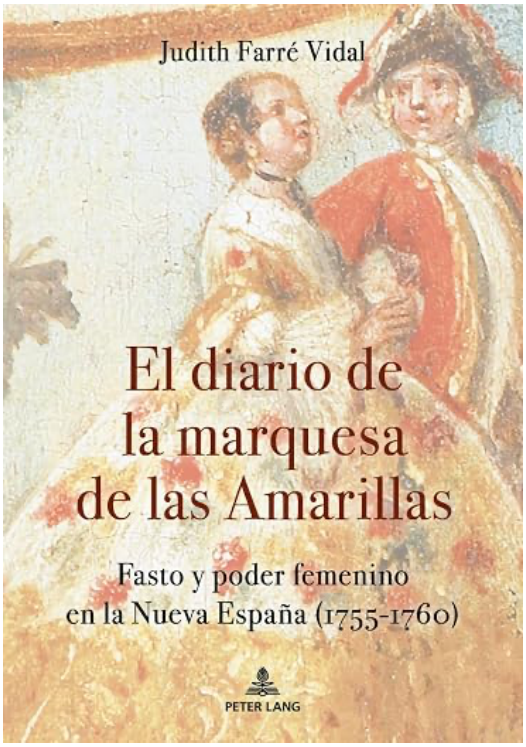
Farré Vidal, Judith. *El diario de la marquesa de las Amarillas: Fasto y poder femenino en la Nueva España (1755-1760)*. Lausanne: Peter Lang, 2026. 128 pgs. ISBN: 978-3-0343-5406-6.

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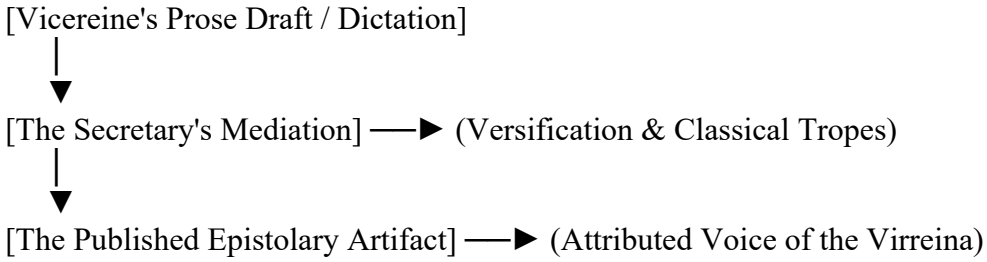
Studies on the political and cultural machinery of the Spanish Empire have long prioritized bureaucratic correspondence, official chronicles, and male-authored panegyrics. Within this historiographical landscape, the figure of the vicereine (*virreina*) has frequently been relegated to the margins—viewed as a decorative extension of Habsburg or Bourbon dynastic representation rather than an active political agent. Judith Farré Vidal's *El diario de la marquesa de las Amarillas: Fasto y poder femenino en la Nueva España (1755-1760)* fundamentally disrupts this omission.

Centering on a unique 1757 text published by the Imprenta de la Biblioteca Mexicana, Farré Vidal presents a critical, rigorously annotated edition and an introductory study of the only travel diary attributed to, and sponsored by, a vicereine in New Spain: María Luisa del Rosario Ahumada y Vera, the Marquesa de las Amarillas.

The text—originally titled *Diario notable del viaje que hizo la marquesa de las Amarillas y virreina de México desde el puerto de Cádiz hasta la referida corte*—is an extraordinary literary artifact. Written in verse but structured as an epistolary travelogue addressed to an anonymous female confidante back at the court of Madrid, it traces the transatlantic trajectory of the vicereiral entourage in 1755.

Farré Vidal's volume serves a dual purpose: it salvages an overlooked text from archival obscurity (specifically rescuing the copy held at the Biblioteca Nacional de España, call number VE/1611/12) and establishes a sophisticated theoretical framework to analyze how elite women navigated, negotiated, and projected authority within the transatlantic Baroque matrix.

One of the most compelling interventions Farré Vidal makes in her introductory study is the problematization of early modern authorship. The *Diario notable* was published under the initials of a male servant, Antonio Joaquín de Rivadeneyra Barrientos, who explicitly states that he converted the vicereine's original prose drafts into verse. Rather than falling into a reductive binary of true versus false attribution, Farré Vidal utilizes what she terms an **ecología autorial** (authorial ecology) to decipher the text's collaborative creation.



Drawing on the material culture theories of Fernando Bouza and the gender performativity frameworks of Judith Butler, Farré Vidal argues that writing through a secretary was an established socio-literary practice among early modern elites. The secretary did not displace the author; rather, he functioned as a technological conduit for the aristocratic subject's voice.

In this light, the Marquesa de las Amarillas retains absolute hierarchical and ideological control over the narrative. Rivadeneyra's subaltern position as a secretary reinforces, rather than diminishes, the vicereine's authorial agency. The text simulates an intimate, elite network of female sociability while operating simultaneously as a highly public display of dynastic pride and institutional legitimacy.

The *Diario* is structurally partitioned into three fundamental narrative segments, each corresponding to a distinct phase of the vicereiral displacement. Farré Vidal analyzes these phases to demonstrate how the text constructs a specific "corporality" and emotional lexicon for the vicereine.

The journey begins at the port of Cádiz, framed not merely as a geographic point of embarkation but as an emotional and bodily rupture. The poetic "I" of the vicereine utilizes intense somatic metaphors to express the grief of severing ties with her homeland and the courtly circles of Madrid. This affective performance is crucial: it frames her departure not as an ambitious pursuit of colonial wealth, but as a sacrifice undertaken out of aristocratic duty to the Crown.

The transatlantic crossing exposes the fragility of the aristocratic body against the hostile, chaotic elements of the ocean. The narrative captures the physical ailments, the existential precarity of maritime travel, and the profound sense of alienation experienced upon encountering the shifting landscapes of the Atlantic. Farré Vidal notes a distinct shifting of registers in this section. The text oscillates between an intimate, subjective register detailing physical suffering and spiritual resilience; and a detached, academic register that describes geographic landmarks and meteorological phenomena through classical, neo-Latin conventions.

This dual register suggests a multi-layered compositional process where the secretary's academic training merges with the vicereine's lived experience.

The final section shifts dramatically from somatic vulnerability to institutional opulence. Upon arrival in Veracruz and the subsequent journey toward Puebla and Mexico City, the narrative transforms into a meticulous catalog of *fasto* (pomp and display). The vicereine details the triumphal arches, the theatrical performances, the religious sermons, and the civic receptions designed to welcome her husband, Agustín de Ahumada y Villalón, and herself. Here, her voice registers a profound consciousness of her elevated socio-political status, positioning her as a co-equal protagonist in the theater of colonial governance.

To fully measure the historical and literary exceptionalism of the *Diario*, Farré Vidal contextualizes it within a broader genealogy of viceroyal travelogues in New Spain. Strikingly,

only one major structural precedent exists: Cristóbal Gutiérrez de Medina's *Viaje del virrey marqués de Villena*, published in Mexico in 1640.

Analytical Category	**Viaje del marqués de Villena (1640)**	**Diario de la marquesa de las Amarillas (1757)**
Primary Author	Cristóbal Gutiérrez de Medina (Chaplain/Almoner)	Antonio Joaquín de Rivadeneyra (Secretary) on behalf of the Virreina
Narrative Voice	Third-person hagiographic/providential	First-person epistolary/subjective
Ideological Aim	Legitimizing a Grande de España; political showcase	Constructing female aristocratic agency & networks of sociability
Format	Official prose chronicle	Poetic romance (verse)

While Gutiérrez de Medina's 1640 text functions as an explicitly political, providential instrument designed to showcase the humility and grandeur of the first *Grande de España* to hold the viceroyalty, the 1757 *Diario* operates on a more complex, gendered axis. Separated by over a century, both texts validate the immense symbolic capital required to sustain vicereiral authority. However, the *Diario* uniquely shifts the focus from masculine administrative capability to feminine domestic and courtly hegemony, illustrating how the *virreina* managed the soft-power networks that bound the colony to the metropole.

Farré Vidal's monograph excels in reconstructing the socio-cultural environment of mid-eighteenth-century New Spain, a period caught between the lingering theatricality of the late Baroque and the rationalizing impulses of the early Bourbon reforms. The publication of the *Diario* in 1757 by the Imprenta de la Biblioteca Mexicana—an institution intimately tied to Creole patriotic and intellectual projects—is highly significant.

The monograph demonstrates that the Marquesa de las Amarillas was not a passive observer of Mexican intellectual life but a crucial patron. By orchestrating the publication of her travel diary, she participated in a sophisticated form of **ostentación encapsulada** (encapsulated ostentation).

The text allowed the vicereine to assert her presence within the vicereiral court while simultaneously signaling back to Madrid that she had successfully established an affective and political hegemony in the colony. Furthermore, the inclusion of verses praised and cited by contemporary figures like Diego García Panes in his own *Diario particular* proves that the literary production surrounding the Marquesa was integrated into the broader intellectual networks of the novohispano elite.

The second half of the volume comprises the first rigorous critical edition of the *Diario notable*. Farré Vidal's editorial criteria strike a commendable balance between philological conservatism and modern accessibility. Basing her edition on the pristine copy held at the Biblioteca Nacional de España ($VE/1611/12$), she meticulously regularizes punctuation and

accentuation to aid the modern reader while preserving the phonetic and morphological idiosyncrasies essential for historical linguistic analysis.

The extensive critical apparatus and explanatory footnotes are invaluable. Farré Vidal expertly deciphers:

- The cryptic classical and mythological allusions embedded in Rivadeneyra's verse.
- The specific maritime terminology utilized during the Atlantic transit.
- The identities of historical actors who comprised the vicereiral court and participated in the welcoming festivities.

Through this meticulous annotations work, the text transitions from a curious piece of circumstantial poetry into an illuminated historical document that sheds light on eighteenth-century courtly protocols, urban geographies, and material culture.

Judith Farré Vidal's study is a masterclass in transatlantic cultural analysis. Its primary strength lies in its theoretical sophistication; by avoiding the trap of dismissing the text due to its mediated authorship, Farré Vidal broadens our understanding of what constitutes early modern female writing. She successfully uncovers an "archive of feminine affect" within a highly regulated, patriarchal genre. If there is a limitation to the volume, it stems from its concise page budget. At 128 pages, certain tantalizing historical threads are left underdeveloped. One wishes for a deeper biographical exploration of the secretary, Antonio Joaquín de Rivadeneyra Barrientos, and his subsequent trajectory within the fiscal administration of the Real Audiencia de México. Additionally, further elaboration on how this text was received by the anonymous female readership in Madrid would provide a more complete picture of the transatlantic loop of consumption.

El diario de la marquesa de las Amarillas: Fasto y poder femenino en la Nueva España (1755-1760) stands as a pivotal contribution to the fields of colonial Latin American literature, gender studies, and the history of the book. Judith Farré Vidal has provided scholars with an impeccable critical edition paired with an analytical framework that redefines how we conceptualize the relationship between gender, authority, and print culture in the Spanish Americas. By illuminating the literary and political maneuvers of María Luisa del Rosario Ahumada y Vera, this volume ensures that the study of vicereiral power can no longer be conducted without a serious evaluation of the *virreina* as an autonomous cultural force. This book is essential reading for any scholar seeking to understand the complex, gendered choreography of power in the eighteenth-century global Hispanic world.