays tackle the areas of thought in which casuistry applied, including legal, ethical, rhetorical, theological, political, and economic contexts. Many of the essays engage with the primary texts of casuistry and model how it informs the creation of new literary genres, thereby encouraging other scholars to follow suit in widening the inquiry into casuistry and early modern Spanish literature. All the studies apply close reading of the literary or historical primary texts, and each chapter includes a list of works cited, with an overarching index.

The collection includes genres already linked to casuistry such as drama (Bidwell-Steiner and Kallendorf) and the picaresque (Friedman, Alvarez Roblin, and Mañero Lozano), and others only now demonstrated to hinge on the issues that casuists deliberated, such as the *novela bizantina* (Traninger). Albert's essay on casuistry in several novella collections makes the important argument that we find "casuistical patterns of thought" and "casuistry as a mental habitus" fully embedded in literary discourse (153). Several of the writers examined in the collection turned to the methodologies of casuistry to grapple with novel situations that they attempted to work through in their texts and lives, such as Mateo Alemán, who confronted an unauthorized

continuation of his picaresque novel (Alvarez Roblin), or Las Casas, who built a theological and moral argument about Amerindian religious belief that aimed to protect these individuals against conquest through just war (Cárdenas Bunsen).

The introductory chapter provides a starting point for scholars that may be unfamiliar with the field of casuistry. For those looking for a more procedural approach, the essays of Bidwell-Steiner, Mañero Lozano, and Kallendorf are recommended. Two essays delve into the early modern political and ethical landscape: Scham's analysis of Sancho Panza's governorship and Cárdenas Bunsen's study of Las Casas's *Apologética*.

One of the collection's stated aims relates to gender: "to bring out important considerations of gender in the literary works as well as in the culture more generally" (2). Within the essays, gender appears in thematic concerns of honor and women's voices in male-authored texts, rather than directly through the voices of women writers. Another promising idea mentioned in the introduction is that of the Jewish and Muslim legal and theological context, which is partially touched on in Bidwell-Steiner's essay. Additionally, Bidwell-Steiner and Traninger discuss connections between casuistry and the converso identity of Pleberio and of the writers Rojas and Reinoso. One question readers can pursue is whether the specific focus on casuistry offered in this collection succeeds in teasing out a keener understanding of the texts that is distinctive from other approaches.

All told, the collection proves through the diversity of genres, time periods, and textual situations, that casuistic discourse is an important mental paradigm that informed how writers crafted their texts, and it contributed to the development of new literary genres in Spain. Another key takeaway is that the writers from early modern Spain who used methodologies from casuistry drew on what current scholarship would understand as a multidisciplinary foundation, bringing the imaginative creations that they produced into conversation with theology, the law, ethics, and politics.

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Women Readers and Writers in Medieval Iberia: Spinning the Text.

Montserrat Piera.

The Medieval and Early Modern Iberian World 71. Leiden: Brill, 2019. xxiv + 484 pp.

This 507-page book consists of two main parts ("Reading Women" and "Writing Women"), followed by an epilogue. It comprises eight well-balanced chapters, which make an innovative contribution to the knowledge of female subjectivity in the Middle Ages. The main subject concerns the premodern reading of medieval Iberian Christian women: the "often-silenced female voice" in multiple forms of textualities in court and convent. Montserrat Piera proposes to approach these voices through