



Reading and Fiction in Golden-Age Spain: A Platonist Critique and Some Picaresque Replies (Cambridge Iberian and Latin American Studies)

B. W. Ife

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In the Spanish Golden Age, the new literary mode of vernacular prose fiction was deplored by many authorities for setting bad examples, undermining reality by deceiving with lies, and persuading in the face of rational disbelief. Dr Ife here examines the connection between the objections posed to this fiction and those raised two thousand years earlier by Plato. This book shows how the aims and results of 'picaresque' novel writing in fact counter such objections. In a study of three sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Spanish novels Dr Ife demonstrates that the authors consciously exploited their readers' response to a narrative in order to bring them to a clearer understanding of their own experience. In this way the very process of representation deplored by the Platonist critics may be regarded as having a moral validity of its own. Additional English translations are provided of all the key extracts studied.

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