



# **Narratives of Desire: Nineteenth-Century Spanish Fiction by Women (Penn State Studies in Romance Literatures)**

*Lou Charnon-Deutsch*

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How was the female body perceived in the popular culture of late nineteenth-century Spain? Using a wide array of images from popular magazines of the day, Lou Charnon-Deutsch finds that women were typically presented in ways that were reassuring to the emerging bourgeois culture. Charnon-Deutsch organizes the 190 images reproduced in this book into six broad categories, or fictions of the feminine: she reads women's bodies as a romantic symbol of beauty or evil, as a privileged link with the natural order, as a font of male inspiration, as a mouthpiece of bourgeois mores, as a focalized point of male fear and desire, and as an eroticized expression of Spanish exoticism and political ambitions. These imaginary visions of femininity, Charnon-Deutsch argues, were a response to, and also helped to create, gendered stereotypes by suggesting ideal feminine behavior and poses. Further, they comprised a reassuring between-male cultural medium that provided graphic validation of women's docile body for a culture enthralled with femininity. Integrating the fields of literature and cultural studies, Charnon-Deutsch's approach to this subject is unique. Many of the images collected here are available for the first time, and they represent only a fraction of the two thousand images Charnon-Deutsch collected during her research. This book will appeal to students of Spanish cultural studies and gender studies, as well as to art historians.

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