

**PUNISHMENT AS SPECTACLE IN
JUAN DIEZ DE LA FUENTE'S
*ENTREMÉS DE LAS MOÇAS DE LA GALERA***

In 1598, wicked women and their evil deeds plagued the streets of Madrid according to Madre Magdalena de San Jerónimo, director of the *Galera de Santa Isabel*, the main penal institution for women that would operate in Madrid throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (*Razón* 304). As female indigence, vagabondage, and illegal prostitution increased, Philip II assigned Madre Magdalena the duty of confining and punishing disorderly women. Shortly thereafter, the *galera* began to serve as an "enclosure" for women who demonstrated resistance to traditional practices. This resistance was corrected through punitive measures such as physical and psychological punishment, hard labor, and in the most extreme case, death. Prostitutes, vagrant women, women that refused service, concubines and *alcahuetas*, constituted the majority of women destined for confinement. These women were taught specific domestic skills that, in theory, would insure their employment upon release, and hopefully transform them into "honest," or at least, "productive" members of society (Cabrera de Córdoba 30).

The need for punishment based on moral values and the insistence on labor that sustained and animated the practice of punishment and confinement towards the end of the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century is clearly reproduced in Juan Diez de la Fuente's *Entremés de las moças de la galera*, (1663).¹ Through the representation of the lives of four wayward women, his text underscores punishment for idleness and disorderly conduct by means of harsh living conditions and hard labor as essential to the rehabilitation of the confined. Madre Magdalena de San Jerónimo's proposal for the punishment of women, *Razón, y forma de la galera y casa Real, que el Rey nuestro señor manda hazer en estos Reynos, para castigo de las mugeres, ladronas, alcahuetas y otras semejantes*, published in 1608, is also a site that reproduces the discourse of punishment which heavily influenced social practice. It is my contention that the representation of punishment in the public theatre as reproduced and viewed through *the Entremés de las moças de la galera* is informed by the discourse of punishment operating in social practice

¹ Juan Diez de la Fuente, *Entremés de las moças de la galera*, in María Dolores Pérez Baltazar, *Mujeres marginadas: Las casas de recogidas en Madrid*, Madrid, Gráficas Lorno, 1984; pp. 42-49. Unless otherwise noted, all further references to *Entremés de las moças de las galera* will be from this edition and parenthetically documented by page number.

which is heavily encoded by Madre Magdalena's manual for the punishment of women. These texts reproduce dividing practices and forms of enclosure that were common in social practice and worked to sustain the authority of hegemonic groups.²

In order to clearly mark the parallels between punishment as spectacle and punishment as social practice, we must remember that all members of Spanish society were subject to different forms of gender, race, and class-specific enclosure. It is imperative to identify these forms because they underpin an early modern sex-gender system that functioned as a "system of exclusion," thus constituting subjectivity and determining social value.³

All early modern women lived within one form of enclosure or another. Several examples of gender and class specific forms of enclosure existed in order to create and preserve the ideal of "virtuous and chaste" women,—ideologically inscribed characteristics—produced by religious and male discourses. For the aristocratic women, the primary forms of enclosure were marriage, governed by strict blood-purity statutes in order to protect the interests of the aristocracy, aristocratic codes of conduct, the home, the convent, and dress codes that restricted physical movement.

For the non-aristocratic women, the subject of this study, poverty worked as the dominant form of enclosure by placing her in the most inferior subject and class position. Religious figures such as penitent women, martyrs, and saints, produced, reproduced, and promoted gender-specific behavior. Marriage, the home, and the convent were the primary spaces reserved for women of all classes by the patriarchal system. Gender and class specific employment were another means to control the public space that women occupied, as well as legal codes that dictated the limitations of free movement within specific social spaces. Dress codes worked to mark women as prostitutes to insure their distinction from "respectable women." The physical space of the public theatre, the *corrales*, was also subject to gender and class specific enclosures; the *cazuela* (stew pot) and the *cazuela alta*, were spaces set aside for women

² Michel Foucault defines dividing practices in the following terms: "'The subject is objectified by a process of division either within himself or from others.' In this process of social objectification and categorization, human beings are given both a social and a personal identity. Essentially 'dividing practices' are modes of manipulation that combine the mediation of a science (or pseudo-science) and the practice of exclusion in a spatial sense, but always in a social one." Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1984; p. 8.

³ Gayle Rubin defines sex-gender system as: "The set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity." Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex", in Rayna Reiter, *Towards an Anthropology of Women*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1978; pp. 157-210. Teresa de Lauretis also provides a helpful definition of sex-gender system: "What the popular wisdom knows, then, is that gender is not sex, a state of nature, but the representation of each individual and is predicated on the conceptual and rigid (structural) opposition of two biological sexes. This conceptual structure is what feminist social scientists have designated 'the sex-gender system.'" Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987; p. 5.

(McKendrick 181-182). And finally, the brothels enclosed prostitutes that functioned within the social norms as “deviant insiders” (Perry 138-158). For those women who demonstrated any form of “resistance” towards the established order, such as madness, idleness, vagabondage, illegal prostitution or other forms of “criminality,” forced physical confinement in the *galera* was prescribed.

Through the representation of punishment in Juan Diez de la Fuente’s *Entremés de las moças de la galera* and the analysis of Madre Magdalena de San Jerónimo’s manual for the punishment of women, the dialectical relationship between discourse and practice operating in early modern Spanish society clearly demonstrates that the theatrical production of this period was heavily conditioned or influenced by its social base (Maravall 13). In this study, I will analyze how Diez de la Fuente constructs the spectacle of punishment by drawing from discourses already functioning in social practice. His text begins with an introduction sung by the *músico*. His song informs the audience that the women of the *galera* whom he is about to present, are dangerous and violent. He begins by stating the following:

Las moças de la galera
pretendo poner en tabla
demás, que son de cabeça
limpias de polvo, y de paja.
o ser gente de pelo
es lo que en ellas se halla,
los cabellos buelan,
donde tales hembras paran. (42-43)

I will analyze below the *músico*’s reference to the women’s physical appearance in order to emphasize the psychological punishment that was instrumental in the management of wayward women. What interests me here is the reference made to “los cabellos buelan, / donde tales hembras paran” which from the very beginning of the representation creates an image of violent and dangerous women who upset order wherever they go. This image works to raise the audience’s expectation of viewing disorderly conduct, which in turn, excites them, thus producing more disorderly conduct and enhancing the atmosphere of folly. The *músico* concludes his introduction focusing the viewers’ attention to the women’s fear of hard labor as punishment stating, “Oigan como se asustan / con las tareas / por hazer el trabajo...” (43). The concluding verses create a new image of frightened and punished women in order to re-establish order before the action begins.

As the action begins, we are introduced to Montalva and Colindres, women who have been confined in the *galera* for some time now. The veteran inmates decide to demonstrate friendship and solidarity towards Escalanta and Chaves who have just arrived by warning the newcomers about the food, work, and

living conditions in the *galera*.. Colindres welcomes the new inmates saying:

Amigas mías, seais muy bien venidas
o por mejor dezir, muy bien traidas,
donde todas conformes
pasemos unas penas tan disformes,
como saben que passa, (43)

This passage illustrates that the inmates have been “muy bien traidas”—confining by force—in a place that does not discriminate among crimes. Everyone is treated with the same harsh punishment, as we will see later in the text. Colindres continues her welcome by warning the following:

la que pensando hallar aquí su casa,
halla por su desdicha una galera,
donde força es muger casera,
y al embarcarse tiene por extremos
para nosotras multitud de remos,
y con mucho desastre
sobre nosotras carga todo el lastre. (43)

The use of nautical language such as *galera*, *embarcarse*, and *remos*, works to create the image of the traditional space reserved for male enclosure, the galleys, where men were sentenced for idleness, sodomy, vagabondage, and other crimes. Through the recreation of the same punitive space for men and women, gender divisions are blurred, emphasizing social intolerance towards any form of deviant behavior. Colindres points out that a woman who expects to find a home will instead find a ship where she will be domesticated, and forced to endure the cargo / weight / burden assigned to women confined aboard. Escalanta shocked by Colindres' warnings, remarks in disbelief: “Tanta fatiga ay en esta casa” (43), to which Colindres replies:

Y mas que con cautelas
para el descanso no nos alcan velas,
con que ya por no estar jamás alçadas,
a pura vela estamos desveladas. (44)

The double entendres of the word *vela* as sail or vigil stresses the oppressive conditions under which the women are forced to labor. The inmates must always work at full sail because the sails are never hoisted nor is the surveillance ever lifted. The women confined to the *galera*, according to Colindres, have lost their *barlovento*—their inclination towards the wind—their freedom to *vagabundear*, and have also been denied the freedom to earn a living the way they chose. Consequently, they have also lost their daily sustenance.

The importance of constant vigil or surveillance is emphasized in Madre Magdalena de San Jeronimo's proposal for the punishment of women in the

galera. The absolute need for caution and the importance of constant vigil is underscored in order to reach the goals set by the incarceration program. Madre Magdalena points out the need for the following measures:

En esta casa ha de aver grade vigilancia, guarda y recato; y las personas á cuyo cargo estuviere han de ser de gran confianza, y que tengan por cierto que el no tener piedad con las que entraren en la Galera es mas caridad y misericordia; y para esto han de tener cien ojos, mucho valor, y gran pecho, sino no se alcançara el fin que se pretende, que es desterrar de la República la ociosidad y maldad destas mugeres. (*Razón* 311)

The apparent obsession with surveillance and separation presented in San Jerónimo's text was inherited from an earlier period. The religious, medical, and political discourses that constituted the discursive field of early modern Spanish society understood the relationship between prostitutes and syphilis as the Middle Ages understood the relationship between lepers and the plague. Thus, if prostitutes were the source of infection—spiritual and physical—they needed to be controlled and separated from the social body. In his study *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault makes the following observation about this relationship:

If it is true that the leper gave rise to rituals of exclusion, which to a certain extent provided the model for and general form of the great Confinement, then the plague gave rise to disciplinary projects. Rather than the massive, binary division between one set of people and another, it called for multiple separation, individualizing distributions, an organization in depth of surveillance and control, an intensification and a ramification of power.⁴

Foucault's account supports my argument that a fear of contagion influenced early modern dividing practices in Spain. This fear is intensified when linked with the religious construction of women as Satan's consort in a quest to corrupt the will of men. An excellent example is presented by Madre Magdalena when she refers to indigent women as, "malas mujeres, tizonas del infierno, lazos de Satanás, enemigas del bien, causadoras del mal, peste y ruina de la República" (*Razón* 316). She also equates these women with lepers suggesting that they be separated from others to prevent contamination. She argues, "Yo he oido dezir que en la sagrada Escritura se mandauan echar los leprosos de los pueblos, porque no los inficcionassen" (*Razón* 315). Through the rearticulation of religious discourse Madre Magdalena is able to underscore the danger that "disorderly" women represent to society and at the same time legitimize her proposal for enclosure.

Foucault explains the ritual of exclusion and the obsession with surveillance, and links these practices directly to disciplinary power. He observes that:

⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Trans. Alan Sheridan, New York, Pantheon, 1977; p. 198.

The constant division between the normal and the abnormal, to which every individual is subjected, brings us back to our own time, by applying the binary branding and exile of the leper to quite different objects: the existence of a whole set of techniques and institutions for measuring, supervising and correcting the abnormal brings into play the disciplinary mechanisms to which the fear of the plague gave rise. All the mechanisms of power which, even today, are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to alter him, are composed of those two forms from which they distantly derive. (*Discipline and Punish* 198)

The fear of moral and physical contagion that prevailed during the seventeenth century generated specific mechanisms of control in order to isolate "the infected." These mechanisms in turn, worked as a tool to support the Monarchy's dividing practices that separated the socially acceptable from marginalized members of society. Medical, religious, and labor discourses worked to define poverty as a moral disease, identifying idleness as one of the main infectious symptoms, and the indigent as morally ill. Consequently, the indigent, the vagrant, and the idle were to be separated from the social body; confinement, hard labor, and strict surveillance was the only available cure for their disease.

In the *Entremés de las moças de la galera*, Diez de la Fuente also reproduces the use of food as a mechanism of control that is paralleled in social practice. Montalva, one of the inmates, interrupts Colindres to inform the newcomers that they should not expect to be fed, and if they are at all, they will be poorly fed:

Y si por dicha alguna vez comemos,
que esto no a todas horas lo tenemos,
esta el manjar (amiga) en voces altas,
pregonandonos ocho o nueve faltas;
de mal macho ú de vaca una tajada
que nos dan, que suele estar muy mal guisada,
y siempre con muy malos contrapelos,
quando de puro flaca esta en los huessos. (44)

Montalva sarcastically points out that the eating conditions are harsh. These women sometimes miss up to eight or nine meals and when fed, they are given more bones than meat. Colindres is then quick to add:

Sin cuidado no mas el pan tenemos,
pues de puro encerrado no lo vemos,
y aun rezando con grande demasía,
el Pan nuestro no es de cada día. (44)

The reference to food, or rather, the lack of food, works to emphasize the denial of basic daily staples such as bread. Colindres refers to the bread as "puro encerrado" or withheld, which implies that this staple is used in order to manipulate the inmates into submission and prayer.

San Jerónimo's program for the *galera* prescribes a similar diet, "pan negro y una escudilla de nabos y berzas, aunque un día a la semana se les puede dar una tajada de vaca" (*Razón* 311). As we can see, the prison's dietary program consisted of thick roots—turnips and radishes—cabbage, cheese, bread, and a slice of meat (may be given) once a week; hardly enough to nourish a body submitted to hard physical labor. The food imagery presented in these texts is of paramount importance because it underscores the connection between food and social class. The description cited above represents the harsh realities lived by non-aristocratic groups. Cultural production of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries introduced class-specific foods, usually turnips and beets to emphasize the theme of hunger. The most famous example is the "nabo" that Lazarillo substitutes for sausage.

After warning Montalva and Chaves about the scarcity of food, Escalanta notices that Colindres has begun to work ardently. She is so surprised to see her friend work—spinning wool—in such a frenzy that she feels compelled to ask: "no me dirás porque causa / con tanta codicia hilas, / siendo assi, que te enfadavas / de ver hilar a qualquiera" (45). Since before her confinement Colindres hated to see anyone working, it comes as a great surprise to Montalva to see that her friend has "acquired" a new attitude towards labor. Colindres explains that hunger has motivated her to work and points out: "con la rueca me prevengo, / y no me juzgues por loca, / si con hilar me mantengo, / pues entonces solo tengo / conque llegar a la boca" (46). Colindres admits that she "prepares herself" working with the distaff in a trade that allows her to earn her keep. The exchange between work for food that informs this scene was at the center of many reform programs during this period. Madre Magdalena's program, for example, organized penal labor around an economic imperative, stressing that all inmates must work in order to support themselves and contribute to the expenses of the *galera*:

Nunca han de estar ni un solo punto ociosas; y así han de tener tarea en su labor, y su pena sino la acabaren, y han de velar hasta acabarla, porque con su labor y trabajo han de ayudar para los gastos de la Galera. (*Razón* 312)

Other reform programs that developed in the late sixteenth century proposed that all able-bodied inmates work within the institutions or supplement their upkeep with the charitable donations received while begging. The main difference between the *Hospicios*, *Albergues*, and the *galera* was the implementation of forced labor and corporal punishment. Not only were the confined women to pay for their upkeep, but hard labor was one of the main disciplinary tactics employed to discourage idleness and disorderly conduct. The following disciplinary measures were also followed:

Han de procurar tener á raya mugeres si quieren valerse con ellas, y así blasfemaren ó juraren, pónganlas una mordaçca en la boca; si alguna estuviere furiosa, échenla una

cadena; si se quisiere alguna salir, échenla algunos grillos y pónganla de pies ó cabeça en el cepo, y así amansarán, y dándolas muy buenas disciplinas delante de las otras, éstas quedarán castigadas y las otras escarmentarán en cabeça agena y temerán otro tanto. (*Razón* 312)

Madre Magdalena recommended that disorderly women be silenced and controlled by physical force through the use of a gag, chains, and the pillory or stocks. It is obvious then, that resistance in any form, was not tolerated during this period.

The punitive mechanisms described above are instruments of torture that were used both in public and private punishment. They created a rhetoric of shame and worked as a manipulative device to break down the body, and most importantly, the spirit.⁵ The main purpose of corporal punishment in the *galera* was to create what Foucault labels “docile bodies:”

Many disciplinary methods had long been in existence—in monasteries, armies, workshops. But, in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the disciplines became general formulas of domination ... What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behavior. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A ‘political anatomy’, which was also a ‘mechanics of power’, was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the technique, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies. (*Discipline and Punish* 138)

In the *galera*, for example, it was thought that the inmates would obey because their will had been broken through torture or simply because they feared being tortured. We should now take a moment to remember the song at the beginning of the *Entremés de las moças de la galera* because the *músico* underscores the inmates fear of punishment stating, “oigan como se asustan” (43).

Psychological punishment was also instrumental in the management of docile bodies. As I have mentioned earlier, a rhetoric of shame was created in order to degrade, humiliate, and control the inmates. This practice is clearly

⁵ Foucault explains that “torture rests on a whole quantitative art of pain. But there is more to it: this production of pain is regulated. Torture correlates the type of corporal effect, the quality, intensity, duration of pain, with the gravity of the crime, the person of the criminal, the rank of his victims. There is a legal code of pain; when it involves torture, punishment does not fall upon the body indiscriminately or equally; it is calculated according to detailed rules: the number of lashes of the whip, and the positioning of the branding iron, the duration of the death agony on the stake or the wheel (the court decides whether the criminal is to be strangled at once or allowed to die slowly, and the points at which this gesture of pity must occur), the type of mutilation to be used (hand cut off, lips or tongue pierced)”. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, Trans. Alan Sheridan, New York, Pantheon, 1977; p. 34.

articulated several times in Diez de la Fuente's text. First, in the introductory song when the *músico* refers to the inmates' physical appearance, "demás, que son de cabeça / limpias de palvo, y de paja. / El no ser gente de pelo / es lo que en ellas se halla" (42). In the early modern period, it was common practice to shave the heads of all inmates, male as well as female. It is important to note that while male prisoners in the galleys were shaven for health reasons—to avoid the spread of lice—female inmates in the *galera* were forced to have their heads and eyebrows shaven as part of a rhetoric of shame. Madre Magdalena specifically called for the following measures: "En entrando qualquiera muger en esta galera, ha de ser despojada de todas sus galas y vestidos; y luego la raparán el cabello á navaja, como hazen á los forçados en las galeras" (*Razón*

We find a second reference to this type of punishment in Diez de la Fuente's text when Escalanta reveals her crime and punishment:

Sabe, amiga, que la Sala
por cierto juego de uñas
mandó raparme a navaja
y embargáronme los bienes,
me traxeron a esta casa. (46)

Escalanta explains that her head was shaven as part of the punishment for committing theft. The correctional board also ordered that she be stripped of all personal possessions before entering the *galera*. As this example demonstrates, the deviant woman's body was appropriated by the institution and "defeminized," and "objectified." It was forcefully confined and physically changed to subvert its gendered characteristics, establish internal control through shaming techniques, and mold it into a penitent female. This tactic was viewed as necessary because according to traditional patriarchal discourse, feminine sexuality constantly threatened to disrupt the social order.

In the *Entremés de las moças de la galera*, violence between women is not presented as suggested in the introduction given by the *músico*, but it becomes quite clear as the action progresses that the inmates cannot liberate themselves from forms of masculine violence. As the inmates of the *galera* converse, the *Portero*, the only male character represented in the work, violently interrupts saying, "Digan, como tan ociosas / se estan sin hilar, hermanas / muy bien ganan la comida" (48). The representation of a male character as the "guardian" of women works to reinforce masculinist power relations and a sex-gender system that forced women to delimit their range of action. And, once again we see the dichotomy idleness / labor and the exchange system of food for work.

The representation of the *Portero* as guard / judge, works to underscore the inferior subject position held by the female inmates. The Guard forces the women to submit to his authority by threatening them with physical violence, "La navaja me sabe / vengar de todas / pues es de sus cabellos / la destruidora"

(49). The *navaja* represents an instrument of male domination that has the potential to control and, if desired destroy the signs of female sexuality. The physical threat, "La navaja sabe / vengarse de todas," works to break down the solidarity amongst the inmates, instill fear, and reduce them to a state of docility. Escalanta, already intimidated by the Guard even before the confrontation escalated, proposes a dance in order to restore peace, "Y aquí viene bien un bayle / para que estas pazes se hagan" (49). The representation of the closing dance suggests the restoration of a patriarchal order. This order is sustained by discourses at work in social practice.

The representation of women of low social extraction in Diez de la Fuente's text is symbolic of their class position with regards to the social body. I would argue that the violence and punishment done to these characters represents a symbolic punishment or violence done to all undesirable members of the subordinate groups, male and female. The beginning song of this *entremés* is significant in that it reproduces the disciplinary message, sustained throughout the text, that disorderly conduct will not be tolerated.

While a twentieth-century reader might not find this work humorous, the perception of deviant behavior in the seventeenth century may have allowed the early modern spectator or reader to find the confinement and punishment of "disorderly" women hilarious. We must keep in mind that this period inherited a system of shame-producing practices that as a set of social activities, was similar in many ways to the spectacle of the theatre. The discourse and practice of public punishment pre-conditioned the viewer of disciplinary events to accept public humiliation as a collective activity. The public had an important role within the disciplinary system; they were to participate by mocking, heckling, and ridiculing the punished, thus alienating him / her from the community.

If we consider that the *entremés* represented, "un cuadro realista de la vida diaria de la clase media y baja, pero nunca enfocado desde el punto de vista serio, sino burlesco,"⁶ we may conclude, that the audiences' participation in viewing punishment as spectacle in the theatre is a representation or imitation of their participation in alienating the punished in social practice. Both activities are powerful and share a common message of intolerance towards "disorderly" conduct that works to sustain monarchical authority and social order.

Darlene Múzquiz-Guerreiro
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⁶ José María Diez Borque, *Historia de la literatura española*, Vol. II, Madrid, Taurus, 1980; p. 699.

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