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Fictions of Containment in the Spanish Female Picaresque: Architectural Space and Prostitution in the Early Modern Mediterranean

Emily Kuffner

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, EKUFFNER@CSBSJU.EDU

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Fictions of Containment in the Spanish Female Picaresque:
Architectural Space and Prostitution in the Early Modern Mediterranean

Emily Kuffner

To Adrienne Laskier Martín, in gratitude for her support and encouragement

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Introduction: Fictions of Containment

In 1450, León Battista Alberti, author of the first Renaissance architectural treatise, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books* [*De Re Aedificatoria*], stated that ‘the building is a form of body’ whose design should serve to reinforce social order.¹ Just as the body often served as a metaphor for the nation with the king as head, the house in Alberti’s treatise is both a physical structure and a metaphor for the social body. Ideologies of gender and the body are deeply embedded in Renaissance architectural theory since treatises such as Alberti’s instruct architects to design buildings that reflect the teleological order and symmetry of nature and of the male body. These texts gender ideal use of space by dividing masculine and feminine space within the home. For example, Alberti’s treatise advocates the segregation of women within the innermost regions of the domestic interior, thus protecting the physical body of the wife through the reinforcement of house walls. Furthermore, Renaissance architectural theory draws direct correlations between bodies and buildings. Vitruvius’s *De architectura* [*On Architecture*] (30–15 BCE), the only extant Roman architectural treatise and an important classical source for renaissance architects, asserts that the structure of temples should be based on the proportions of the ideal (male) body, a tenet that Leonardo da Vinci represented visually in his Vitruvian man drawing. Following this classical teaching, renaissance architects asserted that the design of churches and palaces should be based on the proportions of the human body.² Thus, Alberti’s statement that buildings are bodies is literal; as Alberti’s contemporary Francesco di Giorgio, who published the first vernacular translation of Vitruvius in 1470, put it, churches ‘have the proportions and shape of

¹ Alberti, *On the Art of Building*, 5.

² Krufft, *A History*, 27.

the human body’ so that the chancel is the head, the naves are the arms, and so on.³ For this reason, early modern texts across genres demonstrate a ‘symbolic transference from the body to architecture’ such that architectural spaces serve as a metonymic body.⁴ In the early modern period, ‘theoretical concepts of architecture may be found in very complex literary contexts’ since humanists regarded both literature and architecture as modes of artistic expression.⁵

In this study, I examine the discursive regulation of female sexuality through spatial discourse in didactic and fictional early modern texts from the standpoint that both space and gender are culturally constructed, historically contingent, and intertwined in complex ways. As Henri Lefebvre reminds us in his seminal work on spatial theory, space is not passive, but rather is a social construction shaped by power dynamics.⁶ Although Lefebvre, writing in the seventies, focuses his analysis on class conflict and the capitalist system, feminist critics, queer theorists, and others have expanded upon his ideas regarding the social construction of space, drawing attention to the gendered and heteronormative assumptions that undergird domestic architecture.⁷ Houses, to give but one example, are designed to accommodate a nuclear family. Consequently, ‘the design, structure, and layout of homes can also be seen to reflect and reinforce notions of hegemonic heterosexuality, nuclear families, and men’s, women’s, and children’s gendered roles

³ Cited in Krufft, *A History*, 56; 66.

⁴ Agrest, ‘Architecture from Without’, 359–360.

⁵ Krufft, *A History*, 14.

⁶ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 11.

⁷ See especially Colomina and Bloomer, *Sexuality and Space*; Duncan, *BodySpace*; Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion*; and Johnston and Longhurst, *Space, Place, and Sex*.

and relations'.⁸ The design of built space constrains and shapes the way bodies move through it, and which bodies can access it. Even as renaissance architects addressed the ideal construction of the home, prescriptive regulation of urban life sought to marginalize and segregate undesirable sectors of the population, such as prostitutes, from city centres. Architectural design both reflects and reproduces social relationships, and thereby manifests dominant ideologies regarding gender and sexual relationships. Therefore, as architect Mark Wigley contends, 'the sense of a building's detachment from sexual politics is produced by that very politics'.⁹ Similarly, geographies of sexuality assert that 'there are no spaces that sit outside of sexual politics. Sex and Space cannot be "decoupled"'.¹⁰ Architectural space thus plays a part in generating and perpetuating gendered norms and shaping attitudes towards sexuality.

This book examines the interconnectedness of space and sexuality in the practice of literary prostitution. I focus on a time, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when most of Europe transitioned from regulating legalized prostitution through municipal brothels to prohibiting prostitution outright. In general, medieval society viewed prostitution as an unpleasant but necessary part of the social fabric whose regulation could curtail social disorder. However, in Catholic Europe, sixteenth-century reformist movements that sought to address perceptions of corruption and immorality increasingly called for the closure of government-sanctioned brothels. Consequently, in 1623 Spain's King Philip IV issued an edict that shut down the brothels in all the lands under his jurisdiction. In the same period, the Italian city-states gradually closed their municipal brothels, with some notable exceptions such as Venice. At the

⁸ Johnston and Longhurst, *Space, Place, and Sex*, 43.

⁹ Wigley, 'Untitled: The Housing of Gender', 331.

¹⁰ Johnston and Longhurst, *Space, Place, and Sex*, 3.

same time that official sanction of prostitution elicited increasing moral scrutiny, the humanist turn towards a 'literature of truth' that reproduced daily life led to an increase in literary representations of transactional sex across Italy and Spain. These works, whose influence appears in all the texts I examine here, eschew the fantastic landscapes and heroic action of the chivalric novels and epic genre, instead focusing new attention on urban space, the quotidian, and the marginalized.

As I demonstrate throughout the chapters that follow, many of the architectural spaces that appear in sixteenth-century didactic literature as sites of control over the female body and female sexuality figure in prostibulary literature as loci of carnal commerce. The house, for example, which Alberti describes as a 'body' designed to protect the chastity of the wife enclosed within it, can also be a house of prostitution that commodifies the female body. It is this seeming paradox between spatial design that aimed to contain female sexuality and erotic practices that utilized the same sites as points of sexual commerce that I explore in depth. I argue that the sexualization of architectural space demonstrates a complex economy of prostitution that utilizes spatial signifiers to negotiate economic value within a hierarchically structured transactional sexual economy, and that literary representations reference contemporary debates over the place of prostitution in early modern society, reflecting a range of authorial attitudes toward transactional sex.

I focus my study on a group of Spanish novels and novellas often denoted the female picaresque genre that appear principally in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; these are the first works to feature marginalized women as protagonists, and to speak relatively openly about the sex trade. Their protagonists are not the first prostitutes to grace the pages of Spanish literature; marginalized women and prostitutes appear regularly in medieval literature,

such as the go-between Trotaconventos of the *Libro de buen amor* [*Book of Good Love*] (Juan Ruiz, fourteenth century) and many of the characters of *La Celestina* (Fernando de Rojas, 1499). In the female picaresque, these female characters move from secondary characters to centre stage. However, before delving into the female picaresque, we must first define the picaresque genre in a broader sense. Despite the enduring popularity of the picaresque genre, little critical consensus has been reached regarding its precise definition, though its most popular works—*Lazarillo de Tormés* (1554) and *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599; 1604)—profoundly impacted the course of Spanish and world literature, inspiring picaresque novels throughout Europe such as the German *Lebensbeschreibung der Ertzbetrügerin und Landstörtzerin Courasche* [*The Runagate Courage*] (1670) or the English *Moll Flanders* (1722).¹¹ Among Spanish literary critics, the only novel that is universally accepted as picaresque is *Guzmán de Alfarache*; *Lazarillo de Tormés*, the genre's most well-known and widely taught classic, is often considered a precursor. The picaresque novels enjoyed great popularity; sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish literature abounds with delightful variants on the picaresque narrative, and picaresque themes appear in many works of the period. I take a broad approach to what constitutes the picaresque, adhering to the model proposed by Ulrich Wicks, who suggests that we consider the picaresque as a mode of fiction that presents an 'unheroic protagonist, worse than we, caught up in a chaotic world, worse than ours, in which he is on an eternal journey of encounters that allow him to be alternately both victim of that world and its exploiter'; speaking generally, the Spanish picaresque novel narrates, often in first-person, the exploits of a marginalized rogue who makes

¹¹ On the definition and delineation of the picaresque as a genre, see especially Guillén, *Literature as System*, 71–106, and Wicks, 'The Nature of Picaresque Narratives'.

his way in a hostile world through his own ingenuity.¹² I follow Wicks's suggestion to consider the picaresque as a mode of fiction rather than a genre, but also wish to distinguish between the picaresque with male protagonist and the female picaresque as two distinct variants of the picaresque mode.

Although the general definition of the picaresque mode encompasses the works of the female picaresque, when texts feature a marginalized female protagonist they differ fundamentally from narratives of their male counterparts given the limited mobility and social options available to early modern women. While the *pícaro* wanders about living off his wits, usually through robbery or deceit, the *pícaro* makes her way in the world through the negotiation of her value as a sexual object. While some critics see these works as a derivative subgenre of the picaresque novel, my analysis follows the lead of feminist critics such as Anne J. Cruz and Enriqueta Zafra who trace their origin to *La Celestina*, and therefore read them as a parallel genre rather than a subgenre.¹³ Some *pícaras* are active prostitutes; others exploit men through unfulfilled promises of sexual favour.

The focus on prostitution, along with the many references to *La Celestina* in the titles, frontispieces, and texts of the female picaresque make plain that *Celestina*, more than male

¹² Wicks, 'The Nature of Picaresque Narratives', 242.

¹³ Cruz, *Discourses of Poverty*, 135; Zafra, *Prostituidas por el texto*, 17. Critics such as Guillén, Dunn, and Rico tend to portray the female picaresque novels as derivative. Dunn, for example, states that 'through the picaresque woman the [picaresque] novel turns into literature of crude entertainment' (*The Spanish Picaresque Novel*, 133); on the other hand, Rey Hazas (*Picaresca femenina*), Friedman (*The Antiheroine's Voice*), Cruz, and Zafra classify the female picaresque as a distinct genre, yet one in which the female voice is subjugated to the male author.

rogues, inspires the portrayal of wily female tricksters. *La Celestina*, a Spanish masterpiece and bestseller throughout the Renaissance, recounts the love affair between Calisto and Melibea that is mediated by Celestina, a former prostitute and brothelkeeper who acts as a go-between on Calisto's behalf. Like Celestina, the *pícaras* draw from the stock type of the wily *alcahueta*, or procuress, who exploits male sexual desire to her own economic advantage, receiving rewards such as a gold chain in return for her efforts to win Melibea's favour.¹⁴ Celestina's ability to negotiate a sexual relationship between Calisto and Melibea depends upon her spatial access to Melibea's home, and this spatial access is a defining characteristic of many female picaresque narratives. While Celestina is no longer an active prostitute, her successors are marked by their involvement in sexual commerce. Some, like *La Lozana andaluza* and Elena, *La hija de Celestina*, openly prostitute themselves. Others, such as *La pícaro Justina*, deny any sexual impropriety even as the novel's erotic subtext and her syphilitic condition make clear her mendacity. Still others, such as Teresa of *La niña de los embustes*, employ a variety of survival strategies; at times, she is a faithful wife, while at other moments she engages in sexual commerce.

Even though many *pícaras* do not sell sexual favours in the conventional sense of the term, the female picaresque genre marks *pícaras* as prostitutes through a number of strategies

¹⁴ Celestina's antecedents include Trotaconventos in the *Libro de buen amor* (1343) and similar figures in Arabic and classical literature (see Armistead and Monroe, 'Celestina's Muslim Sisters'; Rouhi, *Mediation and Love*). Studies of this masterful work are too numerous to include in their entirety; Lida de Malkiel set the foundation of modern criticism of the novel (*La originalidad artística de La celestina*), Lacarra examines prostibulary discourse (*Como leer 'La Celestina'*), and Gerli's recent study, *Celestina and the Ends of Desire*, examines the role of desire in the novel.

and cultural associations that will be examined throughout this study.¹⁵ Therefore, the question of early modern cultural constructs of prostitution in these texts demands further critical inquiry and reveals a rich source of information on early modern attitudes towards sexuality. Recent studies of the female picaresque that distinguish these novels from the picaresque with male protagonist have tended to see the novels as didactic in nature, censuring the female protagonist for her sexual improprieties. As Cruz asserts, female picaresque novels ‘advocate women’s control and enclosure by exploiting the protagonist’s sexuality as a lure to the male reader’ while ‘proposing that women utilize their bodies for their social and economic benefit’.¹⁶ Similarly, Zafra argues that the *pícaro* is ‘utilizada por su autor, con más o menos virulencia, como un ejemplo que atestigua la necesidad de la comunidad de atajar las escapadas sexuales de estas mujeres’ [used by her author, with more or less virulence, as an example that attests to the community’s need to keep the sexual escapades of these women in check], and that the discourse of prostitution in the female picaresque demonstrates ‘estrategias narrativas que revelan otras formas en las que la sociedad patriarcal creadora del discurso hegemónico controla a la mujer fuera de lugar’ [narrative strategies that reveal other ways in which the patriarchal society that creates hegemonic discourse controls the out-of-place woman].¹⁷ While I agree that these female protagonists are projections of male erotic fantasy, their texts also convey a wealth of cultural information about the practice of prostitution, an area about which we have little if any primary

¹⁵ For in-depth studies of the *pícaro* as prostitute, see Zafra *Prostituidas por el texto*; Cruz, *Discourses of Poverty*, 134–144; Hsu, *Courtesans in the Literature of Spanish Golden Age*; and Cooley, *Courtiers, Courtesans, Pícaros, and Prostitutes*.

¹⁶ Cruz, *Discourses of Poverty*, 134–135.

¹⁷ Zafra, *Prostituidas por el texto*, 7–8; 16.

source information from the women involved. Moreover, while Cruz and Zafra assert that the authorial voice censures and textually encloses the prostitute, I demonstrate in the following chapters that these texts convey a range of authorial stances that reflect cultural debate over the place of prostitution in Catholic society.

While there is no consensus regarding what constitutes the Spanish picaresque genre, there is even less concerning which texts belong to the female picaresque. For the purposes of this study, I define the female picaresque as a mode of fiction that centres on a non-elite wandering female protagonist who exploits male sexual desire in order to survive, whether through prostitution, procuring, or deception of male characters through deceit that uses the promise (explicit or implied) of sexual favours.¹⁸ The novels I examine include: *La Lozana andaluza* [*Portrait of Lozana: The Beautiful Andalusian*] (Francisco Delicado, 1528), *La pícara Justina* (Francisco López de Úbeda, 1605), *La hija de Celestina* [*The Daughter of Celestina*] (Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo, 1612), *Las harpías en Madrid y coche de las estafas* [*The Harpies in Madrid and Swindling Coach*] (Alonso de Castillo Solórzano, 1631), and *La niña de los embustes, Teresa de Manzanares* [*The Swindler Girl, Teresa of Manzanares*] (Castillo Solórzano, 1634). I also include a number of stories and short plays with female picaresque themes, including *El vizcaíno fingido* [*The False Vizcayan*] (a one-act play by Miguel de

¹⁸ The prostitutes I discuss are all cisgender females. Naturally, other types of prostitutes operated in the early modern world; however, save for a few indirect references such as *La vida y costumbres de la madre Andrea* in which male prostitutes appear in one scene (132), and *La Lozana andaluza* (366) wherein she refers to her acquaintance ‘Galazo’, a hermaphrodite who ‘era hombre y mujer, que tenía dos naturas, la de hombre como muleto, y la de mujer como de vaca’ [was both a man and a woman as he had two genitals, the male one like a mule and the female like a cow], literary prostitutes are female.

Cervantes, 1615), *La tía fingida* [*The False Aunt*] (a novella attributed to Cervantes, seventeenth century), and novellas by María de Zayas (seventeenth century).¹⁹

Not all of these works have been deemed part of the female picaresque by previous critics; *La Lozana andaluza*, when mentioned in discussions of the female picaresque, is generally regarded as a precursor.²⁰ *La hija de Celestina* and *La niña de los embustes* are usually included in studies of the female picaresque, while the other works I study, such as *Las harpías en Madrid* and *El vizcaíno fingido*, are canonical texts that are not generally considered to be exemplars of the female picaresque. The novella *La tía fingida* survives in two distinct versions, whose divergences are discussed in Chapter 4. The novel's attribution to Cervantes has been a matter of critical debate for more than a century, though sadly the work has received little critical attention beyond the question of authorship. Therefore, I focus my analysis on the text itself, particularly the treatment of prostitution, rather than on its authorial attribution.²¹ As shall be

¹⁹ López de Úbeda's authorship of *La pícaro Justina* is questioned (see Zafra, 'Ir romera', 484). All translations are my own except where otherwise noted. In the case of *La vida y costumbres de la Madre Andrea* I have used Cruz's translation, which captures the nuance of erotic jests and explains them in detailed footnotes.

²⁰ See Damiani, 'La Lozana andaluza as Precursor'.

²¹ See Aylward, 'Significant Disparities', for a concise overview of the debate. I concur with Cervantes scholar Adrienne Laskier Martín, who states: 'I find *La tía fingida* to be overwhelmingly Cervantine. Its content, themes, style, and tone clearly identify the author as Cervantes', particularly in its treatment of prostitution (*An Erotic Philology*, 3). As Martín continues, 'the protagonist of this novella embodies one more species of prostitute among the diverse cast of *semi-doncellas* who populate the prose and dramatic works of Cervantes' (ibid., 3). However, my analysis will refer to 'the author' rather than Cervantes to

seen, the work reveals a number of similarities in theme with other works of the female picaresque.

Examining the female picaresque as a mode rather than a genre allows me to focus on the construction of female sexuality in these works rather than definitions or precise boundaries of genre. I also reference works of the picaresque genre such as *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormés* and Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* that include prostitutes as secondary characters, and Italian works from the period such as *I ragionamenti / Ragionamento Dialogo* [*The Dialogues*] (Pietro Aretino, 1534–1536) that feature prostitutes as protagonists. Though early *pícaras* such as Lozana (*La Lozana andaluza*) and Nanna (*I ragionamenti*), both of whose tales are set in Rome at a time that prostitution was legal and unregulated in the city, openly prostitute themselves, later *pícaras*, whose tales recount illicit acts of prostitution, generally adopt the dress and bearing of elite women to execute their *burlas* or tricks. An analysis of the spaces of prostitution in the female picaresque reveals many commonalities between these early prototypes and the later *pícaras*. Consequently, broadening the canon to include works that are not typically studied as female picaresque suggests commonalities in authorial strategies that reveal cultural ideologies regarding the practice of prostitution.

I argue that in these portrayals of prostitution, spatial signifiers play an important role in *pícaras*' erotic strategies, whether through mimicry of the domestic enclosure of elite women or as a site to subtly advertise their sexual availability. The protagonists of these works often reject social strictures governing female behaviour, and reclaim not only the intimate spaces of the home and its boundary areas but also the public sphere of the city streets, which was

avoid entering the authorship debate. I rely primarily on the Porras de la Cámara version, yet also note any significant discrepancies between the two versions.

theoretically prohibited to women. Literary prostitutes subvert the same spaces imagined in didactic texts as sites to contain and regulate female sexuality to maximize the economic profits of their sexual labour. Throughout this study, I assert that prostitution and architectural space serve as ideal sites to disentangle contradictory cultural constructions of female sexuality, revealing a deep-seated insecurity over the potential for sexual desire to subvert patriarchal authority. Authors of the female picaresque frequently denounce their protagonists as evil women, yet simultaneously give voice to the debates over the place of prostitution in Catholic society since some depict the practice of prostitution as necessary to social order and male wellbeing even as individual prostitutes and courtesans elicit condemnation.

Cruz and Zafra, the two scholars who have most diligently studied the female picaresque from a gender studies perspective, argue that the purpose of female picaresque fiction is to reinscribe patriarchal control over the female body through authorial condemnation of the prostitute-protagonist. Cruz in particular sees picaresque fiction as part of an effort in which the ‘polarization of virgins and whores was based on a social infrastructure that required both, so long as each remained readily identifiable’.²² Yet, at the same time many of these works are profoundly ludic, relying on an eroticized subtext that undermines their supposed didactic intent, utilizing double-entendres that appeal to the complicity of an educated elite alongside badinage that relies on folk humour derived from oral traditions. Therefore, my analysis differs from Cruz and Zafra’s in that I argue that the cumulative result of this linguistic ambiguity is to minimize male involvement in transactional sex as a minor transgression in a manner that often appeals to contemporary arguments regarding the necessity of prostitution as a regulatory mechanism of social order, with the prostitute often serving as the butt of the joke, sometimes vilified yet at

²² Cruz, *Discourses of Poverty*, 142.

other times escaping textual consequences for her transgressions.

In what remains of this Introduction, I first situate the origins of the female picaresque within the rise of prostibulary literature in Italy, then set out a rationale for examining Spanish literature through a Mediterranean frame. Subsequently, I examine the rhetoric of prostitution in prescriptive literature to assert that extreme rhetoric invoking a binary distinction between honest women and promiscuous whores serves to construct the sexually available woman as irredeemable, and therefore expendable; however, the insistence in these same texts that all women are inherently sexually deviant undermines the cultural project of identifying and enclosing prostitutes. I then outline the early modern medical model of the human body that reflects similar cultural concerns over the need to contain women, but also conflicts with prescriptive advice on sexuality. After setting out this historical context for understanding the female picaresque mode, I delineate the critical frameworks that inform my analysis and summarize previous approaches to prostitution in Spanish literature. As we shall see, cultural constructs of prostitution in early modern Spain advocate spatial separation of the prostitute from the rest of society. However, the same texts reveal a fundamental belief that this endeavour is doomed to failure since female sexuality is ultimately ungovernable. Literary portrayals of *pícaras* as debased predators who pass for respectable members of society reveal anxiety over the inability to distinguish between virtuous and sinful women; nonetheless, some works also fit within a cultural narrative of prostitution as a ‘necessary evil’ that minimizes male patronage of prostitutes as a minor peccadillo even as it vilifies individual prostitutes. Frequently, the stereotype of women as sexually insatiable serves to excuse male involvement in transactional sex by depicting women as sexual aggressors and men as victims of female deception.

Prostibulary Fiction

The Spanish female picaresque draws on the late medieval bestseller *La Celestina* for inspiration but is also part of a broader trend of prostibulary fiction that appears principally in Italy in the sixteenth century. While non-elite female characters appear in medieval Spanish literature and its precursors, it is not until the sixteenth century that the prostitute moves from secondary character to protagonist. In this era, the humanist drive to depict the mundane details of daily life among the non-elite, no doubt also influenced by the popularity of *La Celestina*, led to a burgeoning literature about prostitutes and prostitution, much of it originating in Rome. Like the courtesan culture that also arose in the city in this period, and which I examine in the following chapter, the profusion of late sixteenth-century prostibulary literature grew in part from the humanist rediscovery and emulation of classical literature and culture.²³ The two portraits of Roman prostitutes that I examine from this period, *La Lozana andaluza* and *I ragionamenti*, drew on classical models such as Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* (second century).²⁴ As in Renaissance Rome, in classical Greco-Roman culture legalized prostitution was hierarchical in structure, with elite courtesans at the apex. Prostitutes often featured in classical comedies and fictional works such as the *Satyricon* (first century), a work that some consider a precursor to the Spanish picaresque novel.

Along with these classical sources, prostibulary literature drew on *comedias a noticia*, or urban reality plays, that often featured lower-class characters, produced by Spanish humanists residing in Rome such as Bartolomé Torres Naharro.²⁵ Though not centred on prostitution, these

²³ Hunt 'Introduction', 26.

²⁴ Findlen, 'Humanism, Politics, and Pornography', 53.

²⁵ Damiani, *Francisco Delicado*, 37.

comedies contain scenes of unbridled and unrepentant eroticism between members of various social classes.²⁶ Torres Naharro, like Francisco Delicado, author of *La Lozana andaluza*, was a Spanish priest who relocated to Rome in the early sixteenth century; furthermore, Torres Naharro was a *converso*, or convert from Judaism, as Delicado probably was also.²⁷ Torres Naharro's work appears in Delicado's novel, wherein the protagonist invites a client to her home to read several works to her, including *La Celestina*, the *Carajicomedia*, and Torres Naharro's *Comedia Tinellaria*. The humanist plays produced in Rome also drew on Iberian sources such as the *Carajicomedia* (published in the *Cancionero de obras de burlas provocantes a risa / Anthology of Works of Jokes that Will Provoke Laughter*, 1519), one of the works owned and enjoyed by Lozana, that parodies Juan de Mena's *Laberinto de Fortuna* [*Labyrinth of Fortune*, 1444] by recounting the tale of an impotent penis who revisits the prostitutes he has known in youth in an

²⁶ For a study of eroticism in humanist comedies see Castillo, 'Natural Love'.

²⁷ Very little is known about the biography of either of these authors, though both left the Iberian Peninsula around the time of the expulsion of the Jews, causing modern critics to theorize that they were *conversos* (converts from Judaism or their descendants). See Vélez-Sainz, *Bartolomé de Torres Naharro*, 15–16. Many critics have argued that Delicado was a *converso*, based on the knowledge of Jewish customs displayed in the novel, the prevalence of the surname Delgado among *conversos*, and Lozana and many of the novel's other characters' probable *converso* origins (see Márquez Villanueva, 'El mundo converso'). This opinion is shared by Damiani (*Francisco Delicado*, 13–14), Serrano Poncela (*Del Romancero a Machado*, 39–41), del Val ('Prólogo', 13–14), and Hernández Ortiz (*Génesis artística*, 15), among others. The fact that Delicado chose to relocate to Venice rather than return to Spain after the sack may support this view. Manuel da Costa Fontes, 'Anti-Trinitarianism', goes further, arguing that *La Lozana andaluza* is a crypto-Jewish satire of Christian doctrine, especially that of the Trinity.

unsuccessful effort to restore his virility. Delicado's innovation in *La Lozana andaluza* was to focus his work on a prostitute as protagonist, a move popularized by later texts such as *I ragionamenti* and that defines the Spanish female picaresque genre. Moreover, Delicado positions his work as a successor to *La Celestina*, promising to deliver 'muchas mas cosas que *La Celestina*' [many more things than *Celestina*] by tracing the life story of his protagonist from her humble origins in Andalusia through her career in Rome and eventual retirement from prostitution.²⁸ Thus, humanist interest in reviving classical culture, spurred also by the enormous popularity of *La Celestina*, led to a burgeoning of prostibulary literature in Rome in both Spanish and Italian.

Following the publication of *La Lozana andaluza*, Italy saw an explosion of novels, poems, and other texts with prostitutes as protagonist, of which the most widely read Italian work is *I ragionamenti* by Pietro Aretino. Aretino, though a writer of devotional literature, shared Delicado's interest in the erotic; he scandalized Rome by publishing the *Soneti lussuriosi* [*Lecherous Sonnets*], a collection of lewd poems which accompanied *I modi* [*The Positions*], Marcantonio Raimondi's set of sixteen engravings of sexual postures first printed in 1524, then reprinted with Aretino's accompanying sonnets in 1527. *I ragionamenti* (1534) recounts the life of a Roman whore named Nanna, who shares many similarities with Lozana. Indeed, Delicado and Aretino may have known each other through their mutual friend Andrea Navagero, or due to the fact that they both published at the same press in Venice.²⁹ Other pseudo-biographies or pseudo-autobiographies of prostitutes from this period include Aretino's *La cortigiana* [*The Courtesan*] (1525), a satire of Castiglione's *Il libro del cortigiano* [*The Book of the Courtier*], the

²⁸ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 165.

²⁹ Ugolini, *Nuovi dati*, 487; Damiani, *Francisco Delicado*, 15.

work of Aretino's disciple Lorenzo Venier, who wrote *La puttana errante* [*The Errant Whore*] (1532), and a variety of anonymous works such as the *Dialogo di Maddalena e Giulia* [*The Dialogue of Magdalena and Julia*] (1531) and the *Ragionamento dello Zoppino fatto frate* [*The Dialogue of Zoppino Become a Friar*] (1539, anonymous though sometimes attributed to Delicado or Aretino), and many more. These lives of whores were only one genre of the vast erotic Italian literary output in this period, including priapic tales, erotic novellas, poetry, and retellings of erotic classical myths.³⁰ Delicado and later authors of the Spanish female picaresque combine the pseudo-biography or pseudo-autobiography of the prostitute with the picaresque mode popularized by *Lazarillo de Tormés* (1554) and *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599; 1604).

Mediterranean Spain

As the discussion of the rise of prostibulary fiction implies, the frontiers of Spain have shifted significantly from the early modern period to the present. 'Golden Age' (sixteenth- and seventeenth-century) Spanish authors wrote at a time when Spain had not fully coalesced as a nation-state. Prior to and during the Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula after the Moorish invasion (711–1492), what are now the various autonomous regions of Spain (Castile, Galicia, Aragón, Catalonia, etc.) were independent kingdoms. The marriage of the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella in 1469 brought together the crowns of Aragon and Castile, thus uniting Spain territorially for the first time. However, the two crowns and the various kingdoms that comprised them, though united by marriage, remained politically separate. Furthermore, their territories encompassed not just the kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula that make up modern Spain, but also certain areas of Italy, such as the Kingdom of Naples, ceded by Louis XII of

³⁰ See Findlen, 'Humanism, Politics and Pornography'.

France to Ferdinand in 1504, and various other holdings such as Milan. The Kingdom of Naples in the early 1500s included the modern regions of Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Basilicata, Apulia, and Calabria. As a result, significant areas of the Italian Peninsula belonged to imperial Spain.

Moreover, the Spanish proudly declared themselves Europe's most Catholic nation, and looked on Rome as the capital of Christendom that united the Catholic Mediterranean. Politically, Rome was part of the Papal States, controlled by the Pope in his capacity as a temporal ruler, and therefore never fell under the direct control of the Spanish despite the considerable influence they built up in the city and other parts of the Italian Peninsula in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century through what Thomas J. Dandeleet terms 'soft imperialism' in which tens of thousands of Spanish migrated to Rome, forming an important and influential sector of the population that comprised nearly a third of the city's residents in the early sixteenth century.³¹ Spain was both Rome's generous benefactor and defender of the Papal States. In return, the Spanish enjoyed a favoured relationship with the Holy See that bolstered their reputation as champions of the faith. Though Rome 'formally remained an autonomous monarchy, by the middle of the sixteenth century the Spanish monarchs looked upon it almost as a part of their own state'.³² From 1492 to 1503 the papacy was in the hands of the Spanish Pope Rodrigo Borja, or Borgia, who took the title Alexander VI, and the Spanish community grew in both number and influence during his pontificate. Following King Ferdinand's death in 1516, his grandson, Charles V, united the lands of the Holy Roman Empire with the Iberian and Italian territories and continued to exert Spanish influence in Rome.

³¹ Dandeleet, *Spanish Rome*, 9.

³² *Ibid.*, 6.

Not only was their relationship with Rome important to Spain's politico-religious self-image, but the Spanish presence in Rome during this period also had profound and lasting implications for Spanish literature. In the early sixteenth century, Spanish was an important literary language in Rome, with books written in Castilian for consumption on the Italian Peninsula, plays produced and performed in Spanish, and the development of new literary styles.³³ As I argue in the next chapter, the prostibulary literature produced in Rome during this period left its mark on the later *pícaras*. Therefore, examining the Spanish female picaresque in the context of the early pseudo-biographies of whores produced on the Italian Peninsula demonstrates important similarities among works that, as I argue throughout the following chapters, reflect a common culture of elite sex trade that catered to wealthy and powerful men and that influences and informs fictional representations of *pícaras*. Furthermore, as I examine in detail in the next chapter, the reformist movements such as the Jesuits that protested against the tolerance of the sex trade in Spain, leading eventually to the abolition and closure of the brothels, had their roots in Rome during the same era. The spread of these reformist ideologies from Rome to Spain lent impetus to the drive to reform prostitutes and confine them in custodial institutions. Consequently, though Rome was not a part of Spain territorially, the cultural interchange with Rome and of Mediterranean Catholicism profoundly influenced Spanish literature. Throughout the early modern period, Spain and Italy enjoyed considerable cultural exchange that influenced the literature of both countries.

Mediterranean studies, as an interdisciplinary conceptual field, 'has provoked a reconsideration of the nation-state model and of continental and civilizational paradigms that up to now have been accepted *a priori* as the fundamental building blocks of history and culture'

³³ See Damiani, *Francisco Delicado*, 13–15.

that moves beyond the grouping of literary texts on a national language basis.³⁴ For the early modern period, in particular, classifications based on language do not entirely hold given the polyglot nature of many texts. *La Lozana andaluza*, for example, contains sentences and phrases in Latin, Italicisms, and other non-Spanish idioms. On the other hand, texts like *La vida y costumbres de la Madre Andrea* test the boundaries of Spain in a different way; though composed in Spanish (albeit with many words in Portuguese), it was published in the Low Countries, part of the Spanish empire under Charles V. As these examples demonstrate, there was significant linguistic overlap among the various vernacular languages and influence from the Latin texts used by the educated elite across Europe, making the early modern Mediterranean a ‘polyglossic space, in which many authors composed their works in more than one language and worked in and were influenced by several literary traditions’.³⁵

What I examine here is not the Mediterranean *per se*, but rather Mediterranean Spain as part of the Catholic Mediterranean. I do not address the rich overlap between Christian, Ottoman, and other cultures, though several scholars have pointed to influence from the Arabic tradition in the picaresque genre and the celestinesque tradition.³⁶ Instead, my focus is on the Spanish literary tradition with the conviction that the Spanish canon is deeply influenced by cultural overlap with what is now Italy and the Vatican City State. By analysing Spain beyond its current borders, for example examining *La Lozana andaluza* as a Hispano-Roman text in dialogue with the Italian authors and other Hispanic writers living on the Italian Peninsula, we can appreciate the considerable parallels with Italian literature and the influence of Italian pseudo-biographies

³⁴ Hamilton and Silleras-Fernández, ‘Iberia and the Mediterranean’, ix.

³⁵ Ibid., x.

³⁶ See Armistead and Monroe, ‘Celestina’s Muslim Sisters’; Rouhi, *Mediation and Love*.

of prostitutes with the works of the Spanish female picaresque and the continuity of the tolerated courtesan culture of Rome in depictions of clandestine courtesan culture in Madrid and other Iberian spaces.

Containing Early Modern Sexuality

Intriguingly, the flourishing of literary texts on prostitution in Italy and Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries coincides with a shift in official policy toward prostitution from regulation toward prohibition and closure of the brothels, stemming in large part from reform movements that responded to perceived social decadence with calls to amend public morality, leading to the Reformation and Counter-Reformation.³⁷ The sixteenth century was a period of transition for the politics of both space and sexuality, due in part to growth in urban population. Architectural design emerged as a field of study even as cultural anxiety regarding female sexuality's potentially disruptive force gave rise to discursive efforts that sought to define or enforce the proper use of space by women. Conduct manuals, or guides to proper social comportment, education, and childrearing, some written for women or their male guardians, posited a model of female behaviour that equated chastity with immobility and enclosure. Fray Luis de León's influential manual for wives, *La perfecta casada* [*The Perfect Wife*] (1583), written to his young niece on the verge of matrimony, uses the book of Proverbs to explain women's ideal role in married life. Fray Luis, like the other moralists of his day, is deeply concerned with the need to control women's access to space, and repeatedly advises restricting women's freedom of

³⁷ Religious reforms began in Spain before the Protestant Reformation and coalesced into the Counter-Reformation following the Council of Trent, which sought to reaffirm Catholic doctrine and strengthen and unify the Catholic Church (see Cruz and Perry, 'Introduction', xiv–xv).

movement, stating that ‘su andar ha de ser en casa, y [...] ha de estar siempre allí presente, por eso no ha de andar fuera nunca’ [her movement should be in the house, and ... she should be always there, and for that reason should not walk outdoors ever].³⁸ The perfect wife, in Fray Luis’s opinion, should remain spatially segregated from physical or even visual contact with the outside world. Italian prescriptive texts, such as Alberti’s *Della famiglia* [*On the Family*] (1432) and Francesco Barbaro’s *Re uxoria* [*On Wifely Duties*] (1417), likewise enjoined enclosure and seclusion for virtuous wives.³⁹ Didactic praise for domestic confinement envisioned the house as a protective fortress that would safeguard female chastity by providing architectural reinforcement of the female body’s limits.

Alberti’s seminal treatise, *On the Art of Building*, lays out the fundamentals of spatial design in such a way as to reveal a preoccupation with preserving the social order and reifying social and gender differences, objectives shared by the many contemporary prescriptive texts that sought to constrain and dictate female behaviour. This enterprise focused on protecting female chastity, supposedly the defining characteristic of womanly virtue, by controlling movement and spatial practice to keep women in their ‘natural’ place within the protective confines of the home. In the fifth book of his treatise, Alberti explains that the private house should be designed, in part, to contain and protect female sexuality within its walls through a division into ‘public, semi-private, and private zones’ so that the portions of the house occupied by women can be kept ‘out of bounds to all but the closest kin’ and, moreover, ‘any place reserved for women ought to be treated as though dedicated to religion and chastity’.⁴⁰ Thus, as Wigley reminds us, in

³⁸ León, *La perfecta casada*, 157.

³⁹ Cohen, ‘To Pray’, 292–294.

⁴⁰ Alberti, *On the Art of Building*, 117–119.

Alberti's architectural manifesto 'the house is literally understood as a mechanism for the domestication of [...] women' that both regulates and produces the chastity expected of the elite woman.⁴¹ The home's construction and design permits patriarchal surveillance of women by defining certain (interior) parts of the house as private female zones in contrast with more accessible masculine areas. Safeguards such as window bars, locks on doors, and other measures delimit the female body by preventing intrusion and circumscribing female access to the exterior.

Architectural containment and regulation of spatial practice aimed to control female sexuality by curtailing mobility in the public sector. Much of the literature of the period utilizes the term *recogimiento* [enclosure or gathering in] to designate female domestic enclosure and refers to the virtuous woman as *recogida* [enclosed]. This term refers to reflective spiritual practices as well as physical isolation from the outside world, and therefore implied moral attributes such as self-denial, modesty, and mental purity as corollaries of spatial separation. As Margaret Boyle demonstrates, *recogimiento* is at once a 'theological concept, a virtue, and an institutional practice'.⁴² Women's adherence to the principle was a private practice, yet one that was publicly visible through the maintenance of carefully honed appearances. Enforcement of enclosure relied on a variety of strategies— institutional, familial, matrimonial and personal— to circumscribe female movement. Since modesty and chastity were so closely tied to domestic confinement, in early modern literary output a woman outside the domestic confines is, at least implicitly, sexually mobile.⁴³ For this reason, 'the normative house of the Christian treatises functioned as a spatial metaphor because it defined the virtuous, industrious woman (inside the

⁴¹ Wigley, 'Untitled: The Housing of Gender', 332.

⁴² Boyle, *Unruly Women*, 21.

⁴³ Martínez Góngora, *La utilización masculina*, 14.

house) in contrast with the evil one (outside the house)'.⁴⁴ Thus, the house plays a multifaceted role as physical container, reinforcement of bodily limits, and moral marker in which architecture serves to regulate the performance of gender. Female domestic enclosure attempted to produce 'docile, domesticated' women by using architecture as 'an accomplice in the exercise of patriarchal authority'.⁴⁵ As a result of the insistence on enclosure as a marker of female virtue, movement in public space elicited censure to the extent that the term 'public woman' was synonymous with prostitute. Conversely, the solution to perceived problems of public morality relied on the enclosure of uncontained women in custodial institutions as a strategy to control their sexuality.

The sort of domestic enclosure prescribed by moralists was untenable for the non-elite who must enter public space to carry out domestic and work-related tasks. Yet even for elite wives and daughters, *recogimiento* as a moral ideal clashed with the reality of daily life since only the aristocracy, who could afford private chapels, could live entirely secluded in their homes. In fact, political displays often required the visibility of elite women. For example, Cesare Vecellio's costume book (*Habiti antichi et moderni / Ancient and Modern Clothing*) describes social custom in Italian city-states, asserting that noblewomen were expected to stay indoors, but also to be a visible presence on state occasions to impress foreign visitors.⁴⁶ Even the moralists who recommended domestic enclosure recognized the impossibility of its effective enforcement. Though conduct manuals caution that women's natural place is in the home and that the virtuous wife has no reason to leave the house, they also include chapters on how women

⁴⁴ Gamboa, 'Architectural Cartography', 184.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 194–196.

⁴⁶ Rosenthal and Jones, *Clothing of the Renaissance World*, 32.

should properly conduct themselves in public (a subject I explore in more depth in Chapter 2). The extent to which enclosure was enforced varied by location, individual family customs, and class since non-elite women had less impetus to protect familial honour. Historian Mary Elizabeth Perry, for example, argues that in sixteenth-century Seville male emigration due to the colonization of the ‘New’ World meant that ‘Seville’s women participated actively in the life of the city’ though ‘male officials [...] took action to check the developing female confidence and to reinforce a male-dominated gender order’.⁴⁷ Despite rigid moral proscriptions, in practice Spanish women of all classes often accessed the public sphere.

Moreover, some historical documents suggest that women may have actively resisted enclosure. Early modern visitors to Spain, such as Madame D’Aulnoy (*Memoires de la cour d’Espagne / Travels into Spain*, 1690) and Andrea Navagero (*Viaje a España / The Voyage to Spain*, 1526), challenge the normative view of female confinement, admiring over the surprising liberty afforded to Spanish women, including the elite. Though D’Aulnoy observes that ladies and gentlemen are very careful not to mix with those of an inferior class, she describes Spanish noblewomen travelling the streets in their coaches with relative freedom.⁴⁸ She further remarks that Spanish women subvert enclosure, asserting that ‘the great constraint they live under puts violent desires in them to enjoy some freedom, and their very amorous nature makes them witty to find out means to bring about their designs’.⁴⁹ She attributes their successful evasion of social constraints to female solidarity, describing how:

⁴⁷ Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, 14.

⁴⁸ D’Aulnoy, *Travels into Spain*, 206.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 223.

The ladies visit one another frequently, and there is nothing more easy for them than to wear a veil and by the back door go into a chair and be carried where they will. And this is the more practicable because all the women agree to keep one another's secrets inviolably.⁵⁰

The network of female complicity and resistance described by D'Aulnoy may be exaggerated, yet feminist historical work undertaken over the last few decades has revealed ample evidence that early modern women frequently did not adhere to the passive models laid out for them in prescriptive texts, instead resisting control and exerting influence on their society through a variety of methods.⁵¹

Similarly, in literary texts and other cultural production, female characters frequently challenge the idealization of domestic confinement. Spanish literature abounds with cross-dressed female warriors, powerful queens, witches, *alcahuetas* [procuresses], adulterous wives, disobedient daughters, and all manner of wayward women, attesting to a cultural recognition that women, and the female body, would always escape male control. For example, the excessively jealous husband who locks his wife in the home, attempting to protect her chastity with locks on the door and bars on the windows, is a common literary trope. In the case of Cervantes' *El celoso extremeño* [*The Jealous Extremaduran*], the jealous older husband fashions a seclusion so extreme that he blocks off all the windows to the street, employs a eunuch to guard the entryway,

⁵⁰ Ibid., 327.

⁵¹ The field is bountiful. A few notable examples include: Cruz, *The Life and Writings*; Cruz and Suzuki, *The Rule of Women*; Vollendorf, *The Lives of Women*; and Lehfeldt, *Religious Women* to name but a few.

and bans all male presence from his house, including domestic animals.⁵² However, regardless of how many precautions he takes, how many walls he constructs, and how many locks guard the doors and windows, these tales always end with the cuckolding of the husband. Such literary portrayals of the subvention of enclosure reflect the early modern view of women as ‘that treasure which, however locked up, always escapes’.⁵³ This perception that women cannot be trusted to regulate their own sexuality leads to an insistence in didactic texts on a need for absolute mental purity to ensure chastity, and an architectural discourse across genres that underscores the need to spatially segregate potentially disruptive women from the social order.

Control over sexuality served to reinforce the patrilineal family system, and therefore focused on regulating the behaviour of elite women on whose reproductive capacity that system depended, leading to the fictionalization of non-elite women as unchaste and sexually available. Male chastity, while a spiritual ideal, was not a social necessity. As the prescriptive writer Juan Luis Vives cautions in *De institutione feminae cristianae* [*The Education of a Christian Woman*, 1523], a conduct manual dedicated to Catherine of Aragon (Queen of England and daughter of the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella) that examines female behaviour according to marital status (virgin, wife, or widow), wives should simply overlook their husbands’ infidelity since ‘human laws do not require the same chastity of the man as they do of the woman. In all aspects of life, the man is freer than the woman.’⁵⁴ While a religious vocation necessitated

⁵² Cervantes, *El celoso extremeño*, 268–271. For other variations on the theme of the jealous husband whose extreme enclosure drives a previously virtuous wife to adultery, see Cervantes’ *El viejo celoso*, Castillo Solórzano’s *La niña de los embustes*, and María de Zayas’s novella *El prevenido, engañado*.

⁵³ Stallybrass, ‘Patriarchal Territories’, 128.

⁵⁴ Vives, *The Education*, 232.

chastity, faithfulness within marriage was not expected of elite men. Moreover, conduct manuals and other early modern sources that mandate proper female behaviour were not directed to women in general, but rather to elite women, upon whose chastity the social order depended.

Prescriptive writers sought to contain the sexuality of elite wives, daughters and nuns, but female sexuality could not be removed entirely from circulation. As I examine in the next chapter, authors dating back to Saint Augustine defended the necessity of allowing legalized prostitution to control lust. Consequently, early modern thought portrayed male sexual desire as a potentially disruptive force that necessitated the existence of some form of transactional sexual economy even as the protection of elite women rested on the portrayal of non-elite women as sexually available and promiscuous. Yet, as I argue throughout the chapters that follow, even as laws attempted to limit the sinfulness of prostitution by regulating who could engage in or patronize transactional sex, literary and historical sources indicate a sexual marketplace in which virginity or a semblance of modesty commanded a higher price, indicating a fetishization of the very chastity that moralists sought to enforce.

Prescriptive writing demonstrates the contradictory and ambiguous place of prostitution and female chastity in early modern Spanish thought that attempted to erect a binary opposition between 'good' and 'bad' women. Both León and Vives contend that distinctions between women can only be maintained through sexual purity. However, their divisions of women into diametrically opposed categories (chaste or unchaste), based on sexual behaviour, are constantly undermined by implying that all women are potential harlots, drawing on stereotypes of women's deceitful nature. Fray Luis declares that he does not call the good wife chaste, but rather presupposes that she must be, since

El ser honesta una mujer no se cuenta ni debe contar entre las partes de que esta perfección se compone, sino antes es como el sujeto sobre el cual todo este edificio se funda, y, para decirlo enteramente en una palabra, es como el ser y la substancia de la casada; porque, si no tiene esto, no es ya mujer, sino alevosa ramera y vilísimo cieno, y basura lo más hedionda de todas y la más despreciada. [Honesty in a woman is not counted and should not be counted among the qualities of the perfect wife, rather it is the foundation upon which the edifice is built, in a word, it is the being and substance of a wife; because, if she lacks this, she is no longer a wife, but a treacherous whore and a vile mud pit, and the most revolting and reviled trash.]⁵⁵

Fray Luis's invective insists that a woman's worth is entirely dependent on her chastity, and clearly delineates between two diametrically opposed models of femininity: virtuous wife or whore. The non-elite woman, who could not live up to these strict standards of behaviour, is implicitly defined as sexually suspect.

Despite the efforts of prescriptive writers to make a radical distinction between female virtue, based on chastity, and vice, equated with promiscuity, the same texts that seek to reify this moral binary include frequent slippages that underscore the fundamental paradox of female identity; since women as a category were lustful and promiscuous; even the most seemingly pure wife could harbour secret mental corruption. For didactic authors, it is not enough for a woman to protect the integrity of her body; to avoid whoredom she must maintain absolute purity of thought. When Vives states that 'a woman's only care is chastity', he utilizes the Latin term

⁵⁵ León, *La perfecta casada*, 90.

pudicitia, which invokes not merely chastity as sexual abstinence, but rather complete mental purity.⁵⁶ He tells unmarried girls, ‘those who preserve the body intact but whose mind is defiled foolishly arrogate to themselves the name or the praise proper to virginity [...] they will not be so [virgins] to God, who is a spirit and sees with the spirit’; in other words, even if the body is virginal, the mind can be prostituted by impure thoughts.⁵⁷ In prescriptive texts, chastity derives not from specific behaviour, but rather is a socially constructed reputation that can be undermined by the opinions of others. Vives further states that by labelling a woman unchaste ‘with this one word you have removed all. She is left naked and loathsome.’⁵⁸ Even the aristocratic wife or the seemingly chaste virgin is in constant danger, if her virtue is called into question, of becoming a whore since a chaste body can mask a hidden interior uncleanness. Thus, didactic writers’ insistence that a virtuous woman’s chastity must be above all suspicion was undercut by their assertion that any infraction, even if not acted upon, made a woman unchaste. Consequently, terms such as “prostitute” in these texts denote not a set of behaviours, but rather a corrupt mental state that cannot necessarily be observed through conduct.

The displacement of chastity to the intangible realm renders its loss invisible; only the woman herself could know her innermost thoughts, and since women were notoriously deceptive, this created great anxiety among prescriptive writers. Similar insistence on mental purity appears in *La perfecta casada* as well. According to Fray Luis de León, just as a traveller who takes the first step down a pilgrimage route is a pilgrim, a woman who is unchaste even in thought is a whore; as he states:

⁵⁶ Vives, *The Education*, 232.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 80–81.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

Ramo de deshonestidad es en la mujer casta el pensar que puede no serlo [...] y, cierto, como al que se pone en el camino de Sanctiago, aunque no llegue, ya le llamamos allá romero; así sin duda es principiada ramera la que se toma licencia para tratar destas cosas que son el camino.

[It is a growth of dishonesty in the chaste women to think that she could be something other ... and, truly, just as he who puts a foot on the road to Santiago, even if he does not arrive, is already called a pilgrim; so without doubt she is a fledgling whore who takes licence to ponder these things that are on the path.]⁵⁹

The enterprise of delineating clearly between good and bad women therefore fails due to a fundamental aporia in cultural stereotypes of female nature; even the most virtuous woman was in constant danger of sliding into whoredom if she left her thoughts unguarded. Moreover, the effacement of ontological boundaries between virtuous and unchaste women often occurs through architectural or spatial metaphors. Fray Luis's ideation of a road to whoredom is a frequently employed trope that correlates spatial access with sexual licence, observed in the popular proverb *Ir romera y volver romera* ('She who goes wandering comes back a whore'), and in a similar manner the spaces of the house are often utilized to display anxiety about female unruliness. Throughout the following chapters, I demonstrate that authors of the female picaresque portray a network of female duplicity founded on the view of women as secretive, manipulative, and deceptive that makes true virtue impossible. Some *pícaras* openly prostitute themselves, but all women are sexually suspect even as male engagement in transactional sex is

⁵⁹ León, *La perfecta casada*, 91.

naturalized and excused.

The Uncontainably Erotic: Approaching Prostitution and Sexuality

As we have seen, prescriptive literature insisted on the need for architectural reinforcement of the body's limits, leading to a metonymic equivalency between architecture and the body that will be examined throughout the following chapters. The belief that the female body, more than the male, could not adequately maintain its limits stems in part from medical epistemologies that often conflicted with moral dictums. According to early modern understandings of the physical body, male and female genitalia were identical but inverted, a model that coexisted with humoral theory, which drew distinctions between male and female makeup. Early moderns did not conceive of the sexed and gendered body in strictly binary terms— accepting hermaphrodites, for example, as part of the natural gender order; but since the fictionalized bodies and authorial positions discussed herein conform to a male/female binary I will limit my remarks to binary gender identities.⁶⁰ Thomas Laqueur demonstrates that the premodern 'one-sex' model of human anatomy envisioned the female body as identical to the male except that the female sexual organs were located inside the body.⁶¹ Consequently, medieval and early modern medical texts frequently refer to the ovaries as female testicles, and depict the uterus as a sort of inverted penis, a bodily model reflected in Madre Andrea's reference to women as the 'sexo concavo' [concave sex].⁶²

⁶⁰ For an analysis of non-binary gender in early modern Spain, see Vollendorf, *The Lives of Women*, 11–31; Velasco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain*, 68–89.

⁶¹ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 1–113.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 25–63; *La vida y costumbres*, 98.

Laqueur's theory profoundly influenced the study of biological sex in the Renaissance, but early modern conceptions of the body placed as much emphasis on the humoral fluids that made up the body as its organs. Gail Kern Paster and others added nuance to Laqueur's model, arguing that unseen humoral forces are as important as or perhaps even more important than the external body in determining human constitution and sex difference.⁶³ Humoral theory described the body as having a specific complexion, or balance of the four humours (black bile, yellow bile, blood, and phlegm) with their accompanying qualities (hot, dry, wet, and cold). The body was healthy when in its natural balance and unhealthy when the balance was disturbed. Each body had its own complexion that placed the individual somewhere within a spectrum of temperaments (melancholic, phlegmatic, choleric, sanguine), but in general the female body was marked by a wet and cold disposition in contrast to the hotter and drier male. This gendered humoral differential explains the genital variation between male and female on which the one-sex model relies; the heat in the womb that causes the foetus to become male pushes the genitals outside the body, while the cooler conditions that form the female body pull the genitals inwards.

The humoral model vindicated the 'natural' inferiority of the female body by associating vital heat, the defining characteristic of the male, with reason. In contrast to the contained male body, the less restrained female body released fluids through menstruation, childbirth, and breastfeeding. Likewise, the virgin body was held up as a model of restraint and order whose orifices remained closed in contrast to the grotesque body of the sexually active female that was 'unstable, permeable and overflowing'.⁶⁴ Early modern thinkers described women, particularly

⁶³ See Kern Paster, 'The Unbearable Coldness'.

⁶⁴ Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity*, 2. For more information on humoral theory see Kaye, *A History of Balance*, 128–240; Arikha, *Passions and Tempers*; and Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance*

non-virginal women, as leaky vessels whose ‘internal boundaries [...] cannot be maintained [...] because her fluid sexuality endlessly overflows and disrupts them’.⁶⁵ Because of this inherent corporeal overflowing, female sexuality and reproductive capability demonstrated women’s incapacity for self-control, requiring external reinforcement such as the architectural boundaries of walls, windows, and doors.

The humoral ecology of the body was in constant flux due to external as well as internal factors. As Gail Kern Paster explains, ‘the quantity of humours not only depended on such variables as age and gender, but also differed from day to day as the body took in food and air, processed them, and released them’.⁶⁶ Early moderns could regulate their complexion by attention to the non-naturals: factors such as sleep and alimentation that could keep the humours in balance. Likewise, medical practices such as bleeding and purging could return the body to stasis by releasing excess humours, as could, in certain cases, the discharge of humours during coitus. Since complexions varied, coitus affected different body types in distinct ways, and seasonal variations also influenced its effects since coitus released hot humours and was therefore more propitious in summer. Medical texts concur that coitus could be therapeutic for bodies with an excess of hot and wet humours. The *Tractado del uso de las mugeres* [*Treatise on the Use of Women*] (1572), for example, states that ‘[durante] el coito [...] se expelle lo superfluo

Medicine, 1–6. The Bakhtinian construct of the ‘grotesque’ body, while leaving a fruitful legacy in early modern studies, sets up what I consider to be a false dichotomy between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture that often limits understandings of the female picaresque. For a detailed analysis of the carnivalesque in *La Lozana andaluza*, see Bubnova, *F. Delicado*.

⁶⁵ Wigley, ‘Untitled: The Housing of Gender’, 335.

⁶⁶ Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, 9.

de la postrera digestion, ordenado para la conseruacion del indiuiduo y especie [...] necesario para la salud del cuerpo y la gouernacion y regimiento del' [During coitus, ... the superfluties of the final digestion are expelled, ordered for the conservation of the individual and the species ... and necessary for the health of the body and the governance and regulation of it.]⁶⁷ However, these texts are explicit that humoral release during coitus also posed grave dangers for certain complexional types, leading to illness or even death. Thus, in galenic medicine, the release of humours during coitus could either serve a hygienic function to restore balance or could imbalance the humours. For this reason, coitus occupied a complex and contradictory place in medical epistemologies that, I argue in later chapters, influences the contradictory literary portrayals of prostitutes in the female picaresque.

Moreover, coitus affected the male and female body differently. Male 'seed', the generative substance we would now call semen, like the male body, was hotter and drier than the normative female complexion. Thus, coitus heated the female body and this heat, in turn, made the woman more lustful, creating stereotypes of the sexually active woman as insatiable.⁶⁸ Conversely, by engaging in coitus, male partners could lose vital heat and potentially become more effeminate. Furthermore, the seed produced by both male and female partners during coitus, if not used for procreation, remained in the female body and could become corrupted in the womb, creating disease that could, in turn, infect male lovers. Humoral theory that represents 'female biology as pathological and dirty', especially that of the sexually active woman, undergirds fictional representations of prostitutes that rely on cultural narratives of woman as

⁶⁷ Nuñez de [C]oria, 'Tractado del vso de las mugeres', fol. 1v.

⁶⁸ Sienna, 'Pollution, Promiscuity and the Pox', 564.

inherently corrupt and deviant, and of sexual sin as infectious.⁶⁹

The paradoxical construction of sexuality in early modern medical epistemologies, in which the female body is pathological but coitus can be therapeutic in certain circumstances, subtly undergirds justifications of prostitution as a repugnant necessity examined in depth in Chapter 1. Mary Douglas's seminal theories of the symbolism of order and disorder argued that nothing is inherently dirty, but rather 'dirt is essentially disorder', something which is out of its natural place.⁷⁰ Prostitution is metaphorically entrenched in concerns about order; analogies frequently equated prostitution with a sewer that funnels immorality away from the orderly city/space. The prostitute's body was often defined as a receptacle for waste—receiving the humoral excess engendered by male sexual desire and funnelling it away from 'decent' society so that while the individual prostitute is disorderly, the collective disorder of prostitution as an institution serves a hygienic function to preserve social order. Arguments both for and against the legalization of prostitution in early modern Spain asserted that prostitution 'polluted' urban space and should be spatially segregated from 'decent' society, either in a brothel isolated from the city centre or in a reform institution. The prostitute represents a transgression of hegemonic space, and therefore her characterization reveals core concepts about the regulation of sexuality and exposes the slippage of ontological categories.

On the other hand, studying the female picaresque through the lens of prostitution can be problematic since the protagonists of the Spanish picaresque are not always explicitly defined as prostitutes. Some, such as Elena of *La hija de Celestina*, are labelled whores, but others do not engage in sexual activity. Lozana even claims in one scene to be a virgin, as do several other

⁶⁹ Ibid., 557.

⁷⁰ Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 2.

pícaras; *La pícaro Justina*, for example, extols her virginity throughout her narrative, despite her syphilitic condition and the many double-entendres in her encounters with male characters that belie her assertion.⁷¹ In her first excursion, for example, she recounts an encounter with a *tocinero* or sausage-maker (whose profession is a clear phallic signifier in itself) in which she relates that ‘iba tan junto conmigo, como si tuviera de tarea el injerir su bobería en mi picarazona’ [he was as near to me as if it were his task to insert his silliness in my sauciness].⁷² Similar veiled erotic double-entendres appear throughout her encounters with the opposite sex.

The term *prostituta* [prostitute] does not appear in any of the fictional or didactic texts studied here; instead, a variety of synonyms roughly equivalent to the English ‘whore’ are used sporadically, such as *ramera* or *meretriz* (from the Latin *meretrix*); but more frequently the works of the female picaresque utilize a rich semantic field of erotic double-entendres in which seemingly benign words mask erotic subtext. For example, words such as *buena* [good woman], *mujer libre* [free woman], or *amiga* [friend] are used as synonyms for prostitute. As Louise O. Vasvári explains in her study of jest in *La Celestina*, such ‘linguistic ambiguity’ relies on obscene wordplay that enacts a ‘simultaneous hiding and uncovering, meant ultimately to reveal rather than to conceal’.⁷³ Since the sexual activity in the female picaresque is not overt but rather

⁷¹ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 230; Justina’s infection with syphilis clearly demonstrates that she is not the virgin she claims to be, and the erotic badinage in many encounters also reveals that her liaisons with men are not chaste, true to López de Úbeda’s promise in the Introduction that he will not talk openly of sexual matters.

⁷² López de Úbeda, *La pícaro Justina*, 318.

⁷³ Vasvári, ‘Glosses’, 171. Vasvári concentrates her study on Calisto’s supposed toothache, arguing that this supposed euphemism is in fact a dysphemism meant to elicit laughter (173).

outlined through erotic subtext, the question of what it means to call these characters prostitutes will require detailed exploration throughout the following chapters.

The term ‘prostitute’, along with all its many synonyms and allusions, has been vaguely defined both historically and presently. To designate prostitution as a sexual act performed in exchange for money, even if one can precisely determine what constitutes a sexual act, does not suffice to describe the range of activities socially classified as prostitution. In the early modern period, as we have seen in the preceding examples from didactic literature, terms such as prostitute and whore frequently served merely to censure women who did not strictly adhere to cultural standards. For example, all the terms used to designate a prostitute in legal parlance, such as *meretrice* or *mujer pública*, could also be employed simply as slurs.⁷⁴ In the works of the female picaresque, transactional sex is not an explicit exchange of sex for recompense, but rather a rhetorical interchange in which payments are generally described as gifts. Additionally, many of the acts of sexual trickery in the female picaresque genre remain unconsummated. The terminology of prostitution serves not merely as behavioural descriptors; rather, terms such as ‘whore’ function rhetorically to regulate and censor female sexual practices. The line that separated prostitutes from chaste women in the early modern period, while sharply delineated in legal documents and prescriptive writing, was often more nebulous in social practice.

Early modern prostitution, as an institution and a practice, has been understudied within emerging histories of heterosexualities. Ever since Foucault famously declared that homosexuality as an identity category emerged in the nineteenth century, gender studies and queer theory have revised and refined the Foucauldian theory that premoderns had sex but not sexuality, investigating how sexual acts and identities were understood in ways that both differ

⁷⁴ Karras, ‘Prostitution in Medieval Europe’, 244.

from and resemble modern sexual identities. The process of queering histories of sexuality has yielded fascinating research that denaturalizes modern identity categories, including heterosexuality.⁷⁵ Recent critiques within queer theory highlight the tendency in earlier iterations of early modern queer theory to contrast the queer with a presumed normative heterosexuality producing distorted and presentist views of a heteronormative premodern, and leading to new studies that attempt to avoid the presumption of heterosexuality in the past. Though the sex acts (whether consummated or not) in the female picaresque primarily involve male and female bodies, ‘the fact that Renaissance men and women had sex with each other’ does not ‘tell us anything about their sexual identity’, which is necessarily historically contingent.⁷⁶ This realization has led to new critical efforts to denaturalize heteroerotic identities in the past; however, the laudable recent critical trend to trace the histories of heterosexualities have been hampered by the tendency to leave prostitution unmentioned, perhaps because transactional sex problematizes the history of sexuality as a history of erotic desire, which the prostitute may not feel.⁷⁷ However, histories of sexualities remain incomplete until they encompass deviant heteroerotic proclivities as well as normative practices.

The evidence that I draw on primarily discusses male/female sex acts, though Chapter 5 examines some allusions to homoerotic female encounters. Fictional prostitutes are a projection

⁷⁵ Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality*, traces the emergence of the term ‘heterosexual’, though his work is rightly criticized for failing to account for the fact that a concept can exist without being named.

⁷⁶ Phillips and Reay, *Sex before Sexuality*, 58.

⁷⁷ Histories of heterosexuality that do not mention prostitution include Blank, *Straight*; Bach, *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature before Heterosexuality*; and Jackson, *Heterosexuality in Question*.

of their (usually male) author and represent cultural stereotypes of debased and hypersexualized women. Curiously however, the male author frequently projects himself into the text, either in a literal sense as a fictionalized author-character who is a client of the prostitute/protagonist, as in *La Lozana andaluza* and *La vida y costumbres de la Madre Andrea*, or in a more voyeuristic sense in which the narrator extols the protagonist's erotic appeal. As I demonstrate throughout the chapters that follow, prostitution symbolically polices the limits of female sexuality by censoring and often dehumanizing the protagonist even as it excuses male participation as insignificant, trivial, and often amusing. Avoiding the presumption of heterosexuality in the past allows us to see transactional sex as one form of early modern illicit sex, but one which is not defined against a normative heterosexuality. The prostitute has frequently been studied as a homogenous identity category in discussions of the female picaresque. Didactic texts construct 'whore' as an identity, but, as we have seen, not a stable one. Destabilizing *prostitute* as an early modern identity allows us to appreciate the wide variety of types of transactional sex in historical and literary sources, and a range of reactions to and stances towards prostitution that reveal the instability of ontological borders between the 'whore' and her more respectable sisters and demonstrate the continuance of ideologies of prostitution as social hygiene.

Destabilization of sexual identity categories must likewise lead us to re-examine other categories of analysis that are too frequently presumed stable, such as sex and the erotic. Foucault alleged that in the premodern period there was sex but not sexuality; however, linguistically speaking there was no *sex* in early modern Spain either to serve as a singular category of analysis; rather, sexual acts were defined in terms of *lujuria* or lust. The word *sexo* (sex) as it appears in early modern Spanish texts denotes biological sex (male / female) but not sexual acts. Instead, terminology ranges from the academic 'coitus' through morally inflected

terms like ‘fornication’, but more commonly appears in literary texts through allusions such as *gozar* (to enjoy), *conversar* (to converse), and other double-entendres.

If *sex* as a descriptor did not exist, did the early moderns conceive of sex or the erotic as a singular category? As Mark D. Jordan demonstrated in *The Invention of Sodomy* (1997), premodern theologians concerned themselves with an array of sins of lust, such as fornication, adultery, and sodomy, that operated along a continuum of greater to lesser sinfulness. Licit sexualities included chastity or procreative marriage, but many acts existed in a liminal space between licit and illicit. For example, many texts asserted that taking pleasure in marital coitus was sinful; however, medical understandings of procreation dictated that conception could not occur without mutual orgasm to release seed. Pleasure, therefore, should be a byproduct of procreative sex, but to engage in coitus for pleasure, even within the bounds of marriage, was sinful. Similarly, the sin of sodomy could occur within a marriage if partners engaged in anal sex or other non-procreative sex acts.

Since the bounds of licit sexuality were so narrow, Karma Lochrie proposes to read premodern sexualities as what she terms ‘heterosyncrasies’; she asserts that there was no normative premodern identity category to serve as a contrast to deviant sexualities, but rather sexualities in the premodern world distinguished between natural and unnatural sexual acts, even as desire in premodern texts ‘is not heterosexual, that is, it is not called into being by the sex of the object of desire’.⁷⁸ This is especially evident in early modern discussions of prostitution; proponents of legalized prostitution asserted that access to transactional sex prevented sodomy, while detractors accused prostitutes of performing sodomy, clearly demonstrating that sodomy

⁷⁸ Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, xiv.

could be performed with either a male or female body.⁷⁹ Within the hierarchy of sins of lust, prostitution was a relatively minor transgression of simple fornication if both partners were unmarried, particularly when the prostitute was already corrupted and sinful. Furthermore, as I examine in Chapter 1, men frequently misunderstood Church teachings, testifying before the Inquisition that they did not believe that prostitution was a sin since the Church condoned it.⁸⁰ Consequently, early modern attitudes towards sexuality encompass a spectrum of sins of the flesh, and the didactic nature of early modern texts is tempered by the greater sins, particularly sodomy, that are left unmentioned yet menacingly possible if lust is not kept in check. Moreover, it must be remembered that marriage itself was a lesser evil since it was (as Paul asserts) better to marry than burn (1 Corinthians 7: 9). However, since early modern elite males generally married late, if they married at all, a large sector of the population had no access to any licit form of sexuality. Consequently, as I argue throughout the following chapters, ideologies of prostitution must be understood not in contrast to a presumed heterosexual licit intramarital sexuality, but in the context of greater or lesser sins of lust.

As will be seen throughout the following chapters, sexuality and the erotic are concepts that are impossible to fully define or describe, largely due to the epistemological opacity of ‘what people *did* or what specific bodily acts *meant to them*’.⁸¹ Moreover, what is perceived as sexual

⁷⁹ Fray Gabriel de Maqueda’s *Invectiva en forma de discurso* (1622), for example, accuses prostitutes of performing sodomy with their clients and with each other (19v). Theologians who accepted prostitution as a necessary evil, like Francisco Farfán, assert that brothels are necessary to prevent sodomy (*Tres libros contra el pecado*, 730).

⁸⁰ Zafra cites several examples (*Prostituidas por el texto*, 39).

⁸¹ Traub, *Thinking Sex*, 14 (emphasis in original). In the context of early modern Spain, Lisa Vollendorf

or erotic varies between cultures and across temporalities. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick defines sexuality as ‘the array of acts, expectations, narratives, pleasures, identity formations, and knowledges, in both women and men, that tends to cluster most densely around certain genital sensations but is not adequately defined by them’.⁸² As this definition indicates, precisely what constitutes an erotic act or erotic language is unclear. Valerie Traub asserts that ‘within the bounds of early modern [texts] one cannot safely assume that a given word, phrase, speech, or bodily act is erotic—or, for that matter, not erotic’.⁸³ This often leads to leaving the erotic undefined, something one simply knows when one sees it, as for example when Víctor Infantes defines erotic literature as ‘la que el lector siente como tal’ [what the reader perceives as such].⁸⁴

This leaves us with epistemological uncertainty regarding what an early modern reader would have perceived as erotic, coupled with the representational problem that nearly all texts on prostitution are authored by men, and therefore represent what may have been perceived as erotic by a *male* author and implied reader. Male and female experiences of early modern coitus represent distinct fields of inquiry since male/female sexual encounters are so deeply embedded in systems of power, particularly when sex is transactional. Studying the erotic presents further difficulty since erotic expressions are scarce and mediated through cultural constructs of acceptable expressions of sexuality and Inquisitorial censorship.⁸⁵ Early modern women’s

attempts to untangle some of how early modern women conceived of their own sexuality through sources such as Inquisition records (‘Good Sex, Bad Sex’).

⁸² Sedgwick, ‘Gender Criticism’, 275.

⁸³ Traub, *Thinking Sex*, 10.

⁸⁴ Infantes, ‘Por los senderos de Venus’, 23.

⁸⁵ Of course, these texts could be labelled ‘pornographic’ rather than erotic. This is apropos since the

expressions of sexual desire are especially difficult to locate given the extreme proscriptions against the experience of sexual pleasure by women that meant women simply could not express corporeal pleasure in a socially licit manner. While men could write of love and even sexuality more openly, their expressions of desire are mediated by the acceptable limits of sexual expression such as proscriptions against ‘sodomy’ as well as generic considerations. Though, as Traub contends, ‘sex may be good to think with’, our interpretation of premodern sexuality is inevitably mediated by the inability to escape our own modern imaginary of sexual expression, and by the dearth of sources that lead to the ‘all too presumable’ superimposition of modern identity constructs over the premodern cultural imaginary.⁸⁶

The methodology that I utilize to approach the female picaresque is promiscuous, leaning heavily on cultural and gender studies, and borrowing from other interdisciplinary fields, but resting on the conviction that the ludic erotic content of the female picaresque frequently undermines its supposed didacticism. Throughout the chapters that follow, I analyse the spatial discourse of prostitution in the female picaresque within its historical context, and therefore recent critiques of the place of historicism in sexuality studies influence my argument. New historicism (and its recent iterations, ‘new new historicism’) encourages us to see literature as a manifestation of intellectual history that should be understood within the context of a range of

original French term *pornographe* describes writing about prostitution (Hunt, ‘Introduction’, 13).

However, this term did not emerge until the nineteenth century (Moulton, ‘Erotic Representation’, 208), and although ‘pornographic’ is as vaguely defined as ‘erotic’, it generally implies a visual medium (photo or video) in modern usage. I opt for ‘erotic’ out of a desire to avoid the value judgements implicit in the term ‘pornographic’ (Hunt, ‘Introduction’, 13).

⁸⁶ Traub, *Thinking Sex*, 5; 14.

other material practices and cultural manifestations. Thus, I draw from medical theories, prescriptive writing, and a range of sources that would not be considered literary to understand early modern culture. However, I am also cognizant of recent ‘unhistoricist’ critiques that the present is not a ‘stable epistemological point from which to view and diagnose the past’s unstable sexualities’.⁸⁷ I share the unhistoricist conviction that periodization is an artificial construction, and I attempt to avoid the pitfall of constructing a teleological view of history although I do not share the unhistoricist goal of effacing the boundaries between past and present. While some parallels could certainly be drawn between early modern and modern approaches to prostitution, my concern lies with recognizing the multivalence and instability of early modern ontological categories. I share the new historicist belief that the past can teach us *something*, even if that something is unstable. One of my main concerns throughout the chapters that follow is to underscore the instability of prostitution symbolically and, to the extent that can be determined from the scarcity of sources, in practice.

Turning to the narrower field of Spanish literary theory, the sexual content of Golden Age literature and of the female picaresque has been slow to be recognized, and has often caused these works to be dismissed by literary critics, as for example when Menéndez y Pelayo famously declared that *La Lozana andaluza* ‘es un libro inmundo y feo’ [is a filthy and ugly book] whose analysis ‘no es tarea para ningún crítico decente’ [is not the work of a decent critic],

⁸⁷ Friedlander, ‘Desiring History’, 8. For critiques of historicism, see Menon, *Wanton Words*, and *Unhistorical Shakespeare*; Freccero *Queer/Early/Modern*; and Goldberg, *Sodometries*. For a defence of historicist methods in the face of these critiques, see Traub, ‘The New Unhistoricism’. Freccero, Menon, and Traub’s subsequent forum in *PMLA*, ‘Historicism and Unhistoricism in Queer Studies’, also lays out the arguments on both sides.

leading to a critical tendency to overestimate their didacticism.⁸⁸ Critics have, generally speaking, identified various modes of erotic expression: exaltations of love, the eroto-didactic, and the satirical or burlesque.⁸⁹ The first of these categories encompasses love poetry and other expressions of admiration for the beloved, and is often classified as ‘high’ art. The second includes mystic poetry and other expressions *a lo divino* [in the divine mode] that utilize human love as a metaphor for spiritual devotion; many pages have been devoted to the attempt to parse whether these writings can properly be termed erotic.⁹⁰ The last category is the one that will occupy us here since the female picaresque is primarily satiric.

With the rise of prostibulary literature, erotica mainly circulated among an elite (often clerical) audience; however, with the invention and dispersion of the printing press, and the increasing availability and affordability of printed material, mass-produced erotic materials reached a wider readership, provoking inquisitorial censorship. The Council of Trent (1563) prohibited ‘lascivious’ or ‘obscene’ books, which frequently appear thereafter on the Index of banned books. However, this did not halt their production; in fact, it often increased their value as clandestine black-market items.⁹¹ Modern criticism frequently imposes certain categories on the erotic that often reproduce class differences by imposing a ‘high art’ versus ‘low art’ distinction that would not necessarily have been recognized by early moderns ‘who did not necessarily distinguish Titian’s eroticism—produced for courtiers and humanists—from popular

⁸⁸ Menéndez y Pelayo, *Orígenes de la novela*, 54.

⁸⁹ See for example Profeti, ‘La escena erótica’, 22–23; Díez Fernández, *La poesía*, 15.

⁹⁰ See Salih, ‘When is a Bosom Not a Bosom?’

⁹¹ Findlen, ‘Humanism, Politics and Pornography’, 27.

pornography' like the images of courtesans sold in the streets.⁹² In terms of literature, the same authors produced 'high' art like sonnets and 'low' scatological poems and other obscene writing. Though early modern authors often dismissed their own erotic writing as minor, or published works anonymously (as Francisco Delicado did with *La Lozana andaluza*), the fact that they produced so many obscene and bawdy works indicates their importance to the literature of the era.

In 1967, Keith Whinnom denounced what he regarded as critical prudery that led to a view of Spanish Golden Age literature as staid and didactic, and accused Hispanists of disregarding the rich erotic tradition and frequent obscenity of their field of study.⁹³ In the past two decades, erotic literature has begun to receive the critical inquiry it merits. Essay collections such as *Erotismo en las letras hispánicas* (López-Baralt and Márquez Villanueva, 1995), *Queer Iberia* (1999), *Venus venerada* (2006; and *Venus venerada II*, 2007), and anthologies such as *Poesía erótica del siglo de oro* (2003) have begun to uncover the wealth of erotic texts from the period, enriching the field of sexuality studies; yet much work remains to be done. Many texts denounce worldly pleasures yet undermine their supposed didacticism with erotic subtext and

⁹² Ibid., 64.

⁹³ Whinnom, *Spanish Literary Historiography*, 19–24. While Whinnom's remarks address medieval literature, and he states that 'puritanism set in in Spain in the late fifteenth century' and gained strength during the Counter-Reformation, the tradition of medieval humour that utilizes the grotesque, scatological and erotic continues, if not quite as openly, well after the Counter-Reformation began (19). Though much progress has been made since the time that Whinnom wrote in the publication of erotic literature, many critics continue to 'studiously ignore' the significant erotic literary output and erotic subtext of canonical writers (ibid., 22).

double-entendre. As Adrienne Laskier Martín declares, ‘much of pre- and early modern Spanish literature is not, in fact, didactic, at least not in the moralistic, admonitory sense in which didacticism has been interpreted’; instead, many works ‘reflect the existence of a complex set of surprisingly tolerant attitudes toward the literary representation of sexuality and eroticism in early modern Spain’.⁹⁴ I explore this ambiguity in order to reveal that texts on prostitution display a range of authorial attitudes that frequently include the minimization or excusal of transactional sex. Cruz asserts that ‘proposing that women utilize their bodies for their social and economic benefit’ is one of the textual strategies used by male authors to circumscribe female autonomy by depicting literary *pícaras* as inherently ‘bad’ women.⁹⁵ Transactional sex in the early modern period was undoubtedly marked, as it is today, by extremely high levels of violence and coercion; yet the portrayals of literary *pícaras* reflect the reality of a deeply misogynist culture rather than the individual misogyny of particular authors, and their portrayals as a whole indicate a sense of male fragility faced with female sexuality that threatens to destabilize male autonomy.

Pícaras frequently utilize *burlas* or tricks that exploit male sexual desire to effect a desired outcome, whether economic gain in the form of money or jewellery or simply the humiliation of the male. However, the Spanish term *burla* conveys much more nuance than the English ‘trick’. The *burla* demonstrates the wit and ingenuity of the trickster; thus, *pícaras* often vaunt the renown their machinations gain them. Justina, for example, states that her first *burla*, in which she evades the advances of a ruffian and leaves him drunk in the town square, ‘súpose y

⁹⁴ Martín, *An Erotic Philology*, 170–171.

⁹⁵ Cruz, *Discourses*, 135.

divulgóse [...] en toda la comarca' [was known and discussed throughout the region].⁹⁶

Consequently, the *pícaras*'s goal is not merely to extort money from her male victim, but also to demonstrate her superior cunning and to humiliate her target, as when Teresa of Manzanares tricks a pair of doctors who come to examine her by giving them wine in place of her urine; their gullibility, based on the literary stereotype of greedy or inept doctors, leads to their humiliation, which Teresa publicizes through an *entremés* or ludic one-act play. At other times, the *pícaras*'s deceit leads to the sexual humiliation of her victim, as when in the final episode of *Las harpías en Madrid* Dorotea leaves her male victim naked, tied up in a blanket, hanging from the balcony of a rich acquaintance accompanied by a mocking poem. These texts denounce the protagonists' pride and vanity, and portray men as their victims, yet also depict women as diabolically cunning and resourceful. Some *pícaras* are punished for their deceit, but others, such as Rufina of *La garduña de Sevilla* [*The Marten of Seville* (Castillo Solórzano, 1642)], who marries the man she loves and runs a successful business with him, end relatively happily.

Recent studies of the geography of sexualities reveal that 'sexuality—its regulation, norms, institutions, pleasures and desires—cannot be understood without understanding the spaces through which it is constituted, practised, and lived'.⁹⁷ Throughout the chapters that follow, I trace the discursive relationship between literary prostitution and architectural space to demonstrate that the belief that the female body needs external reinforcement in the form of architectural confinement in order to properly police its boundaries leads to the displacement of sexuality onto space. Chapter 1 analyses the historical shift from tolerance to prohibition that informs early modern depictions of prostitutes. I demonstrate that, despite changes in official

⁹⁶ López de Úbeda, *La pícaras Justina*, 405.

⁹⁷ Brown, Browne, and Lim, 'Introduction', 4.

policy towards prostitution, both positions depend on an ideology of spatial containment that focuses on segregating the prostitute through enclosure in the brothel during the period of toleration, supplanted by a focus on enclosure in custodial institutions as a strategy of prohibition. A Mediterranean approach demonstrates connections between the Spanish female picaresque and the courtesan cultures more typical of Italian city-states that create a stratified sex trade. While prostitution was legal and unregulated in the Rome of *La Lozana andaluza*, later *pícaras* operate as clandestine prostitutes in Spain, forcing them to adopt more deceptive self-fashioning. After detailing the historical context, I track the discourse of containment through a series of spaces used in erotic negotiations in order to demonstrate that the emphasis on spatial enclosure of unruly female sexuality clashes with an ideology of the female body and sexuality that portrays both as impossible to effectively regulate.

Chapter 2 discusses the use of public space, such as streets and plazas, as contrasted with the domestic space of the home. I argue that rejection of public space becomes an economic strategy by which courtesans and *pícaras* manipulate the economic value of their sexual services. Through this and the following chapters, I argue that the distinction between public and private space is itself a fiction since the emphasis on enclosure enacts it as a public display in which private space is defined by public acts. I then turn to domestic and liminal spaces as loci of sexual commerce. Chapter 3 analyses the use of carriages by literary *pícaras*, which allow them both spatial mobility and a semblance of modesty and elite status. This ability to move easily while shielding her identity often leads to depictions of the *pícaro* as a predator who hunts unwitting male victims.

Examination of the mobile private space of the coach is followed by an analysis of the sexualization of liminal spaces of the house. Chapter 4 investigates the window's place in

advertising prostitution and marking the subtle gradations within a hierarchical sex trade and as a space for erotic enticement. Chapter 5 examines the erotic potential of the doorway as entrance to the home and the female body. This analysis reveals a metonymic relationship between the female body and the domestic space of the home, especially its liminal spaces, that relies on a ritual symbolism of the orifices of house and body demonstrated by their use in love magic. Attention to the multivalent discourses of space and sexuality, and to the stratification of the sex trade, further reveals a fetishization of virginity that gives erotic value to the semblance of virtue and modesty, and that elides ontological distinctions between categories of femininity; virginity does not exist without prostitution to serve as its constitutive other, yet the extreme rhetoric used to police female sexuality and the cultural suspicion of deceptive female appearances portrays all women as inherently deviant.

Throughout my analysis of these particular spaces, I underscore the heterogeneity of the sex trade as a stratified system in which distinctions are made between different types of practitioners. All the spaces examined (streets, houses, carriages, windows, doors) demonstrate that the manipulation of appearances, of what is seen and unseen, is a key tool used by *pícaras* to negotiate erotic capital. *Pícaras* often construct a pretence of inaccessibility and withdrawal from public space that piques the interest of men who are then exploited and deceived, thus portraying women themselves as a false façade, recasting them as controlling and manipulating men, which in turn posits men as the prey of sexually manipulative women, placing the blame for sexual transgressions on women. However, attention to the discourse of space and female mobility reveals a number of authorial postures that comment on the ongoing cultural debates regarding the place of prostitution in early modern society, and the containment of female sexuality. At other times, erotic diversion is portrayed as harmless when not upsetting the social order. These

divergent authorial strategies, sometimes appearing in the same text, create a multivalent morality that extends interpretive responsibility to the reader. Narratives alternate between defences of and attacks upon carnal commerce; but ultimately, whether authors argue for containment in brothels or outright prohibition of prostitution (sometimes within the same text), they portray women as sexual aggressors, minimizing male involvement in the flesh trade.

Chapter 1

Prostitution in the Early Modern Spanish Mediterranean

As we saw in the Introduction, didactic literature defined the prostitute in contrast to an idealized ‘honest’ woman, utilizing invective that classified dissolute and sexually devious women as a homogenous category. However, literary texts and historical evidence suggest that women’s involvement in the flesh trade took a wide variety of forms. Most of late medieval Europe institutionalized prostitution through municipal brothels until the late sixteenth century when reformist movements such as the Jesuits ignited protests culminating in the prohibition of prostitution across Catholic Europe; yet, within this broad unity of approach, the prostibulary milieu varied widely from one locale to another. In this chapter, I give an overview of the history of prostitution in the early modern Spanish Mediterranean, focusing on how the language used to describe carnal commerce functions not solely as descriptors but rather as a rhetorical strategy to regulate and constrain female sexuality. I examine the characteristics of the Roman sex trade during the era of elite courtesans that briefly emerged in the early sixteenth century and that is fictionalized in *La Lozana andaluza* to demonstrate how the resultant stratification of the sex trade and some of the courtesan’s defining characteristics, such as imitation of elite mannerisms as an economic strategy, persist in later picaresque fiction. Finally, I explore the debates over prostitution stemming from Catholic reform movements that led to its eventual prohibition as well as the rise of custodial institutions designed to house and enclose the former prostitute. Throughout the chapter, I examine in detail the place of prostitution in the early modern Spanish Mediterranean, setting the stage for later chapters that will investigate specific spaces and their use in the practice of literary prostitution. I argue that the early modern sex trade was hierarchically structured and fluid as women engaged in a range of strategies, analysed in

subsequent chapters, to renegotiate their erotic capital: the price they can command through the sale of their body. I demonstrate that architectural space plays a key role in this struggle to retain financial security, a point I develop throughout later chapters. In these later chapters, I argue that the stratification of the sex trade allows male authors to present *pícaras* as sexual predators who manipulate male clients through their manipulation of space.

As Leah Lydia Otis explains, ‘generally speaking, three policies on prostitution are possible in a given society: repression (defining prostitution as a punishable offence), tolerance [a neutral attitude, in which no active role is taken by authority], or institutionalization [regulation by authorities of the business of prostitution]’.¹ In the late medieval period, most of Catholic Europe institutionalized prostitution through regulated municipal brothels, whose existence was supported by Church and state as a necessary buffer against social disorder in urban areas, an attitude that would eventually give way to active repression due to pressure from reform movements in the late sixteenth century. Legalized prostitution depended on the rationale that tolerating the ‘lesser evil’ of prostitution avoided greater evils such as seduction or assault on ‘honest’ women that dishonoured their fathers or husbands, or worse, sodomy.² As the cleric Francisco Farfán explains in *Tres libros contra el pecado de la simple fornicación* [*Three Books against the Sin of Simple Fornication*] (1585), ‘son menester mancebías donde se recojan las suciedades y torpezas de los carnales como basura y estiercol de la ciudad’ [brothels are needed to collect the filth and deviance of carnality just like trash and manure from the city].³ Farfán’s

¹ Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society*, 9.

² Karras, ‘Prostitution in Medieval Europe’, 243–246; Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society*, 12–13; Martín, *An Erotic Philology* 15–16.

³ Farfán, *Tres libros*, 730.

reasoning rests on ideology dating back to Saint Augustine, who famously declared, ‘remove prostitutes from the social order, and lust will destroy it’, as well as humoral understandings of the body in which some complexions or bodily constitutions build up excesses of humours that must be released through intercourse or other means.⁴ Farfán’s statement depicts brothel prostitutes as receptacles for male waste whose bodily service maintains the cleanliness of the city as a whole. By this logic, ‘the chastity of some women could be ensured by the fact that men would have access to other women who would sell their sexual services’, a system that implicitly defined non-elite women as expendable.⁵ By segregating sexually corrupted women into brothels, thereby providing a designated location for the release of male lust, social order could be maintained in urban centres. Ideally, municipal brothels ensured patriarchal control over female sexuality by controlling transactional sex, and clearly delineating between ‘honest’ women and prostitutes.

Since legalized prostitution was conceptualized as a lesser evil, regulations on brothels attempted to minimize the sinful nature of sexual commerce. If both the client and prostitute were unmarried, transactional sex was an act of simple fornication, the least serious of the six forms of lust.⁶ In order to prevent adultery, brothel prostitutes could not be married. Moreover, they should be women who had already lost their virginity, whether through rape or with their

⁴ Augustine, *On Order*, 2:4, 65. The original Latin reads: ‘Aufer meretrices de rebus humanis, turbaveris omnia libidinus’.

⁵ Perry, ‘Magdalens and Jezebels’, 126.

⁶ The six forms of lust were, according to Enrique de Villalobos’s *Manual de confesores*, from least to most sinful: simple fornication, adultery, incest, *estupro* (deflowering a virgin extramaritally), abduction accompanied by rape or seduction, and ‘pecado contra natura’ or sodomy (103).

consent, and many were ‘servants who became pregnant (often by their masters)’, since utilizing women perceived as already corrupted further minimized the sin committed.⁷ Likewise, legislation prohibited brothels from opening on Sundays and many religious holidays that required sexual abstinence and dictated that brothel prostitutes attend mass. Brothel prostitutes must be Christian to prevent inter-religious sexual acts, forbidden by canon law, and could not be black or *mulata*, to avoid contaminating the humours of men who slept with them. In theory, brothels catered to unmarried men, though many also believed that the availability of prostitutes could prevent the concubinage of married men, and those who had taken religious vows were legally prohibited from frequenting them (though, as Karras adds, ‘nevertheless, court records and literature reveal that priests and other religious were frequent customers’).⁸ The Church took the stance that prostitution itself was sinful, but taking money for it was not.⁹

Despite numerous restrictions on who could practise as a brothel prostitute that aimed to mitigate the sinful nature of their activity, many lay people misunderstood the Church’s position. For example, men frequently testified before the Inquisition that paying for sex was not a sin, a belief that grew out of the Church’s support for legalized brothels; these men often further explained that the money paid was a form of alms that offset the sin of fornication.¹⁰ Jean-Pierre Dedieu’s study of Inquisition records reveals that ‘the majority of the prisoners who appeared before the inquisitors for having believed that fornication was not a sin knew the Sixth Commandment and the meaning of the word “fornication”’; they simply believed that prostitution

⁷ Karras, ‘Prostitution in Medieval Europe’, 252.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁹ Villalobos, *Manual de confesores*, 164v.

¹⁰ Vázquez García and Moreno Mengíbar, *Poder y prostitución*, 40–41.

was a special case, falling outside the divine prohibition.’¹¹ Thus, brothels were generally accepted as a necessity to orderly city life, and visits to the brothel were an accepted part of many young men’s experience.

The establishment of municipal brothels sought to ameliorate some of the problems caused by increasing urbanization. City authorities wished to keep prostitutes contained and off the streets to prevent potential social disorder caused by solicitation in public space and to protect the virtue of ‘honest’ women by clearly demarcating them from prostitutes. In Spain, the majority of cities had public brothels by the thirteenth century, and nearly all major cities of Castile and Aragon had one by the fifteenth.¹² A variety of terms denoted the brothels: in Valencia they were *hostalers*, while in Seville they were *mancebías*. Brothels were usually located on the outskirts of cities to spatially isolate them, and arms were prohibited to prevent conflict. The late medieval trend towards greater urbanization brought workers into the city, the majority of whom were young and male, creating a gender imbalance that could lead to violent outbursts, particularly on feast days when workers from surrounding areas would often travel to the city.¹³ Furthermore, the age of male marriage was rising in the late medieval period, leaving a significant population of young men without a licit sexual partner.¹⁴ Consequently, as Vázquez García and Moreno Mengíbar argue, the presence of brothels in cities was not merely a ‘lesser evil’ but instead ‘una de las funciones básicas a las que había que atender en el colectivo urbano’

¹¹ Dedieu, “‘Christianization’ in New Castile’, 7. See also Zafra, *Prostituidas por el texto*, 39.

¹² Jiménez Montesión, *Sexo y bien común*, 50.

¹³ Vázquez García and Moreno Mengíbar, *Poder y prostitución*, 26.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

[one of the basic functions to which the urban collective must attend].¹⁵ While the prostitute was an object of scorn as a sinful, debased, and dishonourable woman, the brothel as an institution was not merely tolerated, but seen as a necessary part of the social fabric that protected the honour of respectable women who might otherwise become the targets of male violence.¹⁶

Due to the many regulations placed on them, life in the brothel allowed the women within little freedom. Upon entry, they had to leave behind any children, their wages were garnered by the 'brothel father', periodic disease inspections led to the expulsion of any infected with venereal disease, and rules prohibiting regular clientele prevented women from forming long-term relationships. Legislation attempted to minimize the abuses of women in the brothels by methods such as prohibiting the sale of women to the brothels by relatives or pimps, and enacting prohibitions on economic exploitation of women by brothelkeepers.¹⁷ The need to repeat such legislation periodically indicates that these protective measures were not always enforced. In short, life in the brothels would have been restrictive and harsh.

Due in part to the many restrictions on the brothels, clandestine prostitution offered a more attractive option for many women, despite the threat of arrest or fines, and a thriving market existed in cities and rural areas throughout the period of legalized prostitution in Spain prior to 1623. Several factors made illicit prostitution advantageous for some women: brothel prostitutes had to turn over a portion of their wages, religious minorities were barred since prostitutes must be Christian, marriage disqualified some women from entering the brothel, and

¹⁵ Ibid., 25.

¹⁶ Historian Mary Elizabeth Perry refers to brothel prostitutes as 'deviant insiders' since they were simultaneously marginalized yet central to concerns about social order, 'Deviant Insiders', 137.

¹⁷ Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, 139.

laws regulated the movements and activities of brothel prostitutes.¹⁸ Therefore, clandestine prostitutes often earned more than their counterparts in the brothel and enjoyed greater freedom of movement. Clandestine prostitution took a variety of forms; by the late fifteenth century, the term *mujer del partido* referred to a woman who worked the streets alone, while a *ramera* operated from a house or inn.¹⁹ Two of the most infamous of these *mujeres del partido* appear in *Don Quijote*, travelling to Seville in the (paid) company of a pair of mule drivers and mistaken by Don Quijote for a pair of noblewomen, with comic results. Literary representations from the period primarily portray clandestine prostitutes, though brothel prostitutes appear fleetingly in some works. To my knowledge, *La vida y costumbres de la madre Andrea* is the only novel set in a municipal brothel. Literary and historical evidence is scarce, but suggests that a variety of forms of clandestine prostitution flourished throughout the early modern period.

There are many reasons why women entered or were forced into prostitution. Impoverished women were particularly vulnerable to sexual attack and exploitation, especially servants, who were frequently raped or seduced by their masters or other male members of the household.²⁰ Additionally, the dowry system often prevented disadvantaged women in both Spain and Italy from attaining a licit position in the social order.²¹ The convent, another socially acceptable option, also required a ‘spiritual dowry’ for entry which, though significantly lower

¹⁸ For more detail, see Karras, ‘Prostitution in Medieval Europe’.

¹⁹ Jimenez Montaserín, *Sexo y bien común*, 44–45.

²⁰ Barahona, *Sex Crimes, Honour, and the Law*, 59.

²¹ For a consideration of the dowry system in Spain, see Lehfeltdt, *Religious Women*, 40–41; Cruz, *Discourses*, 142; and Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, 66–67. In Italy, see Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros*, 12–15.

than that needed for marriage, was a barrier for many poor women. For this reason, many women in straitened circumstances turned to prostitution as the only viable option since other forms of female occupation paid low wages that were often insufficient to support even a single person, or were coerced by boyfriends, husbands, mothers, or others who profited from their sexual commerce. Despite rigid rhetoric that erected a binary distinction between virtuous and unchaste women, the commonplace that early modern women had three discrete options— nun, wife, or prostitute— does not entirely hold up under scrutiny since women occasionally moved between these categories, particularly at the lower end of the social spectrum. In fact, some earned a dowry through prostitution and went on to marry or entered one of the convents for reformed prostitutes that began to be established around 1520. The lucrative pull of the flesh trade combined with limited opportunities elsewhere drew many women into transactional sex work, whether willingly or coerced.

Although the sex trade was profitable, it was a fluid economy without fixed prices that often functioned rhetorically as a gift economy, which gave rise to a number of strategies used by the women involved to increase their sexual capital, or the economic profit women could extract from their sexual labour, that are examined throughout the following chapters.²² In Rome, where elite courtesans commanded enormous sums for their sexual labour, ‘the relationship

²² The term ‘sexual capital’, used here synonymously with erotic capital, comes from the work of Nina Kushner, who defines the concept as ‘the desirability of a mistress and hence the prices she could command for her services’ (*Erotic Exchanges*, 5). Kushner examines the *demimonde* of elite mistresses in eighteenth-century Paris, which is similar in many aspects to the courtesan culture of sixteenth-century Rome but differs in significant aspects due to the influence of libertine ideas. I broaden Kushner’s concept of sexual capital to encompass various forms of transactional sex.

between courtesan, prostitute and client was often verbally and socially framed as a “friendship” and modelled around traditional ideas of courtship and courtly love, particularly—although not exclusively—at the level of elite prostitution’.²³ The courtesan typically did not charge a set fee for her services, but rather her lovers expressed gratitude for her ‘friendship’ with elaborate and costly gifts such as jewellery, clothing, and luxury foods.²⁴ A long-term client, or *amico fermo*, often paid rent and expenses for a prostitute or courtesan, essentially establishing her as a kept woman.²⁵ Similarly, clandestine prostitutes in Spain frequently received clothing, jewellery, or food rather than money, or their clients paid rent or other expenses. This was standard practice in the early modern economy where coinage was in short supply; the wages of servants and other employees often included food, clothing, and other goods. Consequently, courtesans and prostitutes operated in a flexible market without fixed prices, within which women must use their rhetorical skills to extract as many gifts and other goods from their lovers as possible. Thus, *pícaras* are eloquent tricksters who exchange the promise of sex for clothing and other goods, for example when Dorotea initiates a relationship with a man outside a fabric store in *Las harpías en Madrid* who buys her rich cloth, stockings, and ribbons for a dress as an initial gesture of

²³ Storey, ‘Fragments’, 651.

²⁴ In the period prior to the sack of Rome, legislation did not require courtesans and prostitutes to wear distinguishing clothing; the few sumptuary laws targeting sex workers prior to the 1550s instead regulated what they could not wear, prohibiting them from wearing men’s clothing, nuns’ habits or noble dress (Storey, ‘Clothing’, 99).

²⁵ Usually, though not always, with more than one lover; some women listed in official documents as *meretrice* had a single *amico fermo* (McGough, *Gender, Sexuality, and Syphilis*, 45–70).

courtship.²⁶ In the absence of established prices, *pícaras* must extract maximal profit, though many fail to follow through on the promised sexual encounter, meaning that withholding sexual favours could often function as a means to augment economic profit.

Gifts of clothing played a vital role in the sex trade since courtesans or clandestine prostitutes earned more for their labour if they were well dressed, as can be seen in the fact that *pícaras* normally assume the dress and mannerisms of the elite to attract wealthy men, and in the sumptuary regulations placed on custodial institutions that took in reformed prostitutes. For example, Valladolid's *Casa de recogidas*, a refuge for former prostitutes, prohibited women from renting out their clothing (indicating that they were renting clothing to active prostitutes still working the streets), and required them to surrender their former clothing if they made the decision to stay in the house after the probationary period.²⁷ Similarly, legislation in Spain prohibited actresses from wearing their costumes outside the theatre, in part for fear they would use them to prostitute themselves.²⁸ As Jones and Stallybrass demonstrate, 'it was investiture, the putting on of clothes, that quite literally constituted' the Renaissance subject, and this is no less true of the prostibulary trade, in which access to sumptuous clothing allowed practitioners to increase their erotic capital.²⁹

Although sexual commerce functioned primarily through gifts and exchange, some records of prices for the sexual services of prostitutes and courtesans survive. Naturally, these records come primarily from legal prostitution since illegal acts generally went undocumented

²⁶ Castillo Solórzano, *Las harpías en Madrid*, 61–62.

²⁷ Torremocha Hernández, *De la mancebía a la clausura*, 58.

²⁸ Boyle, *Unruly Women*, 6.

²⁹ Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 2.

except through court records. One notable exception, a 1566 Venetian document that circulated clandestinely, the *Catologo di tutte le principali et più honorate cortigiane* [*Catalogue of All the Principal and Most Honoured Courtesans*], claimed to list the prices of the city's courtesans; 210 are named, most of whom charged one scudo for their services.³⁰ The lowest price listed is half a scudo. Tessa Storey's archival research also reveals that one scudo was the average price for a mid-range prostitute in Rome in the late 1500s, though she would charge more if the client spent the night.³¹ In comparison, a female servant received approximately one scudo per month in wages, plus room and board.³² Prostitutes on the lower end of the scale could earn as little as one giulio, a silver coin worth one-tenth of a scudo, for a sexual encounter.³³ The most prestigious courtesans listed in the *Catologo* earned around ten scudi, and the highest price recorded was 30.³⁴ However, a select few may have been able to earn even more. Veronica Franco, the most famous of the Venetian courtesans, appears in the *Catologo* at the price of two scudi as an aspiring courtesan before she rose to prominence. At the height of her fame she reputedly charged at least 50 scudi, while one of Rome's most famous courtesans, Tullia D'Aragona, allegedly once charged 100 scudi for a single night.³⁵ As these data reveal, prices varied enormously; but even the poorest prostitute could earn significantly more with her body

³⁰ Barzaghi, *Donne o cortegiane?*, 155–167. There was no single currency system in Italy at this time; each state minted its own coins, and several versions of the scudo, in both silver and gold, circulated.

³¹ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, 170.

³² *Ibid.*, 171; Storey, 'Clothing Courtesans', 101.

³³ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, 163.

³⁴ Barzaghi, *Donne o cortegiane?*, 155–167.

³⁵ Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance*, 153; 97.

than in a licit profession, and fashionable courtesans commanded vast sums. In Spain, prices in the brothels appeared to have varied as well. In the Sevillian *mancebía*, a young and attractive prostitute could earn as much as four or five ducats per day (roughly the equivalent of one scudo), while older or less attractive ones earned only a few *maravedís* (one ducat valued 375 *maravedís*).³⁶ Given that the price of sexual commerce varied enormously even in the regulated prostibulary economy, prices for clandestine prostitution must have required careful negotiation.

In sum, prostitution in most areas of Catholic Europe operated through municipal brothels whose presence was often conceived of as protecting the social order, yet prostitution also flourished clandestinely. Both within and outside the brothels women, or their intermediaries such as pimps and procuresses, negotiated the economic value of their labour in a market without fixed prices. This created a fluid and multifaceted prostibulary economy. As we shall see, a range of attitudes towards prostitution that reflect both late medieval defences of prostitution as necessary to the greater good and reformist attitudes towards prostitution that call for prohibition appear, sometimes within the same text.

The Sex Trade in *La Lozana andaluza*

La Lozana andaluza (1528), written by the Spanish priest and long-term resident of Rome, Francisco Delicado, contains several reflections on and comparisons of the sex trade in Spain and Rome, and describes the Roman prostibulary milieu in great detail. This fascinating work, which survives in a single extant copy rediscovered in 1857, was initially considered too scandalous to be worthy of serious literary criticism. In recent decades, the work of scholars such as Bruno Damiani, Louis Imperiale, Claude Allaigre, and others has demonstrated the mastery of

³⁶ Sánchez Ortega, *Pecadoras en verano*, 141; Anderson, *Daily Life*, 13–14.

its language and artistry, bringing it into the canon. In most Italian city-states, as in Spain with the exception of Vizcaya, prostitution was legal only within the confines of the municipal brothels.³⁷ Rome, in contrast, allowed prostitution to flourish unchecked (though taxed) in its city streets in the same period that witnessed the rise of elite courtesans from the late fifteenth to the early sixteenth century. As stated previously, *La Lozana andaluza* is the first Spanish novel to feature a prostitute as protagonist; this novel in dialogue fictionalizes the life of a lower-class Cordovan who, after her lover's father attempts to have her killed, escapes to Rome where she enters the sex trade. Delicado's novel provides a detailed description of the city's elite courtesans and its numerous prostitutes, yet also describes the sex trade in Spain through comparisons to Lozana's prior experience. Prostitution flourished in Renaissance Rome, where, even at a conservative estimate, at least one-tenth of the population profited from sexual commerce, including prostitutes as well as pimps, procuresses, and dependants such as maids and servants.³⁸ Delicado's novel portrays the entire spectrum of the Roman sex trade, from elite courtesans to laundresses and other destitute women engaged in part-time transactional sex.

³⁷ Renato Barahona finds that, though prostitutes operated in the streets and private homes, early modern Vizcaya did not maintain municipal brothels (*Sex Crimes*, 158; 226).

³⁸ The number of courtesans and prostitutes operating in Rome is impossible to calculate accurately, though all sources agree that it must have been high. Divicia, an ageing courtesan and Lozana's intimate, estimates that in the 1520s there were 30,000 prostitutes and 9,000 go-betweens operating in Rome (Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 430). This figure is probably an exaggeration for dramatic purposes; however, it is certain that an enormous sector of the Roman population lived off the trade in prostitution. Umberto Gnoli's analysis of the 1526 census data concludes that approximately 4,900 of the 55,035 inhabitants listed are legally identified as prostitutes or courtesans (Larivaille, *La vita*, 51).

Prostitutes of many nationalities and ethnic identities operated in Rome, but the Spanish probably ranked as the most numerous among foreign prostitutes.³⁹ Of the 1128 prostitutes and courtesans listed in the 1526 census of Rome whose last names indicate their national or regional origin, 104 were Spanish, indicating either that a significant number of female Spanish residents of the city participated in the flesh trade or that Spanish sex workers were sought after, so as to make it financially advantageous to appear to be Spanish.⁴⁰ Those whose surnames denote geographical origin (such as Teresa Spagnuola) are a minority of the nearly 5,000 prostitutes and courtesans listed in the census. The lofty names taken by courtesans and prostitutes often served a commercial purpose; as Lozana's client, the *valijero* or letter carrier, explains, 'se mudan los nombres con cognombres altivos y de grand sonido' [they change their names for elegant and grandiose pseudonyms] to imitate the elite courtesans, and the Spanish were popular among high-class prostitutes.⁴¹ These numbers do not, therefore, have any statistical value, but rather serve as a preliminary indication that Spanish prostitutes and courtesans figured prominently among the many foreign sex workers in the city. Many Spanish residents saw the prostitution of Spanish women as a stain on national honour, and formed charitable organizations designed to provide dowries for poor women to marry and thus avoid falling into prostitution. However, this aid proved insufficient to prevent many Spanish women from entering the carnal trade out of desperation, a desire to participate in the lucrative market, or both.

Although naturally the flesh trade had flourished in Rome long before the sixteenth century, a new type of prostitute, the courtesan or *cortigiana onesta*, who not only sold sexual

³⁹ Partner, *Renaissance Rome*, 76.

⁴⁰ Larivaille, *La vita*, 65.

⁴¹ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 276.

pleasure but also acquired the refined skills and wit needed to charm the Renaissance man and who played an active role in the city's social life, emerged in this period.⁴² Courtesans attended fashionable events and, as they became more established, began to hold salons in their own homes. The presence of *cortigiane oneste* supplied the companionship of beautiful, articulate, and talented women who were also sexually available in a society that jealously guarded the chastity of wives and daughters. As Georgina Masson explains, 'one of the most important attributes of a courtesan was that she should be good company, capable of charming her host's friends and making a party go, but at the same time of flattering him gracefully so that his friends were envious'.⁴³ In addition, she was trained in the fashionable entertainments of the time. Many courtesans entertained their clients with music, accompanying their singing with the lute and the *viola da braccio*, an instrument very similar to the modern violin, and later courtesans often wrote poetry. Several Venetian courtesans, such as Veronica Franco, Tullia d'Aragona, and Gaspara Stampa, became celebrated and published poets. Their grace and entertaining skills

⁴² Though the term *cortigiane* in Italian is the feminine equivalent of *cortigiano* (courtier), the term's new usage was a translation of the Latin term *curiale* ('belonging to the curia'), referring to the papal Curia from which the courtesan may have emerged (Larivaille, *La vita*, 54; Bassanese, 'Private Lives', 296; Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, 66). Humanist circles founded in the Curia met each evening to discuss matters of culture such as philosophy, philology, poetry, and literature. Some scholars assert that the humanists deliberately created the new class of courtesans by grooming select women in the arts and graces of the *hetaira* in a quest to mould a new version of the classical intellectual sexual companion, choosing as their raw material the most beautiful and intelligent of Rome's prostitutes (Larivaille, *La vita*, 54; Bassanese, 'Private Lives', 296).

⁴³ Masson, *Courtesans*, 31.

turned the homes of the courtesans into the scene of salons in which they and their clientele participated in Renaissance culture.

In short order, prostitutes throughout Rome, envious of the enormous sums earned by the courtesans, began to refer to themselves as *cortigiane* also. New terminology soon emerged as refined courtesans sought to distinguish themselves from common prostitutes. As ‘courtesan’ effectively became a synonym for prostitute, the upper echelon adopted the title *cortigiane oneste*: ‘honest’ or ‘respectable’ courtesan. A census carried out during the pontificate of Leo X distinguishes the elite *cortigiane oneste* [honest courtesans] from a midrange denoted as *cortigiane da lume* [courtesans of light] or *cortigiane da candela* [courtesans of candle] who placed candles in their windows to advertise services, who in turn ranked above the lowly *cortigiane puttane* [courtesan whore], and these terms later spread to other cities.⁴⁴ The fame of their beauty and grace spread across Europe until they became a tourist attraction.⁴⁵

As the courtesans gained respectability, they established a matriarchal succession. Young girls were introduced into the profession around the age of fourteen by their mothers, usually also courtesans, or by adopted mothers who took them in from foundling homes to raise them as

⁴⁴ Larivaille, *La vita*, 55; Witcombe, ‘The Chapel of the Courtesan’, 274–275.

⁴⁵ See, for example, the account of Anthony Munday, *The English Romaine Lyfe*, who portrays the experience of English Catholics living in Rome. His chapter on the carnival in Rome includes a description of the prominent place of the courtesans in the life of the city, who appear at their windows ‘to receiue diuers deuises of Rose water [...] which the Gentlemen will throwe vp to their windowes’ (96). The courtesans are also portrayed in costume books of the period, most notably that of Cesare Vecellio. For an analysis of the ‘Grand Tour’ from northern Europe to Italy in early modern period see Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour*, 58–101.

courtesans.⁴⁶ The older generation often spent enormous sums educating their daughters (or putative daughters) and used their connections to set them up with powerful and wealthy male protectors who would ensure their future in the profession. Women's role in grooming future prostitutes and courtesans and initiating them into the sex trade emerges as a recurring theme in the female picaresque, which abounds with aunts (real and feigned) such as Claudia in *La tía fingida* who takes in Esperanza as a foundling and Lozana's aunt who introduces her to her first lover, as well as mothers like Teodora in *Las harpías en Madrid* who encourage their charges to enter the flesh trade, and share in the profits from it.⁴⁷ The involvement of older women as intermediaries profiting from the sexuality of younger ones may reflect the reduced possibilities for ageing prostitutes who could no longer profit through commerce of their own body. Lozana, for example, states that prostitutes cannot earn a living after the age of 40; thus, many figures such as Zara (mother of Elena, *La hija de Celestina*) are former prostitutes who indoctrinate younger women into the sex trade and profit from their sexual labour.⁴⁸

The imprecise and constantly shifting dividing line between prostitutes and courtesans rested on the latter's reputation for exclusivity, charm, and physical beauty. Though Masson

⁴⁶ Masson, *Courtesans*, 20.

⁴⁷ Lozana is a young girl when she becomes Diomedes' lover and *amancebada* in the Levant, but there are ludic indications in the early *mamotretos* that she was a clandestine prostitute in the sex trade from a very young age. As the narrator relates, her mother was a 'solicitadora' who taught her to 'tejer [...] ordinar y tramar', all frequent synonyms for coitus (Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 176). When she is left an orphan, her aunt instructs her to 'sed buena' [be good], an injunction that should be read in the context of *buena's* function as a synonym for prostitute throughout the novel (ibid., 176).

⁴⁸ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 367.

explains that ‘it was money that raised a woman out of the ranks of mere prostitute to the status of *meretrix honesta* or courtesan’, she must also have the education, beauty, and wit to attract the protection of an elite lover who would launch her.⁴⁹ As courtesans became fashionable, men displayed their social position through the ability to access the services of the most elite practitioners. A courtesan’s status rested not only on the enormous sums she could command for her companionship and sexual services, but also on the public image she created. However, as I argue subsequently, they were in constant danger of losing their prestigious yet precarious position.

The world of the fashionable courtesans, with which Delicado was undoubtedly familiar as a member of the fashionable Spanish literary circles that populated the papal courts of Alexander VI and his successors, plays a key role in *La Lozana andaluza*. In the novel, an elite caste referred to as *cortesanas favoridas* [favoured courtesans] lives in fantastic splendour contrasted with the poverty of the laundresses and shirt-makers who supplement their meagre wages through subsistence prostitution.⁵⁰ Although a minority, these *cortesanas favoridas* exert influence over the other characters. When Lozana starts her life in Rome she is dependent on the sale of her body to survive; however, by the final chapters she seems to derive most of her income and her prominent position in courtesan society from the sale of medicines and beauty supplies. Lozana has no hope of becoming a courtesan since she is past the first flush of youth and has already borne several children by the time she arrives in Rome, and she lacks the

⁴⁹ Masson, *Courtesans*, 9.

⁵⁰ In fact, the terms ‘laundress’ and ‘shirt-maker’ were commonly used as synonyms for ‘prostitute’ in both Spain and Italy, indicating that many women working for subsistence wages probably augmented their wages through occasional or regular sex work. See Mackay, ‘Women on the Margins’, 33–35.

refinement and artistic skills necessary to charm aristocratic men. Nonetheless, she gains access to their inner circle, and in doing so to the luxuries and wealth they enjoy.

Delicado fictionalizes historical courtesans, such as Imperia and Flaminia, in accordance with the humanist ideal of verisimilitude; Delicado titles his work a *retrato*, or portrait, and promises his reader that he will describe only ‘lo que oí y vi’ [what I have heard and seen].⁵¹ The ‘Glorious Imperia,’ fictionalized in several sketches as a client of Lozana’s cosmetic business, was the most famous Roman courtesan of the Renaissance.⁵² Among her lovers were: the future pope Giulio de’ Medici, who held the papacy as Clement VII at the time that *La Lozana andaluza* was written; the banker Agostino Chigi, ‘the wealthiest and most prominent private citizen in Rome’ in the 1520s and ‘one of the wealthiest men in Europe’; and the poet Filippo Beroaldo.⁵³ Imperia was born in 1481 to an unknown father and a minor courtesan who launched her into society. At the height of her fame, she was a neighbour and friend of Raphael, for whom she modelled. Imperia was one of the few courtesans to die at the height of her wealth and power; she poisoned herself, purportedly after being abandoned by one of her lovers. Masson

⁵¹ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 169. This statement is ironic given that Delicado states, ‘diré lo que oí y vi, con menos culpa que Juvenal, pues escribió lo que en su tiempo pasaba’ (ibid., 169). As Allaire remarks in his editorial comments (169), this statement establishes a supposed contrast between what is seen and heard and what really happens that undermines his stated intent of verisimilitude. Nonetheless, Delicado’s work describes in surprising detail many aspects of daily life that are absent from most works of the period, as when he compares the Italian and Spanish methods of laundering clothing (221), or in the many detailed descriptions of culinary techniques.

⁵² Masson, *Courtesans*, 33.

⁵³ Mitchell, *Rome in the High Renaissance*, 42.

states that

Of all the famous courtesans she is the only one known to have committed suicide, and the fact that she did so for love and at the height of her beauty naturally intensified the drama [...] the poets who had sung Imperia's praises during her lifetime now vied with one another in mourning her death.⁵⁴

Her beauty, lavish lifestyle, and dramatic death made her a notorious figure. While the historical Imperia died in 1512, her fictional double appears in *La Lozana andaluza* very much alive and at the height of her career. Lozana enjoys an intimate relationship with this character, and many of the other beautiful and rich courtesans who appear in the novel, as a result of her popularity as a purveyor of beauty supplies.

As Imperia's example illustrates, it was difficult to reach the upper ranks of *cortigiane oneste*; it was equally challenging to remain there. To maintain her image, the courtesan not only dressed in the beautiful and fashionable clothing often provided by her lover(s) but also sustained a large and expensive household. In addition, the courtesans added to their mystique by keeping exotic pets like monkeys, peacocks, and other birds, an imitation of regal lifestyle that fed their glamorous image as the royalty of prostitution. The financial toll of maintaining this ostentatious luxury led some to die in poverty. As Lozana states, though the courtesans earn enormous sums

⁵⁴ Masson, *Courtesans*, 55. Unlike most of the courtesans, Imperia did not raise her own daughter to follow in her footsteps, but rather placed her in a convent, from which she entered into an advantageous marriage and, paradoxically, became a symbol of female purity after attempting to poison herself to avoid being raped by her husband's business rival (*ibid.*, 57).

of money, they are envious of one another, and compete to have the most sumptuous lodgings, clothes, and servants, thus privileging appearances over long-term financial wellbeing. She states that they spend lavishly ‘en pensiones o alquiler de casas, la una ha envidia a la otra, y dejan pagada aquélla por cuatro o cinco meses, y todo lo pierden por mudar su fantasía, y en comer, y en mozos, y en vestir y calzar, y leña y otras provisiones, y en infantescas’ [on boarding houses or rent, one is envious of another and leaves the previous residence paid for four or five months, and they lose everything by changing their maids, and in eating, and on servants, and on clothing and shoes, and wood and other provisions, and on maids].⁵⁵

The fall of the courtesan became a common trope in literature and art through pamphlets, broadsides and paintings depicting beautiful and wealthy courtesans who became decrepit, impoverished hags in old age. *La tía fingida*, for example, warns that, despite the felicitous outcome of Esperanza’s tale, which ends with her happily married, ‘las más de su trato pueblan las camas de los hospitales, y mueren en ellos miserables y desventuradas’ [most of their profession populate the hospital beds, and they die therein miserable and unfortunate].⁵⁶ In *La Lozana andaluza*, the destitute former courtesan appears in the person of the *galana portuguesa* [Portuguese’s lover] whom Lozana observes in her first voyage across Rome with Rampín in Sketch XII. Here, the courtesan appears at the height of her career, supported by her rich Portuguese lover; later, Lozana observes the same woman begging in the streets, too old to ply

⁵⁵ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 337.

⁵⁶ Cervantes, *La tía fingida*, 315. This statement appears in both version, though the Porras de la Cámara version adds ‘permitiendo Dios que las que, cuando mozas, se llevaban tras si los ojos de todos, no haya alguno que ponga los ojos en ellas’ [God permits that when they are young all eyes follow them, yet in the end no one will deign to look at them], *ibid.*

her trade. Lozana observes to one of her clients that the former courtesan ‘fue una mujer que mandaba en la mar y en la tierra, y señoreó a Nápoles, tiempo del Gran Capitán, y tuvo dineros más que no quiso, y vesla allí asentada demandando limosna a los que pasan’ [was a woman who commanded on sea and land, and commanded all of Naples in the time of the Great Captain, and had more money than she could want, and now you see her sitting there begging for alms from passers-by].⁵⁷

In response to these circumstances, Lozana suggests the establishment of a *taberna meritoria*, or ‘meritorious tavern’, capitalizing on the wordplay between *meretrix* (prostitute) and *mérito* (merit), which would take care of prostitutes and courtesans in their old age in return for their ‘services’ in maintaining social stability. In doing so, she invokes the defence of prostitution as a ‘lesser evil’ necessary to the greater social good that undergirded the system of legalized prostitution through municipal brothels in most of sixteenth-century Europe. In Lozana’s opinion, prostitutes provide a public service by allowing an outlet for male sexual release that would otherwise prove disruptive. She exclaims,

Me maravillo cómo pueden vivir muchas pobres mujeres que han servido esta corte con sus haciendas y honras, y puesto su vida al tablero por honrar la corte y pelear y batallar [...] todas esperan que el senado las provea a cada una según el tiempo que sirvió y los méritos que debe haber, que sean satisfechas. Y según piensan y creen que harán una taberna meritoria [...] en la cual les proveían del vito e vestido.

⁵⁷ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 408. The Great Captain is Gonzalo Fernandez de Córdoba, under whom Delicado may have served and to whom he dedicates the Introduction to his edition of *Primaleón*.

[I marvel at how many poor women can live, who have served this court with their estates and honours, and put their life on the line to honour the court and fight and battle ... they all await that the Senate will provide to each according to the time she served and the merits she had, so that they will be satisfied. And they believe and think that a meritorious tavern will be made ... in which they will be provided with clothing and rations.]⁵⁸

Adopting a humorous satire of legal language, Lozana equates prostitutes and soldiers (a common literary theme that appears in Aretino's *I ragionamenti* also) since both are stigmatized professions whose performance of an unpleasant task aids in the maintenance of social order. More importantly, the lexicon of combat, such as 'fight' and 'battle', functioned as double-entendres for sexual activity, as seen in the common usage of *luchar* [battle] for sexual activity, reinforcing the ludic parody.⁵⁹ Lozana goes on to argue that if prostitutes are not given 'el premio o mérito que merecen' [the prize or merit they deserve] girls will no longer enter prostitution, with grave consequences.⁶⁰ The result will be that 'los galanes requieran a las casadas y a las vírgenes d'esa tierra' [the gallants will seduce the married ladies and virgins of this land].⁶¹ Therefore, she concludes that prostitution is best left to professionals since 'se quiere dejar hacer tal oficio a quien lo sabe manear' [this task should be left to those who know how to

⁵⁸ Ibid., 389–390.

⁵⁹ Alzieu, Jammes and Lissorgues, *Poesía erótica*, 10–11.

⁶⁰ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 391.

⁶¹ Ibid., 391.

perform it].⁶²

Lozana's speech echoes the 'lesser evil' defence of prostitution, which, she argues, protects the honour of chaste women by providing an outlet for male sexuality and, consequently, prostitutes protect the virgins and wives of Rome from male advances. Therefore, in Lozana's opinion this service should be recognized and rewarded. Her argument is immediately attacked by her interlocutor Silvano, who states that the hospitals for the incurable, or syphilis hospitals, will take such women in, thus portraying the 'French disease' (syphilis)– a terrifying epidemic sweeping Europe at the time that Delicado wrote and a major theme in the novel– as a just reward for female arrogance. The conversation reiterates the debates over prostitution taking place in the sixteenth century; Lozana voices her support for institutionalized prostitution, but at the same time her statement could be taken as a satirical jab at the recently formed conversion houses, which some feared could become retirement homes for prostitutes. Silvano, even though he comes as a client to Lozana's house, attacks her trade and its practitioners. Though their views differ, Silvano and Lozana both emphasize the need for enclosure, whether in the hospital or custodial institutions.⁶³

⁶² Ibid., 391.

⁶³ Although many critics interpret this novel as a clear denunciation of the flesh trade in Rome (García Verdugo, *La Lozana andaluza*, 21–70; Damiani, *Francisco Delicado*, 85–114; Wardropper, 'La novela como retrato', 476), as the exchange between Lozana and Silvano regarding the *taberna meritoria* illustrates, Delicado does not take a clear stance in the diegesis regarding prostitution. Rather, he reiterates the 'lesser evil' argument common to Spain and Italy through his protagonist. Though in the end materials he claims to write with a didactic purpose, his text is contradictory and presents neither a clear defence nor a clear condemnation of carnal commerce. Delicado explains in the end materials that

On the other hand, the dire literary pronouncements regarding the fate that awaits courtesans and prostitutes also spring from moral concerns regarding the wages of sin and corresponding moral outrage at seeing sinful women escape those consequences. The Roman flesh trade was extremely lucrative; thus, moralizing critiques and attacks may arise from jealousy engendered by the luxury in which many courtesans lived and the wealth that sustained them in old age. Though some courtesans, such as Veronica Franco, died in relative poverty, others showed more restraint in their financial management. The Roman courtesan Fiammetta ‘owned three houses and a *vigna* at the time she made out her will on February 19, 1512’.⁶⁴ After 1520, legal statutes required courtesans to leave one-fifth of their wealth to the newly founded *convertiti*, or convents that housed repentant prostitutes, but some left far more to charity.⁶⁵ Many courtesans converted after reaching an age that made active work difficult, whether out of sincere religious feeling or simply because their age left them unable to successfully practise their profession, sometimes patronizing chapels or convents as a way to demonstrate their piety.⁶⁶ Lozana’s characterization may arise in part as an ironic commentary on this trope. Though Lozana complains repeatedly about the treatment prostitutes and courtesans received and their relative poverty in old age, her claims of poverty and stylized laments in the *ubi sunt* tradition are undercut by the statements of those around her, who often comment on her girth and

immoral activity like prostitution falls into the category of ‘cosas que se hacen que no son de decir’ [things that are done, but should not be talked about] (487). Bubnova elaborates in great detail on Delicado’s contradictions and the ambiguity of the text in *F. Delicado puesto en dialogo*.

⁶⁴ Witcombe, ‘The Chapel of the Courtesan’, 276.

⁶⁵ Masson, *Courtesans*, 129–137.

⁶⁶ Witcombe, ‘The Chapel of the Courtesan’, 274–279.

wealth.

Courtesans, though often wealthy and living in luxury, led a precarious and dangerous existence that left them open to violence from jealous clients or former clients. Their lifestyle required an enormous financial outlay that could only be met by having multiple clients. However, courtesan culture, with its mimicry of the rhetoric of courtly love and fear of jealous acts of retribution, required them to make a pretence of having only one lover. Imperia, for example, one of the most famous Roman courtesans, reputedly had at least nine wealthy lovers at one time.⁶⁷ Rivalry among clients often led to acts of violence against the courtesan such as attacks that scarred her face, or sexual assault such as the *treintiuno*, or gang rape by 31 men.⁶⁸ The courtesan, therefore, mediated between the need to maximize her economic potential and the danger of inciting jealousy or anger. Men of higher social class could not frequent the same woman as those of a lower status without loss of honour. For this reason, though prostitutes were ‘common’ or ‘public women’ and therefore theoretically available to all men, the maintenance of social order required that there be a subset of public women, the courtesans, who were available only to elite men. Likewise, while rhetorically courtesan relationships mimicked a discourse of courtly love and ‘friendship’, meaning that courtesans declared that they had only one lover, in practice elite men often frequented the same courtesan without rivalry. It was when lovers were rejected by a courtesan, or when a courtesan dared to take lovers of different social strata, that she risked attack. The courtesan enjoyed a great deal of autonomy as head of her own household with the ability to choose her lovers and access to wealth and luxury. However, she must maintain the façade of living in seclusion like a chaste woman of the upper class. The fabulous

⁶⁷ Masson, *Courtesans*, 45.

⁶⁸ Lawner, *Lives of the Courtesans*, 74–77; Masson, *Courtesans*, 135–137.

wealth that could be attained by the courtesans required a delicate balancing act to maintain her position. Along with her abilities in music, poetry, and other arts, she must be a skilled diplomat in her relationships with clients.

Delicado satirizes the courtesans to provoke laughter from a male audience probably familiar with the Roman courtesans that appear in the novel. However, women lower down the hierarchy of Roman prostitution used mimicry of courtesan customs as an economic strategy. Just as all the prostitutes of Rome quickly began to denote themselves *cortigiane* after the term emerged to access the wealth generated by courtesans, mimicry of the courtesan's refinement and cultural knowledge may have been an advantageous strategy for advancement in the sex trade. The hierarchy of prostitution was not static, but rather in a constant state of reorganization as new courtesans entered the trade, others lost their allure with age, and women vied for favour with elite clientele. Though courtesans and prostitutes were discursively constructed as separate categories, in practice they existed as points on a spectrum, effectively separated only by their relative success in economic and social terms.

Delicado's work depicts the stratified world of Roman prostitution, in which the courtesans operated as a privileged class but were heavily outnumbered by poor prostitutes. Part of the reason Delicado's novel has captivated a modern readership is that he brings to centre stage an often overlooked sector in daily life as well as historical research. Even while Renaissance writers often drew a sharp distinction between 'honest' courtesans and common whores, in practice this hierarchy was a continuum ranging from the elite *cortigiane oneste*, through minor courtesans (*cortigiane da lume/da candela*), numerous middle-income prostitutes (*cortigiane puttane*), and down to poor women augmenting their wages with sex work. Though the courtesans are thematically integral to the novelized world of *La Lozana andaluza*, they are

heavily outnumbered by the myriad prostitutes at the bottom of the scale since the courtesans' 'pre-eminence must have depended partly on their rarity'.⁶⁹ However, they generated enormous wealth, not only for themselves but also for their servants and other dependants, which Lozana accesses through her services as a beautician.

Many women entered prostitution as a result of the inadequate income available through licit occupations. Tessa Storey reports that for poor women prostitution 'was just one of a panoply of expedients taken in order to feed themselves and their children on an occasional or part-time basis. Such women may not have been considered by their neighbours as prostitutes, or have been noted in the parish records as such.'⁷⁰ These women appear in *La Lozana andaluza* as the maids, laundresses, and other domestic workers who, though not identified as prostitutes, engage in occasional acts of sexual commerce to supplement their wages, such as the maid Magdalena who Lozana convinces to engage in a sexual act in return for a pair of gloves.⁷¹ Despite numerous prohibitions and moralizing treatises designed to control women's sexuality by defining female identity categories such as wife and prostitute as mutually exclusive, economic uncertainty likely took precedence in women's daily lives, and in practice women moved between different categories. As Storey states, 'whilst convent life and marriage were proposed as the most perfect state for women, there were always those who became neither nuns nor wives, or who did marry but were widowed or abandoned; such women accounted for up to 25 per cent of adult females in the Italian states'.⁷² Those women whose poverty took them into

⁶⁹ Cohen, 'Seen and Known', 393.

⁷⁰ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, 116.

⁷¹ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 300–304.

⁷² Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, 239.

the streets on a daily basis to perform the low-wage employment available to them ‘came into daily contact with much wealthier men about the city, particularly if they offered domestic services, [therefore] it is easy to understand how many women became involved in prostitution’.⁷³ Certainly, in *La Lozana andaluza* the vast majority of female characters rely at least partially on bodily commerce to survive. These prostitutes, though financially less secure, also enjoyed much greater spatial access than the courtesans. As lower-class women, they enjoyed a freedom of movement in the streets and the public sphere that the courtesans could not access without losing status.

Delicado, through Lozana’s comments on the Roman sex trade, frequently compares and contrasts the Roman and Spanish systems, often through ironic recourse to the *ubi sunt* topos in which prostitutes or their clients reminisce about an idealized past manifestation of the flesh trade. Lozana and her fellow Spanish prostitutes occasionally reflect on their experiences of the sex trade in Iberia, as when the ageing prostitute Divicia brags to Lozana that she used to be a very sought-after whore in her youth, stating that:

En Medina ni en Burgos no había quien se me comparase; pues en Zaragoza más ganaba yo que puta que fuese en aquel tiempo, que por excelencia me llevaron al publique de Valencia, y allí combatieron por mí cuatro rufianes y fui libre; y desde entonces tomé reputación y, si hubiese guardado lo ganado, tenía más riquezas que Feliciano.

[There was no one who could have been compared to me either in Medina or Burgos; while in Zaragoza I earned more than any other whore of that time, and

⁷³ Ibid., 138.

because of my excellence they took me to the public brothel in Valencia, and there four ruffians fought over me and I was free; and after that I earned a reputation and, if I had kept what I earned, I would have more riches than Feliciana.]⁷⁴

Thus, Divicia describes the public brothels as a prestigious location for prostitutes and a place where she had some degree of autonomy, an assertion belied by the scarce historical data on the public brothels. Additionally, she describes a hierarchical structure to the sex trade in Spain in which some prostitutes earned significantly more than others.

Such assertions that certain prostitutes gained a reputation based on their beauty and perhaps sexual skill hints at a homosocial network of male consumers borne out by literary representations and historical data that portray men of all social classes patronizing the sex trade, whether by visiting brothels or keeping paid mistresses. These projections by male authors reflect misogynist stereotypes of the sexually insatiable woman and of female vanity expressed through reflection on her past beauty, and naturally cannot be taken to represent a female perspective. However, through this projection, male authors reflect on how prostitution should best be regulated.

Lozana, like Divicia, reminisces about Spanish norms toward prostitution. Rampín, as part of his explanation of the prostibulary trade in Rome, tells Lozana that prostitutes and courtesans must pay a yearly tax to ply their trade legally. Lozana, accustomed to the Spanish model of regulated prostitution, exclaims ‘mal hacen, que no habían de pagar sino las que están

⁷⁴ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 422. Feliciana plays on the Spanish *feliz* (happy) and presumably refers to an imagined woman who is happy because she is rich.

al burdel' [they do wrong, for only those who are in the brothels should pay].⁷⁵ Rampín responds that the Spanish distinction between brothel and clandestine prostitutes is inappropriate to the Roman flesh trade; instead, he asserts, 'es la mayor parte de Roma burdel, y le dicen: Roma putana' [most of Rome is a brothel, and they call it whorish Rome].⁷⁶ Delicado, like many of his contemporaries, demonstrates a fundamentally ambiguous stance towards transactional sex. While he denounces the rampant sex trade in Rome by calling the city itself a whore, he also implies that there is a licit manner in which the flesh trade could continue through reflections such as Lozana's that prostitution, when left to professionals, protects wives and maidens from sexual advances and, therefore, seduction. Though Delicado's work is profoundly ambiguous and contradictory, these fond reflections on the sex trade in Spain may indicate Delicado's preference for the more regulated system of municipal brothels in his homeland.

Shortly after her arrival in Rome, one of Lozana's clients, a *valijero* (letter carrier), initiates her into the Roman sex trade through a long speech describing the many types and classes of Roman prostitutes, and Lozana's responses contrast this information with her knowledge of the sex trade in Spain. Lozana initiates the conversation by asking him what kind of life *mujeres amancebadas*, or kept women, have in the city. In medieval Spain, concubinage (under the terms *amigamiento* [befriending], *unión de barraganía* [concubinage union], or *amancebamiento* [cohabitation]) was a legal union that could be contracted between two single people and regarded as a sort of temporary marriage.⁷⁷ In this contract, the *amancebada* [concubine] took on a spousal role for a set period and promised faithfulness, after which she

⁷⁵ Ibid., 215.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 216.

⁷⁷ Lacarra Lanz, 'Changing Boundaries', 162.

would be paid a predetermined amount. Concubinage was not as respectable for women as marriage, but could be considered socially acceptable provided that a public record had been submitted of the union, or that it had been legitimized before witnesses. Historically, concubinage had been seen as a form of marriage, and distinct from prostitution.⁷⁸ Although the Church did not approve of these unions, it tolerated them until the time of the Counter-Reformation, after which marriage became more formalized and concubines gradually became conflated with prostitutes. The Council of Trent forbade concubinage in 1563, thus solidifying its identification with prostitution.⁷⁹

Lozana, before her escape to Rome, lived as a concubine under her birth name, Aldonza. As a young girl, she had been introduced to the merchant Diomedes by her aunt. After Aldonza became his lover and travelled with him to Rhodes, he proposes that they go to the Levant to develop his father's business, requesting 'que se esforzase a no dejarlo por otro hombre, que él se esforzaría a no tomar otra por mujer que a ella' [that she would endeavour not to leave him for another man, and he would endeavour not to take another woman besides her].⁸⁰ With this promise, Diomedes formalizes their relationship, after which she bears him several children. All is well until Diomedes proposes to return to Spain and marry her, upon which his enraged father attempts to have her killed, prompting her escape to Rome, where she changes her name to Lozana.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 159–163. One of the changes brought about by the Council of Trent was the ban on the *palabra de matrimonio* [promise marriage] by which couples could be married secretly 'simply by copulating after having stated their intention to marry' without official approval from the Church (ibid., 162).

⁷⁹ Ibid., 173.

⁸⁰ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 185.

While historical studies have shown that young people of the lower classes frequently entered into sexual relationships prior to marriage on the understanding that they would later formalize the union, in this case Diomedes is a wealthy merchant while Aldonza is a poor orphan from the lowest stratum of society, and it is this difference in status, perhaps as well as Aldonza's lack of virginity, that provokes his father's ire at the proposed marriage.⁸¹ In Rome, elite men not only frequented courtesans, but also kept mistresses from the lower class, who were often paid a set sum on the understanding that they would not take other lovers.⁸² Lozana, due to her Spanish origin, makes a distinction between *mujeres amancebadas* [mistresses] and prostitutes that the letter carrier does not share. The letter carrier, perhaps due to his own status as a non-elite man, responds that there are no kept women in Rome, but rather 'son cortesanas ricas y pobres' [they are rich and poor courtesans], though he states that in his estimation 'todas son putas' [they are all whores].⁸³ Lozana attempts to define herself as a mistress rather than a prostitute, though her client rejects this distinction. In his opinion, there is no distinction between a woman who has an illicit relationship with one man and a woman who transacts relationships with many.

The myriad characters of Delicado's sketches express differing attitudes that reflect contemporary debates regarding the nature of carnal commerce and how to define the women involved in it; while Silvano takes a condemnatory stance, warning that prostitutes and courtesans 'se hacen francesas o grimanas' [become 'French' or syphilitics], Lozana defends

⁸¹ Renato Barahona, for example, finds that in Vizcaya the non-elite frequently entered into monogamous unions that led to marriage (*Sex Crimes, Honour and the Law*, 26–27).

⁸² Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros*, 158.

⁸³ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 269.

prostitution as a lesser evil.⁸⁴ Yet all the male characters of Delicado's novel, even those who attack prostitutes as morally inferior like Silvano, are her clients, including the fictionalized author.

Lozana's defence of the flesh trade appears in the *taberna meritoria* scene mentioned earlier wherein she recommends the construction of a retirement home for prostitutes past their prime, but also in many of her remarks to clients, courtesans, and other characters. In one episode she declares to another of her clients, the doctor Salomón, that 'cuatro cosas no valen nada, si no son participadas o comunicadas a menudo: el placer, y el saber, y el dinero, y el coño de la mujer, el cual no debe estar vacuo, según la filosofía natural' [four things are without value, if they are not participated in and communicated frequently: pleasure, knowledge, money, and a woman's cunt, which should not be empty according to natural philosophy].⁸⁵ She follows this affirmation by asking '¿qué le valdría [...] a la Montesina su hermosura, aunque la guardase otros sesenta años, que jamás muriese, si tuviese su coño puesto en la guardarropa?' [what would ... la Montesina's beauty be worth, even if she could maintain it for 60 years, and never die, if she kept her cunt locked up in the closet?]⁸⁶ To Lozana, an unused vagina is wasteful, unhealthy, and unnatural.

As Joan Cadden demonstrates, works of natural philosophy, which sought to describe the

⁸⁴ Ibid., 392. The terms Silvano uses both refer to what we now call syphilis. The first, *francesas* or French, is a reference to the common term 'French disease', while the second, *grimanas*, refers to the term *greñimón*, which Delicado asserts in his treatise on the French disease is a synonym for the disease that references the groans (*gruñir*) emitted by sufferers (Delicado, *El modo de usar*, 263–264).

⁸⁵ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 461.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 461.

natural order, portrayed women as inherently passive; thus, the uterus figures as an empty vessel, yet one that yearns to be filled with male seed.⁸⁷ Such a description of female nature can be found in a wide variety of medieval medical texts such as the *Secrets of Women*, the *Lily of Medicine*, and many more.⁸⁸ Moreover, Lozana's appeal to natural philosophy stems from medical epistemologies that proposed a hygienic value to the sexual act. As Cadden explains, humoral theory maintained that 'male and female semen, like all other bodily superfluities, had to be expelled to maintain the health of the individual, even though, in specific instances, this imperative could be subject to moral or social objections'.⁸⁹ Consequently, Lozana's rhetorical justifications for engagement in transactional sex draw on medical epistemologies to depict the sex act as therapeutic to the male body. Here, as in the *taberna meritoria* scene, Lozana defends prostitution as part of the natural order and a palliative against social unrest.

Delicado assigns his various fictional characters a variety of stances regarding the licitness of the sex trade. The letter carrier, a member of the serving class, rejects fashionable society's hypocritical acceptance of courtesans as respectable women; he speaks of 'cortesanaricas y pobres' [rich and poor courtesans], using the same term to describe both groups, and insists that all practitioners of the sex trade are 'putas' [whores].⁹⁰ Delicado, unlike his fictional character, was probably a member of Rome's fashionable literary circle, and perhaps for this reason distinguishes between *cortesanar favoridas* [favoured courtesans] and prostitutes, yet he also satirizes the inconsistent and shifting basis for drawing these distinctions. Throughout the

⁸⁷ Cadden, *Nothing Natural*, 116.

⁸⁸ Gordonio, *Lilio de medicina*, fol. 167v.

⁸⁹ Cadden, *Nothing Natural*, 180.

⁹⁰ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 269.

novel, he distinguishes between different types of prostitute, and reserves the term *cortesana favorita* for a select few at the apex of carnal commerce whom he distinguishes from the destitute streetwalkers (referred to in the novel as *putas* or *putillas*, both meaning ‘whores’) on the lower end of the social scale. Lozana herself respects this distinction and treats the courtesans as a separate class. Moreover, Lozana frequently defends the sex trade to her male clients, as in this scene with the letter carrier. Her patrons, including the fictionalized author, refute her defences of the necessity of the sex trade and her own claims to live honourably, thus giving narrative voice to the deliberation over the place of prostitution in Catholic society.

The classification system that Delicado, and in a broader sense the Roman elite, employs to distinguish between prostitutes and courtesans is highly subjective and constantly shifting. Bruno Damiani declares that ‘el sistema de poner nombres cualificativos para designar el tipo de cortesana no era muy uniforme y, por eso, de poco valor histórico’ [the system that places qualifying terms to designate different types of courtesan was not uniform, and for this reason, is of little historical value].⁹¹ However, it serves a literary purpose; that of allowing Lozana to observe and become initiated into the world of Roman prostitution. In addition, it highlights the arbitrary and shifting nature of the distinctions drawn between women in the carnal trade. It is precisely because the terminology and social categorization used to define ‘prostitute’ was in a constant state of flux that courtesans and their clients successfully defined the courtesan as fundamentally different from a prostitute. The historical contingency of the signifier *prostitute* left a large group of women inhabiting a liminal social space in which they were constantly navigating a shifting line between social respectability and categorization as a prostitute. Likewise, in the Roman demimonde the line between courtesan and prostitute was imprecise and

⁹¹ Damiani, ‘Un aspecto histórico’, 181–182.

constantly shifting, leaving the courtesan in a precarious position in which she must constantly renegotiate her status.

The era of elite courtesans in Rome was short-lived; after the sack of Rome in 1527, and as reformist sentiments grew within the Catholic Church, attitudes toward prostitution shifted towards prohibition. Consequently, *La Lozana andaluza* occupies a unique position since it was most likely written before the sack of Rome, but published after Delicado fled (along with many of his compatriots) to Venice. Only one extant copy survives, and there is no proof that the work gained a readership on the Iberian Peninsula. Nonetheless, several critics allege that the work left its influence on canonical authors such as Cervantes and López de Úbeda, and the book has come to be accepted into the canon.⁹² As we shall see, though later *pícaras* lack Lozana's open defences of the flesh trade and unabashed prostitution of herself and others, many of the spatial and discursive strategies she employs left their mark on these later works, whether directly or indirectly.

⁹² See Damiani, *Francisco López de Úbeda*, 148; Díez Borque, 'Francisco Delicado'; Bubnova, 'Cervantes y Delicado'; Damiani, *Francisco Delicado*; Vilanova, 'Cervantes y *La Lozana andaluza*'. Although the work does not appear on the Index of prohibited books, and nor are there any references to it in contemporary literature, at the time that Delicado wrote, many works in Spanish were produced for consumption in the Italian Peninsula, and it may have circulated there. Additionally, given that Delicado was in the habit of exchanging texts with his acquaintance Andrea Navagero, the ambassador to Spain, Navagero may have taken the book to Spain. Many of the characteristics of the protagonist and stylistic techniques persist into later female picaresque tales.

Reform and Prohibition

The sack of Rome in 1527 not only sent many of its inhabitants, like Delicado, into exile, but also initiated the decline of the city's elite courtesan trade, driven by the same reformist sentiments that would culminate in the eventual closure of the public brothels in Spain.

Following the sack, carried out by the forces of Charles V and widely interpreted as a divine judgement on Rome and on the Church for its corruption, Protestant and Catholic moralists condemned the Holy See, decried the city's perceived vice by comparing it to Babylon, and frequently compared the Pope to a whore. The pressure to reform the Church's image led the papacy, among other measures, to enact new legislation that attempted to limit and marginalize prostitution. A 1549 order expelled prostitutes from certain areas, including Pozzo Bianco, the neighbourhood inhabited by Lozana during her initial period in Rome.⁹³ During the pontificates of Pius IV (1559–1565) and Pius V (1566–1572), the movement to contain and regulate prostitution gained momentum with laws designed to expel prostitutes and courtesans from certain areas and identify them with distinctive clothing. New sumptuary laws prohibited the use of gold, silver, and costly fabrics by the non-elite, and ordered sex workers to wear a mantle with a black and white band so they could be readily identified in the streets.⁹⁴ In a highly symbolic move, Pius V published an edict on the feast day of the repentant prostitute St. Mary Magdalen (22 July 1566) that banished all prostitutes and courtesans from the city.⁹⁵ However, official legislation met with protest from the Roman populace, who argued that the city depended upon prostitution for its economic survival. Ultimately, the civic authority, the *Popolo Romano*,

⁹³ Cohen, 'Seen and Known', 401.

⁹⁴ Larivaille, *La vita quotidiana*, 96.

⁹⁵ Roberts, *Whores in History*, 114.

refused to enforce Pius V's edict, and the Pope was forced to rescind it a month after its publication.⁹⁶ Pius V then concentrated his reforms on forcing the prostitutes and courtesans who remained in the city to live in the *luoghi*, a ghetto near the edge of the city.⁹⁷ In 1569, he followed this with an order to build walls around the prostitutes' ghetto. Despite these measures, prostitutes continued to live and ply their trade all over the city, and 'reformers were forced to be satisfied with the stricter controls and urban confinement of prostitutes, as the illegalization or exile of these women proved implausible in Catholic Italy'.⁹⁸ Like all campaigns to abolish prostitution, Pius V's push to eliminate prostitution in Rome ultimately failed and the number of prostitutes operating in the city remained relatively constant throughout the following century.⁹⁹

Regardless of legislative efficacy, the period following the sack of Rome marks a

⁹⁶ Geschwind, 'Magdalen Imagery', 45; Roberts, *Whores in History*, 115.

⁹⁷ The effort to segregate prostitutes into a special ghetto mirrors the similar effort to contain the Jewish population (see Nussdorfer, 'The Politics of Space', 171–175; Geschwind, 'Magdalen Imagery', 47–48).

⁹⁸ Geschwind, 'Magdalen Imagery', 45.

⁹⁹ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, 241. Cohen asserts that 'papal campaigns to drive the prostitutes from sight through a mixture of banishment and segregation did not succeed' ('Seen and Known', 408). Storey agrees, stating that, 'whilst [seventeenth-century] official documents suggest intolerance towards prostitutes, in practice attitudes were more nuanced [...] evidence suggests that in Rome prostitutes were widely tolerated, provided they observed the community ethos and maintained the "appearance" of honesty' (*Carnal Commerce*, 91). Storey argues that due to the symbolic importance of the efforts to extinguish prostitution in the Holy See, 'Catholic rhetoric encouraged the [mistaken] belief that prostitutes had largely been banished from Rome' (*ibid.*, 93). Although the 'Golden Age' of the courtesans is generally believed to have ended in 1527 with the sack of Rome, Storey finds that elite men continued to visit courtesans more or less openly until the mid-seventeenth century (*ibid.*, 250).

definitive shift in official attitudes toward prostitution from toleration to repression. The spread of syphilis across Europe immediately prior to and during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation gave urgency to the movements to enclose prostitutes in the later sixteenth century as they came under attack as vectors of the disease, and some authorities recommended institutionalization of diseased prostitutes in hospitals for the incurable.¹⁰⁰ Reformers urged prostitutes to repent and enter the newly formed convents for reformed prostitutes.¹⁰¹

In Spain as well, Counter-Reformation moralists increasingly regarded regulation of prostitution as inconsistent with Church reform, gradually abandoning the defence of prostitution as a lesser evil, until finally Philip IV closed the brothels in 1623, shifting the official position to repression of prostitution. Following the Council of Trent, reformers questioned the Church's sanction of prostitution, leading to a new set of legal ordinances in 1570 that sought to reform the brothels by enacting restrictions on who could serve as *padre* or brothel father, barring *padres* from lending money to brothel prostitutes, forbidding brothels from keeping women against their will even if they owed money, enacting new sumptuary legislation, further proscribing the days on which carnal commerce took place, and limiting the mobility of brothel prostitutes in an attempt to enclose them within the confines of the brothel.¹⁰² In Spain, protests of the Sevillian brothels began around the 1580s, often led by members of the newly founded Jesuit order.¹⁰³ In

¹⁰⁰ The epidemic spread of syphilis across Europe was one factor in the drive to close brothels and repress prostitution, but neither the sole nor the deciding factor. See McGough, *Gender, Sexuality and Syphilis*, 42–65.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 102–143.

¹⁰² Moreno Mengíbar, 'El crepúsculo', 51; Perry, 'Magdalens and Jezebels', 139–140.

¹⁰³ Moreno Mengíbar, 'El crepúsculo', 56; Perry, 'Magdalens and Jezebels', 140.

1543, Saint Ignatius had founded a custodial institution for former prostitutes in Rome, Saint Martha's House, that served as a model for later institutions.¹⁰⁴ Jesuits demonstrated in the brothels, sometimes blocking doorways to prevent ingress, preaching to prostitutes and clients in the brothels, paying prostitutes not to ply their trade, and petitioning the King to close the brothels. Their goal was the elimination of the brothel system; moreover, they hoped to convert the former prostitutes and allow them to re-enter the social order through penitence and reform. Such efforts led to partial success; the brothels became less profitable, and were eventually shut down; despite this, many prostitutes continued to ply their trade in the city streets.

The calls to put an end to legalized prostitution were accompanied by the foundation of new institutions such as the aforementioned convents for reformed prostitutes, pious houses, and Magdalen houses.¹⁰⁵ While convents for reformed prostitutes had existed since the medieval period, temporary institutions such as the pious houses and Saint Martha's houses were a new innovation that led to the establishment of more and different types of institutions, many of

¹⁰⁴ O'Malley *The First Jesuits*, 179. The *Casa de Santa Marta* housed 60 women. The Jesuits' ministry to the prostitutes in Rome depended on the support of 'honest matrons' of the city, some of whom took repentant prostitutes into their homes (ibid., 180).

¹⁰⁵ Hospitals for those afflicted by sexually transmitted disease could be considered another custodial institution that housed former prostitutes. The surgeon nominated by Seville's city council to inspect brothel prostitutes warned of the potential for a public health crisis caused by their expulsion from the brothel, since he posited that they would enter into clandestine prostitution instead; he recommended their enclosure in hospitals, though his call went unheeded at the legislative level (Perry, 'Magdalens and Jezebels', 139). Other former brothel prostitutes found their way into orphanages, causing complaints about their moral corruption of 'honest' girls (ibid., 146).

which recognized that reformed prostitutes might not be ready to take on the disciplined life of a convent.¹⁰⁶ A 1520 papal bull issued by Leo X dictated that prostitutes and courtesans must leave one-fifth of their estate to such institutions, meaning that they were primarily funded by the earnings of active prostitutes. Indeed, as Georgina Dopico Black asserts, the ‘strongest argument in favour of keeping brothels open in the early seventeenth century was, precisely, the economic one: they provided considerable income for the charitable, or public, work of both church and state’.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, the bull acted as an enforcement of the registration of prostitutes with the city of Rome since the estate of a woman involved in sex work who was not registered could be seized in its entirety. Custodial institutions for former prostitutes included convents such as those in Italy, and the Convent of the Most Sweet Name of Jesus in Seville. Convents for ex-prostitutes relied on strict discipline and penitence to purify the soul. Furthermore, they spatially segregated the former prostitutes from ‘honest’ novices and nuns for fear of the contagious quality of sin.

Concerned that harsh discipline in the convents might discourage women from leaving prostitution, reformers founded institutions such as the pious houses that acted as a sort of half-way house, removing women from prostitution and encouraging spiritual reflection and repentance in the hope that they would move from these institutions into one of the convents after a period of time. These intermediary institutions encompassed two basic types: ‘shelters’ that took in women who voluntarily left the streets, and ‘collection’ houses in which women rounded up from the streets were interned for an initial probationary period, after which they could decide to stay or leave.¹⁰⁸ Many establishments paid dowries for the women to marry if

¹⁰⁶ O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 182–183.

¹⁰⁷ Dopico Black, *Perfect Wives, Other Women*, 85.

¹⁰⁸ Torremocha Hernández, *De la mancebía*, 56–57.

they decided not to enter the convent. However, historians have shown that women occasionally utilized these institutions without true reformation; some converted, married their pimp, collected their dowry, and returned to prostitution. Historical records show that in some cases prostitute/pimp couples married up to seven times.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, new public rituals arose around these institutions; on the feast day of Mary Magdalen, prostitutes from the brothels were gathered to listen to sermons urging them to convert, after which those who came forward were processed to the cathedral and publicly received as penitents.¹¹⁰ Thus, the redemption of prostitutes became part of a public display that ritualized female enclosure, but that also depended at least in part on the continued existence of prostitution.

Not everyone concurred with the reformers' denunciation of the brothels. Protests and demonstrations in the Sevillian brothels led to a rise in clandestine prostitution as clients avoided the potential disgrace of confrontation with reformers. In 1621, dismayed by the perception of social disorder caused by the rise in street prostitution, the city government enacted ordinances designed to assist the brothels to survive by allowing the brothel fathers to charge twice the former rental rate. Likewise, after the 1623 brothel closure, prostitution spread and flourished throughout the city. As a result, in 1631 the citizens of Seville petitioned the king to re-establish the *mancebías*, asserting that their closure had simply displaced prostitution from the brothels to the streets.¹¹¹ Francisco Quevedo, the great Spanish poet, satirist, and aficionado of brothels, gives poetic voice to the dismay felt by brothel patrons in 'sentimiento de un jaque por ver cerrada la mancebía' [the feelings of a rake on seeing the brothel closed], echoing the logic of the

¹⁰⁹ Moreno Mengíbar, 'El crepúsculo', 69.

¹¹⁰ Perry, 'Magdalens and Jezebels', 146; Boyle, *Unruly Women*, 24–28.

¹¹¹ Moreno Mengíbar, 'El crepúsculo', 48.

lesser evil argument. He asks ‘¿Dónde irán tantos calcillas, pecadores de improviso [...] los deseos supitaños / el colérico apetito, / ¿Adónde irán que no aguarden el melindre o el marido?’ [Where will those of the stockings go / improvisational sinners ... the sudden desires / the choleric appetite / where shall they go where they are not awaited by the loose woman or her husband?]¹¹² Quevedo’s question rests in part on a humoral conception of the body in which certain complexions, especially the choleric, tend to build up an excess of fluids, which need to be released. This, in turn, fortifies the argument that male sexual desire must have some socially accepted outlet, or it will lead to affairs, seduction, or other destructive sexual impulses, as seen in his reference to unchaste women and husbands. Prostitutes frequently appear in Quevedo’s work as the subject of criticism and acerbic satire, yet, like many authors of his period, he simultaneously upholds the need for institutionalized prostitution as a social regulatory mechanism and was known to frequent brothels.¹¹³ As these examples illustrate, the push to close the brothels initiated with religious orders and clashed with the desires of many citizens for continued access to the flesh trade.

The Spanish drive to enclose prostitutes in brothels prior to 1623, and to prohibit prostitution entirely after that date, ensures that the prostitutes found in literary representations are not the denizens of the brothels, whose existence is recorded in male-authored accounts and historical records but whose authentic voices are lost, but rather clandestine prostitutes. Though Spain never saw the rise of a courtesan culture such as that found in sixteenth-century Rome, I argue throughout the chapters that follow that Golden Age fiction attests to the presence of a hierarchical system of prostitution marked by distinct types of prostitute and that gives voice to

¹¹² Quevedo, *Obras Completas II*, 193–194.

¹¹³ Ortenbach, *Quevedo*, 23–24. Additionally, Quevedo fathered two illegitimate children with an actress.

the contemporary debates over the place of prostitution in society, and that the male authors of the female picaresque reflect multivalent perspectives in the discourse of prostitution.

Literary and historical sources suggest that elite prostitutes operated in Spain; for instance, Covarrubias's *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* [*Treasure of the Castilian Language*, 1611], the first dictionary of the Spanish language, includes in his definition of *corte* [court] a description of the *cortesana* (courtesan); 'la mujer libre, que en la guerra seguía la cohorte, lo cual era permitido por evitar mayor mal; de allí les quedó el nombre de cortesanas a las que en la Corte viven licenciosamente, unas más que otras, por admitir gentes de diversos estados y calidades' [the free woman, who in war follows the cohort, which was permitted to avoid greater evil; from there the name of courtesan was given to those who lived licentiously in the court, some more than others, because they admit people of diverse statuses and qualities].¹¹⁴ So, while the term courtesan emerged in Spanish to describe the camp-following prostitute, by the seventeenth century it had come to mean a woman of questionable virtue residing at court, possibly an educated and refined woman similar to the Italian courtesan. Moreover, Covarrubias implies that women who have only elite lovers are less licentious than those who have lovers from both upper and lower classes. Similarly, a 1553 brothel ordinance from Ronda quoted by historian María Teresa López Beltrán attests to the existence of elite prostitutes 'que tienen palacios alquilados fuera de ella, donde se van de noche a dormir con hombres fingiendo ser mugeres de más calidad y engañándoles y llevándoles por ello muchos dineros' [who have palaces rented outside the city, where they go at night to sleep with men pretending to be women of quality and deceiving them and taking much money from them].¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua*, 360.

¹¹⁵ López Beltrán, *La prostitución en el reino de Granada*, 22.

Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's canonical play *La verdad sospechosa* [*Suspicious Truth*, 1630], set at the court in Madrid, also describes the prevalence of courtesans and prostitutes in the court environs. The fool Tristán initiates the main character, Don García, into the sexual economy of the court by stating that there are 'una gran multitud / de señoras del tusón, / que entre cortesanas, son / de la mayor magnitud. / Síguense tras las tusonas / otras que serlo dessean, / y, aunque tan buenas no sean, / son mejores que busconas' [a great multitud of *tusón* ladies, who among courtesans, are of the best class. After these *tusonas* are others who want to be them and, although they are not the best, are better than *busconas*].¹¹⁶ The term *tusón* is a synonym for elite courtesan, while *buscona* refers to a street-walking prostitute.¹¹⁷ Ruiz de Alarcón's narrative describes a hierarchical structure of prostitution at court with both elite and non-elite practitioners. Literary prostitutes who impersonate aristocratic ladies abound in the female picaresque. These *pícaras* are expert con artists who deceive men by impersonating noble ladies, principally through their dress, bearing and cultivated language. Through the performance of social status, the *pícaro* negotiates the economic value of her sexual labour, earning rich gifts such as jewellery, clothing or 'loans' of money that far outstrip the value of the wages earned by common prostitutes.

The widespread fear that dishonest women posed as elite women to prostitute themselves found in legal records and fictional representations reveals the stereotype of women as deceitful that subtends fictional portrayals, but also provides an indication that the hierarchical nature of prostitution in Rome may have a counterpart in Spain as well within the market for clandestine prostitution. Indeed, Francisco Márquez Villanueva declares that elite clandestine prostitution

¹¹⁶ Ruiz de Alarcón, *La verdad sospechosa*, I: 329–336.

¹¹⁷ The dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy defines *tusona* as prostitute.

was endemic in court circles, and that the abundance of such transactional sex can be discerned from the ‘pagos disfrazados como regalos o gratitud por servicios como enfermeras, etc., que se registran como normales en los debidos documentos públicos’ [payments disguised as gifts or gratitude for services as nurses, etc., that are recorded as normal in the appropriate public documents].¹¹⁸ The *pícaras* fictionalize the experience of these paid mistresses, who are able to accumulate erotic capital precisely by posing as ladies, indicating that the appearance of modesty and class standing commanded higher wages in the sexual economy.

Another manifestation of the stratified sex trade appears in the reputation of actresses in the Golden Age theatre, who generally lived adjacent to the court. María Helena Sánchez Ortega has noted that in the seventeenth century ‘las actrices y cantantes ocupaban en España el mismo lugar que las refinadas cortesanas en Italia’ [the actresses and singers occupied the same place in Spain as the refined courtesans of Italy] and that, according to the testimony of travellers, ‘casi todos los cortesanos demostraban públicamente su afición a estas mujeres’ [almost all courtiers publicly demonstrated their affinity for these women].¹¹⁹ Some of the more famous actresses of the *comedia*, or Spanish classical play, became mistresses of famous and powerful men, such as María Calderón (*la Calderona*), who was King Philip IV’s lover and John Joseph of Austria’s mother; intriguingly, *la Calderona* later entered a convent, eventually becoming abbess.¹²⁰ As

¹¹⁸ Márquez Villanueva, ‘La cuestión del judaísmo’, 58.

¹¹⁹ Sánchez Ortega, *Pecadoras en verano*, 209.

¹²⁰ For a brief biography of *la Calderona*, and more on the erotic reputation of actresses, see Fernández Rodríguez, *Eros en escena*, especially 57–67. John Joseph of Austria (1629–1679), son of Philip IV and *la Calderona*, is the second illegitimate child of a Spanish monarch to go by the name John of Austria, and should not be confused with his more famous predecessor John of Austria (1547–1578), the

Esther Fernández Rodríguez demonstrates, although there are many similarities between the courtesan and the seventeenth-century *comedia* actress, the great actresses of Spain gained fame through their beauty and affairs rather than for their cultural refinement.¹²¹ While these actresses lacked the sophistication of the courtesans, they occupied a similar social stratum since they were accepted into upper-class society in exchange for sexual relationships with powerful men.¹²² Moreover, a portion of the tax on public theatres went to support the Magdalen houses after the closure of the brothels, transferring the economic support for the redemption of prostitutes, previously provided by legalized prostitution, to the salacious public institution of the theatre.¹²³

La niña de los embustes, Teresa de Manzanares, a female picaresque novel whose protagonist utilizes a number of strategies to attempt to escape the poverty into which she is born, demonstrates the close association between the theatre and transactional sex. Teresa's first marriage, to a wealthy man many years her senior, at first provides her with social status and an

illegitimate son of Charles V, who served as admiral during the Battle of Lepanto.

Spanish classical theatre, unlike English drama of the time, does not distinguish between comedy and tragedy, therefore the Spanish *comedia* is not the equivalent of a Shakespearian comedy, but rather simply a play from the Golden Age.

¹²¹ Fernández Rodríguez, *Eros en escena*, 66.

¹²² Similarly, Storey alleges that by the end of the seventeenth century, when courtesans were officially no longer tolerated in Rome, 'men from the upper ranks of society are described as seeking the favours of "singers" ("*cantarine*" or "*virtuose*") rather than those of courtesans' and that 'there is evidence that the *cantarina* or *virtuosa* could be a courtesan by another name' (*Carnal Commerce*, 249).

¹²³ Dopico Black, *Perfect Wives, Other Women*, 86; Boyle, *Unruly Women*, 20–30.

elite lifestyle. Yet, her husband's obsessive jealousy leads her to have an affair with the young and handsome Sarabia, and her husband dies shortly thereafter. Her second marriage, to Sarabia, who by this time is an actor, brings her into the theatre, where she enjoys great success moving rapidly from second to leading lady. In an attempt to curb the perceived social licentiousness of actresses, Spanish legislature of the time dictated that actresses must be married to playwrights or actors. Sarabia, who has a gambling problem, wishes to capitalize on his wife's beauty and popularity onstage, and encourages her to have an affair with a wealthy nobleman who courts her; she is unwilling, stating that 'aunque en los de aquella profesión sea estilo, yo quería bien a mi esposo, y no gustaba de aquellas conversaciones que estimaran mis compañeras ver en sus casas' [although it is the style in that profession, I loved my husband, and did not enjoy those conversations that my counterparts carried out in their homes].¹²⁴ Her reliance on the double-entendre of conversation and the intimate location of these conversations in the women's houses reveals the sexual nature of these visits. Meanwhile, she also faces pressure from the playwright, whose wife, the former principal actress, has died; Teresa states 'quiso que, como le sucedí en los papeles, le sucediera en el amor' [he desired that, as I replaced her in the roles, I should replace her in his love].¹²⁵ She further states that her *compañeras* [colleagues] in the theatre found themselves obligated to give in to his advances to have 'la ración y representación cierta' [food and certainty of having roles].¹²⁶ Teresa, disrespected by her husband and the author, asserts that women cannot abide to be treated as 'mujeres comunes y de precio' [common

¹²⁴ Castillo Solórzano, *La niña de los embustes*, 206.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 206.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 207.

women who have a price], in other words whores, and loses faith in her marriage.¹²⁷ From this point on she accepts the nobleman's gifts, and he buys her costumes and jewels to wear on stage. Though it goes unstated what he receives in return for these rich gifts, Teresa's protestations that she is not like other actresses and that she resists the nobleman's advances cease from this point on. Eventually, the man goes to Granada and, Teresa recounts, tires of her. This scene underscores actresses' reputation for immoral behaviour and the pressure they may have faced to take elite lovers who would supplement their earnings in the theatre with rich gifts. In short, though the tolerated courtesan culture that typified early sixteenth-century Rome never arose in Spain, there were certainly high-class prostitutes who operated clandestinely or semi-clandestinely to service the needs of elite men.

The sack of Rome in 1527 put an end to courtesan culture in that city, and the widespread perception of the sack as a display of divine judgement on the city may have fuelled moralists' drive to close the public brothels in Spain. However, as the Sevillian plea to the king to reopen the brothels after their closure demonstrates, public attitudes toward prostitution were not uniform. We now turn to the examination of specific spaces used in the practice of prostitution to demonstrate that many of the same spaces whose use moralists sought to constrain through the rhetoric of female enclosure became eroticized to such an extent that they became metonyms for the female body, and that these same spaces are utilized by literary prostitutes to augment their erotic capital. In addition, I argue that authorial attitudes towards their protagonists, while profoundly misogynist and generally denunciatory, nonetheless demonstrate a range of authorial attitudes towards the place of prostitution in early modern society that reflects these ongoing debates over whether prostitution could be carried out in a licit manner.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

Chapter 2

Public Space and Public Women

One of the sites most closely correlated with transactional sex is the city streets, as seen in the use of the English term ‘streetwalker’ for prostitute. Similarly, it is well documented that early modern literature conventionally correlates female mobility with sexual availability, transmuting any woman using public space into a *mujer pública* or ‘public woman’, synonymous with whore. Like the terms ‘public woman’ or ‘streetwalker’, many euphemisms for and descriptors used to categorize prostitutes associate spatial mobility with sexual availability; examples include the English words ‘tramp’ and ‘harlot’, the latter of which derives from the Old French *herlot* or *arlot*, ‘vagabond’ or wanderer.¹ Enriqueta Zafra demonstrates the intertextual references in *La pícara Justina*, and by extension many of the female picaresque tales, to the proverb ‘Ir romera y volver ramera’ [She who goes wandering comes back a whore], that reveal the cultural association of female spatial movement with sexual deviance.² Yet although the *pícaras* are wandering women, they are not true denizens of public space, but rather foray from a housed position; even in the case of the *pícara Justina*, Justina periodically returns to her patriarchal household in order to plot her next foray.

The sixteenth century has been identified by several critical theorists as a time when the notion of privacy or private space emerges, defining women as naturally inclined toward domesticity and interiority, and thereby implicitly defining mobile women as unnatural.³ On the

¹ Harper, ‘Harlot’, n.p.

² Correas, *Vocabulario*, 149.

³ On the emergence of private space, see Ariès, ‘Introduction’. On gender and early modern domestic space, see Stallybrass, ‘Patriarchal Territories’, and Wigley, ‘Untitled: The Housing of Gender’.

other hand, over the past few decades, feminist critics have questioned the validity of a dichotomous distinction between public and private. Public space is not, and never has been, a neutral entity that can be equally accessed by all members of society, but rather is a contested ground that is often used to regulate gender and sexuality.⁴ To give but one example, the term ‘public man’ generally denotes a statesman whereas, as previously noted, ‘public woman’ designates a prostitute. Prostitution is a locus at which the distinction between public and private breaks down since transactional sex is an act that takes place in private space, yet must often be advertised in public unless it takes place from a fixed and publicly known location such as a brothel. As a plethora of recent scholarship attests, private space is subject to social control, and public space is regulated by cultural ideologies regarding access and licit use. Policies towards public space often aim to regulate sexuality, and this ‘governance of sexuality may take the form of: social control; elimination of particular sexualities from urban spaces; and management of sexualities and sexual institutions through various ways such as persuasion, incitement, inducement, and encouragement. The overall effect is a type of moral cleansing of city streets depending on particular anxieties of the time.’⁵ Throughout this and the following chapters, I demonstrate that *pícaras*’ sexualization of supposedly private or domestic spaces undermines the supposed boundary between public and private space, and that *pícaras* deliberately mimic the domestic enclosure of elite women as a means to build erotic capital.

Public space is not gender neutral. In the early modern period especially, males moved with much greater ease through public spaces; for the most part, elite women could not move about unescorted, women faced the risk of verbal or physical assault, and in some places,

⁴ Duncan, *BodySpace*, 130.

⁵ Johnston and Longhurst, *Space, Place, and Sex*, 85.

curfews prohibited women from being outside the home after dusk. Yet, despite the apparently dichotomous distinction that situated virtuous women in the home and immoral women in the streets, elite women could and did use public space on occasion. The apparent homogeneity in didactic and fictional portrayals of unruly women obscures a complex social structure in which women must define themselves in contrast to other less desirable categories of woman, often through spatial strategies that construct a visual presentation of elite identity and modest demeanour; yet the markers of virtue constantly shifted and were redefined. Elite women, facing moralizing dictums that associated immobility and enclosure with modesty and respectability, found ways to distance themselves from public space even while they moved through it.

While the *pícaras* are defined through a wanderlust that reveals their sexual deviance, they also utilize the markers of elite space to construct an appearance of reticence and modesty that serves as the basis for their sexual trickery.⁶ In doing so, they turn domestic enclosure, designed to restrict women's spatial access as a means to safeguard chastity, into a deliberate performance that forged a social identity set above and apart from the common prostitute. As a consequence, the hierarchy of sexual commerce is in a continual state of flux as prostitutes and courtesans attempt to increase their erotic capital. Furthermore, since practitioners of transactional sex imitate the spatial practice and dress of respectable women, the delineation of social identity is blurred, and the methods utilized by elite women to mark themselves as 'private' women while in public become suspect; female presence in public space was subject to such deep-seated suspicion that women were accused of using the spatial strategies designed to protect their modesty for illicit purposes. The practice of veiling, initially designed to protect modesty by obscuring the female body, yet later outlawed as an immoral practice, will serve to

⁶ See Zafra, 'Ir romera', for an analysis of the role of wanderlust in the *La pícaro Justina*.

illustrate this tendency, in which the seeming disembodiment of public space rests on a definition of the unmarked body as male, projecting a sexualized corporeality onto the mobile female body. The constantly shifting arguments regarding the proper use of public space by women reveal that moralists' main concern is the inability to discern 'honest' from 'dishonest' women that made all women sexually suspect. Throughout this chapter, I argue that the imitation of domestic enclosure is a primary means utilized by courtesans and *pícaras* to build sexual capital, and that *pícaras* utilize certain markers of courtesan identity and spatial practice to enact their sexual trickery.

The House as Body

Since the term 'public woman' often functions as a synonym for 'prostitute', the virtuous early modern wife or daughter is therefore implicitly a private woman under the guardianship of a father, husband, or other male relative. Furthermore, given that early modern ideology posited that women were unable to regulate their own bodily boundaries, the integrity of the female body requires the reinforcement and protection of the walls of the house. For this reason, the authors of early modern conduct manuals and other prescriptive literature insist that, in order to preserve a chaste reputation, women remain immobile and unseen through withdrawal into domestic space, effectively identifying the female body with the house it occupies and defining both as, in Peter Stallybrass's words, 'patriarchal territory', through the surveillance of 'three specific areas: the mouth, chastity, the threshold of the house [that] were frequently collapsed into each other'.⁷ The metonymy established between woman and house converted the liminal spaces of the home, such as windows and doors, into symbolic bodily orifices since the orifices of both house and

⁷ Stallybrass, 'Patriarchal Territory', 126.

body serve as points to either seal off or disclose and open, as subsequent chapters will examine in more detail. Thus, the house provides both a protective reinforcement of bodily limits and a tool to produce the ‘docile, domesticated woman prescribed by the [Counter-Reformation] treatises’.⁸ As Yolanda Gamboa points out, ‘the architectural rhetoric of the State reflected in the continuous reiteration of boundaries suggests that both the exclusion of the social other and the enclosure of women constituted the foundation of the hegemonic state itself’.⁹ This metonymic economy makes the house not merely a physical space but further a potent symbol of social order and familial honour.

When the house represents the enclosed female body, marking private space as an embodied sphere, the presence of the female body in public space becomes transgressive and promiscuous. Correas’s *Vocabulario de refranes y frases proverbiales* [*Vocabulary of Refrains and Proverbial Phrases*, 1627] records a multitude of popular sayings that demonstrate the correlation of female immobility and enclosure with chastity, including the following:

A la mujer romeriega, quebralla la pierna [...] que el varón ande y salga, no la mujer [...] Ir romera, y volver ramera [...] la olla y la mujer, reposadas han de ser [...] la pierna quebrada y en casa [...] La piedra y la doncella sin vella [...] La mujer en la casa, y la pierna quebrada [...] La mujer y el fraile, mal parecen en la calle [...] La mujer y la gallina, por andar se pierde aína [...] la mujer casada y honrada, la pierna quebrada y en casa, y la doncella, pierna y media.

[For the wandering woman, break her leg ... The man should walk about and go

⁸ Gamboa, ‘Architectural Cartography’, 194.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 193.

out, not the woman ... She who goes wandering comes back a whore ... The pot and the woman need to rest ... A broken leg, and in the home ... The stone and the maiden should not be seen ... The woman at home, and with a broken leg ... The woman and the friar should not be seen in the street ... The woman and the chicken, by roaming are easily lost ... The married and honourable woman, a broken leg and at home, and the maiden, a leg and a half.]¹⁰

The numerous variations on the broken leg theme indicate the violent measures taken to ensure female compliance with social norms. Juan de la Cerda, in his treatise *Vida política de todos los estados de mujeres* [*Political Life of Women of All Classes*] (1599), echoes the proverb tradition, stating that daughters should not leave the house, even accompanied by servants and veiled, ‘por que no acaezca que vayan romeras y vuelvan rameras’ [so that it may not come to pass that they go wandering and come back whores].¹¹ In these proverbs, mobility and visibility denote sexual availability. As Enriqueta Zafra demonstrates, the inability to remain still marks the *pícaras* as sexually suspect. Zafra opines that the wanderings of *pícaras* are a sort of anti-pilgrimage that form an ironic commentary on the hagiographical tradition that, in her view, López de Úbeda satirizes in *La pícaras Justina* to demonstrate that the corrupt woman can neither be reformed nor can her life of sin ever be exemplary.¹² Certainly, the *pícaras* rarely, if ever, reform in Spanish fiction; yet, the historical context of custodial institutions attests to the belief, at least among reformers, that repentance and penitence were viable and desirable options. This

¹⁰ Correas, *Vocabulario*, 6; 101; 149; 168; 179; 179; 178; 178; 188.

¹¹ Cerda, *La vida política*, 34.

¹² Zafra, ‘Ir romera’, 490.

potential for reform contradicts the ideology behind the brothel system that saw prostitutes as irredeemable in such a way as to require their spatial segregation from society in institutionalized brothels. On the other hand, if reform is possible, it is contingent on enclosure and isolation within the custodial institution and a renunciation of public space; in both these systems of thought, unenclosed women were categorically marked as sexually suspect, thus becoming, as Wigley observes, ‘more dangerously feminine’ by their entry into masculine space.¹³

La hija de Celestina (1612) illustrates the dichotomous view of public and private women. The narrator states that ‘honest’ women of Toledo remain in their houses, adding that ‘por las calles y plazas públicas también andaban muchas de menor calidad en la sangre’ [in the streets and public plazas there are also many who walk about, of lesser quality of blood] like Salas Barbadillo’s protagonist, who wanders freely through the city.¹⁴ In other words, appearance in public space indicates the protagonist’s suspect class status, and perhaps even reflects lack of blood purity in a society that enforced Catholicism and discriminated against *conversos*, or those whose ancestors had converted from Islam or Judaism. Moreover, Salas Barbadillo explains that these women who move about freely in public become the object of affection of ‘mozuelos verdes y antojadizos’ [green and eager young men], implying that they invite seduction by their action of entering public space.¹⁵ In Salas Barbadillo’s account, as in didactic literature, movement and visibility indicate availability and are implicit solicitations of male attention.

Didactic literature’s severe recrimination of female movement mirrors its praise of

¹³ Wigley, ‘Untitled: The Housing of Gender’, 335.

¹⁴ Salas Barbadillo, *La hija de Celestina*, 87.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

female immobility as an indicator of chastity, utilizing the house as a metonym for the honourable wife. Fray Luis de León states that women are inherently fragile, ‘de su natural flaca y deleznable más que ningún otro animal’ [in their nature weaker and more poorly made than any other animal], and that for this reason God limited their mobility, asking ‘¿Por qué les dió a las mujeres Dios las fuerzas flacas y los miembros muelles, sino porque las crió, no por ser postas, sino para estar en su rincón asentadas[?]’ [Why then did God give to women weak wills and soft limbs if not because he created them, not to run around, but rather to be seated in their corner?].¹⁶ Fray Luis’s insistence that the female constitution was suited to remaining indoors is reinforced by his insistence that the virtuous wife has no need to leave the house at all. He identifies the wife so intensely with her home that its walls form an artificial body around her, stating that ‘su casa es su cuerpo’ [her house is her body].¹⁷ Dictums such as these contend that only architectural enclosure can ensure female virtue, reinforcing the cultural proscription on women in the public sector and marking visible or mobile women as unchaste and dishonoured.

The house’s normative construction as a private enclosure that protects female reputation and modesty obscures the social reality that the house was often the site of gendered violence against women. María de Zayas’s tales frequently describe the vulnerability of elite women to domestic violence at the hands of their husbands. Likewise, Teresa of Manzanares, *La niña de los embustes*, describes the physical abuse she suffers at the hands of her gambling second husband Sarabia. Servants working in the homes of others were among the most vulnerable members of society, often subject to sexual assault and exploitation by their masters or male members of the household. Women living without a male protector were also left in a precarious

¹⁶ León, *La perfecta casada*, 86; 164; 92–93.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 93; 154; 157; 110.

position. Gang rapes were a common occurrence in the early modern era, and often directed against women living on their own, both in rural and urban areas, many of whom were then forced into a life of prostitution due to the public loss of their reputation. Consequently, the theoretically protective space of the house was often, in reality, a place where women endured gendered violence.

Despite the cultural proscriptions on female mobility, the didactic and literary binary between public and private space, and by extension public and private women, does not hold up upon close examination, and certainly proved impossible to maintain in practice. The same conduct manuals that insist on the need to confine women to the home also concede that even the most virtuous woman must, on some occasions, enter public space. Juan Luis Vives' *The Education of a Christian Woman*, for example, includes a description of exemplary conduct for all the respectable female social positions: virgin, wife, or widow. To virgins, he counsels that 'an unmarried young woman should rarely appear in public, since she has no business there and her most precious possession, chastity, is placed in jeopardy'.¹⁸ Married women, he contests, have even less need to leave the house than maidens since 'all their attention should be directed to preserving [her husband ...] and striving to please him alone'.¹⁹ On the other hand, he acknowledges that widows may be obligated to appear in public, but 'let them do this with their heads covered and showing in their whole demeanour what they profess in name'; in other words, demonstrating their social abandonment through downcast eyes and a shamed countenance.²⁰ Vives' comments make clear that domestic enclosure is the ideal, yet he also

¹⁸ Vives, *The Education*, 116.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 243.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 318.

acknowledges that complete withdrawal is impossible; thus, when a woman must appear in public, her appearance, demeanour, and dress should mark her social status in a way that can be easily read by observers. In fact, even elite women needed to leave the house to hear mass unless they were wealthy enough to have a private chapel. Consequently, the withdrawal into the private sphere that moralists expected of virtuous women pertained in practice only to the most elite. This, in turn, reified the existing social order. Since total enclosure and immobility were untenable ideals, the idealization of immobility reinforced the commonly voiced opinion that all women were, on some level, unchaste. Likewise, since only elite women could approximate domestic confinement—by leaving the house only occasionally, well accompanied, and protected by a cadre of servants—and therefore only they could maintain the isolation needed to embody ideals of chastity, the stratification of society gained moral grounding, justifying social hierarchy by a public display of virtue (or in this case a public lack of display). Thus, what is not seen (the elite woman) becomes a mark of both moral character and elite status.

Performing Modesty

Since moralists insisted that a respectable woman should separate herself from public space, even when she must enter it, they envisioned ways in which she could bring the privacy and enclosure that signifies and reifies her modesty with her into public space. Antonio de León Pinelo, whose treatise *Velos antiguos y modernos en los rostros de las mujeres: sus conveniencias y daños* [*Ancient and Modern Veils on the Faces of Women: Their Conveniences and Their Dangers*, 1641] explicates the difference between honest and dishonest veiling practices, states that a chaste woman, ‘si saliere, ha de ser como una casa portátil, cercada, cerrada y cubierta’ [if she goes out, should behave as if she is a portable house, enclosed, sealed

off and covered].²¹ Hence, virtuous women should remain closed off and separated from the public sector even as they traverse it. *La Lozana andaluza*, a work marked in a general sense by the absence of virtuous women, does contain a brief glimpse of respectable Roman wives, implicitly contrasting their aloof detachment from the city with the unrestricted access to public space that marks Lozana and her fellow lower-class prostitutes' relationship to the city. As Lozana's lover (and future husband) Rampín leads her through the streets and plazas of the city explaining Roman customs, a pair of matrons passes by. When she catches sight of them, Lozana exclaims admiringly '¡Oh qué lindas son aquellas dos mujeres! Por mi vida, que son como matronas; no he visto en mi vida cosa más honrada, ni más honesta' [Oh how pretty those two women are! Upon my life, they must be matrons; never in my life have I seen anything more honourable or more honest.]²² When she asks why, if they are *romanas principales* or esteemed Roman ladies as Rampín explains, they are in the public street, Rampín replies that

Cuando van ellas fuera, unas a otras se acompañan, salvo cuando va una sola, que lleva una sierva, mas no hombres, ni más mujeres, aunque sea la mejor de Roma. Y mirá que van sesgas; y aunque vean a uno que conozcan, no le hablan en la calle, sino que se apartan ellos y callan, y ellas no abajan cabeza ni hacen mudanzas, aunque sea su padre ni su marido.

[When they go out, they accompany one another, except when one goes out alone. then she takes a servant, but not men, or other women, although they may be the best of Rome. And look how they go quietly; even though they see one who they

²¹ León Pinelo, *Velos antiguos y modernos*, 241.

²² Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 257.

know, they do not speak to him in the street, but rather they keep themselves apart and are silent and they do not turn their head or make any sign, even if it be her father or husband.]²³

The matrons' style of movement echoes León Pinelo's dictum that a woman's covering should be like a mobile house. In Rampín's description, the matrons do not talk to or interact with anyone, and do not make eye contact. Consequently, they create an ostentatious display of inapproachability. The elite woman, by constructing a private space within the public sphere, shields herself from the public gaze, creating a carefully crafted façade of invisibility.

Yet, at the same time that moralists and didactic literature insist on women's strict isolation and segregation from public space, the deep-seated mistrust of women's inherently deceptive nature casts suspicion on enclosed spaces. Magdalena de San Jerónimo's treatise *Razón y forma de la galera* [*Reasons for and Structure of the Women's Prison*, 1608], written to petition King Philip III to construct a 'casa galera' or custodial institution for deviant and unrepentant women, warns that women could use the façade of enclosure in the home to conceal sexual impropriety. Some women, she explains, under the pretence of a seemingly respectable profession such as seamstress, run a 'tienda de ofensas de Dios' [storefront of offences against God] from which they prostitute themselves or other women who pretend to be doing piecework for them.²⁴ Moreover, she warns, it is not only non-elite women who engage in such licentiousness; *alcahuetas*, or procuresses such as Celestina and Lozana, can enter elite homes, seducing not only the maids but sometimes also daughters and even wives, to the 'escándalo de

²³ Ibid., 257.

²⁴ Barbeito, *Cárceles y mujeres*, 72–73.

todo el pueblo' [scandal of the entire town].²⁵ In Madrid, *casas de malicia* [malicious houses] or false façades that hide the extent of interior space, created the illusion that a house was smaller than it really was in order to avoid the obligation to house members of the court.²⁶ In a similar manner, certain houses, like those described in female picaresque tales as well as in Magdalena de San Jerónimo's treatise, serve as a false front that obscures female collusion and vice. Consequently, although moralists insisted on the need for enclosure and isolation, the inability to observe what occurred in female space created suspicion of secret vice, and this fear of false appearances calls the possibility of female virtue into question.

Literary evidence suggests a similar apprehension that certain areas of the city, or even certain houses, masked transactional sexuality behind a veneer of respectability. *La tía fingida*, for example, states of seventeenth-century Salamanca that 'hay casas, así en Salamanca como en otras ciudades, que llevan de suelo vivir siempre en ellas mugeres cortesanas, y por otro nombre, trabajadoras, o enamoradas' [there are houses, in Salamanca as in other cities, which are customarily inhabited by courtesans, or by another name, working girls, or enamoured women].²⁷ The students immediately identify the particular house in which Esperanza and her supposed aunt have taken up residence as a house of prostitution, wherein as the narrator explains 'siempre

²⁵ Ibid., 73.

²⁶ Bass and Wunder, 'The Veiled Ladies', 127.

²⁷ Cervantes, *La tía fingida*, Porrás edition, 252. The Biblioteca Colombina version reads 'aquella casa, que llevaba de suelo habitar sienpre en ella mugeres que comunmente el bulgo suele llamar cortesanas o enamoradas' [that house, which had the reputation of being always inhabited by women who the common people tend to call courtesans or enamoured women], omitting the reference to such houses of ill repute being common in Salamanca and other cities (254).

se había vendido tinta, aunque no de la fina' [ink had always been sold there, though not of the finest variety]; in other words, the house had always been a locale for the flesh trade, though normally inhabited by non-elite prostitutes.²⁸ Despite its reputation, the house is located in what seems to be an otherwise respectable neighbourhood; Esperanza and her aunt impersonate the mannerisms of the elite, and their neighbour is described as an 'official'.²⁹ Thus, Doña Claudia has taken up residence in a house that already bears a reputation as a house of commerce, depending on that reputation to assist her bartering of Esperanza's body, commanding a higher price through the semblance of refinement and wealth.

Similarly, Teodora, the mother of *Las harpías en Madrid*, carefully plans her family's entrance to the capital, having been instructed by a Sevillian neighbour that 'los barrios cerca de San Sebastián eran los más frecuentados de todo Madrid, de la gente moza, así por estar cerca los dos corrales de las comedias, como por vivir en ellos muchas damas de la profesión que pensaban ser las que Teodora introducía en la corte; y así, quiso hacer su habitación en ellos' [the neighbourhoods around San Sebastian were the most frequented in all of Madrid by young people, because they were near to the two theatres, as well as because they were inhabited by many women of the profession that the girls Teodora would present to the court intended to pursue].³⁰ Teresa of Manzanares likewise asserts that the area around San Sebastián 'por estar cerca de los dos teatros de las comedias; y porque cerca dellos viven los representantes y las

²⁸ Ibid., 252, The Biblioteca Colombina version omits this phrase. The reference to *tinta* (ink) is a double-entendre with *tentar* (to caress); additionally, the metaphor of woman as inkpot juxtaposes her genitalia with the phallic quill.

²⁹ Ibid., 256.

³⁰ Castillo Solórzano, *Las harpías en Madrid*, 5.

damas de corte, se llaman comúnmente los “barrios del placer” [because they are close to the two theatres and because the actors and women of the court live near them, they are commonly called the “neighbourhoods of pleasure”].³¹ The ‘damas de corte’ or ‘women of the court’ referred to here are clearly actresses engaged in sexual commerce, since they are presented as the female counterpart to the actors, drawing on the stereotype of actresses as mistresses of elite men.³²

These two statements in Castillo Solórzano’s work reiterate the close association of theatre and sexual commerce, but also elucidate the optimal space for carnal trade: near the court, populated with young men, and with a reputation that will allow the women to discreetly select wealthy lovers, relying on the area’s pre-existing reputation for sexual commerce to advertise their availability. Such representations hint at the existence of certain neighbourhoods or houses known as sites of carnal trade in Madrid, and perhaps other major cities. Moreover, the same area was home to Madrid’s most prestigious brothel, which was known as a location that gentlemen could frequent in a discreet manner.³³ For *pícaras* such as Claudia, the false aunt of *La tía fingida*, the pimping mother Teodora of *Las harpías de Madrid*, and Teresa of *La niña de los embustes*, taking up residence in an area with a reputation for housing elite mistresses allows

³¹ Castillo Solórzano, *La niña de los embustes*, 273. The two theatres to which Teresa refers are the Corral del Príncipe and the Corral de la Cruz.

³² Soledad Arredondo’s editorial comments gloss this phrase as ‘cortesanas, ramerás’ [courtesans, prostitutes], *ibid.*

³³ Molina Molina, *Mujeres públicas*, 134. Madrid was home to four brothels that, as Molina Molina explains, were frequented by men of different social classes, establishing a hierarchical structure among the brothels.

them to discreetly advertise sexual services, whether their own or that of the young women in their charge, even while maintaining an appearance of respectability. This indicates that certain spaces had a reputation for transactional sex, but also that spatial location indicated status within transactional sex, in this case demarcating elite mistresses from brothel or street prostitutes.

Veiling: The Woman Unhoused

Because of such mistrust of false appearances, suspicion often fell upon the strategies women utilized to safeguard their privacy and modesty in the public sector, so that practices devised to demonstrate virtue and chastity came under attack as potentially lascivious, meaning that elite women must constantly renegotiate their public image. One such example is the aforementioned practice of veiling to protect their modesty in public. The *tapada de medio ojo* [veiling with half an eye] would cover her entire body and face with a veil, leaving only one eye, usually the left, unveiled to navigate. This custom was initially seen as indicative of modesty but became increasingly suspect in the sixteenth century. Vives, for example, states that classical sources and church fathers recommended veiling ‘not so much for the purpose of not being seen by men as not seeing men’ to protect women from temptation, but he alleges that the practice has become corrupted by the deceitful wiles of women who ‘go about with their heads covered [...] in order to remain unknown and unseen, while they see and recognize others [...] as] an occasion for shameful acts’.³⁴

Vives, like other moralists of his time, accuses women of utilizing veiling practices to construct a false appearance of modesty even as they behave immodestly. Critics accused women of using the veil to hide their identity either to feign a status to which they did not belong, or to

³⁴ Vives, *The Education*, 243.

engage in unchaste behaviour such as flirtation or even prostitution under cover of anonymity.³⁵ Treatises such as León Pinelo's aforementioned *Velos antiguos y modernos* criticized women's use of the veil, alleging that women attracted male attention through flirtatious looks given by the one uncovered eye with which they 'incitan, llaman y atraen' [incite, invite and attract], or by opening the veil in order to reveal part of the face or body.³⁶ Moreover, the arrangement of the veil allowed the spectator provocative glimpses of the clothing worn underneath. Consequently, the veiled woman appears in literature and art as a 'spectacularly seductive' figure, who also made a regular appearance on the Golden Age stage in what was, given the lascivious reputation of actresses, an inherently erotic performance.³⁷ Alonso Hernández records that *tapada* (veiled woman) appears among the many synonyms for prostitute, to designate a freelance prostitute who, 'cubierta con un manto la cara y dejando sólo una parte al descubierto, con frecuencia un ojo y la parte de la cara correspondiente, recorría las calles de la ciudad en busca de clientes' [covering her face with a veil and leaving only one area uncovered, usually an eye and the surrounding part of the face, would travel the city streets in search of clients].³⁸ As these examples indicate, the practice of veiling, though initially an indicator of chastity, soon became interpreted as a signal of sexual availability.

³⁵ Bass and Wunder, 'The Veiled Ladies', 101.

³⁶ León Pinelo, *Velos antiguos y modernos*, 240.

³⁷ Bass and Wunder, 'The Veiled Ladies', 108. For an analysis of the *tapada* onstage, see Bass and Wunder 125–131; Fernández Rodríguez, *Eros en escena*, 158–160.

³⁸ Alonso Hernández, *El lenguaje*, 40.

Critics feared that the veiled woman's anonymity could provoke men to approach and attempt to seduce women of superior social status, or allow a woman to feign elite status.³⁹ The veil's potential to disguise a prostitute as an elite lady can be observed in María de Zayas's novella *La inocencia castigada* [*Innocence Punished*, 1647] in which an unscrupulous older woman, rewarded with sumptuous gifts for her role as procuress, disguises a prostitute as the virtuous wife Inés by wearing her dress and covering her face in the *tapada de medio ojo* style. The narrator attests that Don Diego arrives at the tryst, 'viéndola y reconociendo el vestido, por habersele visto ordinariamente a doña Inés, como en el talle le parecía y venía tapada, y era ya cuando cerraba la noche, la tuvo por ella' [seeing her and recognizing the dress, having seen it before on Doña Inés, and since she was of similar stature and came veiled, and since night was descending, accepted her as Inés].⁴⁰ The use of veiling to obscure identity is key to this deceit, which Diego does not discover until he confronts Doña Inés, who denies that she has had a sexual encounter with him. Thus, as Zayas's tale reveals, although moralists insisted that chaste women should remain unseen, women who obscured their appearance and therefore identity came under intense suspicion.

Moral critiques of veiling resulted in attempts to prohibit the fashion outright. Philip II, for example, forbade the practice in 1590, imposing a fine of 3000 *maravedís* for infractions.⁴¹ However, this ban was ineffective, and despite numerous repetitions women continued to appear in public veiled to protect their modesty. Since the *tapado de medio ojo* was a style of wearing the mantle rather than a garment, it was difficult to regulate; women could quickly rearrange the

³⁹ Bass and Wunder, 'The Veiled Ladies', 98.

⁴⁰ Zayas, *La inocencia castigada*, in *Obra narrativa completa*, 78.

⁴¹ Deleito y Piñuela, *La mujer, la casa, y la moda*, 288; Bass and Wunder, 'The Veiled Ladies', 99.

fabric to either cover or uncover themselves. For this reason, ‘the controversial fashion was [...] a matter of intention’ rather than a concrete practice.⁴² It was not until the late eighteenth century, when Charles III instituted a draconian campaign of harsh punishments, that veiling finally died out.⁴³ As this example illustrates, practices such as veiling that were adopted by elite women to protect their modesty became targets for didactic denunciations of female character that effaced the social lines between chaste and unchaste women, equating all women with immodesty. The critiques of veiling are not unique; moralists frequently accused women, including elite women, of harbouring secret impropriety, and conversely feared that prostitutes or other unscrupulous women would imitate elite women to sexually manipulate men, a theme that pervades picaresque fiction.

The inversion of meaning undergone by practices such as veiling that were invoked as a strategy to protect modesty yet read as a sign of immodesty is not an isolated example, but rather occurs frequently with regard to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century female spatial practice. As I argue throughout this and following chapters, historical and literary prostitutes and *pícaras* often utilize spatial signifiers to negotiate erotic capital. In particular, they often mimic elite lifestyle to solidify their reputation for exclusivity and refinement that will increase the economic value of their sexuality by simulating certain characteristics of elite female behaviour not always in a vain attempt to ‘pass’ for respectable women, but rather to build allure and a reputation for exclusivity through an appearance of inaccessibility. This mimetic act becomes possible through the reproduction of a homosocial class structure onto prostitution. Since elite men could not frequent the same lover as members of the lower orders without loss of status, maintenance of social

⁴² Bass and Wunder, ‘The Veiled Ladies’, 112.

⁴³ Deleito y Piñuela, *La mujer, la casa, y la moda*, 289.

distinctions required the formation of a class of private ‘public women’ available only to the elite. Historian María Teresa López Beltrán uncovers one example of such practices in her detailed investigation of prostitution in the province of Granada. Malaga city officials petitioned to form a separate sector of the city, a *ramería* [whores’ quarter], to house prostitutes who would service men whose status prevented them from going to the *mancebía* or municipal brothel.⁴⁴ This petition rests on the distinction drawn in late medieval Malaga between *mujeres públicas* or brothel prostitutes, and *rameras*, or freelance prostitutes operating out of private homes. The city officials argued that *rameras* must be allowed to practise their trade so that merchants and other visitors to the city whose social status prevented them from entering the brothel would not be forced to seduce or rape honourable women, but also that *rameras* needed to be spatially segregated from honest women in order to prevent confusion between the two groups.⁴⁵

While such historical documentation is scarce or absent for most of Spain, indications in picaresque fiction and other literary texts suggest that the sort of elite prostitution that reached its zenith in areas such as early sixteenth-century Rome and early modern Venice operated clandestinely in Spain. The hierarchical prostitution structure that distinguishes elite courtesan from common prostitute mirrors the hierarchical structure of society more generally. In this gendered social mimesis, the reinforcement of male class structure creates distinctions among women who, according to the espoused cultural norms of the homosocial order that labelled all unchaste women ‘whores’, belong to a single category. The reproduction of class differences onto a category of women who, according to social practice, should be equal upholds and reinforces male social difference and creates a milieu in which women involved in certain sectors

⁴⁴ López Beltrán, *La prostitución*, 77.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 77–85.

of the flesh trade must constantly renegotiate their reputation to delineate themselves from the common prostitute. In this context, withdrawal from public space on the part of the courtesan becomes a deliberate strategy of agency to accrue economic power through sexual capital.

In the context of officially tolerated elite courtesans, such as early sixteenth-century Rome, the *Feminist Encyclopedia of Italian Literature* states that ‘a strategy of the honest courtesan was to take on the courtly graces of cultivated women by mimicking their dress, demeanor and graces’.⁴⁶ However, courtesan mimesis of aristocratic female spatial practice is far more complex than mere impersonation. Roman courtesans did not simply ape aristocratic women, but rather formed a separate class with their own conventions and traditions that functioned outside the patriarchal family structure. In order to reach the pinnacle of the hierarchical structure of carnal commerce in early sixteenth-century Rome, to distinguish themselves from common prostitutes, and to attract an elite clientele, courtesans parodied certain styles and habits that heretofore marked elite women. In particular, courtesans imitated elite female spatial practices such as domestic enclosure. Courtesans held salons and entertainments at home, appearing in public only occasionally and surrounded by a retinue of attendants, often travelling in clients’ coaches rather than walking the streets.⁴⁷ Furthermore, they adopted some of the restrictive dress practices that limited female mobility, such as the use of chappines (known in Italian as *zoccoli* and in Spanish as *chapines*): high platformed shoes whose use required the assistance of a servant or companion for balance. This footwear was initially used by elite women to protect the hems of their expensive dresses from the muck of the city streets. However, their use by courtesans and later by other groups of ‘public women’ eventually

⁴⁶ Rosenthal, ‘Courtesan’, 55.

⁴⁷ Lawner, *Lives of the Courtesans*, 12.

resulted in their being interpreted as a marker of prostitution.⁴⁸ In other words, the public demeanour of courtesans was distinct from that of the common prostitute and the demarcation of this difference often relied on some of the same social markers that denoted social class for elite women. However, the courtesans' aim is not to masquerade as elite women, but rather to build a reputation as sexually exclusive. By emulating elite women's spatial practice, courtesans turn domestic enclosure, a restriction on freedom, into a path to both economic and erotic influence. Withdrawal from public space becomes a deliberate economic strategy. The few courtesans who managed to succeed in the intensely competitive environment of Roman prostitution by creating a reputation for exclusivity were able to amass enormous wealth. Fiametta, for example, a courtesan who became Cesare Borgia's mistress and namesake of the Piazza Fiametta (near Piazza Navona), left three houses and a vineyard in her will.⁴⁹ The deliberate reproduction of aristocratic lifestyle by courtesans threatened to efface social difference since it was no longer possible to differentiate between 'respectable' women and 'fallen' women. As I argue in later chapters, many of the same strategies are used by the Spanish *pícaras*.

A fictionalized representation of such practices is found in *La Lozana andaluza*, wherein Rome's courtesans mimic the spatial practices of elite women as an economic strategy. As Rampín explains to Lozana during their visit to the Via dell'Orso, courtesans never venture into the streets alone, but, like the matrons, only go out accompanied by servants. Moreover, Rampín observes that they do not leave the house except to hear mass.⁵⁰ They imitate the domestic confinement of elite women to such an extent that one courtesan (Beatrice) is described as an

⁴⁸ Davis, 'The Geography of Gender', 34.

⁴⁹ Witcombe, 'The Chapel of the Courtesan', 276.

⁵⁰ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 214–215.

‘emparedada’ or anchoress, a woman who withdrew entirely from the world for spiritual purification.⁵¹ The Spanish *emparedadas* were religious lay women, often of high social status, who lived in a completely walled-in enclosure.⁵² *Emparedadas* lived in cells with only a small opening to allow food to be passed in to them, and at times another opening into a chapel so that they could hear services. Cruz states that the *emparedadas*

voluntarily shut themselves in a small space usually built against a church wall, but also in cemeteries, in small hermitages, hospitals, and even [...] within the city walls. The cell typically had room only for a kneeling stool or *prie-dieu* and a plank for a bed. The outside wall faced the street and had an opening through which she could be fed; an opening on the inside wall allowed her to hear mass and take communion.⁵³

The most famous example of an anchoress is Julian of Norwich (fourteenth century, England); in Spain, the first named Spanish vernacular poet, Gonzalo de Berceo, recounts the life of the medieval anchorite Saint Oria who enclosed herself in a male Benedictine monastery. Spanish fiction also bears witness to the spiritual value placed on spatial isolation; in María de Zayas’s novella *La inocencia castigada*, for example, the unscrupulous nobleman Diego falls in love with the virtuous wife Inés and, with the help of a Muslim necromancer, casts a spell on her in which she is placed in a stupor and visits his home at night. Her husband believes her to be

⁵¹ Ibid., 312.

⁵² Cruz, ‘The Walled-In Woman’, 358.

⁵³ Ibid., 355.

complicit in Diego's 'seduction', and with the help of her brother and sister-in-law, they wall her up in a chimney, where she survives in terrible agony for six years, until a neighbour frees her, and she enters voluntary confinement in a convent. Like the anchoresses Zayas draws inspiration from, Inés attains spiritual purity through corporeal suffering and prayer. After her release, she enters a convent where she is described as living the life of a saint. The radical withdrawal from earthly life of the anchoress marks her spiritual purity. Consequently, returning to the earlier example from *La Lozana andaluza*, by describing a courtesan as *emparedada*, Lozana satirizes the anchorite's spiritual isolation to emphasize the courtesan's retreat from public space as a strategy to build an exclusive reputation that will build erotic capital.

In fact, domestic confinement frequently serves to mark differences in status among the novel's many prostitutes and courtesans. Unlike Lozana and the less prestigious prostitutes who must relocate periodically since 'las putas cada tres meses se mudan por parecer fruta nueva' [whores move every three months to appear to be fresh fruit] the elite courtesans depend on immobility; as Lozana's client observes, 'las favoridas no se mudan' [the favoured courtesans do not move].⁵⁴ The courtesans withdraw into their sumptuous homes, renouncing street life.

The courtesans' stylized performance of modesty generated unease over the potential for social illegibility that would occur if courtesans could not be distinguished from respectable women. In his 1590 costume book *Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo* [*Ancient and Modern Dress from All over the World*], Cesare Vecellio complains that the courtesans of Rome imitate noblewomen's attire to such an extent that it is impossible to distinguish between them, stating that 'le moderne cortigiane romane vanno tanto bene all'ordine di uestiti, che da pochi sono conosciute dalle nobili donne di quella città' [the modern Roman courtesans go about so well

⁵⁴ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 336.

dressed that they are only with difficulty distinguished from the noblewomen of that city] and that courtesans wear rich garments, including great quantities of gold and pearls.⁵⁵ Vecellio's courtesan, like his noblewoman, wears a *batículo* or pleated robe (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

Vecellio's criticism of the contemporary courtesan supports his argument that modern morals are degraded in contrast to the past when women behaved with more modesty. His grievance was a common one, particularly in the period following the 1527 sack as moralists increasingly attacked Rome's tolerance of prostitution.⁵⁶ Cruz maintains that Delicado uses the few noblewomen who appear in the novel to draw the reader's attention to social difference through the contrast between Lozana's freedom of movement and the 'aloof Roman matrons' who are 'treated with uncommon respect by the author [... to] signify his concern with maintaining order among the different social classes'.⁵⁷ While it is true that Lozana and her fellow common prostitutes enjoy free access to public space, the novel's elite courtesans appear only in their own homes, and imitate the movement and habits of these noblewomen, also serving as a contrast to Lozana's freedom of movement. Their status as courtesans is, of course, commonly known; hence, courtesan imitation of elite mannerisms is not an attempt to 'pass' as noblewoman, but rather a display of exclusivity through subtle spatial markers that will be examined in subsequent chapters. Imitation of the elite serves to attract a higher status of clientele that will pay correspondingly higher prices for their services.

⁵⁵ Vecellio, *Habiti antichi*, 26; Rosenthal and Jones, *The Clothing of the Renaissance World*, 36.

⁵⁶ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, 101.

⁵⁷ Cruz, *Discourses*, 147.



Figure 2.1: Young Noblewoman



Figure 2.2: Modern Roman Courtesan

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The Courtesan Housed

Delicado satirizes the social confusion caused by elite courtesans' imitation of matrons' spatial practices in several scenes in which Lozana is comically unable to distinguish elite women from courtesans. In her initial foray into the city, Lozana observes a group of noblemen, followed by

servants leading mules carrying women she assumes to be their wives.⁵⁸ Rampín corrects her, stating ‘eso de sus mujeres [...] son cortesanas, y ellos deben de ser grandes señores, pues mirá que por eso se dice: Roma, triunfo de grandes señores, paraíso de putas’ [those you take for wives ... are courtesans, and those men must be great lords, so you see why they say: Rome, triumph of great lords and paradise of whores].⁵⁹ In another scene, Lozana mistakes the *batículos*, or pleated robe worn by elite matrons, for the *almalafa*, ‘a pleated garment that covered most of the body and face’, worn by Spanish Moriscas.⁶⁰

Lozana.—¿Y aquéllas qué son, moriscas? [And those, who are they, *moriscas*?]

Rampín.—¡No, cuerpo del mundo, son romanas! [No, by the world, they are Romans!]

Lozana.—¿Y por qué van con aquellas almalafas? [Then why do they wear those *almalafas*?]

Rampín.—No son almalafas; son batículo o batirrabo, y paños listados. [They are not *almalafas*, they are the *batículo* or *batirrabo* and printed cloths.]⁶¹

Though the women in this sketch are not specifically designated as elite matrons, the *batículo* is

⁵⁸ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 242.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 242.

⁶⁰ Perry, *The Handless Maiden*, 57.

⁶¹ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 216. The reference to *batirrabo* is also a sexual joke playing on the polysemy of *rabo/culo* [anus], placing the matrons’ apparent honesty further in question (see Allaire’s editorial comments, 216 note 20).

associated with respectability, whether legitimate or feigned, both in *La Lozana andaluza* and contemporary sources such as Vecellio or Covarrubias, who defines *batículo* as ‘un cierto velo blanco de que usan las matronas romanas que cuelga de los hombros, y de la cintura abajo tiene muchos pliegues y gran ruedo’ [a certain white cloak that Roman matrons use, which hangs from the shoulders, and from the waist down has many folds and a broad hem].⁶² Teresa, one of the poor and probably Jewish seamstresses of the Pozo Blanco neighbourhood where Lozana begins her sojourn in Rome, states that she and her compatriots are criticized if they wear the *batículo* to mass because they lack sufficient social standing to adopt such dress.⁶³ Claude Allaire also comments that the *batículo* was a marker of rank whose use by lower-class women indicates presumption through their transgression of sumptuary norms.⁶⁴ Furthermore, Lozana asserts that her rival *La de los Ríos* wears a *batículo* in order to gain access to the houses of respectable Roman women through the construction of a façade of propriety; as Lozana explains, ‘el hábito la hacía licenciada’ [her habit gave her licence].⁶⁵ Consequently, the *batículo* signals respectable social stature, and marks these particular women as elite wives.

By confusing the Roman *batículo* with a Moorish *almalafa*, Lozana mistakes these seemingly respectable Roman matrons for members of one of the most despised social groups in her native Spain. Like Delicado, Lozana left Spain sometime after the Reconquest of Granada in 1492, which was followed by a period of intense social unrest caused by the measures taken to assimilate the Morisco population after their forced conversion. Though the Catholic monarchs

⁶² Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua*, 173.

⁶³ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 199.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 324.

Ferdinand and Isabella promised the Moriscos that they would be able to maintain their traditional way of life, Muslim beliefs, and traditional dress, they soon rescinded their pledge and forced the Muslim population to convert to Catholicism along with the Jews. This prompted several rebellions in the Alpujarra Mountains near Granada (1568–1571), and eventually culminated in the expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609.

Delicado may have been a *converso* who left Spain due to the deep suspicion shown to new Christian converts and therefore keenly aware of the stigma and prejudice these groups endured. Thus, this passing reference to the *almalafa* inscribes the Morisca's stigmatization, marginalization, and blood impurity onto the noblewomen. Furthermore, the Morisca was an eroticized figure of the dark-skinned 'other'; like all stigmatized female groups, stereotypes painted her as promiscuous, and she played a prominent role in Golden Age erotic fantasy. As Mary Elizabeth Perry asserts, 'the subjugation of all Hispanic Muslims to Christian rule by 1492 led to a sexualization of [the] differences' between them, creating a 'sexualized rhetoric' that effeminized Morisco men and eroticized Morisca women.⁶⁶ Christians frequently accused both male and female Moriscos of excessive lustfulness and deviant sexual activity.⁶⁷ Thus, Moriscas became 'exotic sexual subjects', leading many Christian men to seek out the services of Morisca prostitutes in brothels.⁶⁸ The *almalafa* too became a signifier of eroticized 'deviant' sexuality, such that 'although Morisca costumes actually covered the body more completely than did the clothing Christian women usually wore, Moriscas may have appeared to Christians as more

⁶⁶ Perry, *The Handless Maiden*, 47–48.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

seductive in their enticing difference and mystery'.⁶⁹ Consequently, Lozana's confusion of the *batículo/almalafa* reveals her ignorance of social norms in Rome; she cannot distinguish between women of the elite and marginalized women. While in Lozana's case such a mistake satirizes her lack of refinement, it also highlights the potential of courtesans and kept women to destabilize the carefully drawn lines of social status.

The same unease over the visibility of social status subtends later works of the female picaresque, wherein the protagonists often dress and comport themselves as women of the elite, either to gull men or to command a higher price for their sexual services, revealing concern over the illegibility of female character. In *La hija de Celestina*, Salas Barbadillo describes the adventures of the wily female protagonist in Madrid and Toledo, where she sells herself as a prostitute, works as a mistress, and swindles men for monetary gain. She is able to do this due to her extraordinary beauty and air of refinement; as Salas Barbadillo voyeuristically exclaims to his readers,

Si la vieran salir tapada de medio ojo, con un manto de estos de lustre de Sevilla, saya parda, puños grandes, chapines con virillas, pisando firme y alargando el paso, no sé cuál fuera de ellos tan casto que por lo menos dejara de seguirla, ya que no con los pies, con los ojos, siquiera el breve tiempo que estuviera en pasar la calle.

[If you could see her go out, veiled all but one eye, with a luxurious Sevillian mantle, tan robe, large cuffs, slippers girded with silver, stepping firmly and lengthening her stride, I know of none so chaste that would not follow her, if not

⁶⁹ Ibid., 57.

with their feet, with their eyes, if but for the brief time that she takes in passing down the street.]⁷⁰

Elena's riveting allure stems, in this instance, not from her great beauty, which is hidden from view by the veil that, as seen previously, created a seductive air, but rather from her luxurious and stylish dress, and her confident bearing. The Sevillian mantle, made of fine silk, was the most highly prized type of mantle in the period, and her large cuffs and *chapines con virillas*, the high-platformed slippers decorated with silver used by both elite ladies and courtesans, mark her dress as sumptuous.⁷¹ Elena's characterization exemplifies the theme seen so often in didactic writing that unchaste women will use the trappings of modesty to create a seductive persona. On many occasions throughout the novel, Elena is mistaken for a noblewoman, and she later passes for a courtier, a role that she uses to attract customers as a courtesan.

The protagonists of *La tía fingida*, the prostitute Esperanza and her supposed aunt Claudia, likewise avail themselves of the markers of elite identity to attract customers. When the student suitors, their curiosity awakened by the house's renovated façade, interrogate a neighbour about the occupants, he describes them as 'gente de gran recogimiento' [people who live in seclusion], explaining that he has not seen anyone enter the dwelling except the occupants.⁷² He further explains that the aunt has an air of authority and elegance that 'no es de

⁷⁰ Salas Barbadillo, *La hija de Celestina*, 86.

⁷¹ Bass and Wunder, 'The Veiled Ladies', 108.

⁷² Cervantes, *La tía fingida*, 255.

gente pobre' [is not of poor people].⁷³ In other words, the neighbour has mistaken the women for elite ladies. The house is 'cerrada por fuera' [closed on the exterior], allowing the students to discern that the inhabitants are out.⁷⁴ When the ladies return, they exude an aura of elite refinement; the 'aunt' is described as

una reverenda matrona, con unas tocas blancas como la nieve, más largas que sobrepelliz de canónigo portugués, plegadas sobre la frente, con su ventosa; y con su gran rosario al cuello de cuentas sonadoras, tan grandes como las de Santinuflo, que a la cintura la llegaba; manto de seda y lana; guantes blancos y nuevos, sin vuelta; y un báculo, o junco de las Indias, con su remate de plata. [a respectable matron, with a headdress as white as snow, longer than the surplice of a Portuguese canon, folded over the forehead and mounted, and with a large rosary at her throat with noisy beads, as big as those of *Santinuflo*, reaching down to her waist; a mantle of silk and wool, new white gloves unturned; and a staff, or cane from the Indies, with a silver tip.]⁷⁵

This description contains many markers of elite identity, such as the head covering, rosary, and the silver-tipped cane, which are humorously exaggerated. The giant rosary in Golden Age fiction, particularly when worn by an older woman, typically marked the wearer as a hypocrite.⁷⁶

⁷³ Ibid, 255.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 255.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 256.

⁷⁶ See, for example, the housekeeper in *El buscón* who wears a giant rosary and robs her employers and

Moreover, the women are accompanied by a squire, in fine livery. Esperanza comports herself like an elite lady as well, marked by a ‘rostro mesurado y grave’ [modest and serious demeanour] and dressed in a ‘saya de buriel fino, ropa justa de contray, o frisado; los chapines de terciopelo negro, con sus clavetes y rapacejos de plata bruñida; guantes olorosos, y no de polvillo, sino de ámbar’ [fine woollen robe, vest of fine cloth or silk; black satin slippers with burnished silver eyelets; scented gloves, not of powder but amber].⁷⁷ Her clothes are fine, and made of expensive materials reserved (through price and sumptuary legislation) for the elite, and her gloves are adorned with expensive perfume. However, it is above all her bearing that exudes nobility: ‘el ademán era grave; el mirar honesto; el paso airoso’ [her expression was grave; her gaze honest, her tread light].⁷⁸ Moreover, two ‘dueñas de honor’ [duennas] who wear the same livery as the squire accompany the women.⁷⁹ They enter the house without a glance at the students and shut themselves inside.

As the author’s lengthy description of clothing and bearing makes clear, nothing in the women’s outward presentation displays their profession. Rather, it is the location and façade of their residence, coupled with the lack of male oversight and their non-nativeness, that marks Esperanza as available; the students are described as ‘creyendo, sin duda que, pues aquella gente era forastera, no habría venido a Salamanca a aprender leyes, sino para quebrantarlas’ [believing, without a shadow of doubt, that these were foreigners who had come to Salamanca not to learn

starves the students in her care (Quevedo, *La vida del buscon*, in *Obras completas*, 38–40).

⁷⁷ Cervantes, *La tía fingida*, 256.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 257.

the law, but to break it].⁸⁰ Thus, the women carefully construct a presentation of elite status, yet also subtly signal Esperanza's sexual availability, hoping to find an elite man in search of a mistress.

The use of an elite exterior to mask transactional sexual encounters plays a key role in the denouement of *La niña de los embustes*, in which Teresa carries out an elaborate hoax to deceive two gentlemen, who take revenge by outwitting her in return. Up to this point in the diegesis, the aim of Teresa's tricks has been to marry into or to find a legitimate place in high society, as when she passes herself off as the kidnapped daughter of a rich nobleman or marries a wealthy old gentleman. She humorously explains her actions as a commendable desire to better herself, explaining that 'se debe agradecer en cualquier persona el anhelar a ser más, como vituperar el que se abate a cosas inferiores a su calidad y nobleza' [one should always laud in any person the desire to be something more, just as one should vilify those who debase themselves with things that are inferior to their quality and nobility].⁸¹ In the final episode, Teresa takes up residence in a fine house in Toledo in the guise of a widow (as she is, at this point, three times over) served by a squire and two white slaves who she has selected for their beauty. She clothes one of these slaves, Emerenciana, in fine dresses under the pretence that she is her niece. Having made these preparations, the two supposedly elite ladies attend mass, where they let their faces be seen in a 'cuidadoso descuido' [careful incaution] that attracts male attention 'como moscas a la miel' [like flies to honey].⁸² Here, Teresa and her slave demonstrate the stereotype of veiled women as

⁸⁰ Ibid., 257; the Biblioteca Colombina version reads 'falsearlas' [to pervert them] rather than to break them.

⁸¹ Castillo Solórzano, *La niña de los embustes*, 250.

⁸² Ibid., 253.

immodest by revealing their faces in a flirtatious gesture disguised as accident.

The ruse succeeds and soon after both women have rich suitors; Teresa is pursued by Don Esteban, a cleric who is ‘muy oloroso de guantes’ [heavily perfumed in his gloves] and ‘muy servidor de damas’ [a great ladies man], in other words, a dandy who is not very devout, while Emerenciana draws the attention of Don Leonardo, the oldest son of a noble and wealthy family.⁸³ Teresa, acting the part of Emerenciana’s aunt, at first chides Don Leonardo for his desire to visit the house, stating ‘no querría de primera entrada que nos tuviesen por ligeras en esta ciudad’ [I would not wish that on first impression we should be taken for loose in this city], yet she also inflames his passion by promising him that ‘ocasión habrá en que le recibamos en nuestra posada’ [the occasion will come when you will be received in our home].⁸⁴ The two gentlemen begin to ‘llover presentes en casa’ [shower the house with gifts] and implore the women to return their affections by admitting them to the home at night.⁸⁵ Emerenciana, on Teresa’s orders, accepts the nobleman’s gifts, but does not give him any physical sign of affection, upon which he redoubles his gift-giving, presenting her with a jewel worth more than 600 escudos, after which Teresa promises him that ‘en breve tendría buen despacho su pretensión, con el recato que a su casa debía y con el silencio que esperaba tendría un caballero tan principal como él’ [in short time, he would receive a good answer to his suit, with the reticence that was owed to this house, and under the silence that should be expected of such a notable gentleman as he].⁸⁶ Thus, the women engage in a show of modesty designed to elicit

⁸³ Ibid., 252.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 255.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 257.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 258.

further monetary gain from an assurance of sexual fulfilment, increasing their erotic capital. Curiously, there is no mention of marriage in this courtship scene, even though the young man seems to be a bachelor; instead, he is clearly pursuing a sexual relationship by imploring Emerenciana ‘que le diese entrada una noche’ [that she should allow him entry some night].⁸⁷ Likewise, since Teresa’s suitor is a cleric, there can be no implication of matrimony, though she states that he implores her ‘que yo le favoreciera del todo’ [that I should favour him with everything].⁸⁸ Therefore, these relationships are clearly transactional, entailing an exchange of lavish gifts for sexual favours.

Moreover, Emerenciana, despite her status as a slave and Teresa’s coercion, is willing and eager to satisfy the handsome noble, embodying the stereotype of the lascivious nature of women. One might expect that Teresa would eagerly profit from such a consummation; yet, she cannot resist the occasion to enact an elaborate scam in an attempt to extract even more financial gain. When Don Leonardo comes to the house to claim his prize, Teresa’s squire pretends to be taken gravely ill and fakes death. Teresa, feigning grief, tells Leonardo he must return another time, upon which he offers another gold chain, this one worth 300 escudos, as a show of continued affection. Shortly after, he returns again to the house, expecting to consummate his relationship with Emerenciana, who he believes to be a young virgin of good family. Leonardo is left alone in a room awaiting Emerenciana, upon which the squire enters in the semblance of a ghost, imploring him not to ‘infamar la casa’ [bring infamy upon the house], upon which Don Leonardo flees, becoming gravely ill and bedridden.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, the cleric Don Esteban

⁸⁷ Ibid., 258.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 258.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 262.

continues his courtship of Teresa, and enquires ‘cuando me determinaba a favorecerle’ [when I should be disposed to favour him].⁹⁰ She claims to be too distraught by the death of her squire, yet after he courts her with presents, namely 200 escudos and minor cash gifts to her ‘niece’ and the other slave, Marcela, who is pretending to be a servant, she asks him to return in two nights, promising to let him into the house in secret.⁹¹ When he does this, the ‘servant’ Marcela tells him there are guests in the house, but that he should wait below since Teresa ‘quiere que os lleve a su cuarto’ [desires to bring you to her room].⁹² They repeat their former ruse with the squire acting as ghost, and Don Esteban flees as well, leaving the women with the money and other presents, but without having satisfied the men’s sexual desires.

In this episode, the pretence of honesty and noble identity allows Teresa to extract multiple gifts from the suitors, maximizing her economic profit from the scam, and allows Castillo Solórzano to draw out the bawdy humour of the thinly guised promises of sex through ambiguous language, and ludically underscore the stereotypes he draws on of the sexually voracious widow and the exoticized and eroticized foreign slave Emerenciana, who is described as a ‘moza liviana [...] como nacida en Greca, aunque criada en Sevilla’ [a loose girl ... since she was born in Greece, though raised in Seville].⁹³ Teresa, on the other hand, does not fully perform her role in the stereotype. Unlike characters such as Elena, *La hija de Celestina*, who prostitutes herself or is prostituted by her pimp/husband Montúfar, or Lozana, depicted as an active prostitute and as sexually voracious, or even Esperanza, who is somewhat reluctant but

⁹⁰ Ibid., 265.

⁹¹ Ibid., 265.

⁹² Ibid., 267.

⁹³ Ibid., 258.

resigned to exchange her body for a price, in this scene Teresa evades the sexual act despite previous affairs and illicit relationships. In part, she enacts a stereotype of female greed, yet her motives are not entirely economic either. She maintains an elaborate pretence of mourning, even burying a body that she has acquired, supposedly her dead squire, paying for the funeral and headstone.

This portrayal reflects the disdain heaped in poetry and other literary sources on the *mujer esquiva* or disdainful woman who does not return the poet's affections and is attacked as proud and vain. Teresa sexualizes the *mujer esquiva* stereotype, representing a public woman who should be sexually available, yet refuses her favours to these men despite their patronage. This encourages the two men to enact textual revenge on Teresa for her vanity and greed. Her ploy is discovered after the squire is spotted alive and well, and Teresa and her household flee to Madrid, taking up a new residence and once again emulating elite women new to the city. A friend of Don Leonardo and Don Esteban locates Teresa in Madrid, and presents himself as a rich suitor, enacting a proxy revenge by luring Emerenciana from the house with promises of marriage, deflowering her, and robbing Teresa of all her money and jewels. Don Leonardo and Don Esteban then visit Teresa and declare themselves vindicated, and she accepts that she has been defeated by their superior cunning. Curiously, while the taking of Emerenciana's virginity seems crucial to their perceived victory, Teresa's body no longer interests them, another factor that indicates the significance and worth of virginity in the sexual marketplace; Teresa, as a 'common' woman who has had many previous relations, has no worth beyond her jewels. The revenge on Teresa is carried out through the body of her slave, whose despoilment impacts Teresa. The fact that Emerenciana is considered less valuable as a slave following her deflowering also hints at the prevalence of sexual exploitation of female slaves in the period.

This complex scene illustrates the fear of male impotence in the face of superior female cunning— the two men would be satisfied with an arrangement in which they barter gifts for sexual favours, and their rage stems from the fact that they are left sexually unsatisfied and financially outwitted. Teresa uses the pretence of elite lifestyle to attract wealthy men, yet at the same time openly transacts relationships with these men (though she asks them to maintain silence). The men, in turn, accept her charade of elite identity, and are willing to pay lavishly for what they believe to be an affair with a woman of social (if not moral) standing.

All these portrayals of deviant women who use the clothing, mannerisms, and spatial practices of elite women to manipulate sexual capital serve to reveal social unease over women's potential to subvert class order, but also the erotic value in the sexual marketplace of a semblance of modesty and refinement. Authorial condemnation directed at *pícaras* stems not from their engagement in transactional sex, but rather from deceptive self-fashioning as respectable women. One of the principal strategies employed in these narratives is the rejection of public space, so that domestic confinement becomes the marker of elite status. However, prostitutes and courtesans who conceal themselves within domestic space must still attract clientele. We now turn to an examination of the coach, a mobile private space that is often used by fictional *pícaras*, after which I examine various strategies that utilize the liminal spaces of the home, such as windows and doors, to build sexual capital, attract clientele, and mark out position in the complex hierarchy of carnal commerce that utilizes the liminal spaces of the home as sites to advertise and negotiate their involvement in sexual commerce.

Chapter 3

Coaches of Deception: The Predatory *Pícaro*

As we have seen, elite women, who risked their reputation if they appeared in public without

proper modesty and accompaniment, utilized various strategies to distance themselves from public space even as they moved through it such as veiling or using coaches to travel the streets in a private space from which they could observe city life yet elide their identity behind curtains or veils. Unlike veiling, coaches were expensive and required a coachman and horses, and thus allowed women to display elite social status to onlookers while remaining physically inaccessible.¹ Nonetheless, the use of coaches as a marker of modesty drew the same sort of moral outrage and social satire that women's veiling practices did. On the other hand, the private space that allowed elite women to forgo the city streets proved an ideal site for courtship and seduction given its privacy from prying eyes and could be used by elite men to transport paid sexual companions discreetly. A series of legislative measures endeavoured to control and restrict the use of coaches, but these were largely ineffective. For these reasons, the coach became a battleground in the debate over female comportment. In this chapter, I analyse the use of coaches by several *pícaras* as a site from which to enact sexual trickery. These representations reflect the cultural anxiety over the potential for sexually licentious behaviour afforded by the semi-private space of the coach's interior that manifests itself through depictions of the *pícaro* as a sexualized predator, yet at the same time they demonstrate important differences in authorial attitude toward sexual transgression.

Coaches, introduced around the 1550s most likely by the court of Charles V, came into vogue in the sixteenth century, and at first were used primarily by women.² After the court was definitively established in Madrid in 1606, coaches became one of the defining characteristics of

¹ López Álvarez, *Poder, lujo y conflicto*, 475.

² García Santo-Tomás, *Espacio urbano*, 93; Deleito y Piñuela, *La mujer, la casa y la moda*, 251.

courtly culture in the city, and by 1640 over 1000 travelled the streets.³ At first, ladies of the court used coaches to protect their honour in public by removing themselves from public space, both physically and visually; by closing the curtains they could even evade the male gaze, allowing the occupant to remain completely invisible. As Lope de Vega states in *La llave de la honra* [*The Key to Honour*], ‘las mujeres / van más honradas y honestas / dentro de un coche que a pie’ [women travel more honestly and honourably inside a coach than on foot].⁴ The aristocratic man could protect his wife and daughter by conveying her by coach through the city; yet, their use became a focal point of satirical critique of perceived social decadence.

The sudden and dramatic rise in coach usage in the early seventeenth century caused hygienic, traffic, and social problems for already crowded city streets. On one hand, the urine and excrement produced by horses and mules vastly exacerbated problems of public hygiene in the notoriously muddy Madrid streets. Furthermore, coaches blocked narrow lanes, and resulted in danger to pedestrians of trampling. Moreover, the expense of upkeep generated complaints that those who could not afford it would ruin themselves to maintain the veneer of respectability, as illustrated by a scene from Luis Vélez de Guevara’s popular novel in sketches *El diablo cojuelo* [*The Limping Devil*, 1641], often considered part of the picaresque genre.⁵ The main character, Don Cleofás, observes the inhabitants of Madrid, including a couple who live in their coach, from a vantage point above the clouds where he has been transported by the limping

³ García Santo-Tomás, *Espacio urbano*, 88.

⁴ Lope de Vega, *La llave de la honra*, 9.

⁵ The novel’s biting satire and non-elite main character share properties of the picaresque, though it lacks the autobiographical structure characteristic of the picaresque novel, and there is no main plot to unite the various sketches.

devil, a folk trickster that Cleofás sets free from a magician's spell; the devil states that the pair are

tan amigos del coche, que todo lo que habían de gastar en vestir, calzar y componer su casa lo han empleado en aquel que está sin caballos agora, y comen y cenan y duermen dentro dél, sin que hayan salido de su reclusión, ni aun para las necesidades corporales, en cuatro años que le compraron; que están encochados, como emparedados.

[such aficionados of coaches that all they had to spend on dress, shoes, and upkeep of their home has been spent on that one that is now without horses, and they lunch and dine and sleep in it, without having left their seclusion, even for corporeal necessities, in four years since they bought it; they are encoached, as if they are anchorites].⁶

The objects of this satire are so obsessed with the social status of being *encochado*, or seen in society riding in a coach, that they squander everything they own, in the end losing the very social visibility they desire, and are left with nothing but a useless shell without horses to pull it.

This anecdote of courtiers who spend a fortune on the upkeep of their coach to their own detriment appears in various sources, including renowned satirist Francisco Quevedo's 'Sátira a

⁶ Vélez de Guevara, *El diablo cojuelo*, Tranco II. Brioso Santos's analysis of this episode examines the intertextuality with other satires of coaches, and concludes that Vélez de Guevara utilizes the well-known theme to create a 'texto híbrido entre lo burlesco y el absurdo' (234). See also Rodríguez Marín, 'Los coches' and Deleito y Piñuela, *La mujer, la casa y la moda*, 265–280.

los coches' ('Satire of Coaches'). Vélez de Guevara's characterization invites no sympathy; rather, the limping devil invites Cleofás to laugh with him at the abject pair.⁷ In literary accounts, the potential for such class pretensions is problematic; as Alejandro López Álvarez explains, the fad for riding in coaches exposed social rivalry, where 'la proximidad de estatus entre distintos grupos sociales provocaba entre los situados más abajo en la jerarquía intentos de emulación para igualarse a los estratos superiores y consecuentes respuestas de estos para impedirlo, en orden a seguir manteniendo su superioridad social' [the proximity in status between distinct social groups provoked, among those situated lower down the hierarchy, attempts to emulate the higher strata in order to equal them and consequent responses from those higher up to impede them, in order to protect their superior status].⁸ Thus, the coach earned a reputation as a façade that could potentially falsify social status.

Beyond the hygienic and economic problems, the most intense critique of coaches centred on women's spatial practice. As Hector Brioso Sánchez observes, in the many literary satires of couples impoverished by their zeal for coaches, it is always the wife who instigates the purchase of the coach, drawing on stereotypes of female vanity.⁹ Riding in coaches provided elite women, who were otherwise often confined to the home, an initially accepted means of observing and even interacting in public space while demonstrating their class status through the sumptuous trappings of their coach. Teresa of Manzanares, for example, first marries a wealthy old widower and writes of her delight riding in a coach, displaying her new-found status as a

⁷ Vélez de Guevara, *El diablo cojuelo*, Tranco II.

⁸ López Álvarez, *Poder, lujo y conflicto*, 286.

⁹ Brioso Sánchez, 'Velez de Guevara', 229.

respectable married woman of the elite.¹⁰ Yet, given the extreme proscriptions against women's use of public space, their appearance, even invisibly ensconced in the interior of a coach, invited critique and accusations of female vanity and greed. Likewise, the time spent riding in coaches supposedly distracted women from their domestic duties. More seriously, women were accused of using coaches for lascivious purposes. Use of a coach by elite women 'ensalzaba, guardaba, alejaba y envolvía en misterio a la mujer' [elevated a woman's reputation, guarded her, distanced her and enveloped her in mystery].¹¹ It was the aura of mystery surrounding the coached woman, who could emulate an identity that did not rightfully belong to her, that caused social unease.

Writers alleged that women used the hybrid space of the coach— a private space yet in the public sector— to flirt or invite flirtation. Lope de Vega's protagonist Lizardo, of *La llave de la honra* [*The Key of Honour*], warns his wife not to be among those who lift the curtain while riding in a coach, a flirtatious gesture that invites attention; he gives his wife advice on proper conduct in the carriage, telling her 'no seras de aquellas que dan mano en la cortina, que para esse efecto afeytan [...] no has de hablar con los que tambien requiebran desde sus coches las damas, que una cosa muy fea [...] ¡no te alegras deste coche!' [don't be one of those who lifts the curtain, and who for this purpose uses cosmetics ... you must not talk to those who seduce women in their coaches, which is an abominable thing ... don't enjoy yourself with this coach!].¹² In this play, Lizardo's wife is being pursued against her will by a high-ranking and powerful courtier, and Lizardo attempts to guard his wife's honour by allowing her to travel by coach. However, as Alejandro López Álvarez attests, the coach was more often the site of

¹⁰ Castillo Solórzano, *La niña de los embustes*, 113.

¹¹ López Álvarez, *Poder, lujo y conflicto*, 475.

¹² Lope de Vega, *La llave de la honra*, 9.

amorous encounters than a deterrent to them, and among the upper class ‘el coche jugó un importante papel en la iniciación sexual y en la práctica del sexo fuera del matrimonio’ [the coach played an important role in sexual initiation and the practice of extramarital sex].¹³ Consequently, although the coach initially protected the chastity of women in public, it soon became associated with immoral behaviour and female indecorum.

Just as the veil began as a means to maintain modesty and enclosure in public only to become a symbol of vice equated with prostitution, so too did the coach. By providing a private space within the public sphere in which women could travel free of the oversight of fathers or husbands, the coach gained a reputation as a space for seduction and amorous encounters among the young nobility, whether more innocently through passing notes or conversing via the window, or by leading to a sexual encounter.¹⁴ Like the practice of veiling in the *tapada de medio ojo* style, which allowed a woman to cover her face either to protect modesty or obscure identity yet look seductively out and invite male attention, the coach permitted a woman to mask her identity behind windows and curtains, yet reveal her face or speak with passers-by when she chose to. Likewise, the distancing of the female occupant from public space could allow women to feign an undeserved social status. Literary sources often express the coach’s potential to mask illicit sexual behaviour through metaphors that equate the vehicle with an *alcahueta*, or procuress, who was vilified as a greedy and malevolent corruptor of young women. This metaphor figures in Cervantes’ *Licenciado Vidriera* when the protagonist states ‘si dijeras que sacaban a azotar a un alcagüete, entendiera que sacaban a azotar un coche’ [if you were to tell me that they were taking a procurer to be whipped, I would understand that they were whipping a

¹³ López Álvarez, *Poder, lujo y conflicto*, 469.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 469.

coach] and Quevedo's 'Sátira a los coches' in which anthropomorphized coaches must present themselves for judgement; one explains his crime by saying that 'sirvo / de usurpar a las terceras / sus derechos, y su oficio' [I serve to usurp the privileges and trade of the procuresses].¹⁵ The frequent appearance of such satirical barbs demonstrates widespread anxiety over the potentially destabilizing force of female spatial mobility that could mask sexual licence behind a false façade and that necessitated the reinscription of patriarchal control.

In addition to moral concern that coaches could erode female virtue, legislature and moral literature also demonstrates concern over the possibility that elite men would transport their mistresses or lovers to their homes in coaches. Moralists feared that prostitutes utilized the anonymity of the coach to visit their clients' homes. A series of legislative measures in Madrid, enacted from the 1580s to the early 1600s, sought to curtail perceived immorality, especially clandestine sexual commerce, by mandating who could own or ride in coaches. These reforms included the creation of a registry to track coach ownership and strict control over production to ensure that only the highest-ranking courtiers owned one. In 1604, use of coaches was restricted to women and their immediate male relatives to limit the number of coaches in use. In 1611, Philip III, concerned about mistresses and prostitutes using their lovers' coaches, issued a pragmatic that prohibited such women from travelling in coaches, stating that 'ninguna mujer que publicamente fuere mala de su cuerpo y ganare por ello, pueda andar en coche ni carroza, ni en litera ni en silla' [no woman who is publicly evil with her body and gains from it may ride in coach or in carriage, nor in a litter or in a sedan chair].¹⁶ Coaches provided a number of

¹⁵ Cervantes, *El licenciado vidriera*, 233; Quevedo, 'Sátira a los coches', 1087.

¹⁶ *Novísima Recopilación*, eighth law, book six, 3 January 1611. Quoted in Bonilla y San Martín, *Entremeses*, 216, note 141.

advantages for practitioners of the sex trade: women could cover a broad area, obscure their identity while still attracting clientele, and imitate elite mannerisms, thereby increasing their sexual capital. Since only people of a certain social rank could sit in the back of the carriage, by keeping their faces covered, prostitutes were able to pass for elite ladies.

While this theme is ubiquitous in the literature of the time, the extent to which it reflects social practice is difficult to establish; however, prohibitions against coaches in other areas with a flourishing sex trade indicate that the practice of transporting courtesans in coaches was perceived to be a problem. In Rome, for instance, a series of edicts from 1558 to 1674 banned courtesans from riding in their lovers' coaches, and the edict of 1592 mandated that the streets in which many courtesans lived should be blocked off with bollards to prevent carriages from entering them.¹⁷ In Florence as well, laws banned prostitutes from riding in coaches.¹⁸ However, just as in Spain, powerful elite men and their lovers often flouted these legislations. Despite moralizing rhetoric, the laws against coaches for the most part remained 'rigorosamente incumplidas' [rigorously unenforced] since the nobility used their social clout to flout such laws.¹⁹

Cervantine *Pícaras*

Cervantes satirizes the prohibitions against coach-riding courtesans in *El vizcaíno fingido* (1615), parodying the debate from the perspective of the prostitutes affected by the legislation. This *entremés*, or brief comedic sketch designed to be presented between the acts of a play, focuses on

¹⁷ Storey, *Carnal Commerce*, 97.

¹⁸ Cohen, *The Evolution of Women's Asylums*, 46.

¹⁹ Deleito y Piñuela, *La mujer, la casa y la moda*, 290.

the exploits of two prostitutes, Brígida and Cristina, who discuss the recent legislation. Though this work is not typically considered in studies of the female picaresque, the female protagonists are *pícaras* types. Intriguingly, the positions the two prostitutes will take on the moral debates is alluded to by their appearance at the commencement of the tale; Brígida covers her head and face with a mantle, while Cristina enters with her face uncovered. Brígida, flustered, complains that ‘estaba un pregonero pregonando que quitaban los coches, y que las mujeres descubriesen los rostros por las calles’ [a crier was proclaiming that they would take away the coaches, and that women must uncover their faces in the streets].²⁰ Here, Brígida portrays the 1610 prohibition against veiling and the 1611 ban on prostitutes in coaches being decried simultaneously, underscoring the linking of these practices in the cultural imaginary. Brígida fears that the measures will negatively affect her livelihood, since they will take away prostitutes’ ‘autoridad’ [authority] and ‘vida libre’ [free life] by restricting their movements, and she tells Cristina that such measures will reduce their earnings.²¹

Cristina, on the other hand, supports the new legislations; she attempts to alleviate Brígida’s anxiety, stating that the proclamations merely indicate a reformation of coach usage rather than an outright prohibition, since ‘no es posible que los quiten de todo punto’ [it is impossible that they could take them away from us entirely].²² Moreover, Cristina comically contends that the legislation will be beneficial to society since it will force gentlemen, who in her opinion have become decadent through excessive leisure, to return to their manly pursuits of horsemanship instead of riding comfortably in coaches, thereby returning to the ‘ejercicio de la

²⁰ Cervantes, *El vizcaíno fingido*, 195.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 195.

²² *Ibid.*, 195.

caballería con quien sus antepasados se honraron' [exercise of chivalry with which their ancestors brought honour to themselves].²³ Her statement reflects the position of many in the debate over coaches that their use contributed to the decadence of the nobility.²⁴ In response to Brigida's concern, Cristina jokes that just as the infantry is superior to the cavalry (a comic assertion since the cavalry were of higher status), prostitution is better carried out on foot, with an uncovered face, so that clients will not mistake public women for anything other than what they are. Cristina's comment reiterates the theme of ironic honour declarations such as Celestina's claim, 'vivo de mi oficio [...] muy limpiamente' [I live from my occupation ... very honourably], and Lozana's assertion that 'no me empaché jamás con casadas ni con virgos, ni quise vender mozas ni llevar mensaje a quien no supiese yo cierto que era puta, ni me soy metida entre hombres casados, para que sus mujeres me hagan displacer, sino de mi oficio me quiero vivir' [I have never involved myself with married women or with virgins, nor have I tried to sell young girls, nor delivered messages to one I did not know for certain was a whore, nor have I involved myself with married men, that I should not turn their wives against me, but rather I have merely tried to live by my profession].²⁵ These ironic honour proclamations are part of the ludic satire of social custom that gave picaresque fiction its appeal, yet also reflect a distinction in moral equivalency, similar to the contemporary justifications of prostitution as a lesser evil, that dismiss transactional sex as a minor transgression in comparison to greater evils such as the seduction or rape of a respectable woman.

²³ Ibid., 196.

²⁴ Deleito y Piñuela, *La mujer, la casa y la moda*, 290; López Álvarez, *Poder, lujo y conflicto*, 474. See Lehfeldt, 'Ideal Men', for an analysis of critiques of the nobility.

²⁵ Rojas, *La Celestina*, 277; Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 324.

Although marginalized women such as Celestina and Lozana had no honour in the conventional sense, they rhetorically justify their trade. Recent criticism by Scott K. Taylor and Renato Barahona demonstrates that honour was a less rigid concept than previously imagined. Taylor maintains that honour was not a code, but rather a rhetoric that could be discursively employed by the non-elite to ‘manage relations with their neighbours and maintain their place in the community’.²⁶ Similarly, Renato Barahona’s study of sex crime trials finds that honour is ‘far more flexible and less delicate than has been commonly believed’ and that, in contradiction to fictional representations in which women can only recover honour by marrying their aggressor, women used a variety of strategies to recuperate lost honour.²⁷ Although the frequent declarations of honour in the female picaresque are ludic, they also reflect the belief that some forms of transactional sexuality are more licit than others. In Cervantes’ tale, Cristina declares that she wishes to ply her trade honestly, without the deceit characteristic of the *pícaro*.

Brígida, on the other hand, defends coaches, and in doing so illustrates the potential consequences posed by mimicry of the elite by reminiscing fondly that ‘cuando alguna vez me le prestaban, y me vía sentada en él con tanta autoridad, que me desvanecía tanto, que creía bien y verdaderamente que era mujer principal, y que más de cuatro señoras de título pudieran ser mis criadas’ [when on occasion they would lend me one, I would ride seated in it with such authority that I would begin to have illusions, such that I believed well and truly that I was a great lady, and that more than four titled ladies could have been my maids], to which Cristina replies that this proves her point, since taking coaches from prostitutes will combat ‘el pecado de la vanagloria’ [the sin of vanity] and that it was not right for coaches to equalize those who are of

²⁶ Taylor, *Honor and Violence*, 7. See especially 7–16.

²⁷ Barahona, *Sex Crimes, Honour and the Law*, 120; 166.

different classes or to treat prostitutes as if they were ‘principal señoras’ [great ladies].²⁸

This dialogue ludically voices the debate over coach use through the two fictionalized prostitutes: Brígida, though she expresses opposition to the reform, illustrates the moral argument against the use of veiling and coaches by expressing pleasure in emulating a woman of quality and even believes herself superior to a lady, while Cristina expresses the arguments of moral reformists, and in doing so expresses a variant of the ‘lesser evil’ ideology. Cristina’s argument wins Brígida over, and she promises to walk the streets with her face uncovered, ‘pulirme, y repulirme, y dar el rostro a pie’ [to polish myself, and re-polish myself, and show my face on foot].²⁹ Furthermore, the satirized debate between Cristina and Brígida introduces and serves as a foil for the short play’s main plot, in which the usual female picaresque tale is reversed; instead of a male victim tricked by a *pícaro*, the two prostitutes are gulled by a wily client with the assistance of a friend who, as the name implies, impersonates a wealthy Vizcayan. The two give Cristina a gold chain, then when they demand its return (alleging that the ‘Vizcayan’s’ father has returned) they reveal that it is a fake, accusing the women of theft. The pair are not dismayed by the men’s deceit, but rather celebrate the trick that has been played on them and invite the men to a feast as a reward for their cunning. Thus, the tale that ensues reminds the women of their status as prostitutes, countering their false pride and castigating Brígida’s pretentious vanity.

The *entremés* genre presents ludic depictions of often vulgar themes rather than a didactic message, yet this depiction of the trickster put in her place echoes the final scenes of *La niña de los embustes*, in which Teresa is outwitted by her would-be clients. Such tales imply that

²⁸ Cervantes, *El vizaino fingido*, 197.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 198.

critiques of prostitution often denounce the female duplicity that creates false appearances rather than the sex acts themselves, and that social disorder is righted by the humiliation of the disorderly woman. Moreover, Cristina's assertion that the sex trade can be practised 'honestly' if it is openly presented as sexual commerce without resorting to false appearances implies a conceptualization of prostitution as part of the social fabric, as long as it is properly regulated and contained.

Celestina's Daughter

While Brígida and Cristina escape textual censure, and continue to ply their trade, other *pícaras* are harshly punished for their duplicity, such as Elena, *La hija de Celestina* (1612), who is executed for the murder of her pimping husband, and frequently cited as exemplary of authorial condemnation of the *pícaro*.³⁰ Anne Cruz, for example, states that 'Elena's punishment is Salas Barbadillo's eloquent commentary not only on the picaresque life, but, more specifically, on the *pícaro*'s endeavors to interact freely with all levels of society', and her death therefore signals the author's reinscription of control over the disorderly woman. As Cruz's comment suggests, the author's condemnation of immorality centres more on the effacement of social boundaries engendered by this coach-riding *pícaro* than on her sexual transgressions. Likewise, Zafra asserts that Elena's death serves an exemplary function that reforms the male characters.³¹

The tale begins when the young and beautiful prostitute Elena deceives a wealthy Toledan nobleman, Rodrigo de Villafañe, by posing as an elite maiden who had been raped and deflowered by his nephew Sancho, a known womanizer and rapist. The rape of a virgin,

³⁰ See, for example Zafra, *Prostituidas por el texto*, 143–153; Cruz, *Discourses*, 155–157.

³¹ Zafra, *Prostituidas por el texto*, 146–148.

especially an elite one, was an egregious offence, and Don Rodrigo fears that Elena's claims will prevent his nephew's impending marriage to a wealthy woman of superior social stature since he may instead be forced to marry the woman he deflowered and dishonoured. As proof of her veracity, Elena presents a dagger that she obtained from Rodrigo's household page, who she has seduced and imprisoned in her rented rooms, stating that Sancho had left it behind during the assault. Meanwhile, Don Sancho catches sight of Elena riding in her coach to his uncle's house and falls madly in love with her, even as he prepares for his marriage that evening to a virtuous elite woman. After receiving substantial financial restitution for her supposed deflowering, Elena, her pimp and lover Montúfar, and her maid Méndez flee in the coach. They are overtaken by Sancho, but he cannot bring himself to believe that Elena, given her extraordinary beauty and the pretence of class given off by her coach, could be the woman who robbed his uncle, and he therefore allows her to escape punishment, though she eventually pays the price for her sexual deviancy when she is executed after poisoning Montúfar.

Salas Barbadillo's tale repeatedly underscores the *pícaro's* ability to blur class boundaries. Elena's origins are abject; she is the daughter of a Moorish slave who remains unconverted to Christianity and faithful to her Muslim religion and of a drunken Galician lout, yet her beauty and ingenuity allows her to access the luxury of upper-class life.³² She is so breathtakingly beautiful as a young girl of twelve or thirteen that princes, 'golosos de robarme la primera flor, me prestaban coches, dábanme aposentos en la comedia' [greedily desiring to steal

³² Zara is renamed María by her owners, yet she rejects this name; moreover, her rejection of Christianity is made clear by statements such as 'estaba mal con los cristianos' [she could not abide Christians], and 'hizo [...] firme voto a su Profeta' [she made ... a firm vow to her prophet] (Salas Barbadillo, *La hija de Celestina*, 107).

my first flower [virginity] lent me coaches and gave me chambered seats at the theatre], and so many rich gifts that she runs out of room to store them all.³³ Thus, Elena is accustomed to riding in coaches from youth, and her extraordinary beauty allows her access to the elite and their wealth despite her humble origins.

Elena's story also emphasizes the high price commanded by virginity in the sexual marketplace, a theme drawn from *La Celestina*. Celestina boasts not only of her skill as a mender of hymens, but also of the high price her 'reflowered' virgins command. The servant Pármeno, whose mother was an intimate friend of Celestina and who is well acquainted with her business, states that 'quando vino por aquí el embaxador francés, tres vezes vendió por virgen una criada que tenía' [when the French ambassador visited, she sold a maid of hers three times as a virgin].³⁴ Likewise, Celestina brags to Pármeno that 'pocas vírgenes, a Dios gracias, has tú visto en esta cibdad que hayan abierto tienda a vender de quien yo no haya sido corredora de su primer hilado' [few virgins, thanks be to God, have you seen in this city who have opened shop to sell of whom I was not the broker of their first spinning].³⁵ The 'first spinning' is an erotic double-entendre of sewing terminology, in this instance signifying that Celestina procured the loss of the woman's virginity.³⁶ Similarly, Elena's reference to men's desire to take her 'first flower' refers to her induction into the sex trade in which her first encounter, brokered by her mother, would

³³ Ibid., 112. While the common people would stand in front of the stage, with the women in a separate section (the *cazuela*), those of higher status would watch the play from private curtained rooms (the *aposento* to which Elena refers).

³⁴ Rojas, *La Celestina*, 116.

³⁵ Ibid., 141.

³⁶ For erotic use of sewing terms, see da Costa Fontes, 'Knitting and Sewing Metaphors'.

command the highest price. Elena's mother Zara, true to her description as a 'second Celestina', is an expert hymen-mender who sells her daughter's virginity to the highest bidder not just once, but a total of three times; this tripled transaction mirrors Esperanza's 'tres ventas' [three sales] in *La tía fingida*, and Celestina's three transactions of her maid.³⁷

The unity among these texts depends on the folkloric value of the number three; given that three often signals completeness, I believe that the symbolic importance of being sold three times as a virgin in such texts indicates that the young girl is utterly corrupted and indoctrinated into sexual commerce. This scene also underscores the high price commanded by virginity in carnal commerce across Europe, where 'selling a maidenhood repeatedly was a common practice'.³⁸ Nina Kushner's historical analysis of courtesans in early modern Paris finds that the sale of a new courtesan's virginity could command an enormous sum when skilfully brokered through the services of an elite madam.³⁹ The commodification of virginity in historical and literary sources indicates a sexual preference for innocence and youth that stems from the obsession with female chastity in this period. Guido Ruggiero's study of sexual practices in Venice similarly demonstrates a fixation on virginity among males from the higher levels of society who, he states, 'exhibited a special predilection for attacking prepubescent girls that suggests a deeper and darker interest in virginity and the sexual innocence it implied'.⁴⁰

³⁷ Cervantes, *La tía fingida*, 279.

³⁸ Kushner, *Erotic Exchanges*, 77. The number three is significant in folklore (to cite but a few examples, the tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, or the Three Little Pigs) and the supernatural (for example, the Trinity), and occurs throughout picaresque fiction with reference to the sale of virginity.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 76–78.

⁴⁰ Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros*, 154.

Ruggiero suggests that, for unmarried men of the nobility, sex with a virgin may be a means to reassert a power they felt was lacking in a personal life dominated by family obligation.

In any case, virginity was a marketable commodity in the flesh trade. The last of Elena's three virginity sales is to a rich Genovese, who is given a love potion, another of Zara's specialities, so that he falls madly in love with Elena, squanders his fortune on her, and winds up in a debtors' prison. Elena's mother Zara expertly exploits the market for virginal flesh, and her skills as a hymen-mender are so legendary that 'pasaron más caros los virgos contrahechos de su mano que los naturales: ¡tan bien se hallaban con ellos los mercaderes de este gusto!' [The false virgins fashioned at her hands commanded higher sums than the natural ones, so well were they received by the merchants of this pleasure!].⁴¹ This statement underscores the luxury status of virginity in the sex trade and implies that there are many customers who are 'merchants of this pleasure' and will pay handsomely for the pleasure of deflowering a virgin. Virginity's exorbitant price is yet another reason that modesty and a chaste demeanour assisted the *pícaro* in her monetary exploitation of male victims.

After swindling Don Rodrigo in Toledo, Elena briefly impersonates a *beata*, or non-monastic religious woman, then lives as a courtesan in Madrid, returning to the elite lifestyle of riding in coaches, this time as a paid mistress to courtiers. She ingratiates herself with wealthy courtiers through a network of female accomplices. The narrator relates that Elena

dio parte de su venida a las amigas importantes, a las mujeres de negocios que saben con habilidad acomodar gustos ajenos mejor que si fueran propios. Éstas vinieron, y sacándola ya un día a la Comedia, ya otro al Prado, y ya a la calle Mayor al estribo de un

⁴¹ Salas Barbadillo, *La hija de Celestina*, 110.

coche, donde mirando a unos y riéndose con otros, no despidiendo a los que se llegaban a conversación, empezó su labor y volvió con más danzantes a casa que día de Corpus Christi.

[gave notice of her arrival to important friends, the business women who know how to skilfully accommodate the pleasures of others better than if they were their own. These women came, and took her out to the comedies, and to the Prado, and the high street at the helm of a coach, where, gazing at some and laughing with others, turning away no one who came for conversation, she began her labour and returned home with more dancers than a day of Corpus Christi.]⁴²

These ‘amigas importantes [...] mujeres de negocios’ [important friends ... business women] are clearly courtesans, who assist Elena by showcasing her in elite spaces in order to attract lovers. Moreover, the references to her ‘labour’ coupled with the erotic double-entendre of ‘conversation’ with men clearly indicate the nature of her trade. Likewise, the final phrase referring to the groups of dancers that accompanied the procession of the host in Corpus Christi celebrations is an erotic allusion to Elena’s sexuality; she physically exhausts the men who accompany her home. At court, she advertises her availability from the coach; in this instance, she rides in the front where she can be clearly seen and attract customers. Her lure pays off, and, with Montúfar’s assistance, she earns vast sums by selling herself to wealthy courtiers. One of these, a rich *converso*, or descendant of converted Jews, showers her with gifts, and ‘sustentaba un coche por su servicio, que todos los días por las mañanas a las siete y por las tardes a las dos se le clavaban a sus puertas por si quería salir de casa’ [maintained a coach for her service, which

⁴² Ibid., 148.

called at her door every morning at seven and afternoon at two in case she wished to go out].⁴³

This example illustrates the insecurity that provoked sanctions against courtesans in coaches; when ‘public women’ reap the rewards that should be reserved for honest women of the elite, social disorder ensues and class boundaries are elided. From her early years of wealthy suitors and carriage rides through her career as a courtesan, Elena learns how to mimic the dress and mannerisms of elite women with considerable success: Don Rodrigo does not question her class status; nor does Don Sancho as he searches for her throughout Madrid. This same ability to feign the bearing and behaviour of an elite woman helps her to infiltrate court circles and earn a living as a courtesan, with the assistance and complicity of Montúfar passing as her husband. Salas Barbadillo’s tale, like many other picaresque narratives, illustrates the danger of allowing non-elite women access to elite spaces such as the coach: the astute and immoral *pícaras* can become indistinguishable from the chaste and honourable elite woman.

The Harpies of Madrid

Castillo Solórzano’s *Las harpías en Madrid y coche de las estafas* (1631) similarly utilizes the coach’s lascivious reputation as a plot device to underscore female duplicity through a depiction of women’s use of spatial markers to dupe men for economic gain. This canonical novel is among many in Castillo Solórzano’s prodigious body of work, and though not generally considered to be picaresque or part of the female picaresque, the four trickster daughters share many similarities with other *pícaras*. In this frame tale, Teodora is left a widow after her husband dies in the ‘Indies’. She decides to take her two daughters from Seville to Madrid, making a picaresque determination to ‘mudarse de tierra, por mudar de ventura’ [change location to

⁴³ Ibid., 151.

change her fortune] similar to Lazarillo's determination to 'arrimarse a los buenos' [attach himself to good people].⁴⁴ Teodora has been advised by a worldly female neighbour that her daughters' beauty is worth a 'Potosí'.⁴⁵ This reference to the infamous silver mines in what is now Bolivia that generated enormous wealth in the colonial period illustrates a contrast between male and female opportunities for social advancement. Teodora's husband seems to be a picaresque type who sets off to live by his wits in the Americas; upon his death, Teodora is left to fend for herself, armed only with the beauty of her daughters. While men may survive through ingenuity, women must rely on their physical charms. Each of the chapters within the frame tale recounts a swindle carried out by one of the young women. Teodora's daughters are willing participants in the trickery and textually marked as sexually suspect; Castillo Solórzano relates that 'no se sabía de Feliciano más travesura, que la que con su maestro de danza había hecho quizá por paga de la buena enseñanza' [no mischief was known of Feliciano except for that with her dance teacher, perhaps in payment for his good teachings], revealing that Feliciano has already lost her virginity.⁴⁶ In Madrid, the women establish themselves in a rented room in a neighbourhood with a lascivious reputation, and take on false titles, claiming to be noble ladies from colonial Mexico in an attempt to set the daughters up as courtly mistresses.

Felicitously, they happen to take up residence with another family in the same situation; a widowed mother of two daughters with whom they join forces, creating a network of female duplicity. The narrator states that 'fue suerte que Teodora, sin cuidado alguno, acertase á encontrar con personas que asistían en Madrid, con el mismo modo de vivir que ellas

⁴⁴ Castillo Solórzano, *Las harpías en Madrid*, 8; *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormés*, 139.

⁴⁵ Castillo Solórzano, *Las harpías en Madrid*, 8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

determinaban tener. No se supo esto luego porque cada una se recató de la otra hasta tomar el fondo á las calidades' [by luck Teodora, without any artifice, happened to find people who were in Madrid living the same mode of life that they had determined to pursue. They did not know this immediately since each one treated the other cautiously until their qualities were discovered].⁴⁷ While they are initially circumspect with one another, they soon discover their affinity, and become fast friends and co-conspirators. In this scene, prostitution designed to attract wealthy courtiers is described as a 'mode of life' undertaken by both widows through the exploitation of their daughters' sexuality and willingly seized upon by all four daughters. The portrayal of prostitution as simply a choice of survival strategy is underscored by usage of the term 'profession' to describe their lifestyle.⁴⁸ The fact that all these characters have determined to follow the same means of support implies that the practice is widespread in the court environs. Yet, despite this stated intention to establish her daughters as court mistresses, outside of the initial relationship between Luisa and Fernando that allows the coach to come into their possession, none of the liaisons described in Castillo Solórzano's novel are consummated. This suggests that the truly problematic repercussion of female deception is not unconstrained sexuality, but the promise of sexual intercourse left unfulfilled.

The coach of the novel's title is the second that appears as plot device. To attract lovers, the girls (Feliciana, Luisa, Constanza, and Dorotea) borrow a coach from Constanza and Dorotea's 'friend' (utilizing the common euphemism of *amigo* for lover) and go to the Prado, a promenade in Madrid's centre with a reputation as a meeting site for lovers, where they display themselves in the vehicle in the hopes of attracting male attention. The Prado was synonymous

⁴⁷ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 14.

with upper-class coaches; unlike many of Madrid's streets, the park was wide enough to accommodate many coaches, and was well known as a location for the elite to display their status and engage in flirtation.⁴⁹ The girls' lure succeeds when Luisa meets Fernando, a young, rich, and handsome gallant. Teodora's initial ploy to marry Luisa to Fernando fails when he perceives that she is not, in fact, a virtuous noble maiden as Teodora has portrayed her. Teodora adjusts her strategy and comes to an understanding with Fernando that he will take Luisa as a mistress. However, their relationship is cut short when Fernando is killed in revenge over a gambling fight. Before his death, he had lent his coach to Luisa, who then appropriates it. Each of the subsequent chapters relates a trick in which the girls take turns using the coach as a catalyst to attract and deceive wealthy men.

Teodora instantly grasps the importance of the coach to the endeavour of profiting from her daughters' sexuality. On the night that they acquire the coach, Castillo Solórzano relates, Teodora 'durmió poco, que como se halló señora de un buen coche con un tiro de cuatro caballos rucios, quiso que no se le sacasen de las uñas' [slept little, since, as she found herself the owner of a good coach with a team of grey horses, she did not want anyone to snatch it from her grasp].⁵⁰ She tells the girls that

Toda nuestra felicidad y descanso consiste en conservar este coche y que la Corte nos juzgue poderosas y con hacienda para poder sustentarlo [...] del mismo coche ha de salir su conservación y muchos más provechos [...] podrá servir de cubierta de nuestras casas y de dar autoridad a nuestros embelecados [... cada una] deste

⁴⁹ López Álvarez, *Poder, lujo y conflicto*, 327–331.

⁵⁰ Castillo Solórzano, *Las harpías en Madrid*, 15.

coche ha de hacer con su cara y luego con su astucia un rendimiento tal, que dél redunde una provechosa estafa.

[All our happiness and peace consists in keeping this coach, and in that the Court will judge us to be powerful and with a fortune sufficient to maintain it ... from this coach will ensue our maintenance and many other benefits ... it will serve as a cover for our houses and will give authority to our tricks ... from this coach [each one], with her face and then her wit, will achieve a victory that will create a profitable swindle.]⁵¹

The coach will serve as a disguise that allows them to carry out their deceits without giving away the location of their residence, and will permit them to pass as wealthy noblewomen while using their beauty to deceive and fleece male victims. Furthermore, the coach conveys the ability to deceive men without engaging in sexual activity; as Teodora explains, they can carry out their deception ‘sin que la cueste enamorarse más que en lo fingido, ni cosa que toque en liviandad de su cuerpo, que a ser esto salíase comido por servido, como dicen’ [without going to the trouble of falling in love except in pretence, nor of committing any impropriety with her body, for if that were to happen it would result in being eaten as served, as they say].⁵² The colloquial expression *comido por servido* refers to an undertaking that is not worth the effort. In other words, Teodora encourages her daughters to defraud men using their sexuality as bait but without fulfilment of their promises. This suggests, yet again, that what concerns many authors about transactional sex is not the sexual act but rather female duplicity and false appearances.

⁵¹ Ibid., 15.

⁵² Ibid., 15.

Castillo Solórzano, as narrator, refers to the vehicle as the ‘capa destes embelecós’ [cloak over their fraud], as well as the ‘*tu autem* de la fiesta’ [essential factor in the festivities].⁵³ While it is not the site of the deceits they carry out or of the plot’s action, the mobility and masking function of the coach enables and drives the action, and allows their swindles to succeed. In the first deception, Feliciano stages a scene in which she escapes from the coach to take refuge in the home of a wealthy Milanese banker under the pretext of escaping an impending arranged marriage, only to later rob him of a box of jewels.⁵⁴ In the second trick, Luisa targets a rich elderly Genovese, telling him that she is awaiting an inheritance from an uncle who had made his fortune in the colonies, but does not have sufficient money to pay rent in the meantime. Eventually, she shows him a forged document from a banker of his acquaintance promising the money will be delivered to her shortly, upon which he is finally willing to lend her money and she absconds with 2000 gold ducats. In this second trick, the coach is used only to deliver her to her rented accommodation in the style of a noble widow. Between each trick, the women replace the trappings, horses, and coachmen so that the coach will not be recognized by either Fernando’s family or victims of previous deceits. The third subterfuge employs greed rather than sexuality as the driving force; Constanza plays the part of a rich widow seeking to fund a chapel with her deceased husband’s estate. Her victim is a priest who hopes for employment as the curate of a wealthy chapel. Constanza uses a story similar to Luisa’s, stating that she finds herself without the cash necessary to fund the venture, and shows him the jewel box, taken by Feliciano in the first trick, in order to convince him to lend her money. She promises him the

⁵³ Ibid., 45; 79.

⁵⁴ Spanish literature of the period often utilizes Milanese and Genovese bankers as tropes of wealthy foreigners.

jewels as insurance, but subsequently switches the gems for paste imitations. In this episode, the coach is presented as a blind used by the female predator to select and pursue her male victim. Castillo Solórzano states of Constanza that ‘su coche había de salir a hacer su presa’ [she emerged from the coach to hunt her prey].⁵⁵ The coach provides the women with mobility, but also shields them from the public gaze, allowing them to pick a target and then approach to a position from which they can attack. After this incident, the coach is hidden for four months until the women are ready to hunt again.

In the final episode, men are again described as *presa* or prey. Dorotea, seeing the other girls come back from the hunt with ‘tan buenas presas’ [such good prey], decides to enter the competition.⁵⁶ With the coach disguised yet again, Dorotea lies in wait outside a fabric store until her previously selected mark, a rich Andalusian, approaches. In their initial encounter, she accepts rich gifts of fine cloth with which to make sumptuous clothing. After earning his trust, she promises him a sexual liaison, then drugs him, robs him of money he had won gambling, and leaves him humiliatingly displayed naked and hanging by a sheet outside the home of his wealthy fellow socialite along with a satiric poem. These references to men as the *pícaro*’s prey are embedded in the title of the work as well. Covarrubias’s definition of *harpía* [harpy] states that the term is ‘símbolo de las usurpadoras de haciendas ajenas, de las que arruinan y maltratan, de las ramera que despedazan un hombre, glotoneándole su hacienda y robándose la’ [a symbol of those who usurp the property of others, which they squander and mistreat, of the whores who tear a man apart, greedily consuming his fortune and robbing him].⁵⁷ Thus, the harpies of Madrid

⁵⁵ Castillo Solórzano, *Las harpías en Madrid*, 79.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁵⁷ Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua*, 963.

enrich themselves through their predatory relationship to men, and are marked as prostitutes by the use of this term.

Such depictions of men as ‘prey’ devoured by predatory women also echoes the language of Magdalena de San Jeronimo’s plea to Philip III (1608) to establish a prison for unrepentant prostitutes that would supplement the work of the Magdalen houses; while the convents would take in reformed prostitutes, Madre Magdalena asks the King to establish another custodial institution that will take in the unrepentant and unreformed whores who, she says, ‘llegada la noche, salen como bestias fieras de sus cuevas a buscar la caza’ [when night falls, emerge like wild beasts from their caves to hunt for prey].⁵⁸ This image of unrepentant prostitutes as sexual predators and aggressors in sexual encounters pervades the pages of many texts on prostitution, negating men’s culpability for participation in the flesh trade by portraying them as innocent victims of female vice. Moreover, the concept of a female hunter inverts the normative view of hunting as a sport pursued by elite men; the form of hunting invoked here is not a human one, but rather the bestial pursuit characteristic of the animal world, reflecting an ideology of women as more animalistic than the rational male.

Descriptions of women as hunters parallel the usage of nautical imagery in this and other texts that critique female use of coaches by depicting women as corsairs.⁵⁹ Teodora’s neighbour, encouraging her to relocate to Madrid, states that the city is a ‘maremagno donde todo bajel navega, desde el más poderoso galeón hasta el más humilde y pequeño esquife’ [sea in which any boat can sail, from the most powerful galleon to the humblest and smallest skiff]; after hearing this description, Teodora determines to enter the city as a ‘cossario de los que cursan los

⁵⁸ Barbeito, *Cárceles y mujeres*, 70.

⁵⁹ On the use of nautical terminology in prostitution, see López Sutilo, ‘El léxico’, n.p.

marítimos golfos [...] con dos bien artilladas galeras reforzadas' [corsair of those who sail the maritime gulfs ... with two well-armed galleys].⁶⁰ Teodora's resolution casts the women as pirates engaged in a greedy pillage, drawing on satire that utilized nautical terminology to refer to coaches, such as the use of stern, fore, and aft for the parts of the vehicle. A similar metaphor appears in *El vizcaíno fingido*, where Cristina states that coaches are the 'galeras de la tierra' [galleys on land].⁶¹ Such statements, by extension, portray men as the hapless victims of female sexuality, since they do not seek out the women, but rather are selected as prey. Moreover, while the men seek or hope for a sexual encounter with the harpies, they do not commit the sinful act of fornication, but are instead left unfulfilled, duped and deceived by the diabolical cunning of women. In *El vizcaíno fingido*, the use of the term *galera* [galley] implies the need for internment and reform; Magdalena de San Jerónimo titles her proposed custodial institution a *galera* [jail], mirroring the punishment for men in the *galeras* or galley-ships. The use of these nautical images, which depict women as greedy corsairs, constructs a stereotype of women as utilizing their sexuality for economic gain, whether they follow through with the sexual encounter or not.

The coach is a signal of social identity and status, providing a pedigree interpreted as proof of noble character that enables the women's deception while also protecting them from the consequences. Because the coach was so closely tied to identity, its appearance must be changed between each encounter of the frame tale. Most notably for my purposes, the coach allows them to appear in public space without diminishing their value as sexual objects through the appearance of social class status conferred by the coach as luxury object. Moreover, this spatial

⁶⁰ Castillo Solórzano, *Las harpías en Madrid*, 2; 4.

⁶¹ Cervantes, *El vizcaíno fingido*, 196.

distancing from the prey allows the huntress to act with impunity since the male victim cannot locate her afterwards. The deceits are all successful, and the women face no consequences within the diegesis for their actions; however, the title with its references to harpies, the textual references to the women as hunters and men as prey, and the moral lessons that follow each chapter reprimand the women for their action. The tricks the women carry out escalate from mere robberies to the final trick in which the male victim is left humiliatingly displayed in front of male peers and mocked in the poem as a *niño* [child] who she has *bautizado* [baptized]; thus, Dorotea derides her victim for his naivety and claims to have initiated him through a lesson in female deception.⁶² Don Tadeo is so disgraced by this encounter that he moves to Flanders, while the women retire triumphantly to Granada. As with so many picaresque tales, the message is intended to caution a male audience about female deceit and duplicity so that they may not fall victim to such ploys, instilling in the male reader a suspicious stance toward female appearances.

All these tales of the coach-riding *pícaro* share a common theme: social order cannot be maintained without the strict class differentiation that delineates between honest and dishonest women. However, the texts are marked by subtle distinctions in authorial attitude towards the *pícaro* that communicate distinct outlooks on how to properly contain and enclose women, and how and whether the sex trade can or should function. In Cervantes' tale, emphasis is placed on disclosure and transparency: Cristina emphasizes the benefits of 'yendo descubiertos los rostros, quitando la ocasión de que ninguno se llame a engaño si nos sirviese' [going about with faces uncovered, removing the occasion that any may say they were deceived if they serve us].⁶³ This language echoes the royal decrees that women in public space ought to have their faces

⁶² Castillo Solórzano, *Las harpías en Madrid*, 130.

⁶³ Cervantes, *El vizcaíno fingido*, 196.

uncovered so that they can be identified. Consequently, the danger of prostitution in this text lies in deceiving the client into believing that he is seducing a virtuous woman rather than carrying out a straightforward transaction with a woman already in the profession. The two women in his tale are conned by their wily client but take the joke with good grace and go on to ply their trade undisrupted. In part, this portrayal stems from generic considerations; the *entremés* format emphasizes bawdy comedy meant to appeal to low humour and a ludic taste for laughter at the dissolute. Even so, Cervantes' corpus is populated by similar figures such as Maritornes, who explains that 'desgracias y malos sucesos la habían traído a aquel estado' [disgraces and misfortunes had brought her to that state] of prostitution rather than greed or lasciviousness, demonstrating a markedly sympathetic Cervantine treatment of prostitution that was possibly inspired by the experiences of Cervantes' sisters, illegitimate daughter, and niece, all of whom may have been courtesans, as investigated in more detail in the conclusion.⁶⁴ *El vizcaíno*

⁶⁴ Cervantes, *Don Quijote*, 146. See Martín, 'Maritornes'. Don Quijote and Sancho also show sympathy toward those involved in the flesh trade in the episode of the prisoners on their way to the galleys, where Don Quijote exclaims, upon being told that one of the prisoners is condemned for being an 'alcahuete hechicero' [pimp and sorcerer], that 'por solamente el alcahuete limpio no merecía él ir a bogar en las galeras, sino a mandallas y a ser general dellas [...] es oficio de discretos y necesarísimo en la república bien ordenada, y que no le debía ejercer sin gente muy bien nacida; y aun había de haber veedor y examinador de los tales [...] por evitar [...] muchos males que se causan por andar este oficio y ejercicio entre gente idiota y de poco entendimiento, como son mujercillas' [for the issue of being a pimp alone he does not deserve to row in the galleys, but should command them and be a general over them ... it is an office for the discreet, and extremely necessary to a well-ordered republic, and should not be exercised except by well-born persons; and should be overseen by an examiner of such offices ... [to avoid] many

fingido's depiction of the prostitute who wishes to carry on her trade openly rather than resorting to deception indicates a countervailing influence to the moralistic denunciations of the flesh trade in conduct manuals and sermons, and based on the view of transactional sex as a service to social order.

Both Salas Barbadillo and Castillo Solórzano illustrate more fully the pitfalls that ensue from the class confusion provoked by sexually licentious women in coaches; however, they disagree somewhat regarding onus and solution. Salas Barbadillo does not permit his protagonist to profit from her exploitation of men since she is executed for the murder of Montúfar, yet he lays the blame for social disorder on men. Though Elena is an unsympathetic character, Salas Barbadillo states that 'quien justamente merecía grave pena era el triste, el infeliz don Sancho, pues pudiendo descansar en los honestos y hermosos brazos de su mujer, codiciaba los de una vil ramera que había sido y era pasto común' [the person who justly deserved the blame was the sad, the unhappy Don Sancho, since, being able to rest in the honest and beautiful arms of his wife, he desired those of a vile whore who had been common pasture].⁶⁵ In other words, while Elena is

ills that could be caused if this office and employment were performed by idiotic people of small understanding, such as young girls] (206). The term 'mujercilla' employed by Don Quijote is among the numerous synonyms for prostitute (Alonso Hernández, *El lenguaje*, 64). Thus, Don Quijote reiterates the 'lesser evil' argument and makes a strikingly similar statement to that employed by Lozana in her *taberna meritoria* speech. Sancho is so moved by Don Quijote's argument that he gives alms to the prisoner. While such references to prostitution in Cervantes' work are partly satirical jabs at the lesser evil discourse, the little that is known of his biography also indicates that he would have been sympathetic to women marginalized for their sexual comportment (see Conclusion).

⁶⁵ Salas Barbadillo, *La hija de Celestina*, 116.

a ‘vile whore’, she simply expresses her nature as a lower-class woman of impure blood. Don Sancho, on the other hand, is a nobleman endowed with a greater degree of reason and free will, yet lives a dissolute lifestyle unbecoming of his status. Moreover, Salas Barbadillo emphasizes men’s responsibility to provide a moral exemplar to the women of their household. He insists that the nobleman married to a woman who equals him in status has all he needs within his walls and should not look beyond them: ‘para el alma entretenimiento, para el cuerpo deleite, seguridad para la honra, acrecentamiento para la hacienda y, al fin, quien te dé herederos’ [diversion for the soul, delight for the body, security for their honour, increase of fortune, and in the end, someone who will give you heirs].⁶⁶ Salas Barbadillo cautions that a bad husband will ruin a good wife just as a bad rider ruins a good horse, a turn of phrase that correlates women with animals, especially horses, and also references the theme, common to the era, of exemplary horsemanship as a metaphor for good governance.⁶⁷ This statement reinforces the (misogynist and classist) message that men, given their greater rationality, have a higher degree of moral responsibility, while women are more easily led astray and are therefore less culpable for their actions, a concept that is reinforced through Montúfar’s role as pimp and instigator of many of Elena’s affairs.

Though Elena suffers the ultimate price for her transgressions when she is executed, her textual punishment is undermined by the fact that she dies a wealthy woman. She exculpates her earlier transgressions by leaving money in her will to Don Rodrigo to repay her swindle. Since Rodrigo has preceded her to the grave, this money passes to Don Sancho, who determines to live

⁶⁶ Ibid., 117.

⁶⁷ Alzieu, Jammes and Lissourgues, *Poesía erótica*, 332.

as an honest married man from that point on.⁶⁸ Consequently, Salas Barbadillo holds men responsible for sexual transgression, and the moral lesson of his novel is likewise directed at the noble male to content himself with the pleasures offered by his wife. Elena, though she is a ‘vile whore’, also serves an exemplary role: though she does not repent of her life of prostitution in imitation of the hagiographical models like Mary Magdalen and Mary of Egypt, she does feel guilt for her duplicity, as evidenced by her bequest to Don Sancho. Her death, and more especially her act of monetary restitution, serves to inspire the reformation of Don Sancho. Thus, Salas Barbadillo’s message is homosocial; he warns men to evade the temptations of non-elite women and charges them with setting a moral example. Elena, in contrast, is expendable; through her death Don Rodrigo can be reformed.

Castillo Solórzano, while he allows his protagonists to escape any textual consequences for their actions, since they emerge from their adventures unscathed and enriched, depicts the women as malevolent man-hunters, while the prey are hapless victims of their schemes. This narrative emphasizes the innate duplicity of female nature: in Castillo Solórzano’s narrative there are no virtuous women to stand as counter-examples to the *pícaras*; honest and/or elite women are almost entirely absent from his narrative. Yet, like Cervantes, he emphasizes the danger of false appearances over the immorality of sexual contact. All these narratives essentially turn a blind eye to sexual liaisons as long as they do not threaten the stability of elite marriage (as does Sancho’s attraction to Elena), and all focus on the danger women pose to men, either little concerned or wholly unconcerned with the fate of women.

Until now, our analysis has focused on *pícaras*’ relationship to exterior or ‘public’ space, demonstrating that, contrary to the stereotypical denunciation of ‘public women’, many literary

⁶⁸ Salas Barbadillo, *La hija de Celestina*, 153.

prostitutes rejected appearance in public space as a means to augment their earnings in transactional sex, or to feign modesty in order to swindle men. We now turn to an analysis of the house itself, a theoretically domestic space, with particular attention to the liminal spaces that define the house's limits, where a similar dynamic surrounding the manipulation of the markers of modesty can be observed.

Chapter 4

Prostitutes in the Window

As we turn to the liminal spaces of the home, such as the window, we see the expression of similar misgivings about false appearances that prompted allegations that women would use the coach window to flirt or veiling practices to obscure their identity. The window is a space commonly associated with prostitution; the window has a long history as a signifying site in transactional sex dating back to the medieval period at least that is still in evidence in modern red-light districts such as that of Amsterdam. Early modern Spanish prostitutes frequently used signals in the window to advertise their services clandestinely. For example, the term *ramera*, which entered the Spanish language as a synonym for prostitute in the fifteenth century, derives from ‘la costumbre de colocar un ramo en las puertas de sus casas para indicar que [las prostitutas] ofrecían sus servicios’ [the custom of placing a sprig in the windows of their houses to indicate that they [prostitutes] offered their services].¹

Spanish inns and taverns also adopted this advertisement system, displaying a small branch in the window to announce the availability of transactional sex within.² In *La Lozana andaluza*, the protagonist references this etymology as she shops for a house in which to establish her trade; when Rampín points out a latticework for sale she asks how he knows it is being sold. He responds ‘porque tiene aquel ramico verde puesto’ [because it has that green sprig

¹ Monzón, ‘Marginalidad y prostitución’, 384. As Alonso Hernández explains, *rameras* used other signals besides sprigs, such as plant pots or a particular type of window dressing, a signalling system adapted from the practice of placing vines in the windows of taverns to announce that wine was sold there (*El lenguaje*, 24).

² García de Diego, *Diccionario etimológico*, 930; Soca, *La fascinante historia*, 211.

placed there], to which Lozana replies that to advertise their brothel ‘mejor será poner el ramo sin la celosía, y venderemos mejor’ [it is better to put up a sprig without the latticework, and we will sell better].³ This assertion of the vital role played by the *ramo* (sprig) to the advertisement of *rumeras* (prostitutes) and the many others like it that appear frequently in literature on prostitution demonstrates the importance of windows to the advertisement of the flesh trade.

In this chapter, I argue that *pícaras* use the window to mediate between competing demands for secrecy and exposure, drawing on its historical role in seduction and erotic display. I begin by describing windows’ evolving architectural role in the early modern house. Then, I examine the window’s reputation as a seductive space in early modern didactic literature to demonstrate the intimate association between window space, prostitution, and sexuality. Despite moralists’ injunctions that women should maintain distance from windows, which should be covered by bars and latticework to preserve female modesty, the window as a seductive space used in courtship is a ubiquitous theme. This erotic correlation finds physical expression in many female picaresque tales where, in the tradition of the *rumera*, prostitutes and *pícaras* create a system of complex hierarchical indicators displayed in the window to advertise and negotiate their position in the flesh trade. Moreover, the auditory similarity between *ventana* [window] and *venta* [sale] provides a subtle reinforcement of the erotic subtext in many window scenes. The window, like the doorway and other orifices of the home, serves as a metonym for the vagina. Since the physical window can hide as well as reveal, it plays a mediating role between inside and outside, seen and unseen, that allows *pícaras* to imitate courtesan spatial strategies of domestic confinement while simultaneously negotiating their sexual services or utilizing the promise of sexual contact to deceive and exploit male ‘victims’. I argue that *pícaras* use the

³ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 267.

window and the bars that cover it as a space to create erotic capital through the manipulation of what is divulged and what is perceived, which in turn demonstrates my broader argument that a display of modesty or reticence was of economic value in the flesh trade.

The Erotics of the Early Modern Window

Architectural changes at the beginning of the early modern era led to growing unease regarding windows and their symbolic function in regulating female enclosure. In the Renaissance, windows gained prominence as they became more numerous, more regularly placed, and larger.⁴ While wealthy homes employed glass, in less ostentatious dwellings the windows were bare or covered with ‘translucent blinds made of oiled cloth on frames of wood and wire’.⁵ Known in Italian as *impannate*, these consisted of a ‘wooden frame over which a textile material was stretched [...] the textile was usually linen which was soaked in turpentine’ but could also be made of paper.⁶ These windows, while not transparent like their modern counterparts, nonetheless admitted some light and air. Wooden shutters, either indoors or out, protected privacy, and in the winter these shutters remained closed for insulation and protection against the elements. In addition, two types of covering—*rejas*, or iron bars, and *celosías*, or latticework—guarded against intrusion.

Windows took on vital discursive importance in Spain in the period following the Reconquest, the recovery of territory by the Christians following the Moorish invasion, as a changing social order expressed itself through new spatial practices. Islamic architecture,

⁴ Cohen and Cohen, *Daily Life*, 219.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁶ Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior*, 28–29.

featuring openings towards an interior courtyard, gave way to newer construction techniques in which windows facing the street were commonplace. This was especially true in formerly Muslim areas. As Laura Bass and Amanda Wunder explain, ‘prior to 1492, domestic architecture, following Islamic custom, had supported the tradition of female enclosure; almost all Sevillian homes had had interior patios with windows facing the inside’.⁷ Beginning in the 1500s, Andalusians began building windows facing the street, followed by balconies reflecting Italianate styles with ‘decorative iron bars, [often] painted black or green’.⁸ Windows provided a point of exposure in the otherwise closed perimeter of the home. The bars and latticework prevented entrance from without, but also precluded exit from within. However, even the barred window allowed ingress and egress of the gaze. The perceived risk to female chastity engendered social unease that expressed itself through a cultural association of windows with female sexuality, and culminated in the sixteenth century with prescriptive dictums that attempted to regulate female spatial practice with respect to windows.

Just as the house became a metonym for the female body, windows and doorways assumed a metonymic role as orifices due to their mediating function between interior and exterior. The erotic symbolism of the apertures of the house can be seen in their use in love magic. María Helena Sánchez Ortega finds that windows and doorways played a key role in spells designed to win or regain a man’s affection.⁹ Irene Cieraad, discussing the link between Dutch windows and prostitution, explains that ‘the hymen as the historically vital physical borderline of the woman coincides with the windowpane as the vital societal borderline between

⁷ Bass and Wunder, ‘The Veiled Ladies’, 118.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁹ Sánchez Ortega, ‘Sorcery and Eroticism in Love Magic’, 60–61.

public and private space. The conditions of both fragile borderlines are symbolically related.¹⁰

The closed window comes to represent the closed body, and, conversely, an open window implies lack of chastity. The hymen's symbolic importance in early modern Spain can be easily discerned by the many fictional references to hymen-mending and hymen-menders such as *Celestina* or *Zara*, a theme whose appearance in so many works on prostitution attests to the value of virginity in the early modern sex trade.

Medical literature portrays virginity as a physical state dependent on bodily impenetrability. Medical treatises describe virginal bodies as closed, and attest that sex opened the female body by widening the vaginal passage, making the married woman's body looser and more open.¹¹ *De Secretis Mulierum* [*The Secrets of Women*], for example, a late thirteenth-century text that remained influential throughout the early modern period, states that virgins urinate more slowly and from higher in their body because the vaginal passages are narrower.¹² Perhaps this tightness is the reason that virginity was so highly prized in the sex trade; indeed, José Luis Alonso Hernández's study of the lexicon of prostitution finds a number of terms for prostitutes who passed themselves off as virgins in order to earn more for sexual encounters, such as *la apretada* [the squeezed one] and *la estrecha* [the tight one], which provide further

¹⁰ Cieraad, 'Dutch Windows', 50.

¹¹ Bernau, *Virgins*, 7.

¹² *Ibid.*, 7. This physical change also brought about a change in female temperament. The *Compendium of Human Health* (Johannes de Ketham, 1491), for example states that that a non-virginal woman has turbulent urine, in comparison to the clear and calm urine of a virgin, that shows her to have been corrupted (fol. 6r). On virginity tests, see Cartwright, 'Virginity and Chastity Tests'; Bernau, *Virgins*, 7–14.

evidence of a sexual preference for virgins in the flesh trade.¹³ In any case, once open, the female body remains gapingly so. In order to protect the physical parameters of the female body, architectural control of the home focused on monitoring its openings, such as windows and doorways, and reinforcing them with shutters, bars, and locks. For this reason, conduct manuals often targeted the window as a crucial site at which to contain female sexuality.

The association of closed windows with the closed female body can be observed in *La tía fingida* where the question of Esperanza's virginity (or lack thereof) is metaphorized through a discussion that begins with the windows of her house and is then displaced onto her body. The two student-suitors first attempt to seduce Esperanza by serenading her at her window. Prior to the initiation of their serenade, the windows of the house are shut; in the narrator's words, 'estaban las ventanas de la casa cerradas como su madre las parió' [the windows of the house were as closed as their mother bore them].¹⁴ At first glance, this reference to the windows' mother seems to be a mere jest; yet, the same phrase is reiterated various times throughout the short tale to describe Esperanza's body, establishing a metonymy between the house windows and her vagina through a series of double-entendres in which the false aunt Claudia's initial insistence on Esperanza's virginity and hymeneal closure is exposed as a lie and Esperanza's body is revealed to have been opened. During the serenade, Grijalba, the duenna, asks the

¹³ Alonso Hernández, *El lenguaje*, 33–34. As Alonso Hernández demonstrates, such prostitutes would necessarily be young and relatively new to the flesh trade; he differentiates between the *apretada*, who utilizes hymen-mending or herbal remedies alluded to in *La Lozana andaluza* and similar sources to tighten the vagina (Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 318), and the *estrecha* who depends on the natural narrowness of her genitals.

¹⁴ Cervantes, *La tía fingida*, 259.

students to leave to prevent ‘el escándalo y mal ejemplo que se da a la vecindad’ [scandal and bad example in the neighbourhood] but, in the guise of rejecting their suit, she also makes a pretence of letting slip the supposed full name of her mistress, who she refers to as a *doncella* [maiden], ‘mi Señora Doña Esperanza de Torralba, Meneses y Pacheco’, thus subtly fanning the flames of their passion by presenting Esperanza as innocent, virginal, and noble.¹⁵ The students request that Esperanza appear at the window, but Grijalba feigns offence, retorting that ‘no es de las que piensa’ [she is not one of those that you think she is], again insisting on Esperanza’s supposed modesty.¹⁶ If Esperanza were to appear, this would indicate acceptance of their suit, undermining the attempt to portray her as a modest virgin. However, Esperanza’s perceived rejection of the students’ courtship enrages them; the narrator relates that ‘quisieron apedrarle la casa, y quebralle la celosía, y darle una matraca o cantaleta’ [they wanted to stone the house, and break the latticework, and attack it].¹⁷

Historians Thomas and Elizabeth Cohen examine attacks on doors and windows in Rome as part of a strategy of shaming or dishonouring a house, and by extension its inhabitants. The *matraca*, defacement of doors or windows, is intended as revenge on Esperanza for her haughtiness. Since the students perceive the falsehood of the family’s claim to honour, this attack on the house, if carried out, would publicly unmask the women as dishonoured. As Cohen and Cohen assert, assaults on liminal domestic spaces such as the door or window, ‘and especially to penetrate it, neatly paralleled sexual assault and carried much the same metaphoric meaning’.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid., 269. The Biblioteca Colombina version omits the word ‘scandal’.

¹⁶ Ibid., 260.

¹⁷ Ibid., 273. The Biblioteca Colombina version omits ‘quebralle la celosía’.

¹⁸ Cohen and Cohen, ‘Open and Shut’, 70.

The threat of violence exposes the precarious balance that must be struck in negotiations over transactional sex in which clients frequently resorted to vicious assaults when rejected or shamed. The students ultimately decide not to attack the house, but rather to continue their pursuit of Esperanza, hoping to open the house whose orifices are so tightly closed to them in this scene.

This window serenade that initiates the students' pursuit of Esperanza is subtly referenced shortly thereafter when Grijalba insists to the students' friend Don Felix, who pursues Esperanza on their behalf, that she is 'tan pulcela como su madre la parió' [a maiden just as her mother bore her], echoing the earlier reference to the windows as closed just as their mother bore them, although she promises that 'no habría para su merced puerta de su señora cerrada' [for your lordship none of my ladyship's doors would be closed], a phrase in which the door replaces the window as a metonym for sexual access to Esperanza's body.¹⁹ At this point in the story, Grijalba and Claudia negotiate under the pretext that their goal is to arrange Esperanza's marriage rather than a transactional encounter. Placated by the gift of a gold chain, the duenna bows to the pressure of Don Felix's interrogation and reveals that the supposed maiden 'estaba de tres mercados, o por mejor decir de tres ventas' [has been marketed three times, or to put it better, sold three times], revealing all the details of the transactions in which Esperanza was sold on three occasions as a virgin.²⁰ The use of the word *venta* [sale] is repetitive since the earlier *mercado* [market] covers the same semantic terrain, and subtly reinforces the insistence on the *ventana* [window] as the site of sexual negotiation. Eventually, Don Felix convinces Grijalba to allow him access to Esperanza's bedchamber, a move that would circumvent Claudia's control

¹⁹ Cervantes, *La tía fingida*, 278. These phrases appear in both versions.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 262.

over Esperanza's body since the earnings would be shared between Esperanza and Grijalba. However, Claudia discovers Felix in the house after an inopportune sneezing fit, after which he must negotiate directly with Claudia for access to Esperanza. Claudia, ignorant of the prior revelation of Esperanza's non-virginity, insists yet again that 'esta niña está como su madre la parió' [this girl is as her mother bore her], repeating for the third time the phrase initiated with reference to the closed windows, and symbolically re-enacting Esperanza's three previous sexual encounters.²¹ The negotiation over Esperanza's body is interrupted by the arrival of officers of justice when a fight breaks out after Grijalba strikes Claudia. However, it is clear that Esperanza's favours would ultimately be sold: Claudia refers to the young woman's body as 'merchandise', while Don Felix states that he will not leave the 'store' without having bought the *pieza* or object of sale.²² As Adrienne Laskier Martín cogently observes, in this scene Esperanza displays a 'marked excision between body (flesh) and spirit wherein the former totally eclipses the latter'.²³ She is objectified by the other characters, and objectifies her own body as she coldly observes the negotiation, 'viendo lo que pasaba sobre su cuerpo' [seeing what happened to her body], without displaying any emotion or desire other than to escape being sewn up again by her hymen-mending false aunt.²⁴ In this tale, Esperanza's sexuality is displaced onto the space that surrounds it through a series of double-entendres initiated in the seduction scene at the window, such that window becomes a metonym for her vagina— a space that is closed to the students but

²¹ Ibid., 268.

²² Ibid., 268.

²³ Martín, *An Erotic Philology*, 8.

²⁴ Cervantes, *La tía fingida*, 303. The Biblioteca Colombina version simply reads 'mirando lo que pasaba' without reference to Esperanza's body, 302.

that they hope to open— and the many references to her closed body are intended to enhance her value as a sexual object. As we shall see, this is a common tactic in the practice of literary prostitution in which liminal domestic spaces serve as erotic ciphers for the body's orifices.

Esperanza's tale is unusual within the female picaresque in that the denouement is remarkably felicitous. Esperanza marries one of the students, and, unlike the marriages of characters such as Teresa de Manzanares, Esperanza's union seems to be a happy one. Esperanza's matrimony completes the promise of opening implied in the repetition of bodily closure 'como su madre le parió' [as her mother bore her]. The author states that 'pocas Esperanzas habrá en la vida que, de tan mala como ella la vivía, salgan al descanso y buen paradero que ella tubo, porque las más de su trato pueblan las camas de los hospitales, y mueren en ellos miserables y desventuradas' [there will be few Hopes in life that, for as badly as she lived, enter such peace and good station as she had, because most of those of her trade occupy the beds in hospitals and die in them miserable and unfortunate].²⁵ The Biblioteca Colombina version reads 'no avra otra Esperança' [there will be no other Hope], foreclosing the possibility of another case such as Esperanza's entirely; nonetheless, both these endings clearly imply that this denouement is atypical.²⁶ Claudia, on the other hand, is harshly punished for her behaviour, implying that the author lays the blame for Esperanza's involvement in transactional sex on her false aunt, for whom adopting girls in order to prostitute them is a pattern of behaviour. In Esperanza's case, marriage seems to bring about the reform of the unruly woman by providing her a legitimate place in the social order.

As the serenade in *La tía fingida* demonstrates, the window has a long tradition across

²⁵ Ibid., 317.

²⁶ Ibid., 314.

Western Europe as an important space in courtship and seduction, demonstrated in literature by such episodes as the famous ‘balcony’ scene in *Romeo and Juliet*.²⁷ Likewise, the love affair of Pyramus and Thisbe, an extremely popular myth in the Renaissance, initiates with communication through an opening in the lovers’ house walls, culminating in the tragic death of both. Since windows allowed access to the house, which as I have established in previous chapters formed an artificial buttress around the female body, they needed external reinforcement to protect their integrity: the *rejas* or *celosías*. Despite their defensive purpose, the window bars often functioned in literature as a meeting point for lovers. They could serve as a chaste assignation site where lovers could talk without damage to female reputation, or a location for trysts of a more salacious nature in which lovers planned a rendezvous in a place that would give them direct access to each other, as occurs in Calisto’s initial nocturnal visit to Melibea’s home in Auto XII of *La Celestina*. Consequently, windows and bars became a fictional site that allowed penetration of the carefully constructed borders of female chastity.

Windows in Didactic Literature

The urgency of regulating window space to protect female virtue appears in numerous early modern sources. For example, Hernando de Talavera, royal confessor to Queen Isabel, underscores the window’s role in enforcing female monastic enclosure. Talavera laid out various provisions to defend nuns’ chastity, including a prohibition against leaning out of windows.²⁸ Furthermore, strictures for enclosed nuns mandated that convent windows be covered with both

²⁷ Although it has come to be known as a ‘balcony scene’, in *Romeo and Juliet*, Juliet is described as being at the window. See Zucker, *The Places of Wit*, for the appearance of the balcony in English plays.

²⁸ Lehfeltdt, *Religious Women*, 146–147.

bars and latticework. A Benedictine guide to convent construction, for example, dictates that the bars should be so thick that an arm could not fit between them (to prevent passage of clandestine messages), and the latticework should be so fine that the nuns could not be observed from outside.²⁹ The same mentality governed the construction of custodial institutions for reformed prostitutes; in Madrid, one such institution specifies that the windows must be covered on the outside by bars, and from the inside with shutters to prevent ingress and preclude the penitents from temptation caused by the sight of the outside world.³⁰ Magdalena de San Jerónimo's *Razón y forma* likewise mandates that the women's prison should not have any windows or other openings from which women could look out.³¹ Such regulations highlight the need to enforce enclosure through closing off liminal spaces, and hint at the measures some women may have resorted to in order to evade patriarchal control.

Mid-sixteenth-century didactic writing reflects a similar preoccupation with the window's role in mediating both the gaze and the fragile boundary between inside and outside. Conduct manual authors warned women and especially young girls not to allow themselves to be seen through the window by onlookers. Juan de la Cerda, for example, instructs parents of maidens, 'no la consientan pararse a la ventana a mirar o hablar en la calle con mancebos, porque mujer que tiene por costumbre ser ventanera con dificultad será castigada cuando fuere mayor' [do not consent that they stand at the window to look out or to peek with young men in the street, because a woman who is in the custom of being a window-user will be difficult to punish when

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 179.

³⁰ Torremocha Hernández, *De la mancebía*, 194.

³¹ Barbeito, *Cárceles y mujeres*, 77.

she is older].³² The *refranero* tradition likewise cautions ‘a la hija, tápale la rendija’ [with a daughter, seal up all the cracks] and ‘mujer que á la ventana se pone de rato en rato, venderse quiere barato’ [a woman who stands at the window from time to time wants to sell herself cheaply].³³ The first of these proverbs underscores the need for architectural enclosure, while the second demonstrates the suspicion of immodesty associated with presence at the window. Severe strictures on early modern Spanish women’s behaviour demanded not only absolute chastity, but also the appearance thereof, such that presence at the window seemed to invite the male gaze.

The semblance of complete inaccessibility required women to control their own gaze while remaining invisible to the male. As the eyes of the house, windows shared in the Renaissance association of eyes with lust and the erotic. Thus in *De institutione feminae cristianae*, Juan Luis Vives states that women ‘should abstain from seeing, hearing, or even thinking of unseemly matters’.³⁴ He further warns that sin enters the soul through the senses, which he compares to windows, and repeatedly emphasizes the role of vision in temptation.³⁵ The properly chaste virgin, he states, ‘should not desire to see or be seen, or cast her glance this way and that’.³⁶ Notably, in this passage Vives cedes control over visibility to the virgin; it is she who allows herself to be seen or not seen. As Nancy Weitz Miller notes, such statements

³² De la Cerda, *Vida política*, 27.

³³ Correas, *Vocabulario*, 6; 188.

³⁴ Vives, *The Education*, 87.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 110. Vives states that ‘through all the senses as through windows, death bursts in upon the soul or stealthily penetrates its defenses [...] The young woman should seldom open these doors of the senses’, 110.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 127.

represent a ‘reversal of the usual power-relationship between the gazer and the object of the gaze (where the process of being objectified removes agency from the object), the object is here entirely responsible for “enticing” the sight and “drawing” the eyes of men [...] she is responsible for the gazer’s response to her’.³⁷ In conduct manuals, windows frequently make the invisible state of immodesty visible through the display of the female body. Vives warns that a good wife should strictly control her access to liminal and exterior spaces, giving her husband no cause for jealousy so that if he ‘does not consider it proper that she leaves the house nor stands at the window, nor speaks to anyone nor do any other thing, neither will she desire it’.³⁸

In *La perfecta casada*, Fray Luis goes even further in his admonitions against the window. Like Vives, he warns against excessive mobility in women, a quality often associated with both verbosity and sexuality, and explicitly correlates the window with lust and adultery. Fray Luis cites several verses from Proverbs 7, a reproach against the adulterous woman, who in Fray Luis’s rendition is ‘parlera y vagabunda, y que no sufre estar quieta, ni sabe tener los pies en su casa, ya en la puerta, ya en la ventana, ya en la plaza, ya en los cantones de la encrucijada, y tiende por dondequiera sus lazos’ [talkative and wandering, she cannot suffer being still, nor does she know how to keep her feet in her own house, now at the door, now in the window, now in the plaza, now at the corner of the intersection, and she sets her snares in all places’].³⁹ Tellingly, the original verses (Proverbs 7:11–12) do not mention windows, which may not have existed in biblical times; Fray Luis adds this detail in order to capitalize on the association with female promiscuity, as does his placement of her in the *canton* [street corner] since *cantonera*

³⁷ Weitz Miller, ‘Metaphor and the Mystification’, 139.

³⁸ Vives, *The Education*, 272.

³⁹ León, *La perfecta casada*, 118.

was one of the many synonyms for prostitute at the time, similar to ‘streetwalker’ in modern parlance.⁴⁰ Fray Luis insists on the adulterous woman’s mobility, tying it to her presence at the window; she is driven by a restless movement initiated in the home that brings her to the liminal spaces of door and window, and soon radiates outward, driving her to the streets.

Fray Luis continues to insist on the window’s treacherous nature, to the extent that it becomes part of the unchaste woman’s identity. He warns that a woman with excess leisure time will become *ventanera* [a windower]; the window becomes a marker of identity equated with vice as it moves from a relatively neutral noun to an adjective that describes the woman’s personality in its entirety.⁴¹ De la Cerda uses this same adjective, both in the citation above (‘mujer que tiene por costumbre ser ventanera con dificultad será castigada’ [a woman who is in the custom of being a window-user will be difficult to punish]) and when he advises parents that ‘hase de tener cuenta con la doncella no sea salidera ni ventanera’ [you must take care that the maiden [daughter] does not become a roamer or a windower].⁴² According to Fray Luis, the *mujer ventanera* will be

visitadora, callejera, amiga de fiestas, enemiga de su rincón, de su casa olvidada y de las casas ajenas curiosa, pesquisidora de cuanto pasa, y aun de lo que no pasa inventora, parlera y chismosa, de pleitos revolvedora, jugadora [...] con lo demás

⁴⁰ Alonso Hernández, *El lenguaje*, 38.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 118. The term *ventanera* does not appear in modern Spanish, thus I use a non-existent English word to translate it. The modern Spanish verb *ventanear* [to constantly be at the window] perhaps derives from *ventanera*.

⁴² De la Cerda, *Vida política*, 27; 34.

que por ordinaria consecuencia se sigue, y se calla aquí agora, por ser cosa manifiesta y notoria.

[a visitor, a streetwalker, a friend of parties, the enemy of her corner, forgotten by her home and curious about others' houses, prying into all that happens, and inventor of what doesn't happen, talkative and full of jokes, sniffing around disputes, playful ... with all the consequences that follow such behaviour, though they will not be stated here, since they are such manifest and notorious things.]⁴³

Fray Luis's silencing of the repercussions of being a 'windowing' woman demonstrates his confidence that the link between windows and promiscuity is so culturally ingrained that he need only allude to it. In Fray Luis's admonition, the wife uses the window to display herself, and to gossip and interact with those outside the home. By doing so, she deliberately makes herself visible and mobile, undermining male control over her sexuality and becoming the object of slander.

In the next chapter Fray Luis again cautions his reader that the window poses a threat. Here, the risk is the same; however, in this case outside influence subverts patriarchal control over women's use of space. Fray Luis warns that 'del mirar nace el amar' [love is born from sight].⁴⁴ In other words, a woman whose gaze comes to rest on a man other than her husband is in moral peril. He further counsels against the vices which might be introduced into the home by outsiders. He particularly underscores the dangers posed by sexually mature older women to maidens, stating, 'llega la vejezuela al oído, y dice a la hija y a la doncella que por qué huyen la

⁴³ León, *La perfecta casada*, 18.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

ventana' [the old woman comes to her ear, and tells the daughter and the maiden: why do you flee from the window?].⁴⁵ The older woman's poisonous tongue corrodes the virtue of young daughters. With this description, Fray Luis invokes the trope of the *alcahueta*, a celestinesque figure such as Lozana, who endangers young women's chastity. This last example highlights the menace posed by female secrecy and deviousness: passing on knowledge regarding sexuality destroys the innocence necessary to maintain virginity. As the preceding examples demonstrate, didactic literature paints the window as a subversive space that threatens to allow women to escape the constraints put in place to guard their chastity and equates female visibility with sexual availability.

Windows and Prostitution

Indeed, moralists had good reason to warn young women against appearing too often at the window, since sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature frequently describes windows as a location at which prostitutes display themselves to potential customers. Elizabeth Cohen states that sixteenth-century Roman prostitutes 'flaunted themselves in large numbers in the windows and doors of their houses'.⁴⁶ In the early sixteenth century, as the fame of Roman courtesans spread, they became a tourist attraction, and their presence at the window was described by foreign travellers. Anthony Munday, an Englishman who wrote an account of his voyage to Rome in 1578, states that the courtesans 'have Couerlettes layde out at their windowes, wheron they stand leaning forth, to receiue diuers deuises of Rose water, and sweete odours in their

⁴⁵ Ibid., 123.

⁴⁶ Cohen, 'Seen and Known', 399.

faces, which the Gentlemen will throwe vp to their windowes'.⁴⁷ The most fashionable courtesans' windows were part of an elaborately painted façade that was both stylish and advertised the house's character, and elite courtesans were known to display themselves at the window to tourists curious whether they lived up to their reputation for beauty.⁴⁸

Therefore, the link between prostitution and windows was a deeply embedded cultural referent that assumed any woman displaying herself in the window to be sexually available. Adam Zucker, in his study of the balcony's appearance in English plays, observes that the balcony builds on the cultural baggage assigned to the window, such that characters understand balconies to be 'platforms on which [...] women might display themselves for passers-by, presumably as prostitutes'.⁴⁹ English plays set in Italy, Zucker contends, 'frequently use the upper-story window both as a site of sexualized display and as a figurative locus for men's fears about the penetrability of the walls of their homes and the bodies of their wives and daughters'.⁵⁰

Though Zucker discusses English theatre, a similar argument could be made regarding early modern Spanish plays, in which the window often imperils female chastity; one such example appears in Act 2 of Tirso de Molina's classic play *El burlador de Sevilla* [*The Trickster of Seville*, 1630], the original tale of the legendary figure Don Juan, in which Doña Ana has been promised in marriage by her father to Don Juan even though she is in love with her cousin, the Marquis of Mota. To avoid an arranged marriage to Don Juan, she devises a plan to lose her

⁴⁷ Munday, *The English Romyne Lyfe*, 95–96.

⁴⁸ Masson, *Courtesans*, 36.

⁴⁹ Zucker, *The Places of Wit*, 120. Though they appeared in Italy and then in Spain in the sixteenth century, balconies did not become an architectural feature in England until the seventeenth century.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 122.

virginity to the Marquis, forcing her father to allow their marriage. She passes a note out through the bars covering her window, asking that it be given to the Marquis. Unfortunately for Doña Ana, she unwittingly hands the note to Don Juan, who has heard of her beauty and is determined to trick her into sleeping with him. In the note, she tells the Marquis that she will open the door of her house to him at midnight. Don Juan reads the note and replaces the Marquis at the assignation. Doña Ana discovers the substitution before losing her virginity, but it is too late to salvage her honour. Her calls of alarm wake the palace, and when her father rushes to her defence he is killed by the escaping Don Juan. This encounter is typical of many scenes involving the barred window, in which communication through the bars undermines female chastity. Doña Ana, like many other women in Spanish literature, attempts to subvert paternal control over her matrimonial destiny by using the window to undermine the protections placed around her chastity, leading in this case to the death of her father. The fictionalized window serves as a locus for anxiety over female sexuality, and often appears as the site of sexual commerce.

Furthermore, the window is frequently used in the carnal trade to differentiate between different variants of transactional sexuality, as in *La Lozana andaluza*, which lays out a classification system utilizing the window as a signifying site. In this novel, as in historical Rome, courtesans and prostitutes are divided into distinct categories that determine the price of their services. The lowest ranking prostitutes display themselves on the city streets, while those of a higher class use the boundaries of the home, and particularly the windows, to advertise their services. In the novelized world of *La Lozana andaluza*, as was probably true in historical Rome, subsistence prostitutes supplement their meagre earnings as washerwomen, servants, and shirt-makers by marketing their bodies, often accepting payment in food or wine. Above subsistence-

level prostitution, there is a middle ranking of prostitutes who manage to support themselves comfortably but do not attain the courtesans' affluence. This mid-level prostitution encompasses a broad range of categories, in which women use window dressings to display signs, such as plants or the use of a certain fabric or covering for the window, which publicize the occupation and rank of the house's inhabitants. The terminology used to designate prostitutes and courtesans in the historical record likewise insinuates the ubiquity of this practice. As mentioned earlier, the term *cortigiana di lume* [courtesan of light] came to denote a minor courtesan who used a light in the window to signal availability. At the summit of carnal commerce, the elite *cortigiane honeste* [honest courtesan] also used the window as a space to display themselves and participate in the city's social life (all while feigning an attitude of reticent modesty).

Shortly after her arrival in Rome, Lozana interrogates her client the letter carrier about prostitution there. He responds with a long enumeration of the many types, classes, and nationalities of prostitutes operating in Rome and the role of architectural space in distinguishing between them. This section begins a burlesque parody of the 'tema de las naciones' [topic of the nations], a trope based on the enumeration of different national characteristics; but it also provides a number of insights into courtesans' and prostitutes' spatial practices and sets the stage for an elaborate classification system to distinguish among these groups that will be expanded throughout the rest of the novel.⁵¹ The letter carrier states that there are '[putas] de puerta

⁵¹ Rome was a very attractive destination for people of all the European nationalities, who flocked to the city in the hopes of sharing in the vast wealth and power enjoyed by the papal court. The letter carrier's remarks set in motion a jest based on the vast number of prostitutes from an equally wide variety of nations who followed in the formers' footsteps. Naturally, he assures Lozana that Spanish prostitutes are the best.

herrada, y putas de celosía, y putas d'empanada' [[whores] with iron doors, and whores with lattices, and whores with turnovers'.⁵² Lozana misunderstands his final reference to *putas d'empanada* [whores with turnovers] and replies 'si lo supiera, no comiera las empanadas que me enviastes, por no ser d'empanada' [if I had known, I would not have eaten the turnovers you sent me, so as not to be one of those].⁵³ The letter carrier then explains his Italicism, stating that the reference to *empanadas* [turnovers] was in fact a reference to the Italian *impannata* (in Spanish, *encerado*), a waxed canvas used to cover early modern windows more economically than glass, an elite luxury item; as the letter carrier explains, these *putas d'empanada* 'tienen encerados a las ventanas, y es de más reputación' [have waxed canvas on the windows, and this creates a better reputation].⁵⁴ The waxed cloth serves as both a signal of prostitution and as an indicator of the prostitute's relative status, indicating a middle range of courtesan who can afford the waxed canvas but not glass windows or iron latticework, thus drawing a connection between the house's liminal spaces, such as windows and doorways, and the class of prostitute within. The letter carrier's list links the sexual display of prostitution with three spaces: the door, the latticework, and the window. In fact, Georgina Masson states that the houses of Rome's most popular courtesans were equipped with an iron door such as the letter carrier describes, to prevent attacks by enemies and spurned lovers.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the letter carrier elaborates a complex hierarchy in which the signs displayed in these spaces indicate the prestige of the prostitute within, along the spectrum from the very wealthy to the poorest. According to the

⁵² Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 270.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 270.

⁵⁵ Masson, *Courtesans*, 85.

letter carrier, there is yet another class of prostitutes who use *tapetes* or tapestries to signal their availability and are more prestigious than the *putas d'empanada*. These 'están más altas; éstas muéstranse todas, y son más festejadas de galanes' [they are higher up; they show themselves completely and are more celebrated by gallants].⁵⁶ The letter carrier thus highlights the vast array of prostitutes who inhabit a midrange between the 'honest courtesans' and the destitute prostitutes who supplement meagre wages as washerwomen and textile workers. The window both provides a space for the prostitute to display herself and demonstrates her rank relative to others, thus determining the price she can command in the sexual marketplace.

Lozana also uses the window space to send coded signals to her clients, though in this instance not to prostitute herself but rather to gain access to the courtesans' homes on behalf of her clients. In one scene, an ambassador, introduced to Lozana by a gentleman acquaintance who knows her reputation as a skilled intermediary, begs her to introduce him to the courtesan Angélica. Lozana replies that she will arrange the matter, saying 'yo la haré poner a la ventana' [I will have her show herself at the window].⁵⁷ Lozana uses the intimacy she enjoys with the courtesans to intervene in their clientele selection. She brings Angélica to the window where the ambassador can inspect her, for which she is rewarded with an emerald ring, and the promise of money to pay her rent. Angélica's appearance in the window is an indication of future sexual conquest; the fact that Lozana displays her in this way convinces the ambassador that success is assured, as demonstrated by his gift of a ring, a highly symbolic offering which represents the hymen, the marriage bond, or, as in this instance, the sexual act. As Storey demonstrates, rings often established a contract between client and prostitute in carnal trade; if the ring was accepted

⁵⁶ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 270.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 348.

as a gift, it signified a promise of future sexual access similar to its symbolic role in marital engagement.⁵⁸

Lozana uses the window as a signifier of sexual access again in Sketch LXII, in which two gentlemen stand outside the home of one of the elite courtesans, Jerezana, having been foiled in their attempt to enter despite attempted bribery of household servants and maids. In a move that mimics the custom of placing signs in the window to advertise sexual services, Lozana promises to display a cloth from her outer garments in the window when she has convinced Jerezana to admit them; after she gains admittance to the house, she places a cloth in the window. When the two gentlemen knock at the door, she claims ignorance of their identity, yet convinces Jerezana to allow them to enter.⁵⁹ In these scenes, Lozana utilizes the liminal spaces of the house, drawing on their reputation a coding location in the practice of prostitution, facilitating access to courtesans on behalf of her male clients.

Likewise, in *La Lozana andaluza* the presence of a *celosía* or latticework on the window can serve to announce a prostitute's services and indicate her relative price. The latticework safeguarded the house, yet was also frequently decorative.⁶⁰ Furthermore, it served as a marker of social status; Rampín concurs with the letter carrier that 'es de gran reputación tener celosía'

⁵⁸ Storey, 'Fragments', 653. The ring as metonym for sexual commerce also appears in Sketch IV in which Lozana finances her voyage to Rome through the sale of a ring that she had hidden in her mouth during the failed attempt on her life by Diomedes' father, commonly interpreted as a euphemism for Lozana's sale of her body to fund the journey (Cruz, *Discourses*, 146; da Costa Fontes, 'Un engaño', 136; Allaire, editorial comments, 186).

⁵⁹ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 444–447.

⁶⁰ Bass and Wunder, 'The Veiled Ladies', 118.

[it creates a good reputation to have a latticework].⁶¹ In their initial voyage through the city, Rampín explains the courtesans' habit of displaying themselves discreetly, commenting when they reach the Via del'Orso where the honest courtesans live that 'ya las veremos a las gelosías' [here we will see them behind their lattices].⁶² This is the first mention of both courtesans and latticework in the novel, tying the two together thematically. As they walk, Rampín points out to Lozana the most successful courtesans such as *la señora Clarina* [the lady Clarina] and the *galana portuguesa* [the Portuguese's mistress].⁶³ Rampín's and the letter carrier's remarks reveal that the presence of window bars elevates a prostitute's rank, allowing her to increase erotic capital and the price of her labour.

The window also appears as a coding location for prostitution in several picaresque novels, wherein items placed in the window serve as a signal to the pimping husband that his wife is with a customer. Guzmán de Alfarache, relating courtly customs in the second book, states that courtiers sometimes marry women in order to prostitute them, and recounts that these pimped wives employ a coded system so that 'cuando estaba tomada la posada o dejaban caer la celojía o ponían en la ventana un jarro, un chapín o cualquier otra cosa, en que supiesen los maridos que habían de pasarse de largo y no entrasen a embarazar' [when the bedchamber is occupied, they will either let the latticework down or put a jar in the window, or a slipper or some other thing, so that their husbands will know that he should stay away and not enter to their embarrassment].⁶⁴ This practice appears again in *La hija de Celestina*, in which Elena uses the

⁶¹ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 257.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 213.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁶⁴ Alemán, *Guzmán de Alfarache*, 398.

window to indicate to her pimp and husband Montúfar that she is with a customer. Salas Barbadillo states that when ‘le estuviese bien [a Montúfar] aun no tocar con los pies el zaguán, se ponía siempre una seña en la ventana’ [it was unwise [for Montúfar] even to set foot in the entryway, she always used to leave a signal in the window].⁶⁵ Though Montúfar negotiates the sale of Elena’s body, he absents himself from the house during the consummation. The narrator reveals that, when Montúfar sees the signal on the window sill, ‘alegrábase infinito, considerando que aquello era todo acrecentar hacienda’ [he became infinitely happy, considering how much his fortune would grow because of it].⁶⁶ The complicity of husbands in the sexual transaction of their wives’ bodies was of great concern to moralists, dating back to the *Siete partidos* [*Seven Codes*] of Alfonso X, the most important legal document of medieval Spain, which list among the five types of *alcahuete* or go-between, husbands who are ‘tan vil que alcahueta a su mujer’ [so vile as to pimp his own wife].⁶⁷ These literary representations demonstrate the importance of the window to the practice of prostitution, and express the social reality that men often coerced and benefitted from the transactional sexual activities of their wives.

These examples also illustrate the importance of the window coverings such as the *celosía*, or latticework, to the flesh trade, a theme seen in other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century novels. In *La tía fingida*, it is the latticework that adorns the window of Esperanza’s house that awakens the interest of the students since the freshly painted bars signals to them that a new prostitute has set up shop in the house. In the *Porras de la Cámara* version, the narrator

⁶⁵ Salas Barbadillo, *La hija de Celestina*, 200–201.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁶⁷ Cited in Lacarra, ‘La evolución’, 36.

states that the two students ‘vieron en una ventana de una casa y tienda de carne una celosía’ [saw in the window of a house and meat-shop a latticework], which piques their curiosity immediately ‘porque la gente de tal casa, si no se descubría y apregonaba no se vendía’ [because the people in that house, if they do not reveal themselves and announce themselves, they would not be able to sell].⁶⁸ Thus, the narrator makes clear that the latticework is an advertisement for prostitution given the reputation of the house, and that the inhabitants are ‘revealing and announcing’ their business through the newly refurbished window space. In the Biblioteca Colombina version, the students see the window adorned with a latticework, which intrigues them since ‘en aquella casa no vivia gente que requiriese poner celosias en las ventanas’ [it was unnecessary to such people as lived in that house to put latticework on the window]; in other words, the latticework in this version is incongruous with the class status displayed by the house, and therefore subtly indicates the advertisement of transactional sex.⁶⁹

As examined in Chapter 2, even before they catch sight of Esperanza, the students know that she is a prostitute because of the house’s reputation. In other words, before the students have seen the inhabitants, they perceive the presence of sexual commerce through the display of architectural space. The students themselves, the narrator relates, are not new to the flesh trade, ‘siendo pláticos en la ciudad y deshollinadores de cuantas ventanas tenían albahacas con tocas’ [being conversant with the city, and sweeps of as many windows had basil plants for dressing].⁷⁰ This cryptic sentence requires some explanation; the term *plático*, related to *platicar* [to chat],

⁶⁸ Cervantes, *La tía fingida*, 255.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 252.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 255. The Biblioteca Colombina version describes the students merely as ‘platicos en la ciudad’, omitting the clause beginning with ‘deshollinadores’ (254).

reveals that these young men are part of the student scene in Salamanca, known for its rowdy behaviour, and the reference to basil in the window alludes to the tradition of *rumeras* leaving *ramos* [branches] there, as well as the basil plant's reputation for engendering scorpions among its leaves.⁷¹ It is possible that basil became associated with prostitution through the phallic references to the scorpion's sting and tail, as when Pármeno famously declares to Celestina that he has a 'cola de alacrán' [scorpion's tail] in order to laud his sexual prowess.⁷² Esperanza's 'aunt' also underscores the importance of windows to prostitution when, according to Esperanza's recollection, her aunt instructs her that a courtesan should 'ser ángel en la calle, santa en la iglesia, hermosa en la ventana, honesta en la casa y demonio en la cama' [be an angel in the street, a saint in church, beautiful in the window, honest in the home, and a demon in bed].⁷³ In short, the window and more particularly the latticework that covered it played a vital role in advertising the female body as merchandise in early modern prostitution.

In the hands of literary prostitutes and courtesans, the latticework also becomes a tool for erotic enticement by exploiting the allure of the unattainable through prolongation and deferment of desire. Since the latticework 'allowed occupants to observe discreetly through their slats and also to show themselves while pretending to be invisible', it can either display the female body or hide it in a posture of feigned invisibility.⁷⁴ In order to be successful in her profession, the courtesan needed to cultivate the ability to be simultaneously visible yet obscured. She needed to

⁷¹ Medina, *Novela de la tía fingida*, 9–10.

⁷² Rojas, *La Celestina*, 121.

⁷³ Cervantes, *La tía fingida*, 291. The Biblioteca Colombina version omits the reference to windows (290).

⁷⁴ Cohen and Cohen, 'Open and Shut', 70.

forge a place for herself in fashionable society that would allow wealthy suitors to approach her, but also adopt a façade of inaccessibility that would set her above the common prostitute.

Likewise, the *pícaro*'s sexual deceits rely on the semblance of elite status, but must also signal her sexual availability, drawing on the windows' salacious reputation.

Because of its role in hiding the female body, the latticework can create a false semblance of modesty. In *Las harpías en Madrid*, Luisa's swindle targets a rich elderly Genovese who, though 'muy servidor de damas' [a great servant to ladies], is 'algo verde de condición' [somewhat green]; in other words, the Genovese is naive but also thinks of himself as a lady's man.⁷⁵ Taking advantage of his gullibility, Luisa portrays herself as an honourable lady, using the window space to manipulate his perception of her. After renting a house next door to his, she speaks to him across the intervening space between their balconies, exclaiming '¡Jesús, y qué descuido ha sido tan grande el de no haber hecho poner aquí una celosía! No me pase de mañana sin que se ponga, que no es recato de mi estado y calidad ponerme tal vez a este balcón sin ella' [Jesus! What great carelessness not to have installed a latticework here! I shall not let tomorrow pass without having one put in, since perhaps it is unbecoming to my modest state and quality to use the balcony without one.]⁷⁶ Luisa purportedly needs a latticework to protect her 'honour' and 'quality', implying both blood purity and noble status, by erecting a physical barrier between her body and her suitor's, and her exclamation creates an appearance of modesty that awakens the neighbour's interest in her. She deceives him by presenting herself as a rich heiress awaiting a fortune inherited from a relative who passed away in the 'Indies', even producing forged bank documents to win his trust. Even after he lends her money, she engages in a second deceit that

⁷⁵ Castillo Solórzano, *Las harpías en Madrid*, 100.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

exploits his desire for her by promising to perform a play in which she will dress as a man, a theatrical motif that carried a heavy erotic charge since the woman's legs would be seen clad in tights; Luisa borrows large sums of money for costumes and, naturally, absconds. The latticework in this instance serves, even in its absence, to simulate chastity and seclusion yet in a way that awakens sexual interest.

The use of windows and more specifically shutters to enhance erotic capital appears in Aretino's *Ragionamenti* (1534), of which *La Lozana andaluza* is widely considered to be a precursor.⁷⁷ On the first day of the six-day dialogue, the protagonist, Nanna, explains how she became a whore. She recounts that on her first night in Rome, having been previously coached in the wiles of sex work by her mother,

Mi stava dentro una gelosia, e se pura la alzava, spuntando appena mezzo il viso fuori, la serrava subito. E benché io fussi bella, quel balenare delle mie bellezze mi faceano bellissima: per la cual cosa, accresciuta la voglia di vedermi alla brigata, no si diceva altro per Roma che di una forestiera venuta di nuovo. [I was behind a latticework, and I would lift it, directing merely half my visage out, then I closed it quickly. And as I was beautiful, that glimpse of my beauty made me even more beautiful; because of this, the desire to see me grew among the onlookers, and nothing was talked about in Rome more than the newly arrived foreigner.]⁷⁸

⁷⁷ See especially Imperiale, *La Roma clandestina*; Damiani, *Francisco Delicado*, 110–119.

⁷⁸ Aretino, *I ragionamenti*, 138.

Nanna not only displays herself at the window, but also (following her mother's instructions) uses the window to conceal herself and construct a pretence of invisibility and inaccessibility, thus augmenting her beauty and causing her fame to spread across the city; at this point Nanna has been married, yet purports to be a virgin so that her mother can sell her virginity to the highest bidder. Consequently, by hiding her body, Nanna can most effectively exploit it. She goes on to describe how the shutters on the window become a mask that she peeks out from to entice her suitors with a display of reticence even as she coyly evaluates their physical appeal. Nanna's erotic teasing culminates when, having selected her favourite suitor, 'fingeva onestà di monica, e guardando con sicurit  di maritata, faceva atti di puttana' [I feigned the honesty of a nun, and kept the propriety of a wife, with the gestures of a whore].⁷⁹ Nanna collapses the distinctions between female categories to feign the nun's chastity and the wife's respectability while maintaining the whore's freedom of expression. By inhabiting all the identities available to women, and reducing them into a single entity, Nanna emphasizes the effect created by manipulation of space. Just as the *harp as of Madrid* and Elena (*La hija de Celestina*) use the hybrid public/private space of the coach to lure men into their tricks, Nanna manipulates the liminal space of the window to whet male appetites, becoming in essence another form of huntress; like many of the women of the female picaresque, she is described as an insatiable sexual predator.

A similar scene takes place early in *La Lozana andaluza* when Lozana learns concealment's erotic value from her aunt. Lozana sees Diomedes in the street, and her initial reaction is to approach him directly. Her aunt, however, urges her to ignite his passion through an exaggerated performance of modesty; first, she stages Lozana in the window to display her

⁷⁹ Ibid., 140.

charms to Diomedes. She instructs Lozana to wait while she speaks with him, then to come in, but ‘si os hablare, abajá la cabeza y pasaos [...] y, si os tomare la mano, retraeos hacia atrás, porque, como dicen: amuestra a tu marido el copo mas no del todo’ [if he speaks to you, lower your head and pass by ... and, if he takes your hand, step back, because as they say; show your husband the ball of yarn, but not all of it].⁸⁰ The use of *copo* draws on phonetic similarity to establish a double-entendre for *cuero* [body], and is one of a series of eroticized sewing terms that occur in the novel.⁸¹ Her aunt urges her to entice Diomedes by displaying her body, but also to make a show of reticence.

In all these examples, *pícaras* and other female characters frequently utilize the window space to exercise control over their own sexuality. In the case of picaresque fiction, the window frequently serves to simultaneously construct a façade of modesty even while awakening the sexual interest of male onlookers or subtly communicating relative ranking in the transactional sex trade. Enclosure is, by definition, incomplete since all homes must have doors and windows. Windows and the bars or latticework that covered them emerge in both fictional and didactic literature as crucial sites of contention in the struggle to maintain patriarchal order through female domestic enclosure. Consequently, windows play a vital role in mediating between interior and exterior and can become a platform for erotic performance. The window becomes a site of sensual play where what is not seen but simply insinuated is just as important as what is revealed. In the following chapter, I examine another liminal space of the home, the doorway, and its similar role in the sexual economy.

⁸⁰ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 162.

⁸¹ See Manuel da Costa Fontes, ‘Knitting and Sewing Metaphors’, for an examination of eroticized sewing metaphors in Spanish literature.

Chapter 5

The Doors of Paradise

Because of its visibility and liminality, the doorway, like the window, was an ideal location for advertising prostitution. Since the threshold gave prostitutes access to the exterior while remaining within semi-domestic space, but able to entice the viewer and invite entry, literary prostitutes frequently stand in the doorway of a house or tavern to ply their trade. For example, in the female picaresque novel *La pícaro Justina* (1605), Justina's father establishes an inn and instructs his family on business matters. Among other dictums, he orders his daughters 'tampoco se os olvide que nunca falte una de vosotras a la puerta, bien compuesta y arreada, que una moza a la puerta de mesón sirve de tablilla y altabaque, en especial si es de noche y junto a la cancela' [neither should you forget that one of you should always be at the door, attractive and adorned, since a young woman in the doorway of an inn serves as an advertisement and coffer, especially if it is night and she is by the entry].¹ Justina's father's advice highlights the doorway's erotic connotations as a lure to passing males and stresses the importance of clandestine sexual commerce to inns of the period, despite repeated legislative attempts to prevent it.² Likewise, in

¹ López de Úbeda, *La pícaro Justina*, 254. A *tablilla* is a signal used by an inn to announce that they are accepting guests (Torres, editorial comments, *ibid.*, 938); an *altabaque* is a basket for collecting money.

² Legislative measures included limits on the length of time women could stay in inns. In 1494 the Catholic kings issued a pragmatic prohibiting innkeepers from allowing 'mujeres públicas, rufianes o gentes de mal vivir' [public women, ruffians, or people of bad lifestyle] from inhabiting an inn or tavern for longer than half a day throughout their kingdoms (Lacarra, 'La evolución', 43).

Don Quijote, the *semidoncellas* [half-maidens] of Juan Palomeque's inn display themselves in the doorway to entice travellers. Cervantes' narration recounts that 'estaban acaso a la puerta dos mujeres mozas, destas que llaman del partido [...] que en la venta aquella noche acertaron a hacer jornada' [there were by chance in the doorway two young girls, of those called in the game ... who had determined to earn their daily wage in the inn that night].³ Brothel prostitutes sometimes displayed themselves in the doorways, enticing potential customers in a similar manner to the window displays of prostitutes of Amsterdam's modern red-light district, and the positioning of women within the brothel could indicate distinctions in erotic capital among them.

The practice of displaying the female body led to the creation of a new lexeme, *iluminaria*, to describe a prostitute who 'servía de señuelo generalmente a las puertas de las boticas de la mancebía' [served as a lure generally at the doors of the brothel's rooms].⁴ Such examples indicate that a woman loitering in the doorway marked herself as a prostitute. Intriguingly, given this cultural association, *pícaras* and literary prostitutes seldom advertise prostitution in this straightforward manner. Instead, prostitutes are more often found at the window, due to the erotic charge exercised by windows and their use as a marker of relative rank in the hierarchical structure of prostitution as examined in the preceding chapter. The presence of a prostitute in the doorway advertises a lower status of street-level prostitution in contrast with the higher status afforded windows.

The doorway is not merely a physical location; instead, like the window, it functions as a

³ Cervantes, *Don Quijote*, 43.

⁴ Alonso Hernández, *El lenguaje*, 41.

metonym for the orifices of the body, particularly the vagina but also the anus, giving rise to rich erotic wordplay. Like the window, the doorway is simultaneously entrance and barrier since it can either prevent or allow access to the domestic interior. Cary Howie argues that enclosure invites penetration even as it emphatically resists it, stating that ‘the door may not be a way out so much as a place of intensification, in which the riddle of embodiment, penetrability and contract is focused, narrowed, into a deepening and reinforcement of edges’.⁵ In the metonymic economy of the architectural body, doors and windows carry sensual overtones as the entrance to the female body, in a more literal sense in the case of the doorway. The doorway’s ritual symbolism as well as its metonymic function as orifice made it an important site for love magic and the occult. The female body itself was a ‘riddle of embodiment’ in the early modern construct of women’s bodies as secretive and mysterious. The same enigmatic nature of the doorway allows it to serve as the basis for religious metaphors; for example, Jesus as the door to heaven, or St. Peter’s keys to the gates of paradise. These two seemingly contradictory registers coexist in several female picaresque texts that utilize religious metaphors as the basis for erotic badinage. In this chapter, I argue that the religious symbolism of doors, keys, and related architectural spaces is deliberately invoked by the female picaresque. In what follows, I first examine the literal doorways used as sites of prostitution, then turn to metaphorical constructs of the doorway as an eroticized metonym for the vagina that effaces the delineation of religious and secular symbolism. Though previous scholars have argued that certain female picaresque texts such as *La Lozana andaluza* and *La pícaro Justina* can be read as hagiographical parody,

⁵ Howie, *Claustrophilia*, 10.

especially of Mary Magdalen, the female picaresque does not offer a path to sanctity or a model for female reform.⁶ Instead, such texts invoke doorway imagery as a metaphor for the moral choice their reader faces; authors present a dire portrayal of female vice, but also respect the free will of their (implicitly male) reader, constructing works that are often ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations.

The Literal Doorway

As we observed with reference to windows, the equation of female enclosure, invisibility, and immobility with chastity evoked unease regarding the liminal spaces of the home that could allow either exit or enclosure. While a woman at the window remained within the domestic architectural confines, a woman in the doorway was physically accessible to passers-by and therefore implicitly sexually available. Magdalena de San Jerónimo, in her treatise addressed to Philip III regarding the need to build a prison for unrepentant women, repeatedly insists on the equation of women in the doorway with prostitution. She compares the ‘mujeres de mal vivir’ [women of evil life] in need of containment to wild beasts who hunt at night and ‘ponense por esos cantones, por calles y portales de casas’ [display themselves on street corners, in the streets, and in the doorways of houses].⁷ In fact, for Madre Magdalena, any woman found in a doorway should be apprehended and incarcerated; she states that

⁶ Delicado Puerto, ‘Lozana and Mary Magdalen’; Surtz, ‘Sancta Lozana’; Macpherson, ‘Solomon’s Knot’, 214; Zafra, *Prostituidas por el texto*, 122.

⁷ Barbeito, *Cárceles y mujeres*, 71.

Todas las justicias y sus ministros y alguaciles, han de tener gran vigilancia en buscar y prender todas las mujeres que toparen de noche por las esquinas, cantones, portales, caballerizas y otras partes semejantes y de día en las casas donde se dan las limosnas, en posadas, mesones, campos y huertas.

[All the ministers of justice and its officers should take great care in searching for and taking into custody all women who are found at night on the corner, in the doorways, stables, and other similar sites, and by day in houses where alms are given, in hostels, inns, countryside and gardens.]⁸

Madre Magdalena's rhetoric is harsh, and if her instructions were carried out no doubt many working women would be detained whose presence in such areas could be attributed to legitimate employment rather than participation in the flesh trade, revealing the stigma faced by women in manual labour. Nonetheless, her list demonstrates the association of certain sites, most notably doorways and inns, with prostitution. To avoid confusion between women in licit occupations and illicit sex workers, Madre Magdalena recommends that officers of justice not apprehend women who are carrying some item associated with trade, such as laundry or a jar to collect water from the well that would indicate domestic service. However, she warns that the perfidy of sex workers is such that even these signs are suspect. In Madre Magdalena's zeal to rid the streets of loose women, she recounts how she used to pursue women at night to apprehend

⁸ Ibid., 83–84.

and confine them; as a result, she relates, women would bring a jar or similar item along to construct a pretence of being out on an errand. These deceitful women, she states, even if discovered in flagrante with a man ‘en algún portal’ [in some doorway], would pretend to be servants completing a household task.⁹ Madre Magdalena’s equation of women in doorways with prostitution reveals a cultural view of non-elite female sexuality as expendable, and stems from the practice of medieval and early modern prostitutes displaying themselves in the doorways of inns, brothels, and private homes.

That prostitutes advertised their services from brothel doorways, inns, or in the streets is unsurprising, yet church doors also appear in a variety of sources as sites of seduction, and often prostitution. Since mass was one of the few public events that women, particularly elite women, could engage in without sullyng their reputation, sacred space allowed proximity between men and women, making the church an ideal location for flirtation among the less than truly devout. Literary *alcahuetas*, or procuresses, are frequently depicted entering churches to attract clientele or surreptitiously facilitate liaisons. In Auto IX of *La Celestina*, for example, Sempronio explains that Celestina is at mass, and that ‘quando va a la yglesia con sus cuentas en la mano [...] lo que en sus cuentas reza es los virgos que tiene a cargo, y cuántos enamorados ay en la cibdad y cuántas moças tiene encomendadas’ [when she goes to the church with her [rosary] beads in hand ... what she is praying [or calculating] on them is how many hymens are under her charge, and how many lovers there are in the city and how many young women are in her care].¹⁰

⁹ Ibid., 84.

¹⁰ Rojas, *La Celestina*, 226.

Sempronio's jest relies on the dual meaning of *cuenta* in Spanish as the noun 'bead' in Celestina's rosary and the third person singular form of *contar* [to count or calculate]. Thus, Celestina's visit to the church is a sacrilegious business call in which she carries out her role as go-between and procuress; since *moza* [girl] was a common synonym for prostitute, it seems likely that many of the liaisons she is arranging are transactional. Such literary depictions of women meeting lovers in church express widespread unease over the potential for women to maintain a false appearance of modesty. Teresa de Manzanares, for example, meets her lover in church since her third husband will not allow her to leave the house except to attend mass.¹¹ The church in such scenes serves to obscure female depravity beneath false piety.

Additionally, prostitutes may have attended mass to attract clients. Historian Ángel Luis Molina Molina relates that in Madrid, clandestine prostitutes attended services dressed as 'damas honestas, con su manto y su escapulario, a pesar de las prohibiciones [suntuarias]' [honest matrons, with cloaks and scapular, despite the [sumptuary] restrictions].¹² The doors of the church were locations for selling sweets, wine, and sometimes food, which gallants could purchase and offer to women.¹³ As a result, the church doors were frequently associated with seduction and carnal commerce, to the horror of moralists. Elena, the protagonist of *La hija de Celestina*, uses the cathedral door as a location to bait clients; it is in the *Puerta del perdón*, the entrance to Toledo's cathedral, that she meets Antonio, Don Sancho's page, who relates

¹¹ Castillo Solórzano, *La niña de los embustes*, 234–235.

¹² Molina Molina, *Mujeres públicas*, 132.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 132.

Sancho's predilection for raping women and discusses his impending marriage, and from whom she obtains the dagger that serves as proof of the tale she tells Don Rodrigo.¹⁴ Salas Barbadillo depicts this as her usual location for attracting clientele, dressed as an elite lady. The *Puerta del perdón*, or pardoning door, has a particular religious symbolism since at certain times, such as jubilee years, or with the purchase of indulgences, sinners can gain absolution by passing through it. The frequency with which the church appears as a location for seduction, though perhaps grounded in a historical situation in which women utilized the social acceptability of church space to gain agency over their own sexuality, demonstrates male apprehension in the face of potentially artificial appearances through which women construct a false appearance of virtue.

While such portrayals highlight women's deceptive nature, historical evidence demonstrates that some prostitutes felt genuine piety.¹⁵ The sincerity of prostitutes' religious acts is difficult to parse since prostitutes were often required to attend mass, to abstain from practising their profession on religious days that required sexual abstinence, and sometimes to be enclosed in refuges during Lent.¹⁶ On the other hand, since many women were coerced into practising their trade, they may have found solace in religious imagery such as the cult of Mary Magdalen that promised solace to sinners. A papal bull of 1520 required courtesans to leave one-fifth of their estate to the convents for reformed prostitutes, yet many went beyond this

¹⁴ Salas Barbadillo, *La hija de Celestina*, 88.

¹⁵ O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 179.

¹⁶ See Perry, 'Magdalens and Jezebels' 134–135; Vázquez García, *Mal menor*, 25.

compulsory piety to leave much more of their estate to pious acts, bequests to fund chapels, or other acts of penitence meant to offset the sinful acts committed in life.¹⁷ Such legacies suggest that women involved in transactional sex and their clients may not have understood piety in the same binary terms laid out by moralists in which the prostitute or courtesan must abandon her life of sin, repent, and withdraw in order to achieve forgiveness; rather, they may have considered their sins exonerated through the payment of tithes and alms.

Authors of the female picaresque, on the other hand, frequently criticize the presence of devious women in sacred space and critique the hypocrisy of allowing seduction and sexual commerce in the church, which undoubtedly evoked comparisons to the money lenders in the temple. López de Úbeda, in his description of Justina's experience in the cathedral of León, expresses dismay at the insincerity of churchgoers. Before arriving at the cathedral, Justina passes a brothel in which she observes that the women sit in the doorways 'como pichones en saetera' [like doves in arrow slits] to interact with pedestrians.¹⁸ The cathedral is adjacent to the brothel, evoking comparisons between the two forms of portal. Justina states

Noté que estaba notablemente envejecida la portada, más que ninguna otra parte de la iglesia, y pensé que la causa era porque todas las viejas gastan más de boca que de ninguna otra parte [...] pero no es eso, sino que aquella portada está vieja

¹⁷ See Witcombe, 'The Chapel of the Courtesan'.

¹⁸ López de Úbeda, *La pícaro Justina*, 457. López Sutilo notes the frequency of animal imagery, including birds, in the synonyms for prostitute, 'El léxico', 6.

y mohína y gastada de puro enfadada de ver entrar allí tantas caperuzas y tan pocos devotos a oír vísperas y oficios tan solenes.

[I noticed that the portal was aged, more than any other part of the church, and I thought that the cause was that old women use their mouth more than any other organ ... but it was not that, but rather the doorway was old and run down and worn out from pure rage at seeing so many fashionable bonnets and so few devout come to hear vespers and solemn offices.]¹⁹

Justina metaphorizes the church as an old woman, evincing the misogynist denunciations of older women common to the period and to López de Úbeda's work. Moreover, the reference to 'any other organ' implies a comparison of the church door to an old woman's vagina, underscoring the grotesque comparison since older women were especially vilified as sexually insatiable yet physically repulsive. After drawing this unappealing picture of the door, Justina anthropomorphizes its anger upon seeing people enter the church for reasons other than devotion. López de Úbeda uses this description and the grotesque personification of the church to critique the perceived decayed morals of his time. As one of López de Úbeda's *aprovechamientos* or moral lessons that ends each chapter states, the cathedral, which should be a devotional space, 'hacen la gente libre y disoluta casa de conversación y blanco de entretenimiento, cosa que por ser tan contra la honra de Cristo, morador de los templos, le castigará ásperamente' [is made by free and dissolute people into a house of conversation and place of entertainment, a thing which

¹⁹ López de Úbeda, *La pícaro Justina*, 463–464.

so affronts the honour of Christ, who dwells in the temples, that he will punish it severely] just as he punished the moneychangers in the temple.²⁰ Appearance in church, which should indicate devotion and adherence to social codes, figures in the female picaresque as a sign of depravity.

Given the association of female appearance in liminal space with sexual impropriety, moralists insisted that respectable women remain enclosed within domestic confines, as discussed in the previous chapter. Architectural design sought to strictly contain the female body by sealing off any opening to the exterior, for example through construction of a double doorway that would ensure control over entry and exit. Madre Magdalena's *La razón y forma de la galera* goes into detail regarding how the prison she envisions should be built. It would require five employees: a married couple and three nuns. The husband, who she refers to as the *alcaide* [officer], would be the liaison to the outside world assisted by his wife, while the inmates and nuns would be isolated within the interior. The officer 'ha de estar en la primera puerta y entrada, para que dé la mano a las que han de gobernar allá dentro' [must be in the first door and entryway, to assist those who will govern inside].²¹ He will conduct the prison's relationships with the outside world, while the nuns will administrate the interior. The three nuns will include a rector, who will govern the women, a teacher to instruct them in religious doctrine, and a *portera* [doorkeeper] 'que tenga a su cargo la segunda puerta' [in whose charge will be the second door] to the inside.²² However, the doorkeeper will be cloistered within the prison,

²⁰ Ibid., 625.

²¹ Barbeito, *Cárceles y mujeres*, 80.

²² Ibid., 80.

holding the key to the interior but not the exterior door, which will be in the charge of the officer. This system ensures that the inmates and the women who have authority over them will be strictly segregated from the exterior world, and from male presence, since even the officer will not be allowed past the first door, preventing any breach of chastity.

Madre Magdalena, a nun, imitates the architecture of the convent, with its *torno* [turn], a revolving window that allowed communication with the outside world without permitting entry to or exit from the convent. In her opinion, virtue and female reputation can only be maintained through complete isolation. The women inside the prison cannot exit until they have either completed their time or been granted a pardon from the king; Madre Magdalena assures that ‘con esto se cierra la puerta de golpe a intercesiones y favores de gente principal, de que suelen valerse estas malas mujeres’ [with this the door is closed to any intercessions or favours from important people, which these bad women utilize].²³ In other words, even communication with the outside can incite lascivious behaviour; Madre Magdalena seems to fear that the loose women she seeks to isolate will have former lovers in high positions, implying that some were noblemen’s mistresses. For this reason, they must be prevented from all contact with the outside world by the employment of a doorkeeper who, in turn, will communicate only with the officer and his wife. Similarly, the convent of Santa María Magdalena de la penitencia [Penitent Saint Mary Magdalen] in Madrid enforced strict regulations over who could open the door. The doorkeeper in this convent could open the door only in the presence of two nuns of the order that

²³ Ibid., 81.

oversaw the penitent former prostitutes.²⁴ In this case, the presence of three women ensured that they would oversee one another. These architectural dictums insist not merely on women's enclosure, but their complete isolation from any contact with the outside as the only path to redemption.

However, literary examples reveal cultural concern over the failure of architecture to effectively contain female sexuality. In Cervantes' exemplary novella *El celoso extremeño* [*The Jealous Extremaduran*], the jealous and elderly husband, Carrizales, constructs a completely enclosed space in an attempt to ensure his young wife's fidelity. He first closes off all the windows that face the street, and then constructs an apartment between the domestic space and the street entrance, where he installs an old eunuch as doorman. Only Carrizales may enter and leave the home; supplies are passed into the eunuch's quarters through a *torno* or rotating window similar to those used in convents, and the eunuch does not have a key to the outer door.²⁵ Leonora's confinement is so extreme that 'no consintió que dentro de su casa hubiese algún animal que fuese varón' [he did not consent that there would be inside his house so much as an animal that was male], and her life is compared to a cloister when the narrator explains that 'no se vio monasterio tan cerrado, ni monjas más recogidas' [never was seen a monastery so sealed off, nor nuns more cloistered] than Leonora and her maids.²⁶

This tale in particular highlights the tension between the desire to seal women off from

²⁴ Torremocha Hernández, *De la mancebía a la clausura*, 194.

²⁵ Cervantes, *El celoso extremeño*, 269.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 269–270.

outside contact to ensure chastity and the sexual appeal of modesty; it is precisely Leonora's invisibility and inaccessibility that awakens Loaysa's interest in her even without having seen her; as the narrator explains, Loaysa 'acertó a mirar la casa del recatado Carrizales, y viéndola siempre cerrada, le tomó gana de saber quién vivía dentro' [happened to look upon the house of the discrete Carrizales, and seeing it always shut up, the urge took him to know who lived within]; upon learning of Leonora's beauty, 'le encendió el deseo de ver si sería posible expugnar, por fuerza o por industria, fortaleza tan guardada' [he burned with desire to see if it would be possible to storm such a guarded fortress, whether by force or by industry], leading him to concoct an elaborate scheme to infiltrate the home and seduce Leonora.²⁷ Thus, it is precisely Leonora's invisibility and the architectural barriers erected to protect her modesty that awakens his desire to possess her.

Loaysa's skill as a musician earns him access to the eunuch's chamber through the promise of lessons; subsequently, he appeals to Leonora's maids' boredom and desire for entertainment to gain entry to the main house to perform for them. However, the locked door to the main house cannot be opened without the key that Carrizales keeps in the locked bedchamber he and Leonora inhabit, secured under his pillow. Just as the door functions as a vaginal metonym, the terms associated with doors reference the same erotic subtext such that the key appears as a frequent metonym for the penis; conversely, the keyhole or lock functions as a metonym for the vagina.²⁸ In Aretino's dialogues, for example, when Nanna educates her

²⁷ Ibid., 272.

²⁸ Martín, *An Erotic Philology* 193–197; Alzieu, Jammes and Lissorgues, *Poesía erótica*, 145; 150; 194.

daughter Pippa on how to cultivate sexual wiles, she refers to the lover's penis as 'la chiave che è ne la serratura' [the key that goes in the lock].²⁹ Likewise, in the Cervantine interlude *El viejo celoso* [*The Jealous Old Man*], thematically related to *El celoso extremeño*, the young wife, Doña Lorenza, complains to her neighbour that she is locked in the house by her overprotective elderly husband, stating that 'yo duermo con él, y jamás he visto ni sentido que tenga llave alguna' [I sleep with him, but I have never either seen or felt the presence of any key].³⁰ In this *entremés*, or one-act ludic play, the key is both a physical object and an allusion to the impotence resulting from her husband's advanced age; her reference to the inability to locate his 'key' reveals his inability to fulfil his marital obligation, leaving the young wife sexually frustrated and therefore open to her neighbour's suggestion that she take a lover, who enters the house concealed in a tapestry. Returning to *El celoso extremeño*, similar imagery appears; Leonora and her maids use a sleeping potion to drug her husband and she steals the key that he has hidden between the mattresses, and the main door is opened in a symbolic act that foreshadows Leonora's imminent seduction by the handsome young Loaysa.

In such texts, the erotic symbolism of keys, locks, and doors all serve to reinforce cultural beliefs about the closed nature of the virginal body and the converse openness of the sexually mature woman. Leonora's husband dies of shock after awakening to find Leonora in Loaysa's arms, yet she is not punished for her transgression. Although she does not consummate the relationship, by being caught in the arms of another man she has lost her honour. Her husband

²⁹ Aretino, *I ragionamenti*, 175.

³⁰ Cervantes, *El viejo celoso*, 261.

leaves her a generous inheritance to marry Loaysa, but she chooses instead to enter ‘uno de los más recogidos monasterios de la ciudad’ [one of the most cloistered convents of the city].³¹ This relatively happy denouement suggests that Cervantes exculpates Leonora for her lack of fidelity; the moral of the story, as the narrator relates, is ‘lo poco que hay que fiar de llaves, tornos y paredes cuando queda la voluntad libre’ [how little one can rely on keys, revolving windows, and walls when the will is free].³² This tale suggests that the act of locking away the desirable makes it doubly coveted, while it also re-encloses Leonora from the custody of her husband’s convent-like architecture into an actual convent, this time a confinement that she has freely chosen.

Architectural reinforcements like double doors and barred windows on convents and custodial institutions also insist on the need for a single entry into the interior similar to the architectural structure of Carrizales’ fictional house.³³ While neighbours may observe entry to the house by the front door, literary texts often allude to the back door as an erotic entry to the house that evades this oversight, obscuring involvement in sexual activity from public view, and thus allowing women to maintain a façade of respectability. In several of María de Zayas’s exemplary novels, she refers to women of easy virtue who offer paid companionship to a male character. In *Estragos que causa el vicio* [*The Ravages of Vice*], a novella set in Lisbon, Don Gaspar falls in love with Doña Florentina, the ill-fated protagonist whose love affair with her brother-in-law, Don Dionís, and subsequent machinations against her sister lead to the bloody

³¹ Cervantes, *El celoso extremeño*, 300.

³² *Ibid.*, 300.

³³ Torremocha Hernández, *De la mancebía*, 194.

slaughter of their entire household after she carries on an illicit affair with Don Dionís and betrays her sister through false accusations of infidelity that provoke Don Dionís's homicidal rage in which he kills his wife and their servants, and attempts to assassinate Florentina before killing himself. Don Gaspar rescues the gravely injured Florentina after she escapes from the house. A brief interlude before this main plot begins reveals that Don Gaspar's passion for Doña Florentina is not his first romantic attachment. An introductory sequence narrates his relationship with the youngest of four sisters from an apparently respectable family; however, while they maintain an honourable reputation, the sisters are loose women. The narrator relates that 'aunque con recato [...] trataban de entretenerse y aprovecharse; que ya las personas no sean castas, es gran virtud ser cautas' [although with modest appearance ... they wished to entertain themselves and enjoy life; if one cannot be chaste, it is a great virtue to be discreet].³⁴ Don Gaspar comes to an arrangement with the young woman and visits her at night, 'y para entrar de noche tenía llave de un postigo de una puerta trasera; de forma que, aguardando a que la gente se recogiese y las puertas se cerrasen [...] abría con su llave y entraba a ver su prenda, sin nota de escándalo de la vecinidad' [to enter at night, he had the key to a service door at the back; so that, being sure that people had retired and that the doors were closed ... he could open with his key to enter and see his prize, without a hint of scandal in the neighbourhood].³⁵ María de Zayas implicitly compares these ladies of easy virtue with the noble, beautiful, and chaste heroines of her other novels, and the inclusion of this otherwise superfluous scene in the novel draws a parallel between this

³⁴ Zayas, *Estragos que causa el vicio*, 108.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 108.

unnamed young lady who is not as respectable as she appears to be, and the anti-heroine Florentina, whose secret love affair behind the closed doors of her home leads to macabre slaughter.

Allusions to ladies of easy virtue who masquerade as respectable women appear frequently throughout Golden Age fiction, for example in María de Zayas's *La inocencia castigada*, wherein Inés originally believes that Don Diego's courtship is directed towards her neighbours who are 'doncellas y hermosas, mas con libertad' [young and beautiful, though acting with liberty] or in *La niña de los embustes*, wherein Teresa's lover is able to court her without arousing the suspicion of her husband since their neighbours are 'damas cortesanas' [courtesan ladies].³⁶ The examples from Zayas's and Castillo Solórzano's tales indicate the presence, or at least perceived presence, of elite prostitution in the form of kept women who feign the elite identity to which so many of the *pícaras* aspire. The female characters of Zayas's frame tale generally condemn these immoral women for harming the reputation of women in general.

As all these tales indicate, patriarchal control over female sexuality necessitated strict regulation of entrances to architectural space; since entry to the house signified entrance to the body, doorways served as a metonym for the hymen or vagina. Women's presence in the liminal space demonstrated their lack of chastity through spatial mobility. Yet, the enclosed woman aroused suspicion as well given the widespread mistrust of appearances expressed, for example, through trepidation that sacred space could be used as a cover for illicit sexual activity or tales of

³⁶ Zayas, *La inocencia castigada*, 73; Castillo Solórzano, *La niña de los embustes*, 235.

secret back doors. This, in turn, led to an insistence on complete segregation of the female body from exterior space through the construction of double doors, barred windows, and other architectural reinforcements. Nonetheless, fictional representations of control exercised over liminal space as a means to regulate female sexuality also indicate that containment itself is a fiction, and that male desire to possess the forbidden will override architectural constraints.

The Metaphorical Doorway

As can be seen in many of the previous examples, the doorway often serves as an erotic metonym for the entrances to the female body, undergirded by tension between the desire to physically isolate women to protect chastity and the desire to possess that which is locked up. Erotic poetry and ludic wordplay frequently appropriate the symbolism of doors, locks, and keys as signifiers of sexual innuendo. The doorway, especially, metonymically references the vagina, although due to the metaphoric fungibility of orifices in early modern innuendo, it can also signify the anus.³⁷ The erotic doorway can be either open or shut, signalling the sexual availability of the female body. An anonymous ballad recorded in Menéndez Pidal's *Flor nueva de romances viejos* [*New Flower of Old Ballads*] illustrates this trope:

Yo me era mora Moraima
morilla de un bel catar;
cristiano vino a mi puerta,
cuitada por me engañar.
hablóme en algarabía,
como aquel que la bien sabe:
--Abrasme las puertas, mora
si Alá te guarde de mal.

³⁷ Alzieu, Jammes, and Lissorgues, *Poesía erótica*, 145; Allaire, editorial comments, 231.

--¿Cómo te abriré, mezquina,
que no sé quién te serás?”
--Yo soy el moro Mazote,
hermano de la tu madre,
que un cristiano dejo muerto,
tras mí venía el alcalde;
si no me abres tú mi vida,
aquí me verás matar.
Cuando esto oí, cuitada,
comencéme a levantar;
vistiérame un almejía,
no hallando mi brial;
fuérame para la puerta
y abríla de par en par.³⁸

[I was the moor Moraima
Moorish damsel of beautiful face
a Christian came to my door
intent upon deceiving me
he spoke to me in *algarabía* [Arabic/Spanish Creole]
as one who knows it well
--open the door to me, Moorish woman,
if Allah keeps you from harm.
--How can I, poor woman, open the door
as I know not who you are?
--I am the Moor Mazote,
brother to your mother,
I have killed a Christian
and officers of justice pursue me,
If you do not open, my life,
you will see them kill me here.
When I heard this, concerned,
I began to prepare,
I put on my Moorish robes,
yet could not find my outer robe;
I went to the door,
and threw it open wide.]

³⁸ Menéndez Pidal, *Flor nueva*, 277–278.

The anonymous ballad highlights the sexual intentions of the deceitful Christian; the word *engañar* was commonly used to describe the deflowering of a virgin, often accompanied by a promise of marriage that was unfulfilled. The Christian comes to ‘deceive’ or seduce the exotic and eroticized Moorish woman. He accomplishes this through a masquerade of Moorish identity and appeal to kinship, and through the threat that he will be murdered before her eyes unless she intervenes. The poem is full of erotic subtext; Moraima comes to the door recently arisen from her bedchamber and clad only in her undergarments. Her state of undress, the seeming absence of father, brother, or other male protector, and the physical act of not merely opening the door but throwing it wide open foreshadow the elided sexual act that will ensue.

This poem presents what Marcia Welles terms a ‘heroic rape’ narrative, ‘characterized by a lack of explicit violence, or blatant sexuality, an elegance of posture and feature’.³⁹ Instead, the poem focuses on the beauty and allure of the eroticized Moor, whose acquiescence is implied in the action of throwing open the door rather than merely peeking out. Though she never explicitly consents to the sexual act, verbal acquiescence to sexual activity was unnecessary within the early modern conceptualization of primary (voluntary) consent and secondary (involuntary) consent; according to the ideology that Saint Augustine set forth, in secondary consent if women experience pleasure in the sexual act, they have implicitly consented to the act through what Augustine termed ‘consent of the mind’.⁴⁰ Since early modern texts perceive women as insatiably lustful, they have, in effect, always already consented to sexual activity merely by

³⁹ Welles, *Persephone’s Girdle*, 1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

being physically accessible to men, hence the insistence on architectural constraint of the female body, gaze, and mind. Moraima's tale is an eroticized fantasy of the sexually availability of marginalized women, in this case marginalized through her religious minority status. The doorway motif as a rhetorical figure for sexual availability can be observed in many poems and narratives of the period. While the crossed doorway in this tale signifies Moraima's loss of virginity, the uncrossed threshold serves as a metaphor for the unbroken hymen.

The converse of Moraima's account of throwing the doors wide open (*de par en par*) that utilizes the limits of the house as metonym for the boundaries of the female body appears in another ballad from the *Romancero* medieval ballad tradition, 'La doncella guerrera'. In this tale, a maiden dresses as a man and goes to war to protect her family's honour in the absence of male progeny. A prince, who has fallen in love with her beautiful eyes, discovers her true gender identity and she flees, with the prince pursuing her on horseback; as she nears her home she cries out, 'río de mi lugar, / una vez te pasé virgen, / virgen te vuelvo a pasar. / Abra las puertas mi padre, / ábralas de par en par' [oh river of my home, once I passed you a virgin, a virgin I shall cross once again. Open the doors, oh my father, throw them open wide].⁴¹ In this instance, the unfastening of the doors symbolizes the protection of the woman's virginity from penetration through her re-enclosure in the patriarchal home. The prince is left outside, 'a la puerta fué a llamar' [calling at the door].⁴²

This literary image of a man left outside knocking futilely at the closed door symbolizes

⁴¹ Menéndez Pidal, *Flor nueva*, 202.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 203.

thwarted male desire, a motif found in *La Celestina* as well. In the novel's first nocturnal assignation between the lovers, in which they speak through the locked doors of Pleberio's home, Melibea exclaims 'las puertas impiden nuestro gozo, las quales yo maldigo, y sus fuertes cerrojos y mis flacas fuerças, que ni tú estarías quexoso ni yo descontenta' [the doors impede our pleasure, I curse them, and their strong locks and my weakness, otherwise you would have no cause to complain nor would I be unhappy].⁴³ In this scene, Melibea openly declares her sexual longing, and makes clear that the only impediment to Calisto's access to her body is architectural by declaring 'dispongas de mi persona segund querrás' [you can dispose of my person as you please].⁴⁴ Though Melibea asserts that only her physical weakness hinders their assignation, Melibea's seduction and the dishonour to her father's house would be revealed publicly if the doors were to be forcibly opened. In this instance, both lovers are left sexually frustrated, though they arrange to meet the following night in her garden. Consequently, the doorway as metonym for the vagina is an ambiguous symbol of the contradictory female body that can represent either the loss or preservation of chastity.

Given the doorway's erotic significance, it will come as no surprise that many female picaresque texts employ door metaphors to communicate sexual availability. In *La Lozana andaluza*, for example, during the first sexual encounter between Lozana and Rampín, he implores her to allow him access to her body, saying 'abridle vos la puerta, que él hará su oficio a la macha martillo' [open your doors, and allow my hammer to do his work]; the hammer here

⁴³ Rojas, *La Celestina*, 266.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 266.

is an obvious phallic referent.⁴⁵ As they engage in a second act of intercourse, Lozana cries out ‘¿Qué pasaréis por mi puerta?’ [What? You enter my door?] as he penetrates her.⁴⁶ In the little-known *La vida y costumbres de la madre Andrea* (anonymous, circa 1650), a pseudo-autobiography of the prostitute and brothelkeeper Andrea written in Amsterdam but whose action takes place in a Madrid brothel recently recovered by Anne J. Cruz and Enriqueta Zafra, the protagonist describes a scene at her mother’s funeral wherein her mother’s lovers ludically debate whose seed formed which of Andrea’s body parts.⁴⁷ One of her ‘fathers’ asserts,

Yo pienso que hice la madre y la puerta por donde le entra el socorro, y voto a tal, que quiero me dé lo mío o por lo menos que me lo preste, que no será incesto, pues una parte viene a ser ninguna respecto del todo que obraron vuestras mercedes. [I think I made her mother [vagina] and the opening with which she earns her living, and damn it all, I want her to give me what’s mine, or at least, lend it to me. And it won’t be incest, since one part is just as good as another when you consider the total amount of labour all your

⁴⁵ Delicado, *La Lozana*, 231.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁴⁷ The only extant copy of *La vida y costumbres de la Madre Andrea* was a manuscript owned by Jonas A. Van Praag, who published an edition in the *Revista de Literatura* in 1958. The manuscript was subsequently lost, and the only surviving version was that printed by the *Revista de Literatura* until Cruz and Zafra’s edition (2011).

graces have put in.]⁴⁸

Though Cruz translates the Spanish *puerta* as ‘opening’, the original reads ‘door’. Andrea’s supposed father thus constructs a joke in which he claims to have contributed her genitals, using the common synonym *madre* [mother] for the uterus since no term existed yet in Spanish to denote the uterus, metaphorically describing her vagina as a door. Thus, he claims ownership over her genitals, with the right to a portion of her earnings (the term *socorro* or ‘aid’ multivalently references the penises that enter her, her physical pleasure, and the profit she earns from prostitution), or at least to enjoy her services. *La Lozana andaluza* and *La vida y costumbres* describe sex acts in explicit detail through such eroticized metaphors that allude to sexual acts without explicitly describing them, making use of double-entendres, puns, and allusions, in this case the door as metonym for the vagina.

The doorway’s erotic significance as metaphor for the vagina appears in many other works of the female picaresque as well, such as the *pícaro* Justina. Justina occupies many physical doorways in her tale, beginning with the door of her father’s inn, from which she attracts customers. She also begs in the doorway of a church in her travels in León. To appear impoverished, she trades her cloak for the tattered garment worn by one of the Leonese women she encounters. This woman, Justina states, ‘llamábase Fulana de la Puerta, y como puerta cuyo quicio estaba untado con mis mantecosas dulzuras y promesas, dio entrada a mi gusto y puerta franca a mis intentos’ [was called someone or other of the door, and as a door whose frame was

⁴⁸ *La vida y costumbres*, 34–35. Cruz translation.

greased by my sweet and oily promises, she allowed entry to my pleasure and an open doorway to my intentions].⁴⁹ Ostensibly, Justina merely relates that the woman did, in fact, lend her cloak as requested. However, the sexual subtext in this particular episode lends itself to a queer reading of the scene. The woman's last name conveys a vaginal allusion, and the language Justina uses of oiling her doorway evokes early modern midwives and medicine women who were frequently instructed to apply ointments and oils to other women's vaginas in preparation for birth or to address gynaecological problems.⁵⁰ Justina's reference to oiling Fulana's doorway therefore invokes genital contact. The erotic subtext between the two women culminates in Justina's reference to *gusto* [pleasure] upon having entered the woman's opened door.

This encounter, and all the erotic content of *La pícaro Justina*, is couched in seemingly innocent language; López de Úbeda's introduction to the work assures his reader that he will not 'contar amores al tono del libro de Celestina; antes, si bien lo miras, he huido de eso totalmente, porque siempre que de esto trato voy a la ligera' [speak of love in the tone of *La Celestina*; instead, if you look closely, you will see that I have avoided it entirely, since whenever such

⁴⁹ López de Úbeda, *La pícaro Justina*, 565.

⁵⁰ Nuñez de [C]oria's *Libro del parto humano*, for example, instructs the midwife that during birth she should be 'ungiendo y ablandando la natura con algun azeyte o uncion' [anointing and softening the uterus with some sort of oil or ointment] in order to lessen the pain (26). This is but one of numerous instances in the text in which he advises midwives to apply oils to the uterus. Similar prescriptions are often found in medical texts as a remedy for *mal de madre* or uterine complaints as well, such as the *Lilio de medicina* (Gordonio, fol. 173r).

things occur I tread lightly].⁵¹ In other words, López de Úbeda will not speak openly of carnal matters, but if the reader looks closely, he will see their occurrence despite the elision. Thus, López de Úbeda's text reveals, upon close reading, a nearly omnipresent erotic subtext throughout Justina's supposedly chaste relationships with fellow characters that relies on the suggestive language typical of satire, such as *gusto* (pleasure) in the above quotation. This episode is not a literal erotic encounter, but rather bawdy humour designed to mock Justina, a hypersexualized low other. The erotic subtext wordplay allows the reader to laugh along with the author at female perfidy and debasement.

In fact, queer subtext appears occasionally in early female picaresque texts, though it is less frequent in later works.⁵² In *La Celestina*, for example, Celestina visits the prostitute Areúsa in her home to convince her to initiate a sexual relationship with Calisto's servant Pármeno that would solidify Celestina's influence over him. Celestina begins by extolling Areúsa's body as she lies in her bed, stating 'déxame mirarte todo a mi voluntad, que me huelgo' [allow me to look at all of you at my will, for it brings me pleasure].⁵³ The setting and Celestina's words make clear that Areúsa is naked; when she complains of period pains, Celestina declares, 'tentaré' [I will touch you] and begins to massage her. Though Celestina stages the scene for Pármeno's

⁵¹ López de Úbeda, *La pícaro Justina*, 111.

⁵² Historical evidence demonstrates that homoerotic encounters between women were a concern in custodial institutions, which banned women from sleeping in the same beds (Torremocha Hernández, *De la mancebía*, 195).

⁵³ Rojas, *La Celestina*, 204.

titillation as he waits behind the door, Celestina's touch and words are also designed to seduce Areúsa by disposing her to a sexual encounter. Celestina continues to exclaim over Areúsa's body, stating 'qué gorda y fresca estás [...] qué pechos [...] no hay en la cibdad tres cuerpos como el tuyo' [how fat and fresh you are ... what breasts ... there are not three bodies in the city such as yours]; as Celestina praises Areúsa's body, she touches her, demonstrated by Areúsa's complaint that Celestina is tickling her.⁵⁴

This erotic scene ends, predictably, with an assignation; yet, Areúsa's exclamations that Pármemo is overly hasty make clear that Celestina is still in the room as they begin to copulate. Celestina takes vicarious pleasure in Areúsa's sexuality, telling her that Pármemo is young and therefore lustful, stating 'en tres noches no se le demude la cresta' [in three nights his crest will not go down], to which she adds 'destos me mandavan a mí comer en mi tiempo los médicos de mi tierra, quando tenía mejores dientes' [these are the type I was ordered to eat in my time by the doctors of my homeland, when I had better teeth]; in other words, Celestina reflects fondly on her youth, when she had abundant and virile sexual partners.⁵⁵ As Pármemo enters Areúsa's bed,

⁵⁴ Ibid., 204. Gerli notes the 'female voyeurism' in an 'encounter charged with sexual tension' in this homoerotic scene, which he attributes to a pattern of voyeurism throughout the novel (*La Celestina*, 116). Velasco, on the other hand, asserts that 'prostitution and lesbian sexuality have been linked since antiquity', and criticizes the critical tendency to read this scene as heteroerotic (*Lesbians*, 57–59).

⁵⁵ Rojas, *La Celestina*, 210. Apart from the obvious reference to an erection in this statement, Vasvári notes the relationship to pan-European wordplay on 'cock' in this particular utterance as well as other references Celestina makes to Pármemo as a *gallillo* (little cock) ('Glosses', 172).

Celestina adds ‘voyme solo porque me hazés dentera con vuestro besar y retoçar; que aún el sabor en las enzías me quedó: no le perdí con las muelas’ [I shall leave, only because you make me toothsome with your kissing and touching; the taste still lingers on my gums: I did not lose it with my molars].⁵⁶ The humour of this statement relies on the erotic overtones of teeth in early modern sexual innuendo in which teeth coming in represents sexual awakening and puberty, while conversely the loss of teeth signals old age, impotence, and loss of libido.⁵⁷ Celestina, like many older women in the female picaresque, has lost her erotic appeal but not her lasciviousness. Such scenes reflect the misogynist early modern construction of women, especially older women, as sexually voracious, as well as the fluidity of desire, which is readily displaced from one object to another without regard to biological sex. Gerli explains this malleable desire as voyeuristic fetishism typical of all the characters of *La Celestina*; yet, as Madhavi Menon and other queer theorists have urged us to recognize, erotic desire resists attempts at classification and overruns its limits such that sexual coherence is a fantasy.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Rojas, *La Celestina*, 211.

⁵⁷ Vasvári analyses the erotic meanings of teeth in her study of the supposed euphemism of Calisto’s toothache in *La Celestina*, which, as she reveals, is in reality a dysphemism that exposes Calisto’s sexual motives (‘Glosses’, 173). See also Alzieu, Jammes and Lisourges, *Poesía erótica*, 172; 201. While Gerli examines the ‘verbal sparring’ between Celestina and Melibea in this scene in depth, noting that ‘although she seeks to deny it, Melibea knows full well the reason for Celestina’s visit’, he curiously fails to analyse the reference to Calisto’s toothache as a sexual cipher (*Celestina*, 145).

⁵⁸ Gerli, *Celestina*, 98–121; Menon, *Unhistorical Shakespeare*, 1–25. Menon further states that ‘desires always exceed identitarian categories and resist being corralled into hetero-temporal camps’, and that the

While erotic desire between males was subject to strict early modern taboos against sodomy, female same-sex attraction often served a ludic purpose even as it titillated the male reader. In *La Lozana andaluza* as well, female characters frequently remark on the beauty of one another's bodies. Rampín's aunt, for example, exclaims that Lozana 'tiene lindo cuerpo' [has a beautiful body] and adds 'quisiera ser hombre, tan bien me ha parecido' [I would like to be a man, she looks so good to me].⁵⁹ As these examples demonstrate, characters in the early iterations of the female picaresque occasionally express erotic desire for other female characters. In part, these expressions underscore women's depraved and lewd nature. On the other hand, they serve to entice the male reader through literary voyeurism. Since the sexual act was culturally defined as penetrative, female homoerotic desires in early modern Spanish literature, when they do not involve a woman usurping the male position in sex acts, provide an 'erotic diversion' that 'could be tolerated' and seen as comic.⁶⁰ Such humour presents the female body as, in Delicado's words, a 'jardín que Dios nos dio para recreación corporal, que si no castamente, al menos cautamente lo gozásemos' [a garden that God gave us [men] for corporeal

desire to read stable identity categories in the past is itself an act of heteronormativity, creating a 'heterotemporality' that privileges difference over sameness (1–2). In a similar manner, Gerli asserts that 'desire can neither be denied nor controlled' (*Celestina*, 214), though Gerli insists on the destructive force of erotic desire whereas Menon underscores the productive ability of desire to resist attempts to fix it within modern categories and thereby disrupting heterotemporality.

⁵⁹ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 229.

⁶⁰ Martín, *An Erotic Philology*, 111.

recreation, so that we might, if not chastely at least cautiously, enjoy it].⁶¹ Though the end materials to *La Lozana andaluza* are extremely contradictory, this statement suggests a pragmatic approach that recognizes coitus as unchaste but pleasurable and occasionally hygienic. The female body is a doorway to the pleasures of the flesh, or an object of ridicule; in either case, it is a tool to be utilized by the male reader for his own enjoyment, and always construed as sensual.

Previous criticism has often interpreted the female picaresque as a fictional pharmakon that alleviates sexual desire without sin or danger of sexually transmitted disease through a cathartic encounter with the fictional other.⁶² Yet, the textual body must be interpreted within the same humoral epistemologies that guided understandings of the physical body. Medical texts such as the influential fifteenth-century *Lilio de medicina* assert that poisonous substances build up in the semen if not discharged since ‘seed’ is a purer form of fluid than blood that corrupted more easily and became more noxious when corroded.⁶³ Once accumulated, the seed must be expelled since it accumulates ‘en su lugar natural y con él el pene se pone en erección y se enciende el deseo, ya que la eliminación de las materias nocivas para el organismo exige la operación de la erección’ [in its natural place, and with it the penis becomes erect and desire increases, so that the elimination of the noxious material from the organism requires the working

⁶¹ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 484.

⁶² Zafra, *Prostituidas por el texto*, 125–128; Dangler, *Mediating Fictions*, 140–170.

⁶³ Gordonio, *Lilio de medicina*, 304.

of the erection].⁶⁴ Thus, sperm retention could cause serious illness; moreover, for certain complexions, simply abstaining from sexual intercourse could cause illness and even death through a toxic accumulation of humours. The anonymous fifteenth-century Catalan treatise *Speculum al foderi* [*Mirror of Fucking*] states ‘e jo mateix viu hòmens de molta esperma que estaven de foder per santedat, que refredaren llurs cossos e perderen los miviments, e tornaren en gran tristor sens raó, e avéllur manera d’oradura, e perderen lo menjar’ [I myself have seen men who, having much sperm, out of sanctity denied themselves coitus, and their body became chilled, they lost movement, and sadly their reason, and became insane and lost their appetite].⁶⁵

Within the humoral system, different constitutions required different medical interventions, and some constitutions were seen as inherently prone to an excess of humoral material that must be expelled through sexual contact. The *Lilio de medicina*, for example, states that coitus dries out the body, and thus the lovesick or melancholy should abstain, but for some ‘a los que es permissio el coytu bie[n] conuiene sy templadamente se fiziere segund Auic[ena]’ [to whom coitus is permitted if performed in moderation as Avicenna states] coitus brings health benefits such as improved sleep, mood, and digestion.⁶⁶ Thus, authorial strategies that provoke erotic reactions in the male reader cannot be entirely consistent with a didactic purpose since they could potentially incite a dangerous imbalance of humours. Instead, the male reader is left with a textual pharmakon that can either ‘cure’ by inspiring the total evasion of corrupting

⁶⁴ Constantine the African, *Liber menor de coitu*, 87.

⁶⁵ *Speculum al foder*, 60.

⁶⁶ Gordonio, *Lilio de medicina*, fol. 60v.

contact with women, or ‘poison’ that lays out a guide for sexual contact after having warned of its dangers. Moreover, a medical model based on differing constitutions meant that, unlike the modern medical epistemology in which the same medicine will cure all bodies, in the early modern imaginary different types of body required different approaches, creating a multimodal and multivalent view of human nature. The frequency and lurid detail of portrayals of desire in the early female picaresque indicate that authors left the final moral valuation to the reader. While humoral defences of the hygienic value of coitus became increasingly tempered with moral concerns during the early modern period, their influence persisted well beyond the medieval period.⁶⁷ In this construct, the door opened to the male reader can lead either to earthly pleasure or to spiritual fulfilment.

The Doors of Paradise

In what follows, I suggest that this humoral view of the vagina as a potentially therapeutic doorway undergirds erotic wordplay that utilizes religious imagery. In medieval literature, religious symbolism is frequently eroticized, as for example when the cross was figured as a woman with whom Jesus joined in erotic coupling or losing a relic of the true cross to infidels is described as a rape.⁶⁸ A notorious example of double-entendres on sacred imagery occurs in *El libro de buen amor*, wherein the Archpriest utilizes a male go-between to facilitate an encounter with a woman named Cruz [cross]. The Archpriest recounts that ‘quando la Cruz veía, yo sienpre

⁶⁷ See Kuffner, ‘En el tocar’; Dangler, *Making Difference*, 83–110.

⁶⁸ Giles, *The Laughter of Saints*, 15–20.

me omillava: / santiguava me a ella do quier que la fallava' [when I saw Cruz, I gave homage, I crossed myself to her wherever I found her]. Unfortunately for the Archpriest, his go-between Ferrand Garçia also 'adores' Cruz and 'crosses' her first. The episode is replete with salacious dysphemisms that presage the erotic encounter desired by the Archpriest but experienced by his intercessor.⁶⁹ The Archpriest learns a valuable lesson from this experience and employs a female go-between thereafter.

The doorway is another such site where religious imagery is used as the basis for erotic banter, and this may be related to the doorway's importance in love magic, an arena of occult knowledge often administered by lower-class practitioners including prostitutes, go-betweens, and procuresses such as Lozana, Celestina, and Zara (the mother of Elena, *La hija de Celestina*). As Christopher Black explains, 'professional prostitutes were experts in love, expected to be knowledgeable about love potions and magic, spells and incantations to bind or loose lovers and rivals [...] there was a perceived and real link between prostitutes and superstitious practices'.⁷⁰ Historians have uncovered numerous examples of spells, incantations, chants, and other love magic rituals that take place in the doorway. María Helena Sánchez Ortega, for example, describes conjurations designed to elicit a visit from the male lover that utilize the doorway, such as 'sweeping the threshold while conjuring for the man's return'. She includes an example of one such cant: 'Conjúrote, puerta y quicial / Por donde Fulano ha salido / Ha de volver a entrar' [I

⁶⁹ See Vasvári, 'La semiología'.

⁷⁰ Black, *Early Modern Italy*, 104–105. See also Perry, 'Lost Women', 208–209; Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*, 101.

conjure you doorway and doorframe that where *fulano* has gone out, he will once again enter] that would be recited as the practitioner swept the female customer's doorway.⁷¹ 'Fulano', a generic name in Spanish similar to John Doe in modern English, would be replaced during the conjuring with the name of the beloved. This conjuration bears a remarkable resemblance to the *ensalmos* or healing chants used by Lozana to treat syphilis and other ailments.⁷² Guido Ruggiero likewise underscores the importance of the doorway in love magic, explaining that 'the geography of the house was laden with meanings, signs, and metaphors largely lost today. Along with the hearth, the door sill and the door were very important [...in] a large range of magic focused on these boundaries of the home.'⁷³ Crossing the threshold of the house connotes the sexual act, as seen in the Western marriage ritual in which the groom carries the bride through the doorway, symbolically consummating their union. In love magic performed by female practitioners for female clients, male love is assured by his crossing the doorway, symbolically entering body and home.

Apart from their use as a metonym for the vagina, doors held an important place in the sacred imaginary. Jesus states in the Gospel of John, 'I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved'.⁷⁴ Likewise, St. Peter's iconographic key to heaven symbolizes his role as gatekeeper passed down to his earthly counterpart, the Pope. Doorways' sacred imagery took

⁷¹ Sánchez Ortega, 'Sorcery and Eroticism', 73.

⁷² Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 473. See also Kuffner, 'En el tocar'.

⁷³ Ruggiero, *Binding Passions*, 112.

⁷⁴ Douay Rheims, John 10:9.

material form during jubilee celebrations, when a penitent's sins could be redeemed by a pilgrimage to Rome, going to confession, and visiting the main basilicas for a set number of consecutive days (30 days for Roman residents and fifteen for pilgrims). The ritual symbolism of church doors was used in supernatural healing as well, as when women would put their finger in the keyhole of church doors while reciting a prayer for fertility.⁷⁵ Holy doors, such as the *Puerta del perdón* in Toledo that appears in *La hija de Celestina* as a location where Elena seeks out clientele, could absolve the sins of those who passed through them, and the most important of these were located in the Roman basilica, used in particular for the celebration of jubilee years.⁷⁶ This tradition began with the preparation for the 1500 jubilee, when Pope Alexander VI ordered a doorway to be built in St. Peter's basilica and then plugged with brickwork that he subsequently destroyed with a hammer to initiate the jubilee year. In the same way, 'while the Pope opened the door at St. Peter's, cardinals he delegated did likewise at the other three jubilee basilicas at the same moment.'⁷⁷ Francisco Delicado wrote *La Lozana andaluza* in 1524 as Rome prepared for the 1525 jubilee, which saw the second ritual opening of the holy doors, a custom that continues to the present. In 1525, Clement VII modified the ceremony by opening the doors with a golden hammer, while its modern counterpart is silver.⁷⁸ At the jubilee's close, the holy doors are ceremoniously resealed. Similar holy doors exist at other sites of religious pilgrimage,

⁷⁵ Hufton, *The Prospect before Her*, 179.

⁷⁶ Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, 44–45.

⁷⁷ O'Grady, *Rome Reshaped*, 81.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

such as the *Porta santa* of the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela (Galicia, Spain). These traditions draw on the symbolism of transformation concurrent with entrance into religious life, and, more broadly, into heaven.

Delicado was personally involved in the preparations for Rome's 1525 jubilee since he was commissioned to write a guidebook for Spanish priests who came to the city. References to the jubilee appear in *La Lozana andaluza*, which satirizes and eroticizes the influx of pilgrims to Rome by depicting a burlesque influx of prostitutes. Herjeto, the servant of a priest who has come to Rome for ordination and who solicits Lozana's sexual services, tells Lozana that her fame, or more precisely infamy, has spread all the way to Spain. He describes a pilgrimage of whores that satirizes the holy pilgrimage to Rome for the jubilee, stating that

En España nos dijeron mil bienes de vuestra merced, y en la nao unas mujeres que tornan acá con unas niñas que quedan en Civitavieja; y ellas vezan a las niñas vuestro nombre porque, si se perdieren que vengan a vos, porque no tienen otro mamparo, y vienen a ver el año santo.

[In Spain they told us a thousand good things about your ladyship, and in the boat some women who were returning here with some girls who stayed in Civitavieja; and they taught the girls your name so that, if they become lost they may come to you, because they have no other refuge, and they come to see the holy year.]⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Delicado, *La Lozana*, 405.

Herjeto's description of the voyage constructs Lozana as an eroticized anti-saint venerated by the prostitutes that service pilgrims en route to Rome. The resulting sexualization of religious imagery occurs repeatedly throughout *La Lozana andaluza*, a point that should problematize efforts to read *La Lozana andaluza* as a didactic work. In this same scene, Lozana asks Herjeto why his master, Trujillo, has come to Rome. Herjeto replies 'señora, por corona' [for a crown, madam], referring to the tonsure Trujillo will adopt upon ordination, but also establishing an erotic double-entendre with *corona* as the female genitalia, revealing Herjeto's purpose in visiting Lozana: to solicit her services on his master's behalf.⁸⁰

Another instance of sacrilegious wordplay that appropriates religious imagery occurs in a scene in which one of Lozana's clients pleads with her to intercede on his behalf with a courtesan; he explains that he is vying for the position of her lover, and then states that she is 'sede vacante'; he refers to her as a 'vacant See' since she is a courtesan currently without a patron, using the political machinations involved in choosing a new Pope as a metaphor for the rivalry between the two men that also functions as a double-entendre for her empty vagina.⁸¹ These instances of erotic badinage sexualize the gendering of the Church as female in relation to a male divinity to comically underscore the duality between carnal and spiritual pleasure.

The dualism in this text has been construed as a critique of Church corruption; by eroticizing religious imagery, Delicado could be referencing charges by many of his contemporaries that the Church, and the Holy See particularly, had prostituted itself through

⁸⁰ Ibid., 408.

⁸¹ Ibid., 310.

hypocrisy and abandoned its spiritual principles. Indeed, *La Lozana andaluza* is commonly interpreted as a denunciation of the corruption of Rome.⁸² However, this analysis falls somewhat short when one considers the contradictory nature of Delicado's text, which occasionally includes defences of prostitution as preserving social order, and the fictionalized author's close relationship with Lozana as her client; although he critiques her conduct, he also frequents her home and those of elite courtesans. Delicado minimalizes his fictionalized author's involvement in sexual commerce, and more than likely his own, by referring to women as a garden for men's pleasure, and through his references to 'cosas que se hacen que no son de decir' [things which one does but that should not be talked about], indicating that he takes a more pragmatic approach to morality than he is often credited with; perhaps he is not so much concerned with prostitution *per se*, but rather the unregulated and excessive carnal trade in Rome, which he compares to the regulated system of municipal brothels in his homeland.⁸³ Later female picaresque texts, despite their frequent moralizing, demonstrate the same outlook on women as instruments for male benefit who are, therefore, expendable.

Moreover, Delicado's eroto-religious badinage is far from unique. Delicado's contemporary, the Spanish poet and diplomat Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, for example, employs

⁸² García Verdugo, *La Lozana*, 21–70; Damiani, *Francisco Delicado*, 85–114; Wardropper, 'La novela como retrato', 476. Others see Delicado's work as cryptojudaic (see da Costa Fontes, 'Anti-Trinitarianism' and *The Art of Subversion*; McInnis-Domínguez, 'The Diseasing Healer'; Márquez Villanueva, 'El mundo converso'; Hernández Ortíz, *Génesis artística*, 115).

⁸³ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 487.

a similar technique based on the religious and erotic imagery of doors and keys in his Sonnet

XII:

Preciábase una dama de parlera,
Y mucho más de grande apodadora,
Y encontrando un galán así a deshora,
Sin conocerle ni saber quién era,

Le dijo, en ver su talle y su manera:
“Parecéis a San Pedro”, y a la hora
Rióse muy de gana la señora,
Como si al propio aquel apodo fuera,

Volvió el galán, y vió que no era fea,
Y en el punto que allí se ve quien sabe,
Le respondió con un gentil aviso:

“Mi reina, aunque San Pedro yo no sea,
A lo menos aquí traigo la llave
Con que le podré abrir su paraíso”.

[A woman considered herself an eloquent speaker
and even more so a witty inventor of nicknames
and encountering a gallant at random
not knowing him or who he was,

She told him, upon seeing his size and his mannerism
“You look like Saint Peter”, and at the same time
That lady laughed uproariously
As if that nickname suited him

The gentleman returned, and seeing that she was not ill-favoured,
And with the alacrity which will be seen by the wise,
He responded with genteel advice,

“My queen, although Saint Peter I am not,
At least I bring here the key
with which to open your paradise.”]⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Quoted in Martín, *Cervantes and the Burlesque Sonnet*, 196.

In this poem, Hurtado de Mendoza uses the religious imagery associated with Saint Peter as the basis for an erotic jest in which the key to the doors of heaven becomes a double-entendre for the male member, while paradise is figured as sexual pleasure and, by extension, the female genitals as the portal to erotic gratification. Here, as in *La Lozana andaluza*, the doors of paradise illustrate the duality of earthly and divine pleasures.

The double meaning of paradise in Hurtado de Mendoza's poem may serve to shed some light on a cryptic episode from the final scene of *La Lozana andaluza*. In the wake of a portentous dream that prefigures the sack of Rome, Lozana tells Rampín 'yo quiero ir a paraíso, y entraré por la puerta que abierta hallare, pues tiene tres, y solicitaré que vais vos, que lo sabré hacer' [I wish to go to paradise, and I will enter by whichever door I find open, after all it has three, and I will ask there that you come too, for I'll know how to do it].⁸⁵ Critics frequently interpret this section as a symbolic conversion, borne out by the statement in the title to this

⁸⁵ Delicado, *La Lozana*, 480. In literary conceptions of heaven and hell, the underworld too lay behind gates. In the classical tradition, the underworld was often accessed through descent into a cave. In *The Aeneid*, during Aeneas's descent into the underworld in Book VI, he observes two gated exits: one of horn and one of ivory (Virgil, 160). In Canto III of Dante's *Inferno*, the poet enters the gates of hell, which bear the inscription 'Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate' [Leave behind every hope, ye who enter here] (18).

The reference to the doors of paradise may contain a terrestrial referent as well. In the mid-fifteenth century, Ghiberti designed an elaborate entrance for the east doors of the Florence baptistry. In the early sixteenth century, Michelangelo dubbed these the 'doors of paradise' for their unearthly beauty.

sketch that Lozana ended her life ‘santamente’ [piously] on the island of LÍpari.⁸⁶ In this reading, Lozana’s retirement to LÍpari signifies a penitential withdrawal from a life of sin symbolized through her adoption of a new name, Vellida. However, Delicado suggests several other possible ends for Lozana, leaving the novel without closure. Rampín replies to Lozana’s statement regarding the doors of paradise that they should instead go to Naples, ‘y allí viviremos como reyes y aprenderé yo a hacer guazamalletas, y vos venderés regalicia, y allí será el paraíso que soñastes’ [and there we shall live like kings and I will learn to make pastries and you will sell liquorice, and there you will find the paradise you dreamed of].⁸⁷ In other words, Rampín asserts that they should forge a paradise on earth rather than waiting for the next life. In fact, this seems to be precisely the resolution that occurs, since the end materials and frontispiece indicate that the pair has gone to Venice rather than LÍpari as intended.⁸⁸ Delicado’s ambiguous ending suggests that Lozana does not repent or reform since she never expresses regret. The only evidence of conversion is her intended change of moniker from ‘Lozana’ to ‘Vellida’, which, as Macpherson asserts,

⁸⁶ Delicado, *La Lozana*, 478.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 480. The meaning of *guazamalletas* is disputed, I am following Allaire’s interpretation of a ‘torta o rosquilla’ as most likely in the context of Lozana selling licorice (editorial comments, 480).

⁸⁸ In Manuel da Costa Fontes’ estimation, the three doors, along with all the other tripled references in the book such as Lozana’s three names (Aldonza/ Lozana/ Vellida), are a mockery of the doctrine of the Trinity and demonstrative of what he considers Delicado’s cryptojudaism (‘Anti-Trinitarianism’, 481). Other critics read her references to the doors of paradise as sincere repentance that mirrors Mary Magdalen’s conversion and subsequent hermeticism.

is likely a play on the Italian 'bel ida', referring to the journey on which she is about to embark.⁸⁹

However, she has already undergone one change of name without a corresponding change of lifestyle, so this seems insufficient evidence for true repentance. Instead of confessing the errors of her ways, and in keeping with the stereotype of the greedy *alcahueta*, in this monologue she focuses on economic decline rather than any possible moral qualms about past transgressions, asserting 'veo que mi trato y plática ya me dejan' [I see that my charms and wit are leaving me].⁹⁰ These statements suggest that Lozana's desire to retire from a life of active prostitution stems not from contrition but rather the pragmatic consideration that, as she ages, profits will decrease. More likely, Lozana's retirement parodies the many courtesans who underwent a religious conversion once they reached an age that made active work in the sex trade difficult, and the prostitutes who entered the newly formed convents for reformed prostitutes.⁹¹ Delicado suggests in the end materials, as the imagery of the frontispiece also indicates, that Lozana's does not retire, but rather relocates to Venice, and that she intends to continue her activities as go-between and purveyor of beauty supplies even if she can no longer profit from her own body; however, this repentance is fleeting, or at least ambiguous. In the end materials, Lozana reassures her fellow prostitutes that Roman prostitution will endure and will eventually return to its former glory despite the setback undergone during the sack.⁹² Thus, the reader is left with several possible ends for Lozana, none of which are clearly established, and all of which are therefore suspect. Her reference to the three doors of paradise, in which she promises to ensure Rampín's entry as well, suggests that her ability to seduce extends

⁸⁹ Macpherson, 'Solomon's Knot', 221.

⁹⁰ Delicado, *La Lozana*, 481.

⁹¹ Witcombe, 'The Chapel of the Courtesan', 279–281.

⁹² Delicado, *La Lozana*, 503.

even to the heavenly sphere.

This intermingling of religious imagery with erotic humour requires an approach that recognizes that different registers may coexist and contradict each other without necessarily privileging one over another. Sarah Salih addresses the difficulty of attempts to delineate erotic and spiritual experience in mystic texts, and critiques the critical tendency to read sexual content in medieval literature as always metaphorical, construing the medieval as naive, ‘simply less interested in sex’, and, ‘prelapsarian’ in contrast to a modern ‘post-Freudian obsession with matters sexual’ of the modern world.⁹³ Like Menon, Salih urges critics to resist ‘totalizing explanations’ and instead recognize the possibility for the intermingling of erotic and religious registers.⁹⁴ With Salih, I argue that it is facetious to ask whether texts are *really* about sex when the erotic and obscene appear so frequently across medieval and early modern genres; instead, I propose to follow her suggestion to ‘examine the slippage between’ the erotic and the spiritual ‘rather than attempting to reinforce any secure distinction’ or, more to the point, without allowing one to supersede the other.⁹⁵ Commonly, criticism of Spanish literature overlooks the blatant eroticism of the texts being touted as didactic, dismissing their obscenity as ironic.

Female picaresque texts, especially *La Lozana andaluza* and *La pícaro Justina*, have often been read as parodies of the hagiographical tradition that draw on tales of repentant former prostitutes such as Mary Magdalen, Mary of Egypt, or Saint Thais as part of a didactic strategy

⁹³ Salih, ‘When is a Bosom Not a Bosom?’, 19.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

to warn readers away from sins of the flesh. Yet, as Virginia Burrus demonstrates, the lives of female saints ‘are the site of an exuberant eroticism’ that has gone largely ignored by modern criticism; Burrus calls for critics to recognize the ‘profound ambivalence’ of such texts and to resist the urge to define sinfulness and sanctity as ‘mutually exclusive, oppositional binary terms’ to instead recognize their seductive appeal to the medieval or early modern reader.⁹⁶ Similarly, Martha Bayless’s study of parody in the Middle Ages demonstrates that literary parody ‘is not invariably critical, even of the subjects it satirizes [...and] is more often entertainment than polemic’.⁹⁷ In the Spanish literary tradition, Ryan D. Giles has examined erotic wordplay centred on religious symbols such as the cross, asserting that ‘the medieval tradition of parodying saints allows for a discursive comingling of levity and piety that will later feed into early modern expressions of spiritual disillusionment and mixed feelings’.⁹⁸ Giles construes this tendency as overall in line with didactic messages urging the reader toward spiritual introspection; however, this interpretation tends to downplay the erotic nature of such texts.

While Lozana is often read as a cipher for Mary Magdalen, recent feminist approaches to hagiography have questioned the extent to which these tales served as moral exemplars, instead asserting that they served as much to entice and titillate as to dissuade.⁹⁹ This can be illustrated

⁹⁶ Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints*, 1; 130.

⁹⁷ Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages*, 7.

⁹⁸ Giles, *The Laughter of Saints*, 14.

⁹⁹ For hagiographical readings of *La Lozana andaluza* see Surtz, ‘Sancta Lozana’; Delicado Puerto, ‘Lozana and Mary Magdalen’.

by the tale of another harlot who seduces her way through a holy doorway, Mary of Egypt, whose legend had often been conflated with the accounts of Mary Magdalen from the tenth to the fourteenth century.¹⁰⁰ According to medieval hagiography, this prostitute-saint travelled the world seducing men until she came to Jerusalem, where she attempted to enter a shrine to the Virgin Mary. A mysterious force prevents her from crossing the threshold despite multiple attempts. She appeals to the Virgin, promising to amend her sinful ways, and ‘the virgin is persuaded, the doors are opened’.¹⁰¹ Mary enters the desert and converts her lustful excess into radical asceticism, eventually meeting the monk Gosíma, or Zossima, who narrates her story. In this hagiographical account, popular throughout the medieval period, the story of Mary’s conversion figures a mutual seduction between the two Marys; although the virgin converts the harlot, she is also seduced into opening her shrine by the latter’s pleas. As Burrus argues, sin and sanctity are not ‘mutually exclusive, oppositional binary terms, one of which (‘sanctity’) negates and succeeds the other (‘sinfulness’) [...] it is, rather, the *coincidence* of the ‘extremes of sinfulness and sanctity’ in a *seductively feminized* figure that marks the similarities between [hagiographical] texts’.¹⁰²

As Mary of Egypt’s tale illustrates, female sanctity can be another form of seduction; a loss of self to divine authority rather than to lust. Furthermore, Mary Magdalen and Mary of Egypt remain seductive and enticing after their conversion, allowing for multiple modes of

¹⁰⁰ Witcombe, ‘The Chapel of the Courtesan’, 279.

¹⁰¹ Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints*, 151.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 130–131, original emphasis.

reading. Although Mary of Egypt's body is desiccated and stripped of its former beauty by the desert sun and her ascetic lifestyle, Gosima remains perturbed by the grotesque spectacle of her unclothed and mutilated body that 'impels the monk to run [...] chasing after the naked old woman in relentless, almost comic pursuit' through the desert.¹⁰³ Yet, once the chase is over, he is unable to look at her until her nudity is covered by a cloak.¹⁰⁴ As Julian Weiss asserts, 'Mary's body, even after it has become shrivelled, sunburnt, and emaciated, remains an object of a highly ambivalent male awe and desire'.¹⁰⁵ For Weiss, Mary can only be venerated once 'the dangerously wayward and unstable female flesh has finally been tamed'.¹⁰⁶ Mary's ravaged body remains disturbing, conjuring up not sexual desire, but rather the seductive revulsion of an ambivalent need to see coupled with aversion to the sight.

But woman in the early modern text can never escape her corporality; the repentant prostitute-saint remains inevitably female and disruptive. The female picaresque tales are the converse of these hagiographic accounts; rather than recount the miracles, good works, and repentance of their female protagonist, authors of the female picaresque dwell in great detail on their sinful life, and frequently recount the protagonists' sudden repentance as the conclusion of their narrative, as occurs with Lozana and Andrea. Though Justina declares in the prologue that she has repented, this supposed conversion is, in Friedman's words, 'conspicuous by its absence'

¹⁰³ Weiss, *The 'Mester de clerecía'*, 88.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

from her narrative.¹⁰⁷ Authorial focus on sin and sexuality belies the sincerity of these rapidly recounted conversions. As I demonstrate below, penitent prostitutes such as Mary of Egypt and Mary Magdalen coexisted with other exemplars of unrepentant female sexuality from the popular tradition such as Santa Nefisa, the patron saint of prostitutes who serves as a model for Lozana; allusions to this burlesque saint illustrate the coexistence of religious symbolism with erotic humour.

Critics who have commented on hagiographical influences in *La Lozana andaluza* generally study Lozana as a parody of Mary Magdalen.¹⁰⁸ I propose instead that Lozana models herself on another prostitute-saint from the Italian popular tradition: Santa Nefisa. The first parallel with this eroticized figure comes soon after her arrival in Rome, when she seeks a post as housekeeper to a courtesan who she heals of *mal de madre* or wandering uterus, and whose lover and butler she heals of syphilis.¹⁰⁹ The canon and the courtesan are impressed with Lozana's therapeutic skill, which they express through hagiographic reference to Santa Nefisa. The canon exclaims admiringly that Lozana is 'más hábile, a mi ver, que Santa Nefija, la que daba su cuerpo por limosna' [cleverer, in my view, than Saint Nefisa, the one who gave her body in alms].¹¹⁰ The courtesan suggests that Lozana 'es ella que habrá resuscitado' [is her, who has

¹⁰⁷ Friedman, *The Antiheroine's Voice*, 94.

¹⁰⁸ Surtz, 'Sancta Lozana'; Delicado Puerto, 'Lozana and Mary Magdalen'; Zafra, *Prostituidas por el texto*, 122–124.

¹⁰⁹ See Kuffner, 'En el tocar'.

¹¹⁰ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 284.

been resuscitated].¹¹¹ According to Italian literary tradition of the Cinquecento, Saint Nefisa or Nafisa gave herself to Christians out of charity, though she charged Muslims for sex, and used the proceeds to carry out charitable acts.¹¹²

The legend of Santa Nefisa is a Christian inversion of the cult of the Muslim holy woman Sayyida Nafisa.¹¹³ This Muslim holy woman, one of the patron saints of Cairo, was a descendant of the prophet Muhammad, and a religious teacher renowned for her fasting and piety whose miracles prompted the establishment of her cult in Egypt in the late thirteenth century.¹¹⁴ Giovan Battista Pellegrini asserts that Christian travellers and crusaders transmitted the account of Saint Nefisa to Christian territories, distorting and eroticizing accounts of her life. Seeger Bonebakker and Alice Scott speculate that the large number of female pilgrims who visited Nefisa's shrine may have created her eroticized reputation in the Christian tradition.¹¹⁵ In any case, the eroticized popular Saint Nefisa appears in various sixteenth-century Italian works as a patron saint of prostitution and a charitable whore, a legacy recorded by John Florio in his Italian–English dictionary, first published in 1598, which defines *Nafissa* as ‘a woman taken in mockery for the advocate and protectresse of all strumpets, whores, or bawdy houses’.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Ibid., 284.

¹¹² Pellegrini, ‘Santa Nefissa’, 246–252.

¹¹³ Ibid., 246.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 250.

¹¹⁵ Bonebakker and Scott, ‘Santa Nefissa’, 135.

¹¹⁶ Florio, *John Florio*, 327.

This eroticized legacy appears in the travelogue of the Englishman George Sandys, as well as various works of Italian Cinquecento authors such as Delicado's contemporary Pietro Aretino. Sandys' *A Relation of a Journey* (1627) describes Nefisa as an insatiable harlot who prostituted herself to turn men away from unnatural desires, which Bonebakker and Scott interpret as selling her body 'under the pretence of helping Muhammad to change unnatural (homosexual) orientations [...] into normal (heterosexual) orientations', thus lessening their moral culpability since sex with a prostitute constituted simple fornication rather than the mortal sin of sodomy.¹¹⁷ This version of the Santa Nefisa legend draws on widespread Christian slander of Muslims as particularly susceptible to the sin of sodomy.

Santa Nefisa appears in Aretino's *Ragionamenti* as well, wherein the young Nanna enters a convent where she is quickly indoctrinated into the voracious orgies of priests and her fellow nuns. On her first night there, Nanna enters a room whose walls are decorated with erotic paintings of figures including Santa Nefisa, from which she observes the sexual couplings of the nuns and priests through holes in the walls. Nanna reminisces about this experience to her friend Antonia, who is likewise familiar with Nefisa's reputation, telling Antonia that in the painting Nefisa appears as 'buona fanciulla, tutta piena di carità' [a good girl, full of charity].¹¹⁸ In Nanna's version, Nefisa has impoverished herself by giving away her dowry at the age of twelve, and practises sexual 'charity' on the Ponte Sisto bridge, where Rome's poorest prostitutes plied their trade. When Antonia asks precisely what Nefisa does there, Nanna replies 'ci stava per fare

¹¹⁷ Bonebakker and Scott, 'Santa Nefissa', 130.

¹¹⁸ Aretino, *I ragionamenti*, 21.

l'opre del rivestire gli ignudi' [she performed the good work of clothing the nude], though it soon becomes clear that Nefisa's charitable act of concealing nudity utilizes her own body during the sexual act; moreover, Nanna relates that she sits with her mouth suggestively open, indicating that she may be performing 'unnatural' acts such as fellatio.¹¹⁹ Nanna goes on to describe how Nefisa led men into her cell where she 'consolava gli afflitti, prima gli levava la veste di dosso, e poi, snodatogli le calze e ritrovato il tortorino' [consoled the afflicted, first by lifting the clothes from them, and then, loosening their hose and finding their little dove], continuing the erotic jokes.¹²⁰ She elaborates on Nefisa's saintly acts, saying that

Ivi era dipinto il poppolo d'Israelle che ella graziosamente albergò e contentò sempre *amore dei*. E ci se vedea dipinto alcuno che, dopo l'aver assaggiato ciò che si è, si partiva da lei con un pugno di denari i quali l'altrui discrezione le dava per forza: ce intervenia a chi la lavorava come interviene a uno che alloggia in casa di qualche prodigo uomo che non solo lo accoglie, lo pasce e lo riveste, ma gli dà ancora il modo di poter finir il viaggio suo.

[There was depicted there the people of Israel whom she good-heartedly took in and contented them all for the love of God. And there one saw depicted those who, after tasting what was there, parted from her with a handful of coins which others' discretion forced upon her; as such, those who laboured over her, were

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 21.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 22.

treated like guests in the home of a generous host who not only lodges them, feeds them, and provisions them, but gives them what is needed to finish the journey.]¹²¹

Antonia is overcome with admiration by Nefisa's charity and munificence, replete with sexual suggestiveness in the references to 'contenting', 'tasting', and 'labouring over her', exclaiming 'o benedetta e intemerata madonna santa Nafissa, ispirami a seguitare le tue santissime pedate' [oh blessed and blameless mother Saint Nafissa, inspire me to follow in your most blessed footsteps], upon which Nanna concludes

ciò che ella fece mai e dietro e dinanzi alla porta e all'uscio, è ivi al naturale: e fino al fine suo c'è dipinto; e nella sepoltura sono ritratti tutti i Taliani che ella ripose in questo mondo per ritrovarselo nello altro; e non è di tante ragioni erbe in una insalata di maggio quante son varietà di chiavi nel suo sepolcro.

[and so, all that she did between that front door and the back one, painted so naturally, was depicted there even her end; and on her tomb were portrayed all the Italians that she put to rest in this world to find them in another; and there are not so many greens in Mary's salad as there were nails in her coffin].¹²²

¹²¹ Ibid., 22.

¹²² Ibid., 22–23.

This final description contains a number of erotic allusions: the two doorways that Nanna invokes are the orifices of her body, which Nefisa employs in servicing the ‘afflicted’.¹²³ Furthermore, the reference to nails in her coffin creates a double entendre of *chiavare* [to nail] for the sexual act. Thus, Nefisa appears in Aretino’s work as a prostitute who practises sexual and monetary charity, earning a reputation as the patroness of whores. Nefisa was far from being the only prostitute-saint; Mary Magdalen and Mary of Egypt were very popular figures, but, unlike Nefisa and Lozana, these other prostitute-saints repent and renounce their sexuality. Aretino’s depiction of Saint Nefisa may be directly influenced by Delicado’s work. Both drew on an earlier popular oral tradition that informs the writers of the Cinquecento.¹²⁴

In *La Lozana andaluza*, Delicado invokes Santa Nefisa’s erotic reputation to portray

¹²³ Nanna’s version of Santa Nefisa is a sodomitical figure who utilizes both the front and back door. In the above cited description of Santa Nefisa’s sexual charity, Nanna states that when the man’s ‘little dove’ becomes hot and inflamed, Nefisa turns her back to it (Aretino, *I ragionamenti*, 22). Likewise, Nanna’s statement that everything Nefisa did ‘from the front door to the back’ was painted alludes to the two orifices she used to carry out her sexual services. Roman courtesans in particular were accused of performing sodomitical services for their clients. Fray Gabriel de Maqueda asserts in his treatise *Invectiva en forma de discurso contra el uso de las casas públicas* [*Invective in the Form of a Speech against the Public Brothels*, 1622] that the Spanish brothels are ‘escuelas de esta nefanda maldad [sodomía] y sus ramerias maestras en este torpe vicio’ [schools of this unspeakable evil [sodomy] and their whores are experts in this twisted vice] (19v). However, this theme does not appear in the Spanish texts examined here.

¹²⁴ Pellegrini, ‘Santa Nefissa’, 256.

Lozana's erotic services as potentially therapeutic for the male body. In her ministrations to her client Trujillo, Lozana asserts that 'los tocos y el tacto es el que sana que así lo dijo Santa Nefija' [caresses and touch are what heal as Santa Nefisa said].¹²⁵ A few pages later, Lozana clarifies that Santa Nefisa 'daba a todos de cabalgar en limosna' [gave herself to be ridden by all as alms].¹²⁶ Lozana plays on the auditory similarity of *fissa* or vagina and Nefisa, constructing herself as a Saint Vagina, who heals through erotic touch.¹²⁷ Like the earlier mention of Santa Nefisa, this episode is accompanied by a burlesque miracle carried out by Lozana, again involving corporeal healing and erotic touch wherein Lozana's vagina becomes an object of veneration as a pseudo-religious relic with curative powers. Trujillo complains that he is ill (*malo*) and first suggests that sexual intercourse with Lozana will heal him, saying 'con su visitación sane' [with your visit I will be healed].¹²⁸ He explains that he is suffering from lust, and suggestively adds 'he oído que tenéis vos muy lindo lo vuestro, y quiérollo ver por sanar' [I have heard that you have a very pretty thing, and I would like to see it to be healed].¹²⁹

Medical texts of the period attest that sperm retention threatens corporeal health since it is a purer fluid than blood, and thus breaks down more easily and is more toxic when corrupted.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 412.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 414.

¹²⁷ Giles, 'The Erotic Legend', 116.

¹²⁸ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 410.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 412.

¹³⁰ Gordonio, *Lilio de medicina*, fol. 167r.

Consequently, Lozana's sexual services are recast as (un)holy ministry in which her vagina can heal the suffering penitent, much like the earlier description of her as a pilgrimage site. Her methods are explicitly erotic and corporeal since she links Nefisa's exemplar of sexual charity to physical wellbeing achieved through 'los tocos y el tacto'.¹³¹ Trujillo is not healed by the sight of her vagina, but rather by the consummation of their affair. Drawing on a long tradition that portrays lovesickness as a physical malady, Lozana cures her male patients of sexual desire through the medium of her own body. She recurs to the symbolism of the vagina as therapeutic doorway to construct herself as a practitioner of sexual healing in the style of Santa Nefisa.¹³²

This specific episode, coupled with Lozana's characterization throughout the text as a successful healer despite (or perhaps even because of) her sinful activity, portrays the female body as transformative and potentially healing to the male. The body as a doorway to earthly pleasure is juxtaposed with the soul as gateway to heaven. While the moral defence of prostitution as a lesser evil and the concept of hygienic coitus were both gradually abandoned as premises throughout the century that the female picaresque works considered here appeared, their disappearance was gradual, and the concept of the healing doorway subtends and continues to subtly influence these later works.

¹³¹ Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 412. For a more detailed analysis of Lozana as a sexual healer, see Kuffner, 'En el tocar'.

¹³² She does, however, regret not receiving economic compensation for the act, exclaiming 'engañó a la Lozana, como que fuera yo Santa Nefija, que daba a todos de cabalgar en limosna' [He deceived Lozana, as if I were Saint Nefissa, who allowed all to ride her for alms] (Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 414).

Doorway imagery operates simultaneously on two contradictory registers; it may open to the physical pleasures of the female body, or to the spiritual joy of heaven. By constructing a dualistic metaphor, authors allow for multiple modes of reading that leaves the reader to exercise free will. This is illustrated by the *pícaro* Justina, for whom life itself is a doorway. She states that ‘el título que los poetas dieron a la vida presente y a la inclinación natural que más florece [... es] puerta del otro siglo’ [the title that poets give to this present life and to the natural inclination that flourishes most ... [is] door to the other century].¹³³ In other words, earthly life is a transitory stage the subject passes through on the way to the afterlife. Justina goes on to state that ‘los dos quicios de mi puerta (que son las dos más vehementes inclinaciones mías), fueron, y son, andar sin son y bailar al de un pandero’ [the two frames of my doorway (which are the most vehement of my inclinations) were, and are, to wander and to dance to the rhythm of my tambourine].¹³⁴ Justina, like Lozana, venerates a burlesque saint, *San Alejo* (Saint Go-far), who represents her prioritization of temporal pleasures, like travelling and dancing, over the eternal rewards of spiritual life. While she claims to repent, lamenting ‘Dios me perdone’ [may God forgive me], the use of the present tense in the phrase ‘fueron, y son’ [they were, and are] indicates that she, as narrator, has not reformed.¹³⁵ As Zafra concludes in her study of roaming and pilgrimage narratives in this novel, the author implies that women are incapable of true

¹³³ López de Úbeda, *La pícaro Justina*, 297.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 297–298.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 298–299.

repentance or reform.¹³⁶ In constructing such a view of female sexuality, authors draw on the religious symbolism of doorways to enact an erotic inversion of religious metaphors that present life as an exercise of free will. For Justina, doorways are a dualistic symbol reminiscent of Janus: they signify the moral choice facing humanity— whether to turn toward the pleasures of this life, or forgo them in favour of the next.

The authors of the female picaresque, explicitly in the early novels, but increasingly implicitly as Counter-Reformation values demanded stricter adherence to didacticism, do not close the doorway to reader interpretation. Rather, they present the reader with various options: the message of which is that the reader *should* choose the moral path and live an upright life, avoiding women's wiles. Yet, for the reader who disregards this advice, authors present a subtle justification of transactional sex as a minor transgression for men that minimizes the moral quandaries such illicit sexuality presents. This leaves the choice to the reader which doorway he wishes to cross. Such a pragmatic approach reflects a fatalistic view of life that foreshadows the baroque; a worldview that saw life as a precursor to death, and accepted syphilis as the consequence of sexual activity, yet did not seem to always dissuade men from engaging in transactional sex despite the risks.

La Lozana andaluza and *La pícara Justina* are generally treated as precursors to the female picaresque; however, as I have demonstrated in previous chapters, many themes remain constant among these texts and later novels. Authorial censure of female wiles is, as I have suggested, often unconcerned with sexual behaviour *per se*. The relatively happy, or at least

¹³⁶ Zafra, 'Ir romera', 497.

neutral, endings in many female picaresque tales, such as Esperanza's marriage, the unscathed harpies of Madrid, Teresa's unhappy yet financially secure marriage to a merchant, or Lozana's ambiguous withdrawal to either L'ipari or Venice, suggest that authors of the female picaresque are not, or at least not all, fundamentally concerned with containing and regulating 'bad' women, but rather see them as an inevitable part of society, though one that is superfluous and disposable. Such texts stem from an androcentric worldview that saw women as animalistic and depraved by nature.

Use of the erotic doorway exculpates male involvement in transactional sex by presenting the female body as a tool to be used by the male. Women's bodies appear throughout the female picaresque and early modern literature in general as a commodity to be employed, and, if necessary, discarded by men. There are two basic templates followed by authors of the female picaresque: in one, the woman uses her body as sexual merchandise, a model seen in *La Lozana andaluza*, *La pícaro Justina*, *La hija de Celestina*, *La tía fingida*, and *I ragionamenti*; in the other, the *pícaro* withholds sex yet profits from the promise of it, a model found in *Las harpías en Madrid* and *La niña de los embustes*. Both reduce the female body to a sexual object, the use of which by men is naturalized as a minor transgression even as women appear as fundamentally transgressive, deviant, and incapable of reform.

Conclusion

As we have seen, spatial discourse in early modern literature reveals a metonymic association of the female body with the spaces it occupies, particularly the house and the liminal areas that mark its perimeter. The housed woman of the early modern imaginary symbolizes containment and order while the mobile woman communicates sexual deviance and availability. Female picaresque texts problematize this dichotomy by creating an eroticized spatial discourse in which the same locations that demarcate female virtue in didactic texts become fictional mechanisms to negotiate sexual capital within a stratified system of prostitution. The female picaresque thus exposes the inadequacy of domestic enclosure to safeguard chastity since exterior signs of virtue can mask a corrupt interior. The archetype of the prostitute as disorderly woman serves, in fictionalized form, to express cultural unease about the imagined threat female sexuality poses to the social order through portrayals of devious *pícaras* who utilize the indicators of female virtue and modesty to outwit, deceive, and even at times humiliate men, revealing the fragility of a patriarchal system that depended on women's chastity to ensure the legitimacy of succession even as it mistrusted women's capacity to regulate their own sexuality.

While social order depended on the fidelity of wives, it also required the sexual availability of some women as a means to regulate male behaviour, especially in an era of rising age of male marriage. The fact that many acts of sexual trickery remain unconsummated demonstrates that patriarchal anxiety centred not on female sexuality *per se*, but rather on concern regarding the illegibility of social class and virtue. Nonetheless, although fundamentally misogynist, the female picaresque displays a range of perspectives on the regulation of female sexuality in which some texts include defences of brothels and prostitution as necessary to moral

order even as they denounce women's deceptive nature and lament the lack of transparency in transactional sex wherein women 'pass' as elite.

Debates over the place of prostitution in early modern society expose contradictions between moral ideologies and medical constructions of the body that emphasized the need for release of excess fluids. Whether the envisioned solution is segregation of dishonest women into brothels or re-establishment of patriarchal control through reformatory institutions, the strict control exercised over architectural space through conceptualizations of double doors, barred windows, locks, and keys illustrates the firmly held conviction that women were unable to regulate their own sexuality, and could not maintain their bodily integrity without strict spatial isolation. However, fictional narratives inevitably end with the failure of these attempts at containment, revealing a fundamental paradox at the heart of constructions of female sexuality that present it as uncontainable.

Though conduct manuals and other didactic texts attempt to define 'prostitute' as a uniform and static category, historical and literary evidence indicates that a range of types and classes of transactional sexuality operated and thrived in the early modern Mediterranean. Early modern authors view *pícaras* as sexually deviant and mark them as prostitutes even when they do not explicitly sell sex or consummate relationships with the men they swindle. Instead, *pícaras* build on a cultural construct of women as inherently sexually deviant that presupposes women, especially those of the non-elite, to be whores unless definitively proven otherwise. Through fictional portrayals of women who successfully imitate elite women to manipulate men, as for example when Elena *La hija de Celestina* portrays herself as a virgin deflowered by rape or Teresa of Manzanares presents herself as an elite widow, authors cast suspicion on the

supposedly virtuous women who should stand as counter-model to the ‘vile whores’ of didactic texts. This creates a cultural imaginary that defines chastity as an intangible mental state; as Vives tells his readers, chastity is not a physical condition, but rather ‘integrity of the mind’ and therefore cannot be externally validated.¹ Moreover, authors regularly labelled women ‘prostitutes’ for minor infractions of the social code, as for example when Vives calls wives who leave the house when their husbands are ill ‘prostitutes’.² When the terminology of transactional sex is uncoupled from sexual behaviour, it becomes a mechanism with which to regulate and police female behaviour rather than a descriptor, and a ‘whore’ is merely any woman who does not conform in some way to societal standards. The sexualization of chastity and modesty that made virginity so highly prized in carnal commerce depended on seeing all women, especially non-elite women, as predisposed to whoredom. If chastity and modesty are socially illegible, and women depicted as sexually voracious and insatiable, then all women are by nature corrupt, even those who are physically virginal.

The spatial strategies used by *pícaras* underscore the sexual value of feigned modesty. The many allusions to covert courtesan culture, especially in the court environs, indicate overlap between the tolerated courtesan cultures of locales such as Rome and Venice, and Iberian spaces. The stratified nature of portrayals of the sex trade, replete with allusions to court mistresses, kept women, *mujeres libres* [free women], *damas cortesanas* [courtesan ladies], and other double-entendres for elite transactional sex, serves to broaden the scope of representation of unruly

¹ Vives, *The Education*, 80.

² *Ibid.*, 200.

women beyond the trite madonna/whore dichotomy. Prostibulary narratives are not homogenous and do not correlate neatly with the vilification of loose women presented by prescriptive literature. As we have seen, while the prostitute may be marginalized, prostitution is far from marginal to early modern Spanish literature; nor is it relegated to the pages of the female picaresque. Prostitutes regularly appear on the *comedia* stage, in the pages of canonical works, and in the verses of Spain's Golden Age poets.³ Indeed, Golden Age literature abounds with *semidoncellas* [half-maidens] who are neither respectable women nor whores. Examples might include the daughters of *Las harpías en Madrid*, or Teresa of Manzanares, who are eager to barter their sexual appeal for material gain yet also seem reticent to follow through with sexual encounters. Others, such as the illicit mistresses of tales like María de Zayas's *Los estragos que causa el vicio*, in which Don Gaspar forms a relationship with a woman whose family maintains an outward appearance of respectability, hint at the existence of a number of women who found ways to survive even when the traditional roles such as marriage or the convent were for some reason unavailable to them. This, in turn, indicates that some women found themselves in a liminal category in which they must avoid being socially defined as a whore.

The story of Cervantes' female relatives provides a historical example of such social marginality. Cervantes' illegitimate daughter, Isabel, was the mistress of an older married man

³ To give but a handful of examples, the many prostitutes in *Don Quijote*, Cervantes' novella *El casamiento engañoso*, María de Zayas's *El castigo de la miseria*, Lope de Vega's plays *La bella malmaridada* and *El anzuelo de Fenisa*, and numerous poems and satires by Quevedo (see López Sutilo, 'El léxico').

named Juan de Urbina; eventually, Urbina arranged a marriage for Isabel with his scribe so that he could continue his illicit relationship with her, for which Urbina provided a sizeable dowry, later also bequeathing a house to Isabel's daughter.⁴ Similarly, Cervantes' sisters, Andrea and Magdalena, and Andrea's illegitimate daughter all received generous gifts from a variety of wealthy men.⁵ In Francisco Márquez Villanueva's opinion, these women (whom he labels 'las Cervantas') were courtesans, possibly because their *converso* [convert] status prevented them from finding suitable marriage partners.⁶ Their questionable conduct affected their social standing since when a man was killed on their street the neighbours attributed the crime to the atmosphere created by the questionable sexual mores of Cervantes' female relatives.⁷ However, they remained members of their urban community; rather than being labelled 'prostitutes', they were known as women of dubious moral character.

The same continuum of sexual propriety that allowed women to find a tenuous space in which to profit from their sexuality without being stigmatized as prostitutes can be found in many literary representations. Teresa of Manzanares, for example, presents herself in the final scenes of the novel as a rich widow, yet also makes clear to the men of her social circle that she and her putative niece are sexually available. Others capitalize on a house or neighbourhood's reputation to subtly hint at their involvement in transactional sex. Historical studies also suggest

⁴ Blasco Pascual, *Miguel de Cervantes*, 152–153; Márquez Villanueva, 'La cuestión del judaísmo', 58.

⁵ Márquez Villanueva, 'La cuestión del judaísmo', 57–58.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 56. See also Canavaggio, 'Cervantes en su vivir', 140–143.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

that relationships with elite men could provide a path to economic survival for lower-status women without the denigrating label of prostitute. Guido Ruggiero's work on Venetian court records finds that 'there was a culture of illicit sexuality that focused on relationships between powerful men and subservient women', that relationships between noble men and non-noble women were widespread, and that many lower-class women fell into a 'gray area between marriage and prostitution [...] at the lowest levels of society this condition appears to have been relatively accepted'.⁸ What all these examples indicate is that transaction of female sexuality was more tolerated than didactic denunciations of 'vile whores' in conduct manuals might seem to indicate, and was perhaps the best of a limited set of alternatives for some women who were of a mid-range socioeconomic status, illegitimate descent, or marginalized blood status.

Curiously, while *pícaras* come from the most marginalized sectors of society, their authors often portray them as wielding considerable influence over the men they dupe and fleeced, projecting a fictionalized erotic agency onto the beautiful non-elite woman. As the authors of female picaresque fiction demonstrate, *pícaras'* exploits could only be performed by young and beautiful women, and therefore even such influence as their authors proffer to them was severely limited. Anxiety about deceitful women may reflect fear of the disruption of patrilineal order among the elite if men squandered family capital on mistresses and kept women.⁹ However, historical and literary evidence suggests that early modern women, particularly the non-elite,

⁸ Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros*, 41; 158; 153.

⁹ Kushner, *Erotic Exchanges*, 165.

faced considerable levels of sexual violence.¹⁰ Even elite courtesans in Rome or Venice frequently became the targets of attack, whether verbal, textual, physical, or sexual assaults such as the *treintiuno* gang rape. The *pícaro* often appears as a devious and deliberate trickster who is willing to go to great lengths and often spend considerable sums for the sole purpose of humiliating and dominating her victim, often while withholding sexual intercourse (consider Teresa of Manzanares, who several times amasses great wealth, but is willing to spend vast sums on elaborate swindles).

Though it is impossible to ascertain the subjective experience of women through these male-authored texts, narratives of male reprisal against unruly women, such as the revenge taken on Teresa of Manzanares, indicate that women walked a fraught line between threats of violence and coercion and economic need in which their sexuality was often the only thing they had to barter. Male authors frequently portray transactional sex as an amusing minor peccadillo even as female sexuality presents a threat that deserved censure. The willingness to lock women away demonstrates a cultural view of the marginalized woman as expendable that feeds into Counter-Reformation discourse that seeks to contain and control female sexuality, even as the same texts portray women as uncontainable.

Throughout my analysis, I have argued that the inception of architecture as an intellectual discipline, reform movements that increasingly sought to enclose and contain loose women, and the rise of the picaresque genre in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are interrelated cultural phenomena. Early modern Spanish authors did not view prostitution monolithically, but rather

¹⁰ See Barahona, *Sex Crimes, Honour and the Law*; Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros*, 16–32.

take a variety of stances toward it that reflect contradictory cultural beliefs regarding the place of sexuality in early modern culture. At the same time that reformists attacked the licitness of municipal brothels, the female picaresque mode placed the prostitute at centre stage; nonetheless, these texts are more complicated than a simple denunciation of transactional sexuality. Although the legal status of prostitution changed, texts continue to demonstrate a certain continuity of earlier ideas regarding the need to provide an outlet for excess male sexual desire.

Despite the successful reformist movement to close the brothels, reiterations of the lesser evil ideology persist throughout the century in which the examples of female picaresque literature I examine appear. For example, in 1622, around the time of the closure of the brothels, Enrique de Villalobos writes in the section on lust of his guidebook for priests who administer the sacrament of confession that ‘es licito permitir las ramerias, en la Republica, por evitar otros males mayores’ [it is licit to permit whores in the Republic, to avoid greater evils].¹¹ Similarly, the *Público*, Zaragoza’s municipal brothel, remained open until 1629 since, after the 1623 decree, the Discalced Carmelites of the city petitioned for the brothel to remain open because, they asserted, the moral depravity of their times necessitated legalized prostitution, and closure of the brothel would increase rape and sexual violence.¹² Quevedo’s rake who contemplates the effects of the 1623 prohibition decree concludes that prostitutes have only become ‘más caros y

¹¹ Villalobos, *Manual de confesores*, 130. This statement follows an enumeration of the six forms of lust, including the most severe, ‘pecado contra natura’ [sin against nature], or sodomy, indicating that the principle ‘greater evil’ Villalobos hopes to avoid is sodomy.

¹² Jiménez Montesión, *Sexo y bien común*, 195.

más prolijos' [more expensive and more prolific].¹³

As these examples and the Sevillian petition to reopen the brothels discussed in Chapter 1 demonstrate, prohibition of prostitution was a controversial move, and regulation of sexuality remained a topic of contention. Through the medium of the female picaresque, authors present a range of attitudes towards prostitution: some texts represent women as predators, others admonish men for not living up to their social roles, and still others indicate that prostitution can be licit as long as prostitutes are readily identifiable and make no pretence of respectability. Even as official policy shifted from spatial segregation in brothels to repentance, reform, and the establishment of custodial institutions, insistence on containment conflicts with the cultural construction of containment as untenable, and of female sexuality as ungovernable.

Such a propensity to see all women as deviant places blame for sexual transgression on women, leaving the many clients who populate the pages of the female picaresque largely unremarked upon. When the client does come under scrutiny, as in *La hija de Celestina*, in which Don Sancho reforms, his absolution rests on the castigation of the *pícaro* while he suffers no repercussions. On the other hand, in both *La Lozana andaluza* and *La vida y costumbres de la madre Andrea*, the fictionalized author appears in the diegesis as a client, contradicting the moral remonstrances against prostitution that close these works. In *La Lozana andaluza*, the fictionalized author denounces Lozana's role as procuress. In *La vida y costumbres*, the fictionalized author merely expresses his sexual preference for older women. Neither fictionalized author comments on the morality of their liaisons or the assignations of other clients

¹³ Quevedo, *Obras completas II*, 194.

with the protagonists. The participation of the fictionalized author in carnal commerce contradicts the moralizing tones of these texts' denouements. In both works, the *pícaro* repents in the final pages and the narrative abruptly stops. In the case of *La vida y costumbres*, Andrea simply states that she became a *devota* [religious woman] but recounts nothing of her life afterward, whereas in *La Lozana andaluza* the reader learns that Lozana ended her life 'santamente' [in saintliness] on the island of Lípári, but this is contradicted by both the end materials and frontispiece that portray her in Venice.¹⁴ The authors' concern is not necessarily to reform women since the imagined reader is male; instead, authors excuse male involvement in transactional sex by implying that women as a whole are sexually deviant, presenting marginalized women as inherently corrupt and disposable, and by painting women as sexual aggressors who seek out and prey on men.

The tension between condemnation of women as sexually depraved and bawdy humour masked in innocent language pervades the female picaresque as a key characteristic that differentiates it from picaresque novels with male protagonists in which sexual impropriety is but one among a broad range of human foibles that may be subject to critique. I have suggested throughout this study that although female picaresque fiction frequently includes sharp denunciation and vilification of the female protagonist their purpose may be just as ludic as didactic, and that the reliance on double-entendres and erotic badinage indicates that authors of the female picaresque, while critical of female nature, leave the moral calculus to their reader, opening doors to multiple answers to the problem of human sexuality and the unruliness of erotic

¹⁴ *La vida y costumbres*, 144; Delicado, *La Lozana andaluza*, 165; 503.

desire. The humour in female picaresque fiction often derives from dirty jokes that mock and minimize the female protagonist and, as with many other works from the period, exhibit a semantic dualism that references several opposing registers at once so that the ludic meaning is the converse of the literal meaning. Thus, words like *dama* [lady] or *buena* [good woman] are synonyms for prostitute, the former seen, to give but one example, in Teresa de Manzañares' reference to *damas cortesanas* [courtesan ladies], and the latter stemming from the reference to brothels as *casas buenas*.¹⁵ Covarrubias explains in his definition of *bueno* [good] that 'buena muger' [good woman] means 'puta' [whore] and that 'solo consiste en dezirse cõ el sonsonete, en ocasion y a persona q[ue] la cadre' [the difference consists in saying it with a certain tone, on an occasion and to a person who will understand].¹⁶ *La Lozana andaluza*, for example, is rife with erotic allusions that portray sexual activity in remarkably graphic detail through subtext and erotic jokes while simultaneously not explicitly describing it at all, as for example when Lozana exclaims during her first night with Rampín, 'la liebre está echada' [the hare has been released] to signify her pleasure, utilizing the metaphor common to medieval and early modern literature of hares and rabbits for the vagina.¹⁷ The use of 'rabbit' as a euphemism for vagina stems from their breeding capacity as well as the auditory similarity between *conejo* [rabbit] and *coño* [cunt], and *conejo* is still used as a euphemism for the female genitals in modern Spanish.¹⁸ Such verbal

¹⁵ Castillo Solórzano, *La niña de los embustes*, 235. Molina Molina, *Mujeres públicas*, 39.

¹⁶ Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua*, 157.

¹⁷ Vasvári, 'La semiología', 308; Alzieu, Jammes y Lissourges, *Poesía erótica*, 30.

¹⁸ The Real Academia Española lists 'vulva' as one definition of *conejo* [rabbit].

humour and erotic banter would have been heightened by the practice of reading aloud still common in the sixteenth century.¹⁹

Early modern humour that relies on inversion of meaning, veiled language, allusions, and dysphemisms to construct lewd subtext has contributed to a critical tendency in Spanish literary studies to over-emphasize the didactic intentions of authors.²⁰ Until recently, the erotic content of Golden Age fiction was deliberately obscured by critics who considered such material indecent. Menéndez y Pelayo dismissed *La Lozana andaluza* as ‘inmundo y feo’ [filthy and ugly], stating that the work was too scandalous for ‘críticos decentes’ [decent critics].²¹ While the valiant efforts of critics such as Bruce Wardropper and Bruno Damiani led to *La Lozana andaluza*’s admission to the Spanish canon, this often came at the expense of its erotic content, with scholarship focusing on didacticism and glossing over the bawdy double-entendres and thematic importance of prostitution and sexually transmitted disease. Manuel Criado de Val, for example, published ‘Antífrasis y contaminaciones de sentido erótico en *La Lozana andaluza*’ [Antiphrasis and Contaminations of Erotic Meaning in *La Lozana andaluza*] in which he provides a detailed index of words with erotic double meaning, but refuses to define or explain them since ‘naturalmente, dejamos al contexto la misión de explicar el exacto sentido [...] no permite más la naturaleza del tema’ [naturally, we leave to the context the mission of explaining the exact

¹⁹ See Bubnova, ‘*La Lozana andaluza*’; Ife, *Reading and Fiction*.

²⁰ See Whinnom, *Spanish Literary Historiography*, 19–24; Martín, *An Erotic Philology*, xiii–xiv; 170–171.

²¹ Menéndez y Pelayo, *Orígenes de la novela*, 49–54.

meaning ... the nature of the topic does not permit more].²² Tatiana Bubnova, on the other hand, demands that we study *La Lozana andaluza* not despite its erotic content, but rather precisely because of it.²³ Indeed, the authorial mastery of the female picaresque lies in the ability to maintain a multivalent text that allows for multiple modes of reading simultaneously; *La pícaro Justina*, for example, is polyvalently a parody of Felipe III's voyage to León (as Marcel Bataillon demonstrated), a parody of hagiography, a parody of *Guzmán de Alfarache*, and a ludic text interspersed with didactic messages.

Literary criticism of the female picaresque often tends to downplay its erotic content and subtext. *La pícaro Justina*, like *La Lozana andaluza*, ostensibly warns its reader against corrupting contact with loose women, but, as we have seen, ludic erotic allusions throughout Justina's encounters with men belie her claims to bodily integrity and the author's didactic messages. Some critics have taken Justina's claims to defend her virginity literally; Friedman, for instance, asserts that 'Justina's body is a selling point, but not for sale; she takes men's money and escapes before they can abuse her. On her wedding night, she laments her lack of education in the wifely duties and faces the nuptial couch with a certain degree of modesty.'²⁴ Justina states of her first wedding night, 'yo bien sabía mi entereza y que mi virginidad daría de sí señal honrosa [...] pero sabiendo algunos engaños y malas suertes que han sucedido a mozas honradas, me previne' [I knew very well my integrity and that my virginity would show itself

²² Criado del Val, 'Antífrasis y contaminaciones', 434.

²³ Bubnova, 'La Lozana andaluza', 18.

²⁴ Friedman *The Antiheroine's Voice*, 93.

through honourable signs ... but knowing some tricks and the poor fortune that has happened to some honourable girls, I took precautions].²⁵ That Justina needs to use ‘tricks’ and ‘take precautions’ to ensure that she will bleed on her wedding night clearly indicates that she is not the virgin she claims to be. Thus, Justina’s words and actions contradict each other, as they do throughout her narrative, revealing sexual content despite its narrative absence. The authors of the female picaresque instruct their reader to evade women’s wiles, yet also remind them of the pleasure to be found in erotic encounters, allowing for multiple modes of reading simultaneously.

Recent critical trends in interdisciplinary fields such as gender studies, investigations of the history of sexuality, and queer theory have made the erotic a licit subject of academic investigation, yet there is still much to be done, particularly in regard to the early modern period. Examining in detail the erotic humour of the female picaresque can convey critical insight regarding the sexual subtext of canonical texts from other genres. Attention to erotic humour indicates that texts function on multiple discursive registers simultaneously. The *Libro de buen amor*, for instance, instructs its reader to pursue ‘good’ love of God, yet also gives lurid detail about carnal love including explicit instructions on how to pursue it, such as how to select an appropriate go-between, and describes the Archpriest’s erotic encounters in episodes like the *cruz, cruzada panadera* scene mentioned in Chapter 5.²⁶ While one might contend that such erotic humour is more frequent in earlier manifestations of the female picaresque, particularly *La*

²⁵ López de Úbeda, *La pícaro Justina*, 872.

²⁶ For in-depth analyses of the erotic humour in *El libro de buen amor*, see Vasvári, ‘La semiología’.

Lozana andaluza and *La pícaro Justina*, bawdy humour and erotic subtext appear in later manifestations of the genre as well, as when Teresa of Manzanares asserts that, unlike her fellow actresses, she does not engage in assignations such as ‘aquellas conversaciones que estimaran mis compañeras ver en sus casas’ [such conversations as my colleagues were esteemed to hold in their houses].²⁷ Teresa’s double-entendre of ‘conversation’ for coitus is echoed in *Las harpías de Madrid*, which coyly informs the reader that ‘no se sabía de Feliciana más travesura, que la que con su maestro de danza había hecho, quizá por paga de la buena enseñanza’ [no mischief was known of Feliciana, besides that which she had done with her dance teacher, perhaps in payment for his good teachings], utilizing the double meaning of *travesura* [mischief] to elide the sexual act.²⁸ As a result, these texts, though misogynist and condemnatory of women in general and loose women in particular, are also highly ludic, inciting reader imagination with erotic badinage. Spanish literary critics like Adrienne Laskier Martín, Gregorio Morales, José Ignacio Díez Fernández, Louise O. Vasvári, and others have laid the groundwork for understanding early modern Spanish eroticism, but further inquiry in the field of humour to classify the many types of dirty jokes that rely on visual cues (such as turnip as phallic signifier), semantics (wordplay such as *ventana/venta* [window/sale]), animal imagery (such as the rabbit as female genitalia),

²⁷ Castillo Solórzano, *La niña de los embustes*, 206.

²⁸ Castillo Solórzano, *Las harpías en Madrid*, 4. Teresa of Manzanares recounts an episode of a music teacher who works as a go-between to facilitate sexual access to his pupils, indicating that the spatial access of male teachers to maidens elicited social anxiety (Castillo Solórzano, *La niña de los embustes*, 102).

religious imagery (such as the *sede vacante* [vacant See] as empty vagina, or the creation of burlesque saints like Saint Nefisa) could open new vistas onto canonical texts.

Rather than being straightforwardly didactic texts that reinscribe patriarchal control onto the disorderly women, the female picaresque demonstrates the prevalence of a pervasive fatalism that subtends later baroque expressions of *desengaño*, or profound disillusionment with the physical world. The character of Silvano, for example, in *La Lozana andaluza*, exemplifies this mode of thinking: he warns Lozana that prostitutes and courtesans end their days in the hospitals for syphilitics, yet he continues to patronize them despite his certainty that many are diseased. In this view, sexually transmitted disease or female deceit is simply the wages of sin, but this does not deter the male client from engaging in transactional sex. As Jean Dangler asserts regarding *La Lozana andaluza*, authors of the female picaresque suggest that ‘sex with diseased women is worth the pain it causes’.²⁹ By juxtaposing the pleasures of carnal commerce with the consequences to both body and soul, authors assign moral responsibility to the reader. Understanding this contradiction could permit a more nuanced approach to prostitution in Golden Age literature that might prompt us to re-examine the canon. Similarly, the paradoxical approach to prostitution in the female picaresque might help us better understand historical figures like Philip IV, who closed Spain’s brothels but was also known to have fathered an illegitimate child with an actress, and for his many other affairs. Although he expressed regret for these liaisons in private correspondence, he continued to fall prey to sin. Despite the impetus of theological reform during the Counter-Reformation, the literary history of Spain demonstrates

²⁹ Dangler, *Mediating Fictions*, 152.

the gap between prescriptive morality and lived experience that provides fertile ground for a rethinking of sexuality in early modern Spain.

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