

Francisco Ramírez Santacruz, ed. *Romance Notes: Sor Juana y su lírica menor*, 58.2. Chapel Hill: The Department of Romance Studies, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, July 2018. pp. 169-338.

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 The logo consists of the words "ROMANCE" and "NOTES" stacked vertically in a white, serif, all-caps font. The text is centered within a dark blue rectangular background.

Sor Juana y su lírica menor enriches Sor Juana studies with readings of sonnets, *redondillas*, *décimas*, *romances* and other works that the critical privileging of pieces like *Primero sueño* or the *Respuesta a sor Filotea* often marginalizes. Editor Francisco Ramírez Santacruz remarks: resulta llamativo que más allá de la atención que siempre ha despertado un grupo limitado de sonetos y romances (sin olvidar las célebres redondillas), *Primero sueño* siga proyectando su ineludible y larga sombra sobre un rico y valioso corpus de letras, canciones, ovillejos, *décimas*, *endechas*, etc., cuyo estudio no solo pone a descubierto pequeñas ‘joyas,’ sino también insospechadas claves para entender el desarrollo poético de la jerónima (169).

Like the introduction promises, *Sor Juana y su lírica menor* is a gem that guides the reader through a labyrinth of “minor,” relatively unexplored questions and works from the poet’s oeuvre. As a whole, it responds to lacunae in the sorjuanine canon and encourages scholars to continue grappling with its limits. For these reasons, the anthology will be of interest to newcomers and seasoned veterans in Sor Juana studies alike. Furthermore, the essays’ succinctness and engagement with minor (and often shorter) poetic forms may inspire new pedagogical approaches to Sor Juana in the undergraduate classroom.

By focusing on the minor lyric, the anthology not only highlights topics that resonate with readings of better known works. It also draws out unexplored registers in Sor Juana’s writing. One of the most pleasurable examples is the insight that *Sor Juana y su lírica menor* offers into the poet’s ludic side, a topic few have examined at length. For instance, Caroline Egan’s essay complements prior scholarship on Nahuatl language and themes in the poet’s work by distancing itself from questions of appropriation. With respect to the indigenous musical form that Sor Juana adapts in several *villancicos*, Egan argues: “it is possible to read the *tocotines* as playful exercises that do not presuppose intelligibility, but rather, foreground and ironize its limits” (210). From this perspective, *tocotines* employ a burlesque tone to underscore the bounds of Spanish-Nahuatl interactions. Similarly, Fernando Rodríguez Mansilla examines Sor Juana’s lively dialogue with the ever-witty Anastasio Pantaleón de la Ribera in the early *romance* “Ilustrísimo don Payo.” His analysis draws out the striking contrast between the writer’s engagement with adult themes in Pantaleón de Ribera’s *cancionerillos de la sífilis* and her childlike *anenamiento* in addressing the archbishop Payo Enríquez de Rivera y Manrique. These and other readings of the poet’s playfulness offer refreshing counterpoint to scholarly tendencies to examine the poet through lenses of philosophical and theological gravity.

Other articles in *Sor Juana y su lírica menor* shed new light on themes that have long been discussed in Sor Juana studies. Among these, links among poetic voice, silence and authority stand out. First, Antonio J. Arraiza Rivera underscores the literal inscription of the poetic voice in the *silva Epinicio al virrey Conde de Galve*. He notes that the persistence of “una voz ronca y débil” throughout the poem manifests the nun’s displeasure at being asked to pen the verses and also signifies the lyric narrator’s absence via the inaccessible lacuna between sound and writing (173). The reading beckons additional interpretations of voice’s sonorous qualities in Sor Juana’s oeuvre. Complementary to Arraiza Rivera’s auditory interpretation, Grady Wray deftly lends a masculine tone to discussions of female silence in the *Respuesta a sor Filotea* and other sorjuanine works by drawing out San José’s silence as exemplary in a set of *villancicos* dedicated to the saint. In a different vein, Marie-Cécile Bénassy-Berling’s reading of “Hete yo, divina Lysi ...” situates the poem in its sociohistorical and autobiographical context in order to draw out political connotations. This *romance*, directed to the Countess of Paredes, appears to rebuke the vicereine for expecting the nun’s correspondence during Lent. Nonetheless, Bénassy-Berling argues that the admonishment actually addresses the abbess, for her refusal to accommodate a powerful figure like the Countess of Paredes could negatively impact the convent’s political and financial situation. Arraiza Rivera and Bénassy-Berling’s essays are particularly striking, for they leave the reader wondering what other political maneuvers Sor Juana’s poetry encodes. Elsewhere in the anthology, others respond. Notably, Stephanie Kirk draws out feminine, poetic authority in a sorjuanine sonnet that responds to Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora’s criticism of *Neptuno alegórico* in “Preludio III.” She maintains that the poet’s audacity in displaying her literary prowess—far superior to that of the Jesuit—may explain why Sigüenza omitted the nun’s text in his *Teatro de virtudes*.

Finally, the collection contributes to what Barbara Ventarola calls the “re-canonization” of the poet by reexamining the structures that guide current approaches to her works (311). Pieces like Sarah Poot Herrera’s essay on the poet’s sonnets invite scholars to revisit the sorjuanine canon with renewed consciousness of how the *Obras completas de sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (Alfonso Méndez Plancarte I, II and III; Alberto G. Salceda IV) condition reception. Poot Herrera reviews the publication circumstances for many of the 66 sonnets from Sor Juana’s four volumes as well as her six *extra opera omnia*. There is little doubt that the essay will become indispensable for scholars interested in the genre. Complimentarily, Ventarola also offers a refreshing perspective on Sor Juana’s sonnets. She identifies the 22-piece *De amor y discreción* as a sonnet cycle and illustrates how Sor Juana transforms Petrarchan conventions with stage-like dialogue that affords greater flexibility to the poetic voice. Ventarola is the first scholar to examine these works as a Petrarchan cycle. Her conclusions advance Sor Juana studies and also beckon a reconsideration of the development of verse in general. As Ventarola notes: “We have to change our view on the history of lyric poetry once again” (312). Finally, like Poot Herrera, Felipe Valencia probes the construction of Sor Juana’s canon itself. His contribution to the volume delves into the concept of “loving violence” and illustrates its importance as a theme in the nun’s poetry as well as for understanding the anthologization of her works. He remarks: “Sor Juana’s lyric, in other words, comes down to us subjected to a certain kind of violence – a loving violence, for it was perpetrated by admiring readers who wished to give it the readership and notoriety that only print can afford” (301). To this end, Valencia echoes an astute and recurring theme in *Sor Juana y su lírica menor*: revisiting the limits of the sorjuanine canon with a critical eye.

For all of this, *Sor Juana y su lírica menor* offers the reader tantalizing breadcrumbs for reexamining the nun’s canon. Though rich, the notes are brief and at times, they feel like

introductions to topics that deserve more extensive treatment. Indeed, many articles would benefit from explicit illustrations of how their conclusions dialogue with better-known pieces or overarching themes in Sor Juana studies. On one hand, the essays' brevity can feel unsatisfying to a reader that wants to settle in with a volume that offers a clear and developed critical portrait of the nun. On the other, however, *Sor Juana y su lírica menor* is replete with opportunities for further scholarship and will delight the scholar that seeks to freshen his or her perspective on Sor Juana.