

Encarnación Juárez-Almendros. *El cuerpo vestido y la construcción de la identidad en las narrativas autobiográficas del siglo de oro.*

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This original work studies the function of dress and personal adornment in the construction of subjectivity as illustrated in nine autobiographies, five picaresque novels, and four self-referential historical narratives written during the Spanish golden age. The author provides an explanation for the emphasis on the description of clothes in the literary works of this period. In her attempt to answer questions related to the obsession for clothing and fashion reflected in these texts, Juárez Almendros attends closely to the different ways in which the textual representation of clothing expresses social, cultural, and political change, as well as the identity transformations of the narrators, and challenges essential dichotomies regarding gender, class, professional status, and ethnic issues. The author convincingly demonstrates the ability of the sartorial discourses in these autobiographies to reveal the tension of a fragmented subject that is willing both to conform to the rules instituted by the powerful and to resist them, subverting social hierarchies. However, according to the author, although the utilization of the symbolic power of dress allows the narrators to manipulate conventions in order to obtain social promotion, their accounts reveal their difficulties overcoming personal anxieties and confronting the moral, economic, and social complexities that characterized the historical period in which they lived.

The book is divided into three sections, each subdivided into different parts. In the first section, the author offers important information about the literary genre of

autobiography, the early modern concept of identity, and the political, moral, economic, and cultural issues related to different notions of fashion in their historical context. The section also provides an overview of various theoretical approaches traditionally applied to the analysis of the textual representation of clothing, including the theory of imitation, semiology, psychoanalysis, and cultural materialism, as well as the construction of premodern subjectivity. The second section studies the function of clothing in the development of the main characters of picaresque novels written during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Novels analyzed are the anonymous *La Vida del Lazarillo de Tormes*, Mateo Aleman's *El Guzmán de Alfarache*, Gregorio González's *El guitón Onofre*, Francisco de Quevedo's *La vida del Buscón*, and Francisco López de Úbeda's *La pícaro Justina*. In each of these novels, the manipulation of the symbolic power of dress by a narrator/actor eager to overcome the limitations associated with a humble origin, as well as to justify a current marginalized situation, contributes to the development of complex subjects who are able to resist the status quo. In other instances, the lack of details concerning clothing reveals an extremely simple self, as we observe in the case of Gonzalez's work. Also, just as the *Guzmán de Alfarache* demonstrates the function of the language of clothing in the construction of masculinity, *La pícaro Justina* shows the parallel capacity of dress and personal adornment to transform the narrator/actor into a female subject who controls her own trajectory and is able to objectify the male characters and to incorporate into herself male prerogatives, which allow her to transcend the limitations that early modern society imposes on women.

The third section, which examines historical autobiographies, opens with an analysis of another female narrator, Catalina de Erauso, who in the *Historia de la Monja Alférez* crosses the gender divide via her use of male clothing. The rest of the section includes studies of *Discurso de mi vida* by Alonso de Contreras, *Vida del soldado español Miguel de Castro*, and *Comentarios del desengañado* by Diego Duque de Estrada. In these three narratives the author asserts that the narrators' use of sartorial discourse enables them to both underline successes and hide personal frustrations, and that the use of a clerical robe at the end of their lives confirms the characters' integration into society. In some instances, the application of current masculinity theories might have complemented Juárez Almendros's explanation of the complex relationships between gender and class identities and their effects on early modern subject formation. Nevertheless, overall Juárez Almendros's study offers a unique perspective on the rhetorical use of the language of clothing by the authors of autobiographies in the Spanish golden age, and scholars of this period will greatly benefit from this work.

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