

estudio como un fenómeno histórico amplio, con dimensiones geográficas, demográficas, políticas o culturales, acorde a las nuevas tendencias que la historiografía atlántica lleva años mostrando en los ámbitos académicos más allá de estigmas, temporalidades y actores coloniales.

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WOMEN AND CRIME IN LATE COLONIAL GUATEMALA

The Woman on the Windowsill: A Tale of Mystery in Several Parts. By Sylvia Sellers-García. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. Pp. xiv, 281. Notes. Illustration Credits. Index. \$32.50 cloth.
 doi:10.1017/tam.2021.117

On the morning of July 1, 1800, don Cayetano Díaz, a surveyor in Guatemala City, awoke to find the severed breasts of a woman on his windowsill. The story of this gruesome discovery, along with the discoveries of other severed female body parts in the coming months, is just one element of the genre-defying new book that is part murder mystery, part cultural history, part meditation on the historian's craft, and part memoir. By weaving the history of late colonial Latin America into the narrative of a classic whodunit, this book shows how crimes can serve to illuminate the dynamics of culture and everyday life in the past.

Each chapter describes a key development in the investigation of this case in relation to some aspect of the society and culture of late colonial Guatemala. For example, in the second chapter, the story of Liberata Bejerano, a young woman who had recently disappeared and was thought to be the victim, provides the opportunity to discuss the causes of domestic violence against women and the indifference of the justice system to the everyday violence that women faced in colonial society. Over the course of eight chapters, the book uses historical accounts of a range of topics to illuminate the meaning that the evidence and events of this case might have had for people in late colonial Guatemala. These topics include the religious iconography of female bodies, the role of dissection in enlightened medicine, the experience of illness and death in hospitals and homes, the importance of urban space and place in structuring everyday life, the meaning of death and the dead in Guatemalan society, and the rise of policing in colonial governance under the Bourbons.

Collectively, the book's chapters support an argument that is more than the sum of its parts. The very act of submitting this case to historical analysis is a rejection of the idea that this murder and dismemberment of a woman in late colonial Guatemala was merely a deranged act beyond the limits of explanation. Instead, Sellers-García

encourages us to think about crime—even in its most disturbing manifestations—as a kind of text made meaningful through the careful reconstruction of the historical, social, and cultural contexts in which it took place.

There is little to fault in this study, and it does an exemplary job of bringing life to the world in which this crime took place, while, at points, offering valuable meditations on the historian's craft. Given the attention to situating this case in its different contexts, it is surprising that the book has little to say about another way in which bodily dismemberment figured into late colonial life: the punishment of political dissidents. After all, the timing of these events in Guatemala City puts this case squarely in a period of social and political uprisings in Latin America and the Atlantic World that ranged from slave revolts in the Caribbean to the indigenous uprisings in the Andes. When such uprisings failed, it was not uncommon for colonial authorities—following their counterparts in Europe—to publicly execute the leaders, dismember their bodies, and display the severed body parts throughout the land. Even though the original sources of this case may have not suggested such a comparison, Seller-García's skill at reading the body in parts might have yielded some fresh insights into the broader consequences of early modern body politics.

Ultimately, this book has the two qualities of instant classic: an enthralling narrative presented through readable prose and a thoughtful analysis that is learned yet accessible. As such, it will be equally engaging to students and scholars and is recommended for undergraduate courses and graduate seminars on the histories of women, crime, colonial Latin America, and historical methods. For those looking for the solution to the mystery of the woman on the windowsill, read the book. It is well worth it.

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THE CARIBBEAN STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

Freedom Roots: Histories from the Caribbean. By Laurent Dubois and Richard Lee Turits.
 Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019. Pp. 408. \$35.00 cloth;
 \$26.99 e-book.
 doi:10.1017/tam.2021.118

Writing a book is a challenge in itself, but writing a book about the histories that emerge and shape societies in a geographic and cultural territory as complex as the Caribbean is even more difficult and risky. This new book is the result of successfully facing this challenge. The opening sentence condenses the dimension of its goal: “To tell the history of the Caribbean is to tell the history of the world” (1).