

volume makes a renewed case for the value of the humanities in fomenting productive reflection and collaborative action toward the goal of creating a more just world.

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The Criminal Baroque: Lawbreaking, Peacekeeping, and Theatricality in Early Modern Spain. Ted L. L. Bergman.

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The Criminal Baroque sets out to redress the false dichotomy separating criminals and law-abiding peoples in early modern Spain along class boundaries such that criminality, both in fiction and in the real world, is synonymous with marginalization. Its careful study of the spectacular fictional representations of criminal acts and real-life lawbreaking and punishment addresses a wide range of subjects and genres. With each chapter, we move further along the social ladder beginning with common criminals then progressing to *alguaciles*, soldiers, noblemen, and finally to kings, as Bergman convincingly demonstrates that criminality was not limited to any one social group.

Bergman begins in chapter 1 by examining the generic evolution of the *jácara* through which he traces the recurrent use of criminal jargon and corrects the popular assumption that the *jácara* originated in Quevedo's "Carta de Escarramán a la Méndez." The chapter continues by exploring the real-life violence in and around the *corrales* in Seville and, in so doing, points toward a certain social tolerance of violence and criminality, establishing an intersection between criminality on- and offstage, free from class distinctions.

Chapter 2 addresses the role, representation, and reception of *alguaciles*. Bergman first provides a useful overview of contemporary law enforcement structures before investigating, by way of case study, the widespread corruption among *alguaciles* in early modern Spain. For Bergman, this overt corruption, manifest in their participation in theatrical activities, serves as a source of political *desengaño* (disillusionment). The book then considers the depiction of *alguaciles* in *entremeses*, determining that, despite their widely acknowledged incompetence, they receive a relatively mild treatment.

In chapter 3, the focus shifts from *alguaciles* to soldiers as Bergman uncovers the prevalence of real-life criminals turning to the military to satisfy violent urges or evade prosecution. These figures, classified as *valentones*, are then explored in their fictional iterations on the stage in the *comedias de valentón*. The author defines them as violent individuals who love brawling but who are nonetheless honorable, trustworthy, charismatic—and, crucially, who are reintegrated into society or the military at the close of the play. Building on the previous chapter, Bergman

demonstrates that both real and fictional *valentones* were not only proof of an ineffective law enforcement regime, but that their ability to escape prosecution also verified its arbitrary and unpredictable operation.

Chapters 4 and 5 switch, once again, to focus on real-life spectacles implemented by the nobility to exercise control. While chapter 4 directly confronts the misconception that criminal behavior occurred on the margins of society and investigates the attempted use of spectacle to demonstrate authority by figures like Count Puñoenrostro, chapter 5 reconsiders the infamous public execution of Don Rodrigo Calderón. Intended to signify the stamping out of corruption at court, Bergman details how Calderón co-opted imagery associated with religious spectacle to transform himself from negative exemplar to repentant hero and avoid vilification. For Bergman, Calderón's unexpected co-option marks the state's loss of the propaganda battle, proving that public spectacles designed to deter and entertain are not able to communicate any single or unequivocal message.

The final chapter builds on the wealth of existing scholarship on kingship in the *comedia*. Bergman agrees with current arguments that the institution of the monarchy remains unchallenged in theater but adds that how it operates and how it is depicted as operating is up for debate. Devoting his attention to *comedias* in which the king is presented as akin to the brawling *valentón* figure of chapter 3, he writes that the king-as-brawler is the apotheosis of the criminal baroque and in fact coheres with law enforcement frameworks as understood and experienced by the early modern audience.

Throughout the detailed and wide-ranging case studies of *The Criminal Baroque*, Bergman depicts an audience that is tolerant, if not altogether accepting, of criminality and aware of its pervasiveness in society. His argument systematically problematizes the dominant model of interpretation, established by José Antonio Maravall, that plainly casts theatrical displays as political propaganda designed to ensure civic obedience. Bergman, however, deftly teases out the intrinsic disruptive possibility of public spectacles and highlights how, for a socially aware audience, they hold the potential to entertain and to fascinate, but also to bring about political *desengaño*.

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Cartesian Poetics: The Art of Thinking. Andrea Gadberry.

Thinking Literature. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020. 198 pp. \$27.50.

This is a very welcome contribution coming from a comparatist to the much-neglected subject of the relationship between thought and poetry in Descartes. Here, the reader will not find an enquiry into the (few) texts in which Descartes speaks on poets or poetry. The aim of the book is indeed more ambitious: to retrace the implicit poetic structures and forms pervading Descartes's principal philosophical texts.