

Review Essay: Latin American Cultural Studies Beyond the Human

Andermann, Jens. *Tierras en trance: arte y naturaleza después del paisaje*. Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Metales Pesados, 2018. 462 pp. ISBN 9789-5698-4350-1

Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*. Durham: Duke UP, 2017. 188 pp. ISBN 9780-8223-6897-7

Jenckes, Kate. *Witnessing Beyond the Human: Addressing the Alterity of the Other in Post-coup Chile and Argentina*. Albany: SUNY UP, 2017. 221 pp. ISBN 9781-4384-6570-8

In the past five years, an increasing number of publications in the field of Latin American cultural studies have engaged with posthumanist, ecocritical, new materialist, or animal studies methodologies. While these various theoretical approaches are divergent in their goals and methods, they share a common point of departure: the recognition that solely centering the human as the primary object of analysis within literary or cultural studies is limiting. Taken together, these works argue that human communities are deeply and inextricably enmeshed in more-than-human milieus, and that this entanglement is reflected in cultural production and should be taken into serious consideration by scholars.

The enmeshment of human and nonhuman has become all the more evident and urgent in this era of climate change. As a species, humans are no longer just biological agents, but creatures that wield geological agency: capable of altering the make-up of the planet with our practices. How we have exercised this agency has imperiled our own survival and that of many other forms of life with which we co-make the planet; it has brought about the ongoing sixth extinction, increased extreme weather events, and exacerbated phenomena like drought that have made life in certain regions (like the Central American dry corridor) unsustainable. Latin America is in many ways at the center of these changes. The Orbis hypothesis put forth by ecologist Simon Lewis and geologist Mark Maslin proposes that the origin of the Anthropocene can be linked to the conquest of the Americas. The atmosphere recorded the subsequent genocide of Amerindians, whose eradication prompted reforestation and led to a noticeable drop in CO₂. This atmospheric archive of empire underscores the centrality of processes of colonialism and accumulation in environmental degradation, evident today in the unevenly distributed consequences of climate change, which greatest affect the planet's most vulnerable populations. So, the turn beyond the human in recent Latin American cultural studies asks how might we begin to disentangle the privileged position of the human in the *humanities* and bring into focus ways of rethinking our relationship to the more-than-human from a Latin American perspective.

In the brief space of this review, I will highlight three recent books published within the field of Latin American cultural studies that have taken such an approach, albeit from divergent sets of questions. In spite of their dissimilar frameworks—decolonial/queer, aesthetic/Deleuzian, and infrapolitical/Derridean—the monographs by Macarena Gómez-Barris, Jens Andermann, and Kate Jenckes can be situated within the umbrella of posthumanist concerns: posthumanist in the expansive sense of a range of theoretical positions that break with human exceptionalism or undermine the separation/elevation of the human over the nonhuman. These works are important interventions in this subfield, which has been pioneered by earlier publications by Mark Anderson, Laura Barbas-Rhoden, Scott DeVries, Jennifer French, Gabriel Giorgi, Gisela Heffes, and Rachel Price, among others.

Macarena Gómez-Barris's slim, dynamic book *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives* articulates why Latin America is a crucial site for understanding

our current environmental crisis. This crisis is the result of colonial capitalism, which has systematically destroyed human and nonhuman bodies by treating them as expendable commodities. Gómez-Barris's contribution is aimed at ecocriticism writ-large, which within the US academy has often privileged Global North perspectives, and elided the dynamics of race and empire at the root of the crisis. *The Extractive Zone* endeavors to “decolonize the Anthropocene by cataloguing life otherwise, or the emergent and heterogeneous forms of living that are not about destruction or mere survival within the extractive zone, but about the creation of emergent alternatives” (4). These alternatives enact what Gómez-Barris terms “submerged perspectives” that articulate other epistemologies or ways of seeing the world. The idea of submersion at once conjures up the historic marginalization of these perspectives, as well as the metaphor of water—of being underneath what we typically see, immersed in the muck and diffracted aqueous view. By contrast, that which is typically visible is what Gómez-Barris deems the extractive zone, those biodiverse sites, often occupied by Indigenous or Afro-Indigenous groups, that have been captured by colonial-capitalist worldviews and reduced to the status of an exploitable natural resource.

Gómez-Barris's methodology is heterogeneous, an apt strategy that captures the complexity of extraction in the Andean region today. In part ethnography of Indigenous negotiation with eco-tourism and the new age economy, and in part cultural analysis of visual art (Francisco Huichaqueo, Carolina Caycedo, and Mujeres Creando collective, among others), *The Extractive Zone* weaves together accounts and contestations of resource extraction in the Andes. Given Gómez-Barris's professed decolonial queer femme methodology, the perspectives foregrounded are ones that have been marginalized by the racialized logics of our petroeconomy, namely women and Indigenous subjects. Yet Gómez-Barris is wary of identity politics, and critiques with nuance the cooptation of *buen vivir* ideologies and the contradictory and patriarchal policies of Rafael Correa and Evo Morales. *The Extractive Zone* can be smoothly incorporated into classes across disciplines and skill-levels, as it is written in accessible and engaging language. I have had success teaching Chapter 4, which examines Colombian multimedia artist Carolina Caycedo's appropriation of satellite technologies to contest hydroelectric development projects. (This chapter pairs well with other analyses of water extraction and dispossession, such as Rob Nixon's chapter in *Slow Violence*, as well as cultural accounts from other regions in Latin America, like the Honduran documentary *Berta Vive*, and Mexican documentaries *El ciruelo* and *Los reyes del pueblo que no existe*.)

In *Tierras en trance: Arte y naturaleza después del paisaje*, Jens Andermann explores sensorial, aesthetic engagement with the nonhuman in Latin American art since 1920. For Andermann, aesthetic practice operates as a space of trance, in which the boundaries between nature and culture blur. This experience of trance—which Andermann theorizes through Deleuze and African diasporic religions—scrambles the usual logic of the landscape, in which the observer lies outside the natural space, and gazes down upon it as an object that can be captured and dominated. By contrast, the experience of trance is one in which aesthetic object and artist/observer commingle as vibrating materialities, sharing and exchanging intensities. The landscape in twentieth century Latin American art, Andermann proposes, is not just a noun but a verb: a bringing of bodies together: human and nonhuman, material and affective (27).

Andermann's theoretical framework can be situated within new materialism, as pioneered by Jane Bennett. This subfield is interested in deconstructing the dualism of nature/culture, human/nonhuman, and subject/object through a return to matter. Andermann pushes back against the idea that the landscape is always configured as a static or inert space, instead tracing out how

it affects and is affected by those that interpolate it. *Tierras en trance* begins by exploring avant-garde inscriptions of the landscape as a space that exists in opposition to the cosmopolitan city through Sergei Eisenstein, Blaise Cendrars, and Mário Andrade, to argue that in this period natural spaces outside of the city were revalorized as a crucial aesthetic component of national patrimony. The next section also focuses on avant-garde artists, but this time on those who aimed to relocate nature within the heart of the city through architecture and gardens, including Victoria Ocampo, Luis Barragán, and Roberto Burle Marx. The book's third section turns to "insurgent nature" to examine the politicization of space in Latin American regionalist literature. Reading in an ecocritical key, Andermann proposes that Horacio Quiroga's short stories resist presenting nature as something pristine and separate from the human realm. In spite of this, Andermann concludes that regionalist authors like Quiroga, Orestes Di Lullo and Bernardo Canal Feijóo were not able to extract themselves from the desire to colonize space and bring stability to the frontier. This problematic line of thought was only overcome in guerrilla narratives of the 70s and 80s like those of Omar Cabezas and Mario Payeras, who endowed the jungle with transformative force. In the book's final section Andermann turns to "postnatural" art, bio or eco-artworks that exceed categorization and respond to the uncertain becoming of life today. This illuminating book provides a panoramic examination of the aesthetic role of the nonhuman environment in twentieth-century Latin American art. Andermann's dense, challenging prose makes this text best suited for graduate courses or for any scholar invested in Latin American environmental aesthetics.

Kate Jenckes's *Witnessing Beyond the Human: Addressing the Alterity of the Other in Post-coup Chile and Argentina* investigates the political implications of decentering the human subject as a coherent and stable entity. A densely theoretical exploration indebted most to Jacques Derrida, Jenckes digs into the ways in which writers and artists in post-dictatorship Southern Cone questioned the stability of human identity and moved beyond the discourse of human rights by instead privileging "discontinuity, encounter, and the unknown" (xv). Part of the infrapolitical wave of thought advanced by scholars like Alberto Moreiras, Jenckes is invested in deconstructing the association of politics with identity or subjectivity. Jenckes sets up *Witnessing beyond the Human's* theoretical stakes in the introduction, riffing off of Derrida's notion of the immunological to put forth the concept of the "alter-immunological," which describes the excess that destabilizes the coherence of the self and its desire to dominate or sacrifice anything that threatens its integrity. She convincingly argues that the literary work of Juan Gelman, Sergio Chejfec, and Roberto Bolaño, as well as the visual art by Eugenio Dittborn do just that: trace avenues for rethinking politics in the wake of dictatorship by witnessing or testifying in ways that are radically open to otherness. Or as she puts it, these thinkers "radicalize the relation to the other beyond the figure of the human and all that it represents, rethinking the structures of self, other, humanity, community, and history, and opening them to an otherness that exceeds certainty and representation" (xiii).

While Jenckes' contribution is far from ecocritical nor is it invested in specific nonhuman material bodies/forms of life, her approach shares a posthumanist concern for disrupting human exceptionalism and moving toward a radical openness to difference. It is however somewhat odd that Jenckes does not engage with Gabriel Giorgi's 2015 study *Formas comunes* of Southern Cone writers that move beyond the human in order to fracture the idea of contained subjectivity; an elision perhaps due to Giorgi's more Agambian and Deleuzian account of animality as biopolitics or queer becoming, or to Jenckes's positioning of her project as unrelated to animal studies. This is somewhat of a missed opportunity, given the resonances that Jenckes's

intervention has beyond the primary group of interlocutors that she engages. The conclusions of Jenckes's study are useful for any scholar interested in the posthumanities: her articulation of Chefjec's myopic practice of writing as akin to the exposure to the unknown (61), or account of life, following Gelman, as more than an individual self-contained biological self, as that which contains difference, rather than effacing it (34).

It is worth mentioning in conclusion that many recent monographs within the field of Latin American cultural studies are incorporating posthumanist or ecocritical chapters, even when such an approach is not the dominant theoretical framework. To name but a few, Yansi Pérez's recent examination of Central American cultural memory in *Más allá del duelo: otras formas de imaginar, sentir y pensar la memoria en Centroamérica* (UCA 2019) includes analysis of the blurred limits between human and animal in Horacio Castellanos Moya's work. Patricia Vieira's *States of Grace: Utopia in Brazilian Culture* (SUNY 2018) makes the case that the environment holds a key role in Brazilian conceptualizations of utopia. And Zeb Tortorici's *Sins against Nature: Sex and Archives in Colonial New Spain* (Duke 2018) brings bestiality into purview in his fascinating dive on bodily desire and sexuality in the colonial era. The proliferation of books that incorporate the non-human as a serious avenue of investigation reflects an exciting development within the field of Latin American cultural studies that recognizes that these questions of the more-than-human can and should be taken into account within pretty much any area of inquiry. This turn acknowledges that as humans we are constantly remaking ourselves with and in relation to other forms of life, and that consequently the nonhuman can be a rewarding lens of critical analysis.

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Review Essay: Efraín Barradas in 2020, the Year of His Retirement

Barradas, Efraín. *Para devorarte otra vez: nuevos acercamientos a la obra de Luis Rafael Sánchez*. Santo Domingo: Cielonaranja, 2017. 251 pp. ISBN 9789-9450-8999-8.

Barradas, Efraín. *Inventario con retrato de familia*. San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2015. 103pp. ISBN 9781-6150-5266-0.

Efraín Barradas is one of the most important critics of Puerto Rican cultural production. His long list of publications, conference presentations and invited talks bear witness to a career devoted to understanding, explaining, and testifying for Puerto Rican artists. I use the word "testify" in the sense that his work functions as a testimony for a people who are forgotten, missing, and invisible from the cognitive maps of most scholars and citizens whether in the U.S. or Latin America. His work forms an important and vital, ethical role in its scholarly function by bringing the voice of the colonized and forgotten to the attention of others. A review of scholarly books by such an author would be daunting enough, but what makes this one even more challenging, and perhaps interesting, is that *Para devorarte otra vez* is a critical study of the eponymous Sánchez while the other, *Inventario con retrato de familia*, is a series of stories that might be categorized using the relatively new term, "autofiction." In that book Barradas' parents have been moved to a retirement home and he is tasked with going through their belongings. In the process he stumbles upon certain objects that, like Proust's madeleine, cause him to remember things past and ruminate on their relevance to the present. The question is, How is it

possible to even begin to study two books about such apparently disparate topics and genres by such an eminent and well-read authority? What aside from a common author do they have that unite them? I propose that what connects Barradas's critical and creative work to that of Sanchez is the concept of *lo soez* and its relation to the neo-baroque *vacío* that Barradas develops in his essays.

Publisher Cielonaranja has done us the great service of publishing in a single volume Barradas' recent work on one of Puerto Rico's most important and consequential authors, Luis Rafael Sánchez. By creating interesting and well-informed connections to literary and artistic traditions in other parts of the Caribbean and Latin America, Barradas shows the reader that Sánchez's work should be included in any discussion of Latin American literature. Barradas's essays make the case that, in addition to the better-known novel, *La guaracha del macho Camacho* (1976), Sánchez's stories, particularly those collected in *Cuerpo de camisa* (1967), and his plays are works worth our attention. As he says in one of the essays, "Los desquites de 'Los desquites': Sobre la cuentística de Luis Rafael Sánchez," "esos cuentos acaso superan el valor de sus creaciones teatrales, pero en general se les ha visto como antecedentes de su primera novela y no como piezas que poseen valor propio" (119-20). His work is therefore of incomparable value to scholars whether they are interested in one text or the entirety of Sánchez's oeuvre.

Though the essays were written at different times of his career about different works, several qualities unite them as a single volume apart from the binding. First, there is Sánchez's work and its importance as a part of a growing literary canon as well as its cultural significance. Perhaps one of the most important unifying themes that Barradas teases out uniting Sánchez's texts forms part of the aesthetic of *lo soez*, his ability to capture local language patterns and slang. Sánchez's ear for the rhythms and specificities of Puerto Rico speech allow for moments of what Barradas calls "sorpresas" or surprises in the language used to create the texts. Language goes beyond a reflection of local color or the mimetic to create ruptures within the narrative fabric that produces the Puerto Rican reality.

As Barradas says the ruptures are created by, "el choque entre el uso popular boricua y un lenguaje neobarroco basado en esa misma lengua" (122). Sánchez's use of language is important in the history of Puerto Rican letters because it places his work as a rupture with previous generations, particularly the work of René Marqués, and as part of the, then new, group of Puerto Rican writers such as Ana Lydia Vega, Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá, and Marta Alsina Aponte, among others. This latter group of writers distanced itself from what Juan Gelpí has called the "paternalism" of the previous generations. Though paternalism was employed by previous generations as a necessary way of defending Puerto Rico from U.S. colonialism, Sánchez and the other writers Barradas mentions felt that the concern for Puerto Rico's political status limited artistic production. Ana Lydia Vega in a famous article, "Sálvese quien pueda: la censura tiene auto," argues that the Puerto Rican colonial condition has caused writers to censor their own voices in order to succumb to the pressure to repeat and idealized and paternalistic identity. The need to imagine the nation as a bulwark against colonialism justified images that were, in a word "machistas," not to mention homophobic, misogynist, racist, and favoring an identification with Spain. Citing Sánchez, Barradas calls the demand that writers present a unified image of national identity, "independentismo literario" which has resulted in, again citing Sánchez, a "pendejismo líricista" (141).

Though Barradas cites the date and page number of the Sánchez quote and clearly says that it was in a, "foro sobre la condición de la literatura puertorriqueña celebrado en el campus de Río Piedras" he does not provide the specific title for his source in the body of the text. Looking

at the Works Cited at the end of the chapter, there is no text with the date (1972) he gives for the title-less source. It is only by paging back to the Bibliography at the end of the book, indeed on the last page, that it is possible to find what could be the source. What explains this slip? Of course, all of us, even critics as venerable as Barradas, have made such unintentional omissions. However, given that the chapter in question was previously published, it has not only been read and re-read by editors, but Barradas himself has also had a second chance, as it were, upon the re-edition of this essay to correct any errors or omissions. As becomes evident through a close reading of the final chapter of the book, the absence of the source, or at least the difficulty in finding it, connects the Sánchez quotation to what underlies and even perhaps motivates it, something that connects the sharp criticism, “sin pelos en la lengua” of the paternalism practiced by previous generations. The absence of the source is connected to a larger *vacío* that forms a connective thread running through all of Sánchez’s work and, in the end, also links Barradas’ critical and creative work to that of the author he studies.

It is as if Barradas’ work itself performs a *criticismo barroqueño*, the latter being a term that Barradas invents to describe what he calls a Puerto Rican neo-baroque that is centered on a dual relation to absence and its expression as *lo soez*. Stunningly, his criticism performs what it discovers in Sánchez’s work. In addition to the illusive conference, Barradas chooses to refer repeatedly throughout his collection to a presentation given by Sánchez, “Hacia una poética de lo soez,” which Sánchez apparently gave at Harvard when Barradas had the luck of being a member of the audience. He says, “supe que él mismo era su arte poética, un arte poética personalísima y, a la vez un manifiesto de un neobarroco puertorriqueño” (16). Sánchez’s presentation regarding *lo soez* not only defines his work, but it also creates what Barradas calls an ethical aesthetic that distances him and other writers from those of previous years who were overcome by concerns with national identity (218). Using *lo soez* or the abject as a defining characteristic of the *barroqueño* Barradas creates an interesting and complicated articulation of Sánchez’s ethical aesthetic. At the same time that it rejects the paternalist *costumbrismo* of previous generations, it also attempts to reproduce the endlessly creative speech and culture of the popular classes and other groups previously excluded in this way Barradas and Sánchez seek out *lo soez*. At the same time they reject the “independentismo literario” that lead to self-censorship, they still propose an ethical aesthetic critical of the Puerto Rican political status. Faced with absence, Sánchez and Barradas decide to engage in endless creation of *lo soez* with an ethical purpose.

Like his criticism, his collection of “autofictional” stories *enseñan deleitando*. Narrating his thoughts as he goes through his parents’ things in *Inventario con relato de familia*, he encounters absences causing eruptions of lost time or memories long ago forgotten. Perhaps one of the most poignant of these is triggered by the discovery of a box filled with buttons of all sorts but mostly from political campaigns, making him remember the disagreements they had about political matters. Then Barradas finds a button that reminds him of the time he took his parents to see the AIDS quilt exposition in Boston. He is surprised to see that his mother has saved the pin from that event. Then he remembers how they almost saw the whole exposition, but that his mother had to stop due to a physical ailment. When he rejoins his father, he sees his mother standing next to a man suffering the final stages of the illness laying in a hospital bed. The man and his mother hold hands and speak as if they were long lost friends even though neither understands the other’s language. When his mother leaves, she kisses the man on the forehead. Afterward, neither Barradas nor his parents speak about what had happened. This leads Barradas the narrator to realize that something similar had happened between him and his parents. They differed greatly in their opinions and perspectives on things, yet something held them together.

He says they did not argue, but just let things go in silence. He says it was a silence that, “intentaba demostrar que detrás del mismo subyacía un profundo cariño” (95). Even though his mother was against the ideas that the AIDS Quilt exposition were for, the memory he has of her with the unknown, dying man and the fact that she has kept the button from that event demonstrate a, “raro silencio que se convertía siempre en declaración de cariño” (95).

With this, Barradas seems to signal toward another, perhaps even more conclusive description of *lo soez* and the “nada.” The unspoken empathy and love that his mother showed to the AIDS patient is also the undeclared love that unites him to his parents and even other humans regardless of the way they choose to express their identity or relation to the place called Puerto Rico. This takes me back to a quote in his book on Sánchez, where Barradas writes, “Sánchez explica que nuestra expresión cultural sea ecléctica, mestiza, barroca y, además, sirva para dar cuenta hasta del porqué del trigueño subido de aquí, cuando aquí no es un lugar fijo sino un estado cultural donde, “to be called negrito means to be called LOVE.” He ends that statement with a line from Tato Laviera who always questioned how he was received in Puerto Rico because he was Afro-Puerto Rican and had lived so many years in New York that he did not speak Spanish with a perfect Puerto Rican accent. However, in the poem that Barradas cites, Laviera sees that beneath those differences is love. This is the argument that Barradas makes in both books. The place Puerto Rico is a confluence of differences. But rather than identify with difference, which after all is a construct imposed by colonialism, Sánchez, Laviera, and Barradas remind us that Puerto Rico, “no es un lugar fijo” and that we should all, whether Puerto Rican or not, identify with the *raro silencio de amor* that unites us.

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Review Essay: UnReading: New Approaches to Recorded Indigenous Knowledges Across Abiyala

Burdette, Hannah. *Revealing Rebellion in Abiyala: The Insurgent Poetics of Contemporary Indigenous Literature*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2019. 304 pp. ISBN 9780-8165-3865-2

Worley, Paul M., and Rita M. Palacios. *Unwriting Maya Literature: Ts’iib as Recorded Knowledge*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2019. 248 pp. ISBN 9780-8165-3427-2

Research concerning recent literary production by and about American Indian and Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island and Abiyala (alternatively spelled Abya Yala) is undergoing a critical transformation and the two books addressed in this essay constitute part of this shift. In *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*, Walter Mignolo considers how, during the conquest of Abiyala, scholars (mostly ecclesiastic), imposed European notions of recorded knowledge upon indigenous ones. The effect, according to Mignolo, was the production of regimes of truth and the colonization of memory. Recent scholarship—largely U.S.-based—on indigenous literary production (and cultural production, more broadly)—has made strategic moves to: 1) problematize these regimes of truth within the realm of literary studies, 2) acknowledge, if not dismantle, the colonization of memory as it exists in *indigenista* literature, 3) decolonize academic approaches and theories deployed to study indigenous recorded knowledge. Now more than ever, scholars are critiquing the limits of conventional literary theory and analysis in order to take stock of the abundant and thematically rich forms of recorded

knowledge created by American Indian, Native and Indigenous peoples. The year 2019 was the designated “International Year of Indigenous Languages” by the United Nations. Coincidence or not, it was a prolific year for indigenous literary studies across the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, it yielded the two books discussed in this essay, which were both published by Arizona University Press. Each productively critiques and stretches the respective classifications of indigenous literature and recorded knowledge, compelling scholars to look beyond the written word and traditional literary genres to include other forms of recorded knowledge, encompassing but certainly not limited to the written word.

Hannah Burdette’s *Revealing Rebellion in Abiyala: The Insurgent poetics of Contemporary Indigenous Literature* takes a geographically and culturally broad view, dealing with production across Abiyala, meaning the “Continent of Plenitude and Maturity” in Guna. Her study encompasses both textual and oral communication forms by artists who identify as Tzotzil, Zapoteco, Mapuche, Wayuu, Laguna Pueblo, as well as non-indigenous people writing in Bolivia and Chicano folk. Burdette’s research concerns cultural production via written word, and she contends that these texts manifest knowledges rooted in indigenous epistemologies. Many of these exemplify what she calls “counterwriting” which “manifests as attempts to delink the tool (alphabetic writing, the novel) from its product (modernity/coloniality, ‘universal’ literature)” (141). For Burdette, this delinking also promises to uncouple literary production from “neoliberal, capitalistic, Eurocentric values of progress and individualism” in a trend she calls “insurgent poetics,” which is politically radical and reflected in indigenous political movements (6).

The epistemological and political consequences of insurgent poetics serve as an organizing principle for the book: part 1, “*vizibilización*” deals with literature which makes bodies (social and community based, mostly) and bodies of knowledge visible, and part 2 “*visualización*” thinks through the visionary or even prophetic nature of recent Indigenous literary in Abiyala. Chapters one and two are grouped under “*vizibilización*.” In Chapter 1, Burdette takes up *Snichimal vayuchil*, a poetry volume in Bats’I K’op (Tzotzil) which distances itself from literary markets by remaining untranslated from the Bats’I k’op. Burdette recognizes a similar phenomenon in Zapotec poetry volume *Wila che be ze lhao* by Javier Castellanos Martines. In Chapter 2, Burdette notes how literature acts as an alternative to armed resistance and cites Maya poetics as activism. More specifically, Maya literature is considered a means to visibilize injustices committed during the State Sponsored Genocide of Maya peoples in Guatemala during the 1970s and 80s. The Yucatec Maya concept of *tz’ib* (spelled *ts’iib* in Worley and Palacios’s book) is central to Burdette’s reading, as she understands it as making space within Maya poetics for verbal art, weaving and lines. Burdette draws on Luis de León’s *El tiempo principia en Xibalbá*, its connection to the Popol Wuj, and *B’ixonik tzij kech juk’ulaj kaminaqib’* (*Song from the Underworld*, Pablo García), acknowledging the role of translation in creating an ambiguous space between Spanish and Maya Yucateco. This ambiguity, according to Burdette, is a means by which recent Maya poetry manages to resist “discovery” or revealing under the colonial gaze, including, I might add, that of the academic.

The third chapter considers how Mapuche poets Elicura Chihuailaf and David Añinir offer distinct approaches to Mapuche culture and experiences. Burdette contextualizes their cultural production within the persistent coloniality of terror enacted by the Chilean state upon Mapuche people. In what she reads as moves of political resistance Burdette points out how the two poets’ works assert Mapuche sovereignty, embody struggle, and dream of world building. Urban indigeneity is taken up in the latter part of this chapter, in which Burdette draws two sets

of parallels linking Wallmapu and Turtle Island, first between Añinir's *Mapurbe: venganza a raíz* and the poetry of Tommy Pico, and second between Mapuche Hip Hop Peñas (grassroots musical gatherings) and U.S. rap. Burdette points out how Pico and Añinir's poetry upends the idea that to be indigenous one must live in harmony with nature and that urban centers strip away indigeneity (a point which would be fascinating to place in dialogue with recent works like Tommy Orange's *There There*, a novel dealing with the Native community of Oakland, California).

The fourth chapter of *Revealing Rebellion* notes relationships between literature, survivance, migration and the refusal of borders in Wayuu poetry. Burdette highlights works by Wayuu poets such as Estercilia Simanca Pushaina, Miguel Angel Lopez Hernandez and thinks about their productive dialogue with Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*. All three texts appeal to dreams and prophecies and reject the legitimacy of national borders. The trans-indigenous and diasporic indigenous identities in dialogue in this chapter further underscore the insurgent potential in counter-writing across Abiyala, and this thesis is driven home in the final chapter, which considers a chronopolitics of insurgent poetics. In the fifth and final chapter, Burdette discusses multiple recent *indigenista* novels written by non-indigenous authors from Bolivia and the U.S. *Cuando Sara Chura despierte* (Juan Pablo Piñero), *De cuando en cuando Saturnina: una historia oral del futuro* (Alison Spedding), are both works of speculative fiction published in Bolivia. Burdette reads the former as a representation of utopian madness and *mise en abyme* which promotes the imagination of other worlds and even the eternal dawning of a new world or coming to revolutionary consciousness. The latter is "the first novel of indigenous science fiction" (192) and carries out a technique of "trilinguaging," a term borrowed from Mignolo's "bilinguaging": creating a fruitfully entangled space between Andean Spanish, Aymara and Spanglish and imagines a future in which Decolonization is complete but imbalances of power persist. Burdette concludes by briefly mentioning the novels *Atomik Aztex* (Sesshu Foster) and *Lunar braceros* (Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita), each of which imagine counter histories and futures with drastically different hegemonic structures. For Burdette, this *indigenista* literature actually complements the aforementioned indigenous-authored literature or rap in terms of its radical decolonial vision and insurgent poetics.

Like Burdette, Paul M. Worley and Rita Palacios are keenly interested in the question of what literature, produced in an indigenous context, can be and do. Specifically, they bring to light literary studies' need to think about its own limitations (and presumptions) when attempting to engage with Maya literature. Worley and Palacios's book overlaps in its theoretical framework with Burdette's second chapter, *tz'ib/ts'íib* and the political implications of decolonized aesthetics. The act of creating and receiving a text is political and performative insofar as it entails the body. Worley and Palacios's book deals with a narrower area: Maya literary studies. Resultingly, their work is more concerned than Burdette's with written word's hegemony in the realm of recorded knowledge. As the title suggest, *Unwriting Maya Literature: Ts'íib as Recorded Knowledge* decentralizes the written word as the privileged medium and places it on a continuum of *ts'íib* alongside other "readable objects" ranging from weavings to poetry to *traje* (traditional Maya dress). For the authors, the concept of *ts'íib* is:

a dialogue of different modalities that does not privilege one over another and that sees the processes of storing and producing knowledge as fluid, collective, and cyclic [...] texts/utterances that do not follow the same patterns or respond to the same aesthetic demands and cultural standards as traditional Western words, particularly in the recording of history. (21-22)

As such, the authors produce a decolonial theoretical approach grounded in a triad of Pan-Maya concepts with which to recognize the kinds of intersubjectivity and cultural specificity which ts'uib sustains. Worley and Palacios lay out the theories grounding their readings, which, as they will likely be unfamiliar to a fair number of *Chasqui* readers, are enumerated here: 1) *k'anel*, a Tsotsil concept of individual and collective emotional ties, reciprocal love, and pride, having important consequences for social belonging and cultural identity 2) *cholel*, or *cholel-päk'äbtyak*, a CH'ol concept, with both concrete and abstract meanings, including a process of acquiring *ch'ujlel* (knowledge and consciousness through life experience--this knowledge and consciousness feeds into work on the corn farm) and 3) *cha'anil*, or a strong feeling (kiooltsil) acquired through carrying out public performance.

One important distinction between Occidental literature and ts'uib, according to Palacios and Worley, is that the latter is a record of human interaction. To underscore this point, the second chapter considers weaving huipil as *cha'anil* and points out that these weavings contain and transmit knowledge: they produce a mathematical portrait of the human, create a miniature version of the universe, and turn the wearer herself into a part of the cosmos. The authors relate this to the bees embroidered on bags made by Pancha Pérez Pérez, a member of the Tsobol Antsitek weaving cooperative. These bees form a visual narrative, perhaps even a *tsikbal* (storytelling, in Yucatec Maya), in that they reference political resistance, Maya cosmology, and the Acteal Massacre of members of the Las Abejas Collective in 1997. Furthering the discussing of weaving in Chapter 3, Worley and Palacios assert that some Maya poetry isn't merely inspired by textile production, but is in fact woven text/tile itself. For the co-authors, poetry-like weaving—represent *k'anel* among individuals and communities. Featured in this chapter are poets Calixta Gabriel Xiquin (Kaqchikel) and Ruperta Bautista Vazquez (Tsotsil), whose respective poetry collections, *Tejiendo los sucesos en el tiempo* and *Xolobal jalob te' Tela iluminario*, weave words and signs into knowledge, valuing the practice of weaving as a way of understanding time, life cycles, nature, and the universe itself.

Chapter 4 takes up the political and cultural significance of woven garments, such as Maya traje, in relation to the poets Humberto Ak'abal and Rosa Chávez. Ak'abal and Chávez “redeploy traje to invalidate its function as a marker of gender and ethnic difference in Guatemala, imbuing it with a renewed poetics of gender form a Maya perspective” (84). Both also create *cha'anil*, which contributes to *kanel*. For Palacios and Worley, Ak'abal's *Ajkem tzij: tejedor de palabras*, renders him a “poet-weaver” who uses Maya epistemology to articulate contemporary Mayaness. Further, his thoughtful choice of dress and re-articulation of weaving and gender, undermine reductive, “gendering and ethnicizing” ladino notions of Indigeneity (97). By the same token, Rosa Chávez's *Piedra/Abaj* concerns itself with urban Maya women, and the poet's public performances are identified shape—Mayanize—the space she occupies. Her choice of garb (a huipil with pants), is read as a contestation of essentialist notions of Maya femininity.

In their fifth chapter, Worley and Palacios shift the direction of their volume, taking up the question of how to articulate a Pan-Maya literary history. The authors note that indigenous systems of recorded knowledge such as codices have much to do with performance, or *cha'anil*, but that this quality was given lesser importance due to the influence on these recorded knowledges under Spanish colonial rule. With this in mind, Worley and Palacios think about the intertextual/interts'uib linkages between colonial-era *Chilam Balam de Chumayel* to the works of three relatively recent poetic works: Victor Montejo's, *Oxlanh B'aqtun: Recordando al Sacerdote Jaguar*, Armando Dzul Ek's *Bix uuchik u bo'ot*, and Josías López Gómez' *Sakubel K'inah Jachwinik*. By valorizing performatic traditions, re-performing the performance of the

Chilam Bayam, and articulating a Pan-Maya literary conscience rooted in performance of cultural practice, time-space continuums, and even orality, fixed notions of textuality are disrupted to ensure Maya literature does not become equated with Maya ts'ib. Chapter six dialogues especially well with Burdette's second chapter, as both deal with refusals of translation, bi or tri-linguaging and intentional veiling. In this chapter, Worley and Palacios consider how the poetry in question defies neoliberal translation and cooptation by literary markets. The final chapter rounds out the book by thinking about where ts'ib might serve to understand the works of Benvenuto Chavajay and Manuel Tzoc Bucup, which the authors read as interventions into the world in order to change colonized spaces. Tzoc Bucup's *Polen*, on one hand, synthesizes visual media with Latin script in a way that troubles normative notions of Maya art. Similarly, Benvenuto Chavajay's self-identification as a *chunchero* rather than artist, and his use of clay, corn and tattoo art are recognized by Worley and Palacios as means to decolonize his creative practice and to think about Maya relations to the colonial/modernity project.

Taken together, *Revealing Rebellion in Abiyala* and *Unwriting Maya Literature* indicate that the area of indigenous literary studies is doing important work to change academia from the inside out. In fact, these two books point to productive shifts happening within the field of Hispanic Literatures: not only do they problematize the treatment of literature as a national cultural product, they recognize that the field must look beyond—though not fully reject—Eurocentric theoretical and analytical tools and the very notion of literature in itself in order to begin to consider the abundant and potent works of art being created across Abiyala. At a moment when white supremacy and nationalism is imposing very real threats on the U.S. and the rest of the world, it is perhaps more critical than ever to find new ways to take critical distance from Eurocentric ideologies and to offer due diligence to other art forms and knowledges.

Julia Brown, University of California Santa Barbara

Review Essay: “Uma entrada do afeto pelas impressões e sensações.” Contemporary Brazilian Film and Television as an Encounter with Sensations and Affect

Carter, Eli Lee. *Reimagining Brazilian Television: Luiz Fernando Carvalho's Contemporary Vision*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2018. 286 pp. ISBN 9780-8229-6498-8

Lopes, Denilson. *Afetos, relações e encontros com filmes brasileiros contemporâneos*. São Paulo: Hucitec, 2016. 200 pp. ISBN 9788-5840-4096-4

Denilson Lopes's *Afetos, relações e encontros com filmes brasileiros contemporâneos* is primarily made up of encounters, “na força do seu momento” (22), because for its author it is crucial “pensar a obra, seja individual ou coletiva, colaborativa ou não, como uma relação” (36). As such, Lopes's book is not structured via a traditional division into chapters purporting to chart a path, an itinerary of analysis whereby the author will present us readers with a scaffolded theoretical argument. Herein lies its greatest strength. What may initially throw off readers entices them to forego expectations about a certain linearity that would never do justice to what Denilson Lopes has set out to examine. All we know right away is that there will be three questions underlying the author's encounters: “afetos pictóricos;” “afetos, encontros, relações;”

and “afetos *queer*” (24). Overlap among these axes is readily apparent, and it somewhat justifies Lopes’s film selection, although it is fair to say as well that he engages with them on a purely personal level. So do we, as we gradually come across them throughout these pages that ask that we relate to them through affect. The constellation of questions that guide Lopes’s encounters with films by Eryck Rocha, Julia Murat, Clarissa Campolina, Uirá dos Reis, Guto Parente, André Antonio, Marcelo Caetano, Gustavo Vinagre, among others, succeed at facilitating “uma entrada do afeto pelas impressões e sensações” (66). In “O fim das paisagens,” Lopes describes this point of entry into the films of Clarissa Campolina, arguing that it is the impressions and sensations triggered by spaces, rather than by human faces—“rostos”—that lead to our passive yet attentive immersion in Campolina’s film *Adormecidos*.

In *Reimagining Brazilian Television*, Eli Lee Carter’s analysis is also guided by the impressions and sensations triggered by the hybrid and visually saturated spaces constructed by Brazilian director Luiz Fernando Carvalho. Nevertheless, one could extrapolate his description to speak to the overall layout of Eli Lee Carter’s analysis of Brazilian director Luiz Fernando Carvalho’s television production in *Reimagining Brazilian Television*. Refusing to organize his book as a chronological reckoning of the landmarks punctuating Carvalho’s long relationship with TV Globo, Carter embarks instead upon an affect-laden approach to a director that he not only deeply admires but also, to some extent, emulates. Carvalho’s search for a new type of televisual language has for Carter a great deal in common with Antonin Artaud’s conceptualization of theater. At the foundation of Artaud’s desire to reduce speech and replace it instead with the concrete language of the stage lies a belief that the director ought to engage the audience’s senses. As Eli Lee Carter argues, this is a belief that Luiz Fernando Carvalho adheres to, a commonality that is evident from the title itself of Carvalho’s essay “Educação pelos sentidos.” “In the same spirit as Artaud,” Carter summarizes, “Carvalho proposes a type of language that appeals first and foremost to the spectator’s senses” (74). Carter himself seems to have dutifully followed this lead by the creator he admires and has allowed his own examination of Carvalho’s production be shaped by “uma entrada do afeto pelas impressões e sensações” (Lopes 66).

Reimagining Brazilian Television sets out to provide a persuasive account of how Luiz Fernando Carvalho’s work for the Global South’s largest television network is both a counterpoint to and a reflection of the past, present, and future of Brazilian television fiction. It does not merely do that, however. Like Denilson Lopes’s book, Carter’s takes us on a journey wherein we join him as the ideal audience generated by Carvalho’s singular aesthetic, our senses awakened at every turn by Carter’s adroit unpacking of the director’s experimental trajectory. Aware of the limitations of Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological analysis of cultural production to account for Carvalho’s aesthetic idiosyncrasy vis-à-vis mainstream Brazilian television, Carter opts to complement Bourdieu’s theories with some aspects of auteur theory to be able to “determine the creative distinctiveness” of the director’s audiovisual corpus and the central agents behind it (14). The plural here is of utmost importance, as it points not only to Carter’s reckoning with the shortcomings of auteur’s theory when faced with collaborative creative processes, but also to his commitment to a hermeneutic—borrowed from literary, television, and theater criticism—that bridges the distinctiveness of Carvalho’s team production method with the larger sociohistorical context. As a result, as the title implies, *Reimagining Brazilian Television* goes beyond an enlightened understanding of Carvalho’s singular aesthetic to provide an illuminating assessment of the larger sociohistorical forces at play behind the state of Brazilian television fiction in general.

Carter's book starts with an examination of Carvalho's 2010 microseries *Afinal, o que querem as mulheres?* While surprising, the decision to devote the first chapter to one of Carvalho's later works successfully sets the tone for the main motives underlying Carter's analysis. "Nowhere is Carvalho's position more explicit," Carter argues. *Afinal, o que querem as mulheres?* is read in this chapter as a metacritique of contemporary Brazilian television fiction. Such reading allows Carter to reveal the subtle and complex ways in which Carvalho constantly challenges the industry status quo. At the same time, it is a reading that exposes one of the aspects of mainstream television that Carvalho finds the most bothersome, namely, the subservience of the director's role to that of the author's and the ensuing preeminence given to the written and spoken word at the expense of the *mise-en-scène*. Carter's insightful analysis in this chapter on how the techniques favored by Carvalho in the 2010 microseries call attention both to the series itself as exceptional and to the role of its creator helps readers see how the writer/director hierarchy is deconstructed while providing a rationale for meaningfully experiencing later in the book the ins and outs of Carvalho's peculiar preproduction process.

This singular process consisting of several month-long workshops and seminars involving the crew and cast before actual production begins is the subject of the second chapter, where Carter critically engages the implementation of this process as well as the long-lasting and crucial relationships that Carvalho establishes with his creative team. Here, as elsewhere in his book, Carter takes cautionary steps to prevent theoretical models imported from the Global North from obscuring local geopolitical specificities that merit attention. His examination of the interrelatedness between Carvalho's transgressive oeuvre and the structure of TV Globo as the main producer of telenovelas in the Americas is so important and necessary that it leaves one yearning for more answers—again the affect—to help make sense of Carvalho's departure from the big conglomerate about a year before this book was published.

Carvalho's assertion of his directorial control is not just revealed through his unusual preproduction process. The "aesthetically hybrid and theatrical *mise-en-scène*" (67) that characterizes all of his works—examined in the third chapter via Artaud's writings and the legacy of Brazilian teleteatro (televised theater)—figures most prominently in the opening scenes that constitute the object of study of the fourth chapter. In this chapter, these carefully crafted scenes are seen to set up an ideological and artistic professional identity for the director that in chapter five aligns him with Brazilian modernism of the 1920s. Not only does the fifth chapter place Carvalho's output within this legacy, but, most importantly, it interrogates the messages about nationalism and citizenship embedded in the director's experimental aesthetics. Is Carvalho in his attempt to reimagine the nation compliant with or defiant of TV Globo's historical role in didactically disseminating the tenets of Brazilian culture? Carvalho's search for inspiration in Brazil's past, more specifically, in its cultural heritage, manifests itself as well in *ancestralidade*, "a sensorial kit of dispositions" "which are 'embodied,' develop over time and are a result of circumstances relating to family upbringing, educational experiences, and, more broadly, one's cultural context" (137). This is a concept that Carter introduces in Chapter Five, and takes up again, conveniently so, to examine in the next chapter Carvalho's *Projeto quadrante*, his version of *mambembe*, or low-budget, makeshift traveling theater.

In the last two chapters—Chapters 6 and 7—Eli Lee Carter parses the ways in which Carvalho has expanded his horizons, so to speak. The sixth chapter, on *Projeto quadrante*, foregrounds the intercultural and interregional exchange generated by this unique initiative of Carvalho's, and how it is rooted in *ancestralidade*: "The professional interchange between workers from disparate fields and territories of the country is embedded in and therefore a

manifestation of the individuals' respective *ancestralidades*" (180). Spatiotemporally diverse ancestralities enable Carvalho both to reflect upon Brazilian culture and to defamiliarize Brazilian television, and these are also motives behind his more recent microseries *Subúrbia* (2012). Carter closes his book with a chapter that persuasively problematizes this microseries as part both of a broader effort to appeal to the C-Class—an emerging socioeconomic group that “has also been a major driver behind the recent growth of pay television subscriptions” (218)—and of a tradition within Brazilian television to misrepresent, and underrepresent, people of color.

All in all, the most valuable of Carter's contributions in producing his study, if one were to rank them, can be articulated as a much-needed addition to the emerging scholarship on the aesthetic aspects of television production, a critical engagement with it as a cultural artifact on par with cinematic production. “Scholarly inquiries into Brazilian audiovisual production disproportionately favor film over television,” Carter decrees (9). This reality notwithstanding, it bears emphasizing that a study like Denilson Lopes's on recent Brazilian films that challenge the industry status quo provides a more than pertinent counterpart to Carter's necessary study. In describing what sets apart the films in question, Lopes, like Carter though less explicitly, describes the state of Brazilian film production, and, in particular, what this output might be lacking. We can more clearly see what some mainstream movies lack in Brazil today by fully sensing, together with Denilson Lopes, how the films he has picked address us otherwise. In these films that Lopes analyzes, “no lugar da contemplação há a aventura da sensação” (73). In his book, Lopes bets less on an account of the past that relies on history—or at least a form of historical reckoning that conjures wars, genocides, and catastrophes—and more on the recreation of an atmosphere through images. And these images are evoked in the films he experiences not just through a language that is akin to painting, but also to photography, music, poetry.

Lopes's gift, for lack of a better term, his attuned and perceptive sensorial approximation to the films that he discusses deludes us sometimes into thinking that theoretical underpinnings might be absent from his study. Rather, these are de-centered and dis-oriented—à la Ahmed—to avoid getting trapped into the by now well-known complications and sometimes shortcomings of theories around sensations and affect. Lopes's intent in crafting this impressive little book—whose scope and impact is anything but small—is best summarized in the section titled “De volta à festa:” “não é das referências teóricas que quero falar agora. Apenas imergir no mundo das sensações; aventurar-me nas possibilidades dos afetos como geradores de relações e encontros. [. . .] Encontros que mal sabemos nomear, se alegres ou tristes, alegres e tristes; encontros que configuram relações sem saber de seu futuro o seu passado, sem heranças claras e com ancestralidades a serem construídas. Essas relações não se institucionalizam, se estabilizam. Na sua fragilidade e precariedade, elas podem se fazer distintas cada dia. É, sobretudo, nesse sentido que alguns filmes me interessaram” (115). The failure to name these encounters is a failure therefore related to that outlined by Jack Halberstam—whom Lopes invites to partake in his affective journey—a failure that is generative of new modes of understanding, or better still, of new possibilities for immersing ourselves in these films without a conscious intention, without the will to do or be, but instead with the openness to “ficar apenas no mundo horizontal dos espaços percorridos” (111). All that remains to be stated by now is a wish for readers unfamiliar with this book to share in the experience, to take part in the party, to join Denilson Lopes joyously on this “modesta viagem,” “modesta caminhada” which will nourish in them a mode of being in this world that points to a queer futurity, a then and there that defies straight, normative

time, as José Esteban Muñoz argued, and, with it, celebrates a disruption of the utilitarianism pervading our grim neoliberal realities.

Mariela Méndez, University of Richmond

Review Essay: New Directions in Contemporary Central American, Mexican, and Mesoamerican Literary Studies

Chacón, Gloria Elizabeth: *Indigenous Cosmolectics: Kab'awil and the Making of Maya and Zapotec Literatures*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2019. 243pp. ISBN 978-1469-6367-95

Pérez, Yansi: *Más allá del duelo: otras formas de imaginar, sentir y pensar la memoria en Centroamérica*. San Salvador: UCA Editores, 2019. 180pp. ISBN 9789-9961-1062-7

Central American, Mexican, and indigenous literary studies are among the most dynamic and vibrant fields of current inquiry within the broader context of Latin Americanism. Both books reviewed here are examples of this vibrancy. They also sketch two rather different directions in which the fields are heading. Gloria Chacón's *Indigenous Cosmolectics. Kab'awil and the Making of Maya and Zapotec Literatures* forms part of a growing body of scholarship about contemporary indigenous writing and performance. Yansi Pérez's *Más allá del duelo. Otras formas de imaginar, sentir y pensar la memoria en Centroamérica*, on the other hand, adds to the corpus on Central American postwar literature and memory studies.

With a focus primarily on El Salvador and Guatemala, Pérez's *Más allá del duelo* intervenes in current debates about historical memory. In particular, she aims to take the discussions beyond the question of mourning, in contrast to but also in dialogue with works on mourning in the Southern Cone by Idelber Avelar and Elizabeth Jelin. Pérez argues that while there are similarities in the processes of memory in both regions, they are also different. Central American postwar societies are faced with ongoing high levels of violence, with a more precarious public sphere, and manifold acts aimed at guaranteeing amnesty and impunity for war crimes. For her analysis, Pérez discusses novels and short stories by notable Central American writers such as Claudia Hernández, Horacio Castellanos Moya, Jacinta Escudos, Rodrigo Rey Rosa, and Ana Cristina Rossi. She also engages with visual culture in the context of memory work, such as the documentary *El lugar más pequeño* by Tatiana Huezo about the civil war in El Salvador, the short film *Contrafactum del ocuro* by Guillermo Escalón and Rodrigo Rey Rosa about the trial for genocide of Efraín Ríos Montt in Guatemala, as well as the political and educational work of the Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen in El Salvador.

Pérez discusses the different works with great ease and sophistication. She highlights stories of crime, metamorphosis, and abjection as well as initiatives that transcend the process of mourning as key elements to describe transformations that Central American societies are currently undergoing as they confront past and present violence. For these analyses she applies recent theoretical currents such as aurality, affect, and posthumanism with great illuminating effect. What stands out throughout the book is Yansi Pérez's erudite employment of theory, used with precision and in the right dosage to illuminate the text and topic in question without the theory taking center stage, and moving from Aristotle and Plato to Derrida and Agamben. While the book dialogues admirably with theory and literary and philosophical classics, the book's

argument, however, could have been enhanced by a more thorough engagement with more recent Central Americanist scholarship, a field in constant growth. That being said, *Más allá del duelo* is an excellent book, which also shines because of Pérez's meticulous and enlightening close readings and interpretations, for example of the meaning of the car and its interior in Castellanos Moya's *Baile con serpientes*, or the meaning of the unspeakable and delirium in *El lugar más pequeño*, or her analysis of the meaning of law, voice, and the gavel in the reflection on the Ríos Montt trial.

Pérez ends the book with one of the most pressing topics of our time: conviviality. How to create community in an environment of fear, violence, mistrust, and polarization, in societies with literal and mental gated communities? She reflects about the meaning of Radio Venceremos during war times, the clandestine radio station of the Salvadoran guerrilla, and the Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen in postwar times, both projects spearheaded by Carlos Henríquez Consalvi as examples for building community without a defined inside or outside. She posits her grandmother's act of listening to the clandestine radio station and thus risking her life, and participating in a secret community of listeners as an example of the question of choice (freedom and risk) in making community which makes it possible to: "imaginar otra forma de estar juntos, de compartir lo común, asumiendo el riesgo y la libertad que supone toda exterioridad, pero también la intimidad y la unión que funda toda conspiración, ya que, como aclara su etimología, esta es una forma de respirar juntos, de compartir un ideal. Para crear una comunidad, hay que saber exponerse al otro, a lo extraño, al fuera..." (164). Overall, *Más allá del duelo* is a crucial contribution to Central American scholarship, sure to make an impact in US and Central American academes and in Salvadoran intellectual circles.

Chacón's *Indigenous Cosmolectics* is also concerned with the question of historical memory, but with a focus on indigenous writing. The book constitutes a staunchly decolonial intervention. It is written against the lack of acknowledgement of indigenous literatures, aimed against the notion that no writing existed on Abya Yala/the American continent before the Spanish conquest, and against the overreliance on Western concepts and modes of thought. For such a multi-layered intervention, Chacón employs the Mesoamerican concept of kab'awil, a double gaze, or double mode, which connects society and cosmos and simultaneously reflects past and present. Chacón explains that the concept has undergone many mutations and has different representations (e.g. a smoking mirror glyph and a double-headed eagle). She theorizes kab'awil as part of what she calls an indigenous "cosmolectics" in contrast to dialectics: a Mesoamerican form of thought constituted through the connections between "cosmos and history, sacred writing and poetry, nature and spirituality as well as glyphs and memory" (12). She places the concepts in contrast to the binary oppositions so prevalent in Western thought and compares it to other concepts of in-betweenness and double positioning especially under coloniality, likening it in part to W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of double consciousness. Published in the Critical Indigenities series of the University of North Carolina Press (and the series' first on Latin America), Chacón's *Indigenous Cosmolectics* thus makes a crucial contribution to the recuperation, theorization, and dissemination of indigenous thought.

Applying the double gaze of kab'awil throughout the book, Chacón discusses indigenous writing in the past and present, giving detailed historical overviews and providing contextualized readings. The result of many years of research, the book offers a wealth of information as it discusses questions of authorship and analyzes poetry, theater, and prose fiction, covering a wide range of authors from Mexico and Central America. Chacón discusses a wide range of other authors, Zapotec writers from Juchitán and the Sierra Norte in Oaxaca, and Maya writers from

Chiapas, Yucatan, and Guatemala, among them the K'iche Maya poet Humberto Ak'abal and the Zapotec poet Natalia Toledo Paz. In the richness and diversity of its corpus, the book underscores its claim that the current “politically conscious and articulate indigenous literary movement represents one of the most significant cultural developments in Latin America” (156). The first chapter discusses the genealogy of indigenous writing moving from the times before the conquest to the present. It shows both how prevalent the view is among Latin Americanists that indigenous writing did not exist before the conquest, citing many prominent names in the field, and compellingly argues against this view. The second chapter focuses on the figure of the indigenous author. Chacón highlights the indeterminacy of the author as a central characteristic of indigenous writing as well as the importance of the testimonio for strengthening and amplifying indigenous voices. But she also contrasts the testimonio as a mediated practice with works written solely by indigenous authors, in which they purposefully resist common indigenista tropes. Chapters 3 and 4 offer a sustained overview and analysis of poetry and theater written and performed by Maya and Zapotec women. Chacón shows how the writers use their writings to question gender norms within indigenous societies (e.g. the oppressive patriarchal ritual of *el rapto*, the testing of virginity of future brides in Zapotec communities). Chacón continues this line of inquiry in the last chapter, for example with an insightful feminist reading of the novel *X-Teya, U puksi'ik'al ko'olel / Teya, un corazón de mujer* by Yucatec Maya writer Marisol Ceh Moo.

Indigenous Cosmolectics is an erudite exploration and application of kab'awil. The book is concise, which is appreciated, but sometimes in its brevity the text lacks transitions and longer explanations to link thoughts. And while the author explains the book's inner logic of working on Maya and Zapotec literatures together (indigenous writers have stressed the need for comparative work; the two language families are the most prominent in current literary fields in Mesoamerica; and they have a long history of writing predating the Spanish conquest), more time could have been spent discussing benefits and possible dangers of such an approach, as well as on the reasoning to use a Maya concept to read Zapotec literatures. That being said, Chacón's book is an important scholarly contribution to a wider trend of the growing importance of indigenous literary studies within and beyond Latin American studies. In the last decade, there has been an upsurge of publications of and on indigenous literature, especially in relation to the Maya literary renaissance since the 1990s, and an overall increase of visibility of indigenous scholars and indigenous languages and literatures in the profession. The year 2019 herein constituted a particular year for the field, a kab'awilian year one might say. It grieved the passing of Humberto Ak'abal, saw the publications of several key scholarly books, and celebrated a new program track "Indigenous Languages and Literatures" with twelve sessions during the annual Latin American Studies Association (LASA) congress, the program track co-chaired by Chacón, among them the first LASA panel presented entirely in Nahuatl and by Nahuatl scholars.

In closing, I want to say that one of the challenges that the Latin Americanist field as a whole needs to tackle in the future is to bring the different strands represented by these two books into fruitful dialogue, so that they do not end up being siloed, indigenous studies on one side and ladino studies, the conventional study of works written by non-indigenous authors, on the other. I think dialogue will help illuminate the different literatures, its blind spots, its points of contact, and silences. Contemporary indigenous studies pose a rightful intellectual challenge to Latin Americanism to become more complete, less one-sided, more plurilingual, and more pluriintellectual. The question of indigeneity is at the heart of political processes in the region, be it the question of historical reckoning or the ongoing act of nation building, or of imagining,

un-imagining, and reshaping the nation and its contours. The role of indigenous voices in the reckoning with the genocide in Guatemala, and the physical, discursive, and performative erasure of indigeneity in El Salvador after the 1932 Matanza (an enormous trauma that precedes the trauma of the recent civil war) are cases in point that invite dialogue between the two books reviewed here. Gloria Chacón also ends her book with an invitation to read indigenous literatures not only as different from but also in relation to dominant Latin American literatures. As such, both books, different as they might be in their focus, are two important contributions that lead the way and signal points of discussion and possible future convergence.

Sophie Esch, Rice University

Review Essay: México mestizo, México asiático, México teatral

Dalton, David S. *Mestizo Modernity. Race, Technology, and the Body in Postrevolutionary Mexico*. UP of Florida, 2018. ISBN 9781-6834-0039-4

Torres-Rodríguez, Laura J. *Orientaciones transpacíficas. La modernidad mexicana y el espectro de Asia*. U of North Carolina P, 2019. ISBN 9781-4696-5190-3

Ward, Julie Ann. *A Shared Truth. The Theater of Lagartijas Tiradas al Sol*. U of Pittsburgh P, 2019. 9780-8229-6588-6

México está situado entre dos océanos: el Atlántico y el Pacífico. Del Atlántico proviene su conexión con Europa, el pasado colonial y la ansiedad por la Modernidad. El Pacífico, aunque a veces olvidado en los recuentos históricos y en la crítica cultural, no es la negación del Atlántico sino su continuidad de otra manera. En la cultura mexicana, el Pacífico ha sido con frecuencia el puerto de entrada de la Modernidad, pero de una que aparece de soslayo, no directamente sino a ratos y modificada por la mirada colonial. La función del océano Pacífico en las representaciones que la cultura mexicana ha hecho de sí misma es el tema y el método que Laura J. Torres-Rodríguez explora en su libro. Para ello, realiza un recuento de notable imaginación crítica para identificar los puntos críticos en los que las representaciones del “Oriente” son también un espejo negro en el que la cultura mexicana ha proyectado los deseos de sí misma.

La relación de la cultura mexicana con Oriente pasa por coordenadas afectivas dominadas por “distancia, desconexión y desconcierto” (17). Llamamos Oriente en México a la zona del mundo que está a nuestro occidente. Esta idea hace de Europa la mediadora definitiva de nuestra relación con el resto del mundo, como sucede normalmente con los países que han sido colonias; sin embargo, el libro de Torres-Rodríguez muestra que en algunos momentos de la historia la relación con las culturas orientales (Japón, India, China) no necesariamente adopta esa forma.

La contradicción fundamental en los usos de Oriente en la cultura mexicana son analizados por la autora a partir del concepto lacaniano de extimidad. Esta es una “exterioridad íntima” que lo mismo sirve para proyectar deseos propios en representaciones de otros, que para superar los límites tradicionales al plegarlos al interior (como sugiere el concepto de *invaginación*, tomado de Derrida).

Dado que el corpus de análisis proviene, como lo indica la autora, de una genealogía sinuosa y dispersa, uno de los elementos más logrados del trabajo es el “anudamiento” de las obras. La selección se propone mostrar una “cercanía con lo distante” que permite conjurar la espectralidad de lo asiático en México (35). Cada capítulo responde a un modelo interpretativo

que atiende las configuraciones singulares al tiempo que despliega las mutuas referencias: visualidad, textualidad, temporalidad, espectralidad y resonancia.

El primer capítulo identifica las trayectorias del japonismo en la obra de José Juan Tablada, las fotografías experimentales de Manuel Álvarez Bravo y una secreta colección de estampas sexuales. Torres-Rodríguez da cuenta de la red de elementos y condiciones materiales que esta predilección estética supone: la mano de obra migrante, la constitución del interior como continuidad de la autonomía estética o acaso como el único espacio en el que se realiza, el ejemplo de Japón en la construcción de infraestructura globalizante, el uso de tecnologías tradicionales para la producción de una identidad nacional en el paisaje. Japón es así una proyección, “el terreno estético en el cual disputar distintas articulaciones entre formas de gobernabilidad y representación cultural” (87).

El segundo capítulo analiza la textualidad del archivo orientalista de José Vasconcelos, especialmente de su obra *Estudios indostánicos*. En él, la autora muestra la presencia diseminada de diversos textos sagrados y sapienciales de la India en la formación del pensamiento vasconcelista. En su lectura, los textos indostánicos son la condición de posibilidad de la filosofía y la praxis política de Vasconcelos, así como de su concepción del cuerpo y la higiene: “Es en el circuito transpacífico... donde Vasconcelos encuentra el lenguaje para dar cuenta de los retos modernizadores” del México posrevolucionario (131).

El tercer capítulo ensaya una lectura sugerente del pensamiento marxista temprano de Roger Bartra. En su deslinde del marxismo ortodoxo, atado en México al sindicalismo de Lombardo, Bartra recupera la teoría marxista del “modo de producción asiático” como una manera de comprender las derivas de la acumulación de riqueza y poder despótico en América. El modo de producción asiático es un desajuste de la temporalidad del marxismo ortodoxo, para situar la singularidad de la acumulación despótica no al margen sino en el corazón de la dependencia del capitalismo global. Así, Oriente es desplegado en la obra de Bartra como el punto de partida para la reimaginación del despotismo priísta, no un afuera ni una excepción absoluta, sino una contradicción constitutiva del Estado y el desarrollo capitalismo.

El cuarto capítulo insiste en la presencia de China como un significativo cultural fundamental durante los años sesenta. Mediante su lectura de *El complot mongol* de Rafael Bernal, la autora propone la presencia de China durante la Guerra Fría en la forma de un espectro en el sentido de Derrida. Tras el antagonismo entre bloques capitalista y comunista, Bernal conjura en su novela el uso de la milicia mexicana como mecanismo de control biopolítico de migrantes; con ello también hace aparecer el narcotráfico como el espectro que sostiene al estado autoritario: “El complot mongol *es* el complot del Estado mexicano” (188).

El quinto capítulo da cuenta de la proliferación de tropos y apariciones de Oriente en México en el periodo neoliberal. Una fotografía de Daniela Rossell recuerda los aires orientalistas del modernismo porfirista, en ella el harén representa el “reverso ‘femenino’ de un despotismo oriental” (193). También en la novela *El testigo* de Juan Villoro la estética neoliberal “se imagina como un retorno por venir”. En la repetición y en la resonancia de formas y motivos se conjura el espectro de Asia como la proyección del futuro capitalista. *Japón* de Carlos Reygadas es una pastoral de reminiscencias japonistas para renovar la imaginación del agro mexicano; *Bola negra: el musical de Ciudad Juárez* de Mario Bellatin y Marcela Rodríguez y las instalaciones sonoras de Shinpei Takeda “anticipan la creciente reorientación actual hacia el Pacífico” (231).

Finalmente, el brillante libro de Torres-Rodríguez articula dispositivos de lectura sobre la cultura mexicana para reorientarla hacia el descubrimiento de lo que siempre ha estado presente.

La extimidad de Asia en México produce una cartografía “que implica una sensación inesperada de intimidad, familiaridad o proximidad con lo que todavía se percibe como ajeno o distante” (239).

En cuanto al libro de Dalton, el problema del mestizaje en América Latina, y en especial en México, ha valido el interés de académicos y académicas desde perspectivas diversas. Dada la complejidad histórica y conceptual del problema, los enfoques desde los que se ha estudiado van de lo político a lo social, de la biología a la cultura, de los discursos científicos a los literarios, entre otros. Una de las áreas que quizá ha recibido menos atención por parte de la academia dedicada al problema en el siglo XX es la relación entre cuerpo y tecnología, como parte del enfoque más amplio dedicado a las representaciones de la dominación y el control biopolítico. Por supuesto, se han realizado estudios acerca de las técnicas de control social en poblaciones durante el nacimiento de la biopolítica mexicana, lo mismo que sobre el desarrollo del mestizaje y la mestizofilia como parte del proyecto de modernización del Estado posrevolucionario. Es, de hecho, a partir de algunas de las más recientes investigaciones en este campo que David S. Dalton desarrolló su propia investigación, en la intersección entre modernidad mexicana, cuerpo biopolítico y tecnología. La tesis principal del libro es que la relación entre cuerpo y tecnología es lo que permite la producción de cuerpos racializados y legibles como tal dentro de la modernidad mexicana.

Para Dalton, que sigue la tesis de Joshua Lund, el mestizaje es la codificación del proceso de modernización sobre las poblaciones y los individuos. Así, el mestizaje en México no sería solamente la producción estética de sujetos híbridos, sino también la actualización tecnológica de las poblaciones originarias para convertirlas en sujetos políticos de la refundada república posrevolucionaria: “Corporeal hybridity and modernity became the founding elements of a distinctly Mexican society that was technologically advanced, racially and culturally mixed, and clearly gendered. Mestizaje thus represented the discursive tool that could overcome perceived indigenous shortcomings and initiate Mexico into the modern world” (7).

Para Dalton, a pesar de las diferencias ideológicas al interior del proyecto nacionalista mexicano, la intersección no siempre favorable entre tecnología y mestizaje es una de las maneras más relevantes en las que los cuerpos interactúan con el discurso oficial. A partir de ello, propone una lectura de formas *cyborg avant la lettre* en las que los cuerpos son modificados mediante instrumentos tecnológicos para convertirse en sujetos biopolíticos. En su uso del *cyborg* para codificar las relaciones entre tecnología y cuerpo, Dalton se distancia de la teórica emblemática del concepto, Donna Haraway. Si bien es uno de los puntos a los que vuelve a lo largo de los capítulos, ya sea para delimitar su posición, o bien para antagonizar la de Haraway, es en el capítulo 4, dedicado al héroe de cinematográfico El Santo, en el que el desarrollo se comprende más claramente, y en el que se perciben las virtudes de la reformulación del concepto.

El libro está compuesto de cuatro capítulos, cada uno dedicado a una obra específica en distintos medios y géneros (ensayo literario, pintura mural, cine melodramático y cine de ciencia ficción). Cada capítulo desarrolla la misma tesis con variantes sugerentes adecuadas para las obras y los medios: la tecnología es la interfaz en la que el cuerpo se racializa como mestizo y se introduce en la modernidad.

El primer capítulo está dedicado al *Prometeo vencedor* de José Vasconcelos, quien es bien conocido por su ensayo utópico, *La raza cósmica*, una de las obras paradigmáticas, si no es que la más, de la mestizofilia latinoamericana. Siguiendo a Lund, Dalton parte de la raza como la dimensión estética de la división entre modernidad y premodernidad; así, propone una aguda

lectura del *Prometeo vencedor* como una obra que desarrolla la estética del mestizaje, antes de que el autor lo hiciera con la política del mestizaje en *La raza cósmica*.

El segundo capítulo está dedicado a los murales de Diego Rivera y José Clemente Orozco. Mediante un análisis de la dimensión biopolítica de las representaciones de la conquista y la naturaleza, Dalton ve en las obras de Siqueiros una potencial victoria de la tecnología sobre la religión en la constitución de un nuevo cuerpo nacional, y en las de Rivera la búsqueda de una fusión entre tecnología y cuerpo indígena para la producción de un cuerpo más cercano al de la ideología indigenista.

El tercer capítulo parte del concepto de inmunización desarrollado por Roberto Esposito para identificar los usos de la medicina como tecnología de modernización sobre los cuerpos indígenas en el cine de Emilio “El indio” Fernández. Para Dalton, el cine de Fernández y la cinematografía de Gabriel Figueroa producen una visión simultáneamente tecnologizada y mítica de los personajes femeninos, y una justificación de los esfuerzos estatales por producir cuerpos mestizos mediante las campañas médicas y de alfabetización.

En el cuarto capítulo analiza la formación de un superhéroe mestizo en la figura del Santo que, mediante sus películas, reformulaba la ideología mestizofílica oficial al presentarse como el defensor entre el pueblo mestizo y las amenazas del exterior y el pasado indígena; el personaje coincide con la crisis del estado a finales de los sesenta por lo que es la supervivencia del discurso oficial en un discurso masivo y popular. Al contrario, la novela *Mejicanos en el espacio* de Carlos Olvera se sirve de los tropos del género de ciencia ficción y los cuerpos posthumanos para criticar la burocracia del gobierno y el proyecto de un cuerpo nacional homogéneo y resistente al exterior.

Finalmente, el libro de Dalton ofrece una mirada que renueva algunas de las discusiones sobre el mestizaje y la formación ideológica de la modernidad mexicana. Su selección del corpus es notable por la capacidad para mostrar la diversidad de formas artísticas usadas en la proyección de la mestizofilia mexicana, así como por su atención a una dimensión poco atendida en los estudios mexicanistas.

Pasando al libro de Ward, anoto que esta es la primera monografía académica dedicada al trabajo de la compañía teatral Lagartijas tiradas al sol, especialmente a las obras de sus fundadores, Luisa Pardo y Gabino Rodríguez. En él, Julie Ann Ward explora las obras dramáticas a partir de su doble dimensión teatral: como texto dramático y como experiencia performativa y escénica. Su metodología oscila entre la propia del análisis literario, enfocada en los elementos temáticos y formales del texto en relación con su contexto sociohistórico, y la atención a la presencia de la representación teatral. Si bien no es posible reproducir los elementos característicos de la performance teatral en el análisis, esta es el elemento central que organiza el análisis de las obras para entender a lo largo del tiempo la poética de compañía. Como sostiene Ward, “It is only in the moment of performance that real meaning-making occurs, and that is precisely why the theater is so powerfully positioned, in the digital age, to challenge hegemonic discourses and traditional notions of what is real” (7).

La problemática representación de la realidad y su integración en el texto dramático y en la puesta en escena es la base sobre la que se elabora la periodización y el comentario de las obras de Lagartijas tiradas al sol. Ward contextualiza el trabajo de la compañía dentro del llamado “teatro de lo Real”, el concepto que fue desarrollado, entre otros, por Carol Martin, para englobar un conjunto de prácticas teatrales y dramatúrgicas que mediante citas de textos legales, historiográficos, entrevistas, etc., pone en cuestión su relación con la realidad de un entorno sobrecodificado; haciéndolo además mediante la presencia del cuerpo como enclave de verdad

de la historiografía. “In what ways is performance embodied kinesthetic historiography, and what end does this serve?” se pregunta, citando a Martin, Ward (15).

La tesis principal del trabajo de Ward es que la singularidad de *Lagartijas tiradas al sol* reside en que su pertenencia al “teatro de lo Real” no se debe sólo al uso de documentos y temas historiográficos, sino también a la intersección con anécdotas personales e historias biográficas. “By playing themselves and their parents, contemporary actors reinforce and surpass the text as currency of the real” (17). La relación no siempre sintética entre la realidad y colectiva y la historia personal, es decir, entre historia nacional y biografía es la perspectiva a partir de la cual Ward propone entender el desarrollo de la trayectoria escénica de la compañía.

El primer capítulo realiza dos tareas críticas. Primero, expone el carácter colectivo de la creación de la compañía. La labor colectiva es el resultado de la integración de saberes y colaboraciones entre los integrantes, pero también del lugar de la Historia (como colectividad organizada) en las obras dramáticas. La colectividad histórica, además, se corporiza mediante la presencia en escena. La reactuación/representación (como *reenactment*) de la historia rompe con el modelo interpretativo para situar las obras en la tensión entre la naturaleza verdadera del contenido y la condición ficcional del teatro, simultáneamente (33).

En el primero y el último capítulo es donde se desarrolla más claramente la propuesta crítica de la autora, más allá de la discusión sobre obras específicas de la compañía. El capítulo dos es una revisión de las obras más claramente autobiográficas sobre las familias y la genealogía de Luisa Pardo y Gabino Rodríguez. El tercer y último revisan la producción más reciente al tiempo que la sitúa en relación con trabajos similares del resto de América Latina. Para ello, se sirve de la teoría sobre el teatro posdramático contemporáneo de Lehmann. Con ello, reúne dos marcos críticos que podrían parecer disímiles, el de Martin y el teatro de lo Real y el de Lehmann y el teatro posdramático, para comprender la riqueza de *Lagartijas tiradas al sol*. Esta existe en la intersección entre las operaciones sobre el archivo documental nacional y continental y la fuerza del trabajo escénico que desplaza lo representacional para enfocarse en lo afectivo. Para Ward, es esto uno de los valores fundamentales de la obra pues es una especie de respuesta estratégica al contexto de falsas noticias, suplantaciones y descontextualizaciones mediáticas; al centrarse en la afectividad y en su valor crítico de la historia, *Lagartijas* muestra que “this kind of communication of reality can be done in the theater...getting back to the basics of human communion and ritual is a way to connect with the truth” (117).

El libro es una aportación relevante para el estudio del teatro mexicano contemporáneo, aunque en varias ocasiones parece repetitivo en sus postulados debido a que se centra en la descripción y contextualización de las obras, más que en la problematización de estas a partir de conceptos. También es una obra de consulta pues ofrece además de los análisis y la trayectoria de la compañía, una entrevista y la lista de las participaciones en festivales de teatro y escena.

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Review Essay: Brazilian Literature in Translation

Rio, João do. *Vertiginous Life*. Trans. Ana Lessa-Schmidt. Hanover, Conn.: New London Librarium, 2017. xxi, 463 pp. ISBN: 9780-9982-7308-2 (paper)

Rio, João do. *Religions in Rio*. Trans. Ana Lessa-Schmidt. Hanover, Conn.: New London Librarium, 2015. 405 pp. ISBN: 9780-9905-8998-3 (paper)

- Machado de Assis, Joaquim Maria. *Good Days! Bons dias: Chronicles 1888-1889*. Trans. Ana Lessa-Schmidt, with Greicy Pinto Bellin. Hanover, Conn.: New London Librarium, n.d. [2018?]. 427 pp. ISBN: 9781-9470-7422-4 (hardcover); 9781-9477-7432-1 (paper)
- Machado de Assis, Joaquim Maria. *Miss Dollar: stories by Machado de Assis*. Trans. Greicy Pinto Bellin and Ana Lessa-Schmidt. Hanover, Conn.: New Liborium, 2016. 527 pp. ISBN: 9780-9966-7474-4 (paper)
- Andrade, Mário de. *Amar, verbo intransitivo. To Love, Intransitive Verb*. Trans. Ana Lessa-Schmidt. Hanover, Conn.: New London Librarium, n.d. {2018?}. 433pp. ISBN: 9781-9470-7427-9 (hardcover); 9781-9470-7428-6 (paper)

It is really quite remarkable to discover this publication series. Despite the enormous demographic presence of Portuguese, one often has the impression that it is treated as a minority language, down there with Albanian or Hungarian, to the extent that it has, at least in the United States, so little impact on the general cultural imaginary. And despite the enormous Brazilian literary production, with now a very respectable production from Portugal and notable works from Portuguese-speaking Africa, literature in translation from the Portuguese continues to be under-read. Indeed, one is often startled to see how much Brazilian literature gets translated into English, even if it gets reviewed even less than Spanish and Hispanic American literature translated into English.

Thus, the publication project of New London Librarium is truly notable. With assistance from the Brazilian Ministério de Cultura and the Fundação da Biblioteca Nacional, over a dozen titles have been translated to date. Although the authors are in key to Brazilian literary history, either the authors are little known to U.S. readers (e.g., João do Rio) or the works translated fall into that category, even if the authors are quite well known (Machado de Assis). The vast bulk of Brazilian literature being translated is, as one might expect, contemporary fiction, although translations continue to fill in the gaps, so to speak, of minor or overlooked works of major authors, with the implied understanding that a major author is much more than just the most known or influential work. This is certainly the case with the work mentioned below by Machado de Assis, even if the majority of his readers might not get beyond reading *Dom Casmurro*.

João do Rio, however, has remained mostly unknown to American readers, and even students of Brazilian literature may not do more than read a few representative texts as part of their coverage of fin-de-siècle Rio, although, as his pen name indicates he viewed himself as totally engaged with the Brazilian capital, which at the time—unlike the current capital Brasília—was pretty much the exclusive domain of national political, social, economic, and cultural life. Rio was born João Paulo Emílio Cristóvão dos Santos Coelho Barreto, or simply, Paulo Barreto, in 1881. Like Machado, he was of African descent, although his father was an intellectual and provided his son with the best education had to offer, with the result that he was honored by admission into the Academia Brasileira de Letras that Machado had founded. Rio exemplified as best he could a Brazilian understanding of the complete nocturnal bohemian, and his queer preferences were a fairly open secret, often thought to be confirmed by his explicit defense of Oscar Wilde, whom one might reasonably believe he enthusiastically identified with; certainly, like Wilde, he was known publicly as an often outrageous dandy.

Vertiginous Life (Vida vertiginosa) was originally published in Paris in 1911 and consists of several dozen chronicles written 1905-11 in the Rio daily, *Gazeta de notícias*, where his fame as a chronicler of the city became associated with the pseudonym he created for his *notícias* in

1903. He would write for the *Gazeta* 1903-13, the high point of his career. Rio died in 1921, and his funeral was a major public spectacle, a testimonial to the enormous interest his chronicles held for his Carioca readership.

Rio called himself a *reporter maldito da noite carioca*, and his queer interests are much in evidence in many of his chronicles. One suspects that the considerable enthusiasm among readers of the *Gazeta* for his texts was because it was high time for queer culture in Rio to have a spokesperson. But his writing, in an overall sense, is crucial for tapping into the imaginary of Rio at that time for its aspirations to be a thoroughly modern city by the most influential European standards, which mostly meant Parisian ones. Indeed, Rio's chronicles are particularly interesting for charting the Brazilian Francophilia of the day. Unquestionably, Rio's writing, which is associated with an emergent respect for the journalistic chronicle, despite the still prevailing prejudice in favor of poetry and fiction, is at the center of the project of modernity in its manifestation in Rio de Janeiro, and still holds enormous importance to Brazilianists in that regard. This is a bilingual edition of Rio's text, and it is important to return to his texts in the original as exemplars of the formation at the time of a Brazilian Portuguese educated standard before the complications and derivations that will soon be introduced after his death by São Paulo's own project of national modernity.

Also included in New London Librarium's list is the collection, also bilingual, of João do Rio's writings on religions in Rio. These chronicles, as Reginaldo Prandi points out in his "Foreword," were published between February and April 1904 under the general banner of "Religiões no Rio" in Rio's *Gazeta de notícias*. They were first issued in book form in 1951, and, in addition to Rio's sharp analytical eye, they are important for being among the first writings on religious diversity in Brazil; certainly, they represent Rio's interest, if not in exactly what we would call cultural diversity today, in contributing to the record of Brazilian modernity by pointing out that the conservative, nationalistic proposition of Brazil as a Catholic country is a very relative and problematical designation. If the ruling class would adhere to the construction of Brazil as fundamentally Catholic, the bohemian would wish to find, if not where atheism or nonreligiosity exists, at least the aesthetic As Prandi notes, his column "dealt with the religions of Africans and Afro-Brazilians, Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist Protestants, Spiritists, Israelites, Positivists, Physiologists [physiolate = nature worshippers]" (5). And this panorama would very amply be supplemented today by the presence of the Church of Latter Day Saints, the large Jewish immigration of the 1930s and after (which was mostly Ashkenazic; one assumes that Prandi's Israelites were mostly descendants of Portuguese and Sephardic Jews from the Peninsula), and a quite substantial array of Pentecostals, Evangelicals, and other fundamentalist branches of Protestantism. To this day, one does not want for options for religious affiliation, another one of the truly distinctive features of the Brazilian imaginary. Rio's articles are indeed pioneering in creating an awareness of this dimension of the country.

Machado de Assis is not generally known outside of Brazil for his chronicles, and one suspects they are not assiduously read in Brazil. As the preeminent novelist in Latin America at the turn of the century, it is expected that his masterpieces of fiction have always been what readers have turned to. But Machado, like Rio, wrote an ample spectrum of chronicles of life in Rio de Janeiro, and, as one might well suspect, chronicles marked by all of his critical sarcasm, irony, pessimism, and ambiguous feelings toward the human endeavor and especially the Carioca bourgeoisie. The title of this collection is a play on the title under which, with the pseudonym of Boas Noites (for some reason the foreword distractedly makes the translation Good Nights! equivalent to Bons Dias! [13], Machado published these short texts in the *Gazeta de notícias*

between April 5 and August 29, 1889, a full decade before Rio's chronicles graced the same pages. This, too, is a bilingual edition, so the reader can fully appreciate the undertaking of the translators in getting just the right tone in English of Machado's sometimes tricky Portuguese originals, usually sly in direct proportion to the sauciness of Rio's texts.

In any event, reading Machado's chronicles is an important literary undertaking. He may have been a better novelist than Dickens, but he never earned anywhere near the money Dickens did with his potboilers, and it is important to keep in mind with these chronicles that such writing was for so many Latin American fiction writers of the day important sources of income.

Extremely welcome is the bilingual edition of Machado's short stories, which appeared in various daily newspapers and illustrated journals. One usually does not associate the short story with the realist novelists, who required vast volumes to pursue their sociohistorical representations. But, then, Machado is an exception in so many literary ways, even though it would be quite reasonable to associate the short stories, like his chronicles, with the need for the sort of steady income journalistic contracts provided. Since Machado did not, during his lifetime, enjoy the sort of international readership his works now have, the chronicles and short stories brought him a Brazilian readership far larger than the novels did, especially since, at the time, sophisticated Brazilians preferred to read the latest novels off the ship from France. The fact that Machado saw his short stories as somehow marginal to the central writing of his novels is reflected in the fact that he never published a collected volume of them, although several anthologies of them and translations into other languages have been constructed posthumously based on scholarly recovery in periodical archives.

But there is nothing slapdash about these stories, even if some are a little uneven: in the main they are every bit as perceptive in a hard-edged and unflinching way as his novels are. It is also to be noted that often they are much more than short stories, with some like "Confissões de uma viúva moça" ("Confessions of a Young Widow) running fully thirty pages. Such an extension afforded Machado the detailed opportunity for psychological probing that is not usually associated with the short story. One of my favorites, "O caso da vara" (The Rod of Justice), which dates from 1891, so trenchant in its cynicism, its critique of the interface between the unspeakable cruelties of slavery and the hypocrisy of Christian benevolence, is regrettably not included here.

The bilingual edition of Mário de Andrade's psychological novel of intercultural, intergenerational, interclass erotics is easily the most important entry here. Machado is already known extensively in English translation, if not principally on the basis of his short stories and chronicles, and João do Rio, while an important writer, is not quite as crucial a central figure in Brazilian literature. Mário de Andrade, trained as a musician and musicologist and fundamental for his work in those areas, was also crucial to the Modernist movement in Brazilian literature and art and a pioneer in the Brazilian history of artistic photography.

Although not as singularly important as Andrade's poetry, especially his *Pauliceia desvairada* (1922), one of the first great cycle of poems dedicated to a Latin American city, along with Jorge Luis Borges's *Fervor de Buenos Aires* (1923), *Amar, verbo intransitivo* (1927) is significant for the sophisticated level of the erotic issues it deals with, especially against the solidly moralistic backdrop of the upstanding bourgeois urban families that could afford to import foreign governesses. This practice, which Brazil shared with other prosperous countries like Argentina and Uruguay was, if not always explicitly so stated, a civilizing step above the use of black slaves (or their clientelized "freed" descendants) for the task of child rearing. In the case of Brazil, it was a sharp contrast between the rural *engenho/fazenda* culture still based on black

labor and the Europeanized urban substitutes of São Paulo. As such, it fit perfectly with the disjunction between traditionalism and modernity in the social values of the country.

Critics have been reluctant to address adequately the queer elements in Andrade's work (one understands that his heirs have played a role in encouraging this reluctance). But it is tempting to view *Amar, verbo intransitivo* as somehow related to Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* (1915), wherein some critics have read the tribulations of erotic attachment described in terms of a heterosexual relationship as really an allegory of homoerotic love in a context of a draconically enforced homophobia—at least in Brazil as regards open discussion of homoerotic love at the time. By the same token Andrade's novel bears some resemblance to Adolfo Caminha's *Bom-Crioulo* (1895), which dealt quite openly (and thus merited severe critical denunciations) homoerotic love that also intersected axes of race, class, ethnicity, and generation.

In sum, this is an extremely praiseworthy publications project. One hopes for an expanded publications list. Moreover, the decision to publish bilingual editions is truly remarkable, given the additional cost. But it does much to encourage the reader to have contact with the original Portuguese, a language to which far too many readers in English, who may have routinely studied Spanish, have never been exposed.

David William Foster, Arizona State University

De Castro, Juan. *Writing Revolution in Latin America: From Martí to García Márquez to Bolaño*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2019. 262 pp. ISBN 9780826522597

With the supposed end of ideology following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the alarming shift to the far right among several nations around the world in recent years, Juan E. De Castro's *Writing Revolution* comes as a particularly timely reflection on socialist revolution in Latin America: a region he describes as “representative of global historical trends” (1). This includes a worldwide trajectory from anti-capitalist movements in the 1960s towards a “generalized, though far from unanimous, belief in the free market as the solution for ... social problems” in the present. When contemplating the book's subtitle, the connection between Martí and revolution may be more self-evident than it would be for authors like Bolaño, which is precisely why undergraduates and seasoned scholars alike have something to gain from reading De Castro's chronological and even at times longitudinal analysis of Latin American writers through this particular lens. This is especially true when it comes to the central yet often overlooked role the Cuban Revolution played in shaping the Boom—Latin America's most globally recognized literary generation—a question that *Writing Revolution* examines in all its unexpected and occasionally contradictory complexity.

While many monographs delve into close readings of a handful of texts, De Castro's monograph provides a comprehensive overview of the writers themselves, as well as curated and relevant historical and biographical information that Latin Americanists will find helps to fill in many of the blanks left behind by previous studies that focus solely on the authors' works. The book thus provides a wider context that proves illuminating for both scholarship and pedagogy, along with a smattering of selected works that serve as flashpoints—coordinates as De Castro maps out the authors' floating trajectories around the changing dynamics of revolution. Chapter 1 begins by tracing revolutionary dialogues between the United States and France, and later between Marx, and Martí, wherein the latter rejects the former's “putative cult of violence” in

favor of an optimistic view of democracy and its collaborative possibilities that would later become tempered by sobering events in the U.S. Mariátegui, however, completely rejected capitalism, believing socialist revolution to be the only possibility for real change, although his belief in the original Inca tradition put him at odds with “rapidly hardening Soviet Communism” and “its interpretation of Marx’s ideas as a one-size-fits-all solution” (29). De Castro traces the evolution of an interesting and tense relationship between the Peruvian intellectual and politician Víctor Raúl Haya and his caudillo-esque transformation of the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana, as well the ideologically fraught afterlife of Mariátegui’s essays.

Chapter 2’s subtitle poses a most interesting question: “What is revolutionary about the Latin American novel of the 1960s?” De Castro begins with José Donoso’s observation that supporting the Cuban Revolution, “at least in principle,” was a precondition to membership in Latin American intellectual circles in this decade, despite varying degrees of “commitment to leftist political activity” (45). A growing repressive paranoia within the Castro regime towards writers and artists would culminate in the 1971 Padilla affair that would reconfigure the equation. The chapter follows Vargas Llosa’s journey from being “the most radical of the Boom masters” to later supporting free market economics, whereas Cortázar would initially be seen as largely apolitical before becoming more visibly committed to revolutionary causes. Interesting tensions between literature and political activism are addressed in this chapter, as well as the revolutionary nature of literature itself, ironically visible in the work of the conservative Borges. The chapter ends with the increasingly conservative Vargas Llosa punching García Márquez, who continues to use his influence with Castro to moderate the Cuban regime in the wake of the Padilla affair.

Chapter 3 turns more to specific texts to explore trends in the decades that follow, focusing on Vargas Llosa’s *The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta* (1984) and Puig’s *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* (1976), both of which involve queer protagonists, although deployed with different intentionalities around revolution. While the former novel is meant to express disillusionment with supposedly outdated leftist causes, it ironically is a text that has inspired sympathy for its idealistic title character, prompting De Castro to engage in yet another interesting discussion about the death of the author post publication. *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* famously reflects a “waning of the cult of revolution and its replacement by questions of identity, gender, and sexuality (88),” and while De Castro does an excellent job of contextualizing the popular novel historically and politically, the real contribution to the existing literature lies in the attention given to psychoanalysis, its prevalence in Argentine society, and not only its obvious links to sexuality, but also its less evident ties to Marxism and the interplay at work throughout the novel.

The final chapter examines works by two Chileans, Bolaño and Guelfenbein, “whose novels reflect the structure of feeling that characterizes the region after the demise of any and all revolutionary hope” (134), although, having lived in exile, both “have written novels and other texts that can be read as reflections on Allende’s socialist government, perhaps the last moment during which truly revolutionary change seemed clearly possible for the region” (135). Bolaño’s work is indicative of a global trend of replacing politics with ethics; militancy with mourning. “Thus, if Bolaño created a literature that was ruthlessly indifferent to literary fashions—even if he still participated in the cultural Weltanschauung of our time—Guelfenbein’s novels use the traits and ties of one of the least respected commercial genres. The question that divides critics is whether she continues or subverts the romance genre” (154-55). While Bolaño’s work may be interested in deconstructing History, Guelfenbein’s is concerned with exploring its implications

for individuals, and De Castro's exploration of the tensions between the authors' strategies is enlightening.

Even more so are his concluding pages to this final chapter, in which he recaps some of major developments of the Cold War (importantly, from within the Soviet bloc, as well as from within Latin America) and weaves them through the biographies and works of the various Latin American writers covered in his monograph, synthesizing but offering additional insight into evolving tensions and major questions explored in the book. Brimming with footnotes and additional sources, *Writing Revolution* reads as the work of a seasoned and dedicated scholar, providing the type of knowledge and context that only come with decades of experience in the field.

Charles St-Georges, Denison University

García, Enrique. *The Hernandez Brothers: Love, Rockets, and Alternative Comics*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2017. 175 pp. ISBN 9780-8229-6492-6

Enrique García takes on a herculean task in addressing the Hernandez Brothers' collective oeuvre, a corpus which is complex, wildly varied, and spans more than three decades. Beginning with an anecdote from his graduate student days, García recalls how his classmates were able to engage with challenging literary texts but could not establish the same analytical distance with Gilbert Hernandez's 1994 graphic novel *Poison River*. As he tells it, the graphic novel was upsetting to many in the class even though its storyline was no more violent or sexual than the other texts on the syllabus. This experience led García to conclude that in order to work with comic book narratives on a sophisticated level, students and scholars alike must be better trained in the analytical reading of text and image to avoid falling into the misconception that comic books are simple texts that do not warrant serious study. He chooses a wide target audience in his desire to "entice non-comic readers [...] while providing compelling discussion points to fans" (xii).

The Hernandez Brothers is organized into an introduction and three chapters; each chapter is preceded by a short spotlight section. The spotlights allow García to reference more of the Hernandez brothers' extensive catalogue, offering "a brief discussion of an important comic not mentioned earlier but touching on themes relevant to the preceding chapter" (5). In the introduction, García situates the Hernandez brothers (also referred to as Los Bros) in the history of the U.S. comic book tradition, tracing their artistic production and trajectory from the Chicano punk movement in California in the late 1970s to their current mainstream status in the literary and comic books canon. Recognizing how daunting it may be to tackle such a large body of work, García offers a summary of the major storylines of the *Love and Rockets* series (20-4), which serves as a useful point of reference for new readers and fans alike.

The first two chapters explore the intertextual nature of the Hernandez brothers' oeuvre within the corporate comic book structure (chapter 1) and in relationship to tropes and devices from U.S./Anglophone and Latino/Latin American comic book genres and soap operas (chapter 2). The first chapter begins with an analysis of three segments from the first issue of *Love and Rockets*: Gilbert's "BEM" and Jamie's "Penny Century, You're Fired" and "Mechanics," all key stories in what would become the *Palomar* and *Locas* sagas, respectively. García convincingly argues that these stories and their resulting sagas parody superhero narratives and comic book

genres to create complicated and ambivalent texts that defy a singular or straightforward reading. He pays particular attention to the evolution of the Penny Century character, which culminates in the 2012 story “The Return of the Ti-Girls.” Penny Century (née Beatriz García) is one of dozens of superpowered women in the *Locas* universe, and the character’s trajectory has been marked by a long and complex quest to obtain her powers. Century’s status as a Latina superhero already pushes back at racial and gendered hegemonies in mainstream U.S. superhero narratives, but Jaime takes this subversion one step further by situating Maggie Chascarillo, one of the protagonists of the *Love and Rockets* universe, as the narrator and interpreter. García notes that Maggie’s role as “Latina comic book reader-decoder” privileges her reading of events and her knowledge of comic book lore, which stands in direct opposition to the overwhelmingly white and male world of comic book readers, critics, and experts (64). Before directly addressing the primary texts, however, García devotes nearly six pages to explaining narrative intertextuality and which components, concepts, and scholars he plans to use in his analysis. The theoretical framework is appropriate and productive, but it could have been more seamlessly integrated into the primary texts so as not to overshadow them for pages at a time.

The second chapter continues with Gilbert’s *Palomar* and Jaime’s *Locas* sagas and explores the use of sexuality and gender tropes from American and Mexican/Latino comic book genres and soap operas to “disrupt utopian and traditional Anglophone and Latino paradigms” and to offer a “balanced criticism of ethnic identity and politics” in Chicano and Latino narrative (69, 77). For example, *Locas* pushes back against notions of Latino homogenization in stories such as “Wigwam Bam” through the experiences of its protagonists, Maggie and Esperanza (Hopey) Glass (72-3). Hopey often passes for white, while Maggie cannot, which impacts the ways in which they perceive race and as well as how they are read or perceived racially. As Gilbert’s and Jaime’s works engage with devices from comic genres and soap operas that would be recognizable to a Latino/Chicano/Mexican-American as well as an Anglophone audience, they push back against the American mainstream industry even as they insist upon a variety of manifestations of gender, sexuality, and ethnic identity within Latino, Chicano, and Mexican-American cultural paradigms (114).

In lieu of a conclusion, García ends his book with a 2013 interview with Gilbert and Jaime Hernández. The decision to organize the interview thematically rather than chronologically is an effective one that sheds new light and perspective on García’s previous analyses, ranging from the history of the U.S. comic book industry and distribution as related to the Hernandez Brothers’ careers to perceptions of Latinness in their comics to the relationship between queer/sexual content and reader reception of their work (118). The interview itself is engaging and thoughtfully conducted but is an abrupt and rather truncated ending to the book as a whole. These issues aside, *The Hernandez Brothers* is a fundamental addition to the body of research on *Love and Rockets*, providing a useful theoretical orientation to the uninitiated in teaching and reading comics while offering a broadly intertextual analysis that proves engaging to those already familiar with Los Bros and their work.

Sara A. Potter, The University of Texas at El Paso

Hernández-Linares, Leticia, Rubén Martínez, and Héctor Tobar, eds. *The Wandering Song: Central American Writing in the United States*. Foreword by Juan José Dalton. San Fernando: Tía Chucha P, 2017. 323 pp. ISBN 9781-8826-8853-1

The Wandering Song: Central American Writing in the United States is a timely multi-genre anthology that showcases literary works from a segment of U.S. society that, as Central American studies scholars have argued, remains invisible to the vast majority of U.S. citizens despite their overwhelming presence since the Central American wars of the 1980s. With more than one hundred works by authors of Costa Rican, Guatemalan, Honduran, Nicaraguan, Panamanian, and Salvadoran descent, the anthology contains poetry and prose that portrays a range of experiences, perspectives, and emotions that are bound by the authors' identities as U.S. Central Americans.

Indeed, one of the volume's most valuable contributions is the way in which several works grapple with the topic of identity. For example, Quique Aviles's "Latinhood" offers an ironic meditation on the concept of U.S. Latinx identity, and Alexis Aguilar's "Me Enteré Que Era Hispano" questions the concept of existing as an "illegal," while describing a heightened consciousness of skin color upon arriving in the United States (133). Patrick Mullen-Coyoy's "Where is Guatemala?" alludes to U.S. Central Americans' unintelligibility within *Latinidad* and Rosanna Pérez's "Back and Forward" highlights the complex history behind the poetic voice's identity by describing it as "a pastiche of cultures: Nahua-Pipil, North African, and Spanish" (57). Other works, such as "Frijoles" by Mixel Natalie Muñoz Bernadino and Suyapa Portillo's "Biography of a Hard Love" bring intersections between ethnic identity, gender, and sexuality into focus. Darrel Alejandro Holnes's "Angelitos Negros," and indeed the volume as a whole, takes a step toward the cultural representation of U.S. Central Americans that scholars have called for. Moreover, many of the volume's works, including "Pupusas or Lucha" by Willy Palomo and "Eight Women in the Kitchen y una Poeta" by Cynthia Guardado, incorporate images of traditional Central American foods as a central element of the poetic voice's cultural heritage. Food imagery throughout the collection often evokes a sense of nostalgia and creates a material connection between life in the U.S. and Central America.

Notwithstanding the moments of nostalgia, most of the memories portrayed are less pleasant than those provoked by the taste or smell of foods associated with family and loved ones. Indeed, representations of trauma are critical to the anthology as a whole, often providing essential context for the root causes of Central American migration. Memories of families, communities, and countries torn apart by the wars of the 1980s are particularly prominent. For example, "War" by María Isabel Alvarez recalls the devastation wrought by Mayan ethnic cleansing in Guatemala: "the Ixil and the K'iche and the Q'anjob'al had been wiped from their communities, after their homes had been set ablaze and their children trampled like stalks of weeds and their wives and daughters raped as repeatedly as shells are shot from a submachine gun" (19). The father in "Night Memory" by Carolina Rivera Escamilla alludes to the psychological impact of trauma when he comments that "war scars the soul worse than any natural catastrophe" (25). Mario Escobar's "An Apology to My Children" portrays a father who is perpetually absent from the present as a result of recurring flashbacks to the civil war in El Salvador. In "Ghost Bullet" by Henry Mills, the manifestation of physical trauma in a former revolutionary's bullet wound becomes the catalyst for a conversation that leads to a deeper human connection between characters and a more profound understanding of Salvadoran history. Another form of trauma captured in *The Wandering Song* is the suffering caused by the

separation of family members. For instance, “Early Memory of Light” by Karina Oliva Alvarado eloquently evokes the pain of living without a mother who has migrated to the U.S.

Displaying a continuity with 20th century Central American writing, *The Wandering Song* also contains a strong undercurrent of social protest and a desire for social justice. In many cases, such as the political murders in Gabriela Ramirez Chavez’s “Oración” and the disappearance of a young revolutionary in Koyote the Blind’s “Juancito,” one finds a protest against state violence perpetrated by Central American governments. Sara Campos’s “Guatemala” offers a fierce denunciation of the Guatemalan government for allowing U.S. business interests to drive the violence against its own citizens. Other works, including “I’ve Been Told That Without You I’d Be Nothing” by Karina Oliva Alvarado and “The Banana Files: Empire vs. Resistance” by Krys Méndez-Ramírez, criticize the U.S. government for its imperialistic impulses and lack of accountability for the conditions, partially created by U.S. foreign policy, that drive Central American migration. Lorena Duarte succinctly captures the sad irony about U.S. discourse on immigration in her poem “San Nicolás, Patron Saint of Children,” where she writes, “We choose to pontificate about borders / Pontificate when we, with our dollars and our guns / Leave countries ravaged” (105). Finally, Maya Chinchilla’s poem “Solidarity Baby” focuses on the experiences of a child whose parents have dedicated their lives in the U.S. to social activism on behalf of Central American migrants.

In the current political climate in the U.S., amidst calls for new border walls, headlines about Central American migrant caravans, and deliberate demonization of Latin American migrants, perhaps *The Wandering Song*’s greatest achievement is its insight into the lived experiences and humanity of U.S. Central Americans. Through depictions of suffering, resilience, hope, fear, and occasionally joy, the humanity of the authors, poetic voices, and characters in this volume is on full display. From the isolation of a live-in nanny in Los Angeles to the perseverance of a war-weary widow in El Salvador and on to the desire for a better life for those that set out for the north, *The Wandering Song* is a testament to the courage of several generations of Central Americans that have sought a new life in the U.S. and the beauty of their contributions. *The Wandering Song* is thus a landmark contribution to the cultural production of the U.S. Central American diaspora.

Adrian Taylor Kane, Boise State University

Librandi, Marília. *Writing by Ear: Clarice Lispector and the Aural Novel*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2018. 214 pp. ISBN 9781-4875-0214-0

In recent years, scholars have increasingly explored the role of the sonic in the creation of knowledge in the twentieth-century Global South. It is precisely this emergence of the sonic as a formal field of inquiry that allows Marília Librandi’s *Writing by Ear* to “resonate” with an aurally attuned audience. And while both Latin American and sound studies have already gained academic currency, Librandi’s book is one of the first theoretical ventures that attempts to develop a comprehensive aural model of multidimensional perception in twentieth-century Brazilian fiction.

Following the current auditory turn in critical theory, *Writing by Ear* aims to unravel the sonic properties in Clarice Lispector’s major novels through an examination of the role of listening in the process of writing. Librandi’s approach is rooted in traces left by audibility.

While drawing from the relationships between listening and writing, Librandi offers a highly original three-fold theory of the aural novel. She frames her theory with discussions of the relevance of listening and sound-related processes in the multilingual and multi-cultural environment that surrounded Lispector's production.

How does Librandi herself approach listening in writing? Resisting the closure of traditional dichotomy, Librandi perceives listening as a third mode of operation between speech and the silence of written words, which places her approach to Lispector's work among studies that explore the connection between literacy and orality, such as Ochoa Gautier's *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia*. Even if her use of sound-related terms such as *speech*, *orality*, *aurality*, *echo*, and *resonance* are often either confusedly exchanged or not clearly defined, she assertively identifies in writing and reading accounts of the sonic that have been overlooked. Although her theoretical approach is mainly rooted in Eurocentric perspectives, the book points out that our ocularcentric society—along with academia—is responsible for hiding Lispector's "ultrasensitive ear" behind her abundant use of visual imagery.

In the introductory chapter, Librandi stresses the role of the ear as an independent listening entity that challenges the supremacy of literacy. This section explores aspects involved in internalized and externalized reading processes and the connections between them. She concludes that writing by ear comprises not only the production of sound but also its absence, silence. Librandi argues that *A hora da estrela* (1977) is an aural space of reception rather than production.

The second and third chapters deal with interconnected issues related to listening in writing in the context of twentieth-century Brazilian fiction. Librandi draws daring links between different Brazilian artists and writers to explore the semiotics of listening. With a comparative analysis of Machado de Assis's *As memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas*, Guimarães Rosa's *Grande Sertão: Veredas*, Oswald de Andrade's *Serafim Ponte Grande*, and Lispector's *A hora da estrela*, Librandi shows how the aural novel reveals as much about sound practices as about their silencing. She is particularly interested in the ways Brazilian authors conceive text as an "aural object" therefore confirming the preeminence of sound over the written word.

In Chapter two, she argues that in Brazilian fiction, urban and rural soundscapes merge. She interprets this as a sign of the "dis-domestication of orality" that barbarizes the written word. Unfortunately, the absence of an extended discussion marks a curious blind spot in the book. The third chapter continues the close reading of Lispector's *A hora da estrela* and develops a theorization of the aural novel. Here Librandi uses Bakhtin's and Heidegger's ideas to emphasize the listening qualities of the genre. Linking *A hora da estrela*'s protagonist Macabéa with Toni Morrison's conceptualization of the *aural*, Librandi touches on aspects related to the oral, the unspeakable, community participation, and jazz. In her efforts to detach her approach from orality—intended as spoken word—Librandi claims that the auditory relates to listening more than speaking, hence the key role of silence. However, readers familiar with research on orality will notice the absence of a clear definition of the concept that would have helped to structure Librandi's theory. Nevertheless, the chapter finishes with the strong conclusion that aural novels and aural art are sites of "resonance."

In the fourth and most extensive chapter of the book, Librandi examines Lispector's use of onomatopoeic language and frequent descriptions of auditory intensity. Her close reading of *Perto do coração selvagem* (1943) focuses on the author's opening image of an "ear, listening, large, pink, and dead" that, detached from the individual body and voice, becomes a receptive

channel rather than a tool for her individual expression. Librandi comes to the conclusion that Lispector's free-fluid narrative is more in contact with the outside world than with the author's subjectivity. However, she seems to contradict her own claim when she emphasizes several parallels between protagonist Joana and Lispector's life and unconscious manifestations. She argues that the maternal death at the root of Lispector's muted voice links her writing to silence and the dead ear to the allegorical embodiment of such a void.

With a cross-cutting approach, the fifth chapter brings us back to the beginning of *Água Viva*, this time offering an analysis of it from a psychoanalytic perspective. Librandi includes a well-informed examination of Lispector's relationship with mechanical writing. She argues that the origin of Lispector's authorship is to be found in her association with automatic, "blind" typewriting: a channel for Lispector's silences as well as a symbol of the author's "voice of impression"—as opposed to "expressions"—that suppresses patriarchy. This chapter includes discussions of how the two original titles for *Água Viva* highlight the interconnection between hearing, the unconscious, and the condition of the female author to reveal a form of writing that Librandi terms "echopoetics."

In the sixth chapter the author turns to *A paixão segundo G.H.* (1964) to argue that Lispector's poetics is located in the space-time of the Ovidian myth of Echo. She is particularly interested in the ways the myth brings to the surface different sonorous aspects of the novel, understood by Librandi as a space-time of *receptive* authorship rather than a *productive* one. This mythological reading serves to display some mechanisms through which echoes of sound and silence articulate Lispector's prose. She insists that these reverberation practices reveal an unconscious-driven ear-oriented narrator deprived of authorship, who is paradoxically affected by an "echolalic" writing mode.

The final section functions as an additional chapter rather than as a conclusion. Here Librandi's focuses on Lucrecia, the protagonist in *A cidade sitiada* (1949), and her allusions to the horse as a symbol of the untamable qualities of Brazilian Portuguese. The fact that it introduces previously undiscussed Lispectorian recurring motifs deprives the reader of a sense of closure. Some aspects related to language complexities resulting from Lispector's origins and multi-lingual upbringing are also discussed here.

In Lispector's terms, and borrowing Librandi's own words on Kittler's scholarship, *Writing by Ear* has strong "kaleidoscopic" qualities. Librandi's argumentation is marked by fluid associations with visual arts, sonorous objects, and Western European scholars alike, all set in a mosaic-like fashion. Her writing resembles that of Lispector's in its fragmentation. Besides the fact that Librandi's zips between novels, theoretical approaches, and artistic domains, pelting the reader with synesthetic examples, by the end it becomes evident that for the scholar, Lispector's aural poetics is found not only in the writing process but also in narrative material as well as at the level of discourse (language). Better signposting of these multiple levels on which the sonic invades the Lispectorian universe would be of great help to the reader.

By overlooking the connection with other theoretical approaches in the region, Librandi deprives her study of a mutually enriching dialogue. Her discussion of oculocentrism and the relegated importance of the ear excludes the work of Santiago Castro-Gómez on the role of the gaze as a tool of controlling the production of knowledge in Latin America coloniality. In fact, *Writing by Ear* is marked by a lack of specificity in its discussion of regional socio-political repercussions and cultural implications of a sonic approach to writing. Overall, the inclusion of a twentieth-century Latin American perspective would expand and secure Librandi's contribution to the field.

Finally, throughout its narrative *Writing by Ear* presents a number of brief excursions that touch on musical issues such as performativity, resonance, atonal music, echo, capoeira, jazz, and improvisation. Without an actual theoretical base for writing about musical practices, Librandi's blink-and-you-miss-them references to music, performance, and improvisational practices tend to weaken her conceptualizations. For example, when discussing improvisation, an important component of her three-feature model, Librandi makes the common mistake of reading the presence of improvisation in fiction as associated with uncontrolled, individual performance. Improvisation, however, is neither unconsciously "progressing without method" nor related to "blindness" (53). Understanding improvisation as dialogically organized and a communal form of art-making would be a great enrichment to Librandi's framework and to discussions about displacement and outsidership, strategic in Lispector's narratives.

Librandi makes it clear that Lispector's poetics touches on diverse artistic disciplines. She, however, constantly returns to visual artifacts over sound structures to prove key points of her conceptual model. Librandi thus runs the risk of frustrating the reader whom she tries to convince of the relevance of listening when dealing with Lispector's narratives. Synthetic comparisons and metaphors are useful to the reader. However, aural components are seldom discussed in depth, introducing weakness to the point they aim to illustrate. The emphasis on psychoanalytical theories risks overlooking other sound/silence outcomes such as diasporic aurality and sonic contributions to Latin American identity, interests that have played a key part in sound-oriented research in recent years.

These weaknesses, nevertheless, matter little in light of Librandi's effort to challenge the closed ears of literary scholarship. The monograph opens possibilities for a better understanding of Clarice Lispector's sonic texts as well as for further explorations of the sonic in Brazilian twentieth-century fiction. *Writing by Ear* raises critical issues about how to approach texts whose authors appear as "receptive channels" rather than "subjects of production." Scholars inside and outside of the field of Brazilian literature will benefit from Librandi's effort to revisit the value of listening for the written word.

Andrea Perez Mukdsi, Georgia State University

Madan, Aarti Smith. *Lines of Geography in Latin American Narrative: National Territory, National Literature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. 291 pp. ISBN 9783-3195-5139-5

Writing about the real and symbolic power of maps, Linda Hutcheon, Djelal Kadir, and Mario J. Valdés observe: "Societies produce space as 'territory,' as a manifestation of culture. In seeking to map such territory, [we must] be aware of the less than innocent nature of cartography and, indeed, of geography" (*Collaborative Historiography: A Comparative Literary History of Latin America*, 2). It is in this sense that geography, as both a literary discourse and scientific discipline, emerges as the subject of Aarti Smith Madan's wide-ranging study of the way in which "Latin American states and the space they occupied were consolidated and rendered natural and controllable" (4). In *Lines of Geography*, Madan examines the aesthetic and philosophical underpinnings of four writers whose works are foundational to understanding Latin American geography, namely: Alexander von Humboldt, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Estanislao Severo Zeballos, and Euclides da Cunha. Performing what she terms a "geocritical

reading,” Madan deftly establishes an intriguing genealogical line that connects each of these writers and simultaneously delineates the contours of Latin American discourse during the nation-building processes of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *Lines of Geography* is both well-researched and timely. While Madan’s study broadly includes scholarship produced by critics based in the United States, Europe, Spanish America, and Brazil, it also presents a unique combination of archival research and close readings of primary texts, along with a careful review of the ways these texts have been read, interpreted, and appropriated across time. Perhaps it is Madan’s historicizing impulse that simultaneously makes this book valuable for readers who desire to understand better the origins of contemporary debates over the future of Latin American territory in the era of the Anthropocene.

In the introductory chapter of *Lines of Geography*, Madan outlines the scope of her geocritical approach, a “marriage of literary studies and geographical practices” (9), arguing that “literature mimetically etches out the national terrain, becoming both an outgrowth and a byproduct of the land” (11). She carefully notes the way the four authors of her study “write alongside and against the institutionalization of Latin American geography, ultimately producing transculturated geographical discourse” (14). *Lines of Geography* is thus interdisciplinary in its approach: partly a history of the scientific discipline and institutions of geography in Latin America and partly a literary history of geography as practiced and written by four foundational figures.

In Chapter 2, “Geographical Discourse and Alexander Von Humboldt,” Madan explores a contradictory tension in Humboldt’s work that reveals his “complicity in imperialism and [...] in ecological devastation of the Americas” (38) as well as his incipient ecological consciousness. Through a careful reading of Humboldt’s monumental *Cosmos* (1850), Madan examines the ways Humboldt contributes to the development of a geographical consciousness in Latin America. According to Madan, in Humboldt’s formulation, “*history and geography nourish one another*. Telling the tale of the physical world becomes tantamount to narrating the national story” (55). Madan’s analysis thus foregrounds the aesthetic, literary dimensions of Humboldt’s works to demonstrate how narrative nourishes geographical discourse.

In Chapter 3, “Sarmiento the Geographer: Unearthing the Literary in *Facundo*,” Madan delves into the literary dimensions of the most famous work of the Argentine statesman and writer Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Here, Madan proposes a double framework for understanding Sarmiento’s geographical imagination in *Facundo*, asserting that Sarmiento adopts (1) a literary mode of *didactic geography* intended to help the citizens of Argentina better understand their own national landscape, and (2) a mode of *marketable geography*, “designed to convince foreign readers to populate the lush Argentine terrain” (78). This useful theoretical frame reveals the way in which Sarmiento’s writings circulated both internally and externally in relation to Argentina.

Chapter 4, “Estanislao Severos Zeballos and the Transatlantic Science of Statecraft,” focuses on the work of the Argentine politician and writer Zeballos and the way his writings “articulate the emergent nation-state’s contradictions and [...] make sense of its diverse inhabitants and terrain” (129). Madan examines in particular Zeballos’s keen interest in the “institutionalization of geography” (130) as a strategy for establishing both an Argentine literary canon and political state. Madan counterposes Zeballos’s political uses of geography in the late 1890s against the failed efforts made by Joaquin Costa during the same period to facilitate Spain’s commercial reconquest of Latin America. Scholars interested in Spanish transatlantic studies will find Madan’s analysis particularly interesting. Adopting a Foucauldian approach,

Madan's reading of Zeballos and Joaquin Costa shows "geographically inflected ways of interpreting Spain's colonial demise and, with Argentina as an illustration, the colonies' incremental steps toward statehood and consolidation" (166).

Madan transitions to Brazil in Chapter 5, "Euclides da Cunha's Literary Map, or Including *Os Sertões*," by examining a surprising and gripping account of an intercepted communicate that nearly caused an outbreak of war between Brazil and Argentina and was eventually revealed to have been forged by Zeballos himself. In this chapter, Madan situates her reading of da Cunha by invoking key concepts in Brazilian cultural studies as presented by canonical Brazilian scholars, including Silviano Santiago, Fernando Ortiz, and Antônio Cândido. While she might have similarly contextualized her reading of Euclides da Cunha in relation to established scholars of da Cunha such as Francisco Foot Harndan, Leopoldo Bernucci, Roberto Ventura, Walnice Nogueira Galvão, or Luiz Costa Lima, her historicization of da Cunha is nonetheless insightful and welcome. One of the valuable contributions of this chapter is the attention Madan gives to da Cunha's interest in territorial borders and Brazil's relationship with its South American neighbors. Additionally, Madan offers a perceptive and nuanced reading of the contradictions present in da Cunha's aesthetic and narrative strategies as he seeks to "explain the nearly inexplicable" (228).

In sum, *Lines of Geography* is an excellent contribution to our understanding of what Scott Slovic would call vernacular thinking about geography, the environment, and the national narratives of Latin America.

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Perrone, Charles A. *Brazil, Lyric, and the Americas*. 2nd rev. ed. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2017. 250 pp. ISBN 978-0-8130-5489-6

Countless are the studies on Brazilian poetry and similarly numerous are analyses of Brazilian popular music. As one of the many scholarly works that address poetry and music, Perrone's ambitious *Brazil, Lyric and the Americas* presents a unique analysis of the hemispheric spirit of Brazilian lyric. The author defines lyric in a broad sense, including conventional and unconventional verse, as well as song. Organized thematically, with each chapter addressing work by Brazilian writers who establish a dialogue with other writers in the Americas, the book focuses on lyric mostly written since the 1980s. Nevertheless, the author's rich analysis crosses centuries of Brazilian literature, highlighting its connections with the culture of various geographies, reaching as far as medieval Portugal.

Chapter One establishes the notions of insularity and invention as key tropes of a Brazilian lyric that imagines Brazil and the Americas as open to cultural exchange. The author links these cultural expressions to a lyric tradition in Brazilian letters that dates back to 1920s *modernismo* (particularly the work of Oswald de Andrade), 1960s Concrete Poetry, and the 1970s Tropicalist movement in music. This openness, as Perrone notes, is embodied by the idea of cultural cannibalism, which has served as a compass in Brazilian arts since its inception in the 1920s. The author goes on to problematize the concept of America, pointing out its multiple meanings, ending with a reading of Leminski's "Ler pelo não," to propose that America, the continent, can be read as a metaphor for invention and diverse encounters.

In Chapter Two, Perrone explores lyrical connections between Brazilian and USAmerican poets. These connections are expressed by the use of the English language (words, phrases, titles), homages to USAmerican poets, in addition to multiple citations, translations, and references to USAmerican poetry and culture. The use of English in Brazilian lyric, the author notes, has various meanings, from criticism to Anglo-American imperialism to a gesture of solidarity or even admiration for Anglo-American culture. The author highlights several instances of intertextuality between the work of Brazilians such as Wally Salomão, Haroldo de Campos, Carlos Valero Figueiredo, Augusto de Campos, Claudio Nunes de Moraes, and USAmerican Erza Pound, Walt Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, Allen Ginsberg, and William Carlos William.

Chapter Three explores the relationship between contemporary Brazilian lyric and USAmerican media other than literature, the most prominent of which is cinema. Poets such as Arnaldo Antunes, Bluma W. Villar, Janice Caiafa, and Sebastião Uchoa incorporate the visual language of cinema, as well as references to film and characters in compositions that contain as little English as the title or as much as the entire poem. Besides cinema, the author shows the many points of contact between contemporary Brazilian lyric and USAmerican music, principally jazz, blues, and rock. Brazilian poets such as Marcelo Sandman and Frederico Barbosa, for example, incorporate jazz as the embodiment of heterogeneity against the homogenizing forces of globalization. Others turn to blues-rock for inspiration and for an awareness of African roots. Ademir Assunção, for instance, was influenced by the music of Jimmi Hendrix. Additionally, many contemporary Brazilian poets incorporate USAmerican pop culture as a way to reflect on issues of nationality and globalization, often using these references as “agents of anti-acculturation” (96).

Chapter Four deals with manifestations of epic poetry in contemporary Brazilian lyric, which indicate a hemispheric gesture either towards Latin America or towards the American continent as a whole. The author’s analysis is prefaced by a brief history of the genre in the Americas, in which he highlights Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* (1855), Pablo Neurda’s *Canto general* (1950), Octavio Paz’ *Piedra del sol* (1957), and Gabriela Mistral’s *Poema de Chile* (1967) as most influential. In Lusophone America, the author notes the importance of Santa Rita Durão’s *Caramuru* (1781) and José Basílio da Gama’s *O Uruguai* (1769). The chapter then focuses on Sousândrade’s *O guesa* (1871), Ronald de Carvalho’s *Toda a América* (1926), and Marcus Accioly’s *Latinomérica* (2001), epic poems that collectively cover pre-Columbian history to postmodern America. Sousândrade affirms the superior potential of the Americas in opposition to Europe while providing sharp criticism of the negative aspects of USAmerican capitalism. A linguistically rich epic, which includes languages such as Tupi and Quechua, *O guesa* influences, for example, Caetano Veloso’s album *Araçá Azul* (1973) and the poetry of Adriano Espínola. Perrone shows that Sousândrade saw Brazil as intrinsically linked to other Latin American nations, while being positioned to thrive after learning the best from the United States. In the case of Ronald de Carvalho’s *Toda a América*, Perrone points out echoes of Walt Whitman’s poetry, as well as important distinctions from the work of the author of *Leaves of Grass*. Finally, Marcus Accioly’s *Latinomérica* is described as “an epic for the third millennium” (127), concerned with colonial and neo-colonial relations in the Americas, filled with intertextuality, and mindful of the linguistic battles that reflect centuries of oppression in Brazilian history from the 1500s to 1990s.

In Chapter Five, the author provides an extensive analysis of connections in lyric between Brazil and Spanish America, opening with the example of Banda Hispânica, an online platform

that promotes dialogue between Brazilian and Spanish-American poets at the turn of the twenty-first century. The chapter explores the history of the cultural divide between Brazil and its Spanish-speaking counterparts, highlighting the initial commonalities in poetry within the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages before their distancing during colonial times. The author then proceeds to identify a myriad of connections between Lusophone and Hispanic poets in the Americas, as well as singers and songwriters. These connections entail collaborations, experiences living in a Latin American country other than their homeland, intertextualities, homages, shared contents, and literary prizes. Perrone concludes the chapter envisioning the future of these dialogues, as the world's interconnectedness continues to play its role in Portuguese and Spanish-speaking America.

Chapter Six reviews Tropicália and its hemispheric echoes in the music of Mangue Beat in the 1990s. Here, Perrone looks at how these movements in Brazilian music have conceptualized the relationship between the local and the global, following in the footsteps of the poets of *modernismo* and the influential Northeastern musician Jackson do Pandeiro.

Finally, Chapter Seven, titled (In-)Conclusion, offers final considerations regarding lyric in the Americas. First, the author explains the title for the chapter in question. Second, he cautions that his analysis does not intend to be a comprehensive picture of hemispheric Brazilian lyric in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but rather an exploration of particular (song)writers and texts. Lastly, he returns to his opening question of the possibility and meaning of being national by being transnational in the global era.

Although not comprehensive, as noted in the author's disclaimer, the book is a tour de force that offers an impressive catalog of Luso-Anglo-Hispanic connections in the Americas. Its vast coverage of lyric would be of interest to scholars with a variety of backgrounds, including, for instance, Brazilian Studies, Latin American Studies, Transborder Studies, and Ethnomusicology. In addition, general audiences interested in poetry and music in the Americas will find in this book a highly informative perspective on the subject. Overall, readers will be inspired to explore other possible connections in lyric not addressed by the author, particularly in the work of authors from non-hegemonic backgrounds, and to continue to watch these hemispheric movements in the years to come.

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Reati, Fernando y Margherita Cannavacciuolo, comps. *De la cercanía emocional a la distancia histórica. (Re)presentaciones del terrorismo de Estado, 40 años después*. Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros, 2016. 333 pp. ISBN: 9789-8757-4755-5

Este volumen representa un aporte substancial al creciente campo de los Estudios de Memoria en América Latina. Al ofrecer un catastro y ordenamiento de parte importante de lo que han sido los debates en torno a la memoria del pasado reciente en Argentina, se constituye en un estudio pionero y paradigmático para futuros acercamientos críticos que—desde lo cultural—analicen el presente estado de las sociedades latinoamericanas post-conflicto. Por un lado el volumen ofrece un registro amplio y exhaustivo de la producción artístico-cultural argentina en al era post-dictadura: literatura en sus variados géneros, nuevas hibridaciones y digresiones; cine documental y ficticio; esculturas; música, y performances y artes visuales cívicos. Tanto o más importante es a su vez la variedad de acercamientos teórico-críticos, generacionales, e incluso

regionales que participan en el volumen, permitiendo con ello apreciar el calibre y diversidad de los expertos argentinos que contribuyen a este campo de estudio. Sobre esto me interesa primero destacar la prolijidad estilística y analítica de cada uno de los capítulos, lo que facilita una lectura tanto placentera como iluminadora. Los análisis recuperan y actualizan además un aparato crítico producido desde América Latina, y al dialogar con el paradigma canónico internacional, adoptan una actitud inquisitiva, ajustada al proceso propio argentino, estableciendo de este modo una dialéctica que así como reconoce lo aprendido desde otros contextos post-desastre, pone a circular el aporte conceptual surgido desde las particularidades latinoamericanas. De la misma manera, los análisis se dejan guiar por los artefactos y prácticas simbólico-culturales estudiados, de tal modo que la praxis crítica permite revelar la complejidad y riqueza reflexiva y afectiva del trabajo creativo. El resultado es que se logra cuajar una reflexión amplia, íntegra y responsable para ofrecer respuestas, pero sobre todo para abrir múltiples y necesarios acercamientos a tan vasta problemática.

Es mérito de los compiladores haber reunido 13 artículos perfectamente engarzados en 4 líneas simbólico-analíticas: Cuerpos, Imágenes, Hijos, y (Re)visiones. La presentación de Fernando Reati resume los diversos capítulos, y detalla las interrogantes a las que el volumen en su conjunto intenta dar respuesta, o las que aspira al menos a instalar para así reanimar una discusión orgánica, actual, y polifónica sobre el pasado reciente argentino.

¿Cómo se procesa hoy la memoria social a cuatro décadas del golpe militar?

¿Qué nuevos productos artísticos y/o académicos generan las memorias del terrorismo de Estado?

¿Qué nuevos rumbos toma aquello que Elizabeth Jelin llamó acertadamente los “trabajos de la memoria” para destacar que son procesos de y en construcción?

¿Debemos revisar objetos ya canónicos—filmes como *La historia oficial*, novelas como *Respiración artificial*—a la luz de las nuevas prácticas de artistas y pensadores jóvenes?

¿Existen tensiones irresueltas entre la visión de la generación setentista y la de quienes la siguen?

¿Son los recursos paródicos, humorísticos e irreverentes de algunos artistas una manera aceptable de contemplar el pasado? (15-16)

Se opera de este modo una suerte de meta-memoria, que interroga a los sectores culturales a su cargo, incluido el trabajo crítico, su rol ético-intelectual y los desafíos para acercarse adecuadamente a una realidad memorial en constante flujo y con renovados litigios, como lo indica la última pregunta aquí citada. De modo tácito, se responde por un lado a las reservas surgidas en los últimos años en un sector de la crítica en la cual se acusaba una suerte de “abuso”, “cansancio”, o incluso “comercialización” de “el tema de la memoria.” Por otro lado, y situados ahora en una época en que en la región (y a nivel global) resurgen y se fortalecen gobiernos de corte fascista, interesados en radicalizar las políticas neoliberales cuestionadas en el lustro anterior, insistir en revisar los procesos de memoria contribuye a retomar una discusión en cuyo epicentro se ubica, precisamente, el lastre legado por las dictaduras, su imposición de la economía de mercado y consecuente desarme de las estructuras para ejercer ciudadanía.

En la sección “Cuerpos,” Ana María Careaga se pregunta por las huellas que sobre la subjetividad ha dejado la experiencia del horror y la preeminencia del modelo neoliberal. Al ofrecer un relato de doble registro, en el que se intercala la narración crítica con la testimonial,

Careaga expone la variedad de “voces” que coexisten en una misma subjetividad, en este caso la analítica “distanciada” y la testimonial “afectada,” esto es, aquélla que se reconoce alterada en “los afectos.” Se detiene así en el aporte directo que las víctimas han ofrecido al proceso de sanación social: “El impulso y la construcción de políticas públicas de memoria, ejemplar en su alcance, la posibilidad de elaboración de un relato sobre lo sucedido durante el terrorismo de Estado viabilizó también el despliegue de una verdad constituida desde las víctimas que no había podido desarrollarse antes en instancias institucionales” (40). Si bien, como veremos, el discurso sobre el pasado reciente consolidado por diversos agentes sociales—incluidas las víctimas—es cuestionado por un importante sector de la generación de los “Hijos e Hijas,” el argumento de Careaga sirve para constatar hasta qué punto—y de un modo paradójico—el proceso para superar el pasado ha recaído, precisamente, en subjetividades heridas. De allí que al analizar la perspectiva crítica de los hijos/hijas, lo que encontraremos sobre todo es la constatación de nuevas y presentes formas de vivir la victimización. Por otro lado, la atención en la subjetividad nos anima también a preguntarnos de qué modo aquéllas no tocadas directamente por el horror, pero partícipes no obstante en diversos modos y grados—incluso diferidos—, influyen hoy en la factura social, y determinan el modelo de colectividad en ciernes.

La interrogante por la subjetividad es analizada por Nora Strejilevich en el ámbito colectivo-comunitario y los múltiples recursos discursivos allí surgidos para encarar y asumir la persistente actualidad del pasado. Su referencia a una memoria emocional y reflexiva resulta de utilidad para situar los rituales urbanos, ya sea manados desde organismos de DDHH o desde las mismas comunidades. “Pareciera que la justicia estatal puede restablecer a los detenidos-desaparecidos en los registros, pero no alcanza para restablecer su presencia. Esta ausencia, sentida en el barrio, reclama acciones que los inscriban” (46). Dichos actos responden sin duda a la herencia performativa de las madres y abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo, pero transcurridos ya 40 años, van más allá de la denuncia, o de querer honrar a las víctimas desaparecidas, pues se explican también en la necesidad psicológica barrial de aprender a vivir con y desde la ausencia de aquellos hechos desaparecer pues, como afirma Strejilevich, “el pasado reciente anida en el paisaje urbano” (57). De este modo, lo performativo ofrece una presencia a la ausencia, supliendo con ello además la imposibilidad lingüística de nombrarla.

El apartado “Imágenes” agrupa cuatro capítulos dedicados a analizar formas visuales, y de qué modo éstas conviven, interpretan o interpelan lo existencial y cotidiano. Estela Schindel analiza la omnipresencia del Río de La Plata en tanto cronotopo fundacional de lo identitario en Buenos Aires-Argentina, y luego su malversación al devenir “una inmensa tumba interminable” (86). Su atención en la escultura de Claudia Fontes al joven desaparecido empotrada en medio del río, sirve de núcleo para elaborar una doble presencia imaginativa-afectiva: la de la desaparición que no se deja ver, y la del río como un ámbito memorial, subterráneo y panóptico a la vez, cuya “presencia contigua a la ciudad [es] como una manifestación de lo abyecto: aquello “externado” de sí que sin embargo es íntimo y parte constitutiva de lo propio” (75).

Julieta Zarco pasa revista a los filmes de ficción que desde la era de Alfonsín han estado re-presentando los variados momentos vividos en la historia argentina, y los estadios de memoria por los que se ha transitado. Enfrentados a la tarea monumental de recuperar la convivencia comunitaria, el análisis de Zarco permite apreciar de qué modo el lenguaje fílmico se instala como uno de los motores que impulsa, desde lo estético, una reflexión crítica y emotiva. De este modo se observa el valor de lo artístico cultural para ordenar los términos y el temple de la discusión, visualizando y haciendo accesible una realidad psicosocial y política ominosa. En este sentido, el análisis de Zarco dialoga con el de Jorge Bracamonte, quien se detiene en la

influencia que distintos movimientos de rock durante la dictadura ejercieron en otros lenguajes artísticos, tales como el literario. El proceso contracultural propiciado desde la música sirve de este modo como plataforma desde la cual ensayar la disidencia y las estrategias estéticas para responder a la represión imperante. En dicho contexto, si bien en el momento actual ocurre un proceso de revisión crítica respecto de los derroteros seguidos por los procesos de memoria en los últimos 40 años -sobre todo por un sector de la mencionada generación de los hijos/hijas- los análisis de Zarco y Bracamonte recuperan un proceso generacional para ofrecer una suerte de ficha terapéutica de los recorridos de la memoria hasta volverse social y colectiva. Afianzan con ello su carácter dinámico y siempre tentativo, sujeto a las contingencias político-sociales y las pulsiones de quienes adquieren una capacidad parlante.

Los dos capítulos restantes de la sección “Imágenes” se enfocan en procesos que podríamos describir como pre e interverbales. De un lado, Liliana Ruth Feierstein analiza el lugar simbólico que durante la dictadura adquiere el texto clásico, *Alicia en el país de las maravillas*, subtexto presente en un imaginario creativo articulado desde diversos códigos artísticos. En sus palabras, “Alicia pasó a ser sinónimo del reino del terror y, simultáneamente, la posibilidad de nombrarlo (152). Así, los diversos artefactos culturales que se inscriben en dicha intertextualidad intentan hacer patente lo que Feierstein describe como “lo infantil y lo siniestro,” para describir los modos en que la dictadura instaló el terror “a través de la reactivación de miedos infantiles latentes” (157).

El análisis en los temores fundados en el estado preverbal funciona como contrapunto del auge de nuevas variantes de novela gráfica, formato por el cual han optado un número importante de jóvenes escritores argentinos. Karina Elizabeth Vázquez sostiene que esta preferencia representa una “dialéctica [que] invita a cuestionar la hegemonía que tiene el discurso verbal a la hora de revisar el pasado dictatorial y sus efectos... No constituyen solamente un intento intergeneracional por ‘bloquear el olvido’...sino que son además una forma menos regulada de ‘desbloquear la memoria’” (116). Es precisamente en este punto que comenzamos a apreciar las “tensiones irresueltas” mencionadas por Reati en la Introducción del volumen, cuando alude también a los “recursos paródicos, humorísticos e irreverentes” de los que se sirve la nueva generación en su acercamiento al pasado. Si bien sabemos que el formato gráfico cuenta entre sus antecedentes *Maus*, de Art Spiegelman (1980-91) en su tratamiento del holocausto judío a través de la figura del padre sobreviviente, el análisis de Vázquez patentiza hasta qué punto nos encontramos aquí ante un escenario diferente. Por un lado, no se trata de servir de intérpretes de las experiencias atroces de los mayores, sino de canalizar una condición propia que reconoce que “no hay material para la memoria sino espacios y contextos en los que el poder de la palabra, el de la imagen y el del silencio se encuentran en permanente tensión” (137). Por otro lado, lo que se intenta es perturbar el establecimiento de versiones de memoria ordenadoras, que desatienden o simplifican el estatus único de victimización que viven los hijos/hijas, quienes no se sienten interpelados por la verbalización hegemónica sobre un pasado del que han sido también protagonistas activos, aunque silentes hasta hace unos años.

El capítulo de Vázquez sirve de preámbulo a los tres artículos incluidos en la sección “Hijos.” Si la novela gráfica puede leerse como un recurso para llenar silencios, o bien para responder a la preeminencia que han ganado ciertas articulaciones sobre la memoria reciente, Jordana Blejmar opta por analizar la relación que hijos de militantes revolucionarios establecen con las cartas legadas por sus padres. En este sentido, la relación epistolar sirve de puente para intentar establecer una interlocución directa con el padre desaparecido, a la cual hijas/hijos responden recurriendo al cine documental o la narración no-ficticia, lo que Blejmar describe

como “un diálogo anacrónico entre generaciones” (174), obviando así la mediación histórica contra la cual se manifiestan los autores estudiados por Vázquez. Un aspecto central del análisis de Blejmar es la recuperación del concepto de “herencia” propuesto por Derrida y Roudinesco, y que le sirve para atender al carácter crítico de la interlocución establecida. Ante la pregunta “¿cómo recordar a un padre si todo lo que se le ofrece es un monumento?” (175), Blejmar responde que lejos de situarse como legatarios pasivos, hijas/hijos se apropian de dicho legado para intervenirlo y luego hacerlo suyo. De este modo, lo que acontece es una vivificación, que permite la inclusión dinámica de dicha herencia para hacerla parte de un proceso que la vuelve actual desde tal condición. Por otro lado, su análisis busca responder al argumento popularizado de que los revolucionarios asesinados optaron irreflexivamente por la guerrilla por sobre sus familias, algo que las cartas desdichan al hacer patente la conciencia y la angustia de tener que sopesar ambos compromisos. Con ello, la réplica de los hijos y el análisis mismo contribuyen a vencer el riesgo de abrir un abismo generacional, de perpetuar incomprendimientos históricos y afectivos que podrían muy bien servir a las agendas actuales, en donde languidecen los compromisos sociales y colectivos frente a la abrumadora imposición de los valores individuales forzados por la economía de consumo.

Es atendiendo a esta actitud crítica de las hijas/hijos respecto del legado memorial recibido que Luz Celestina Souto propone que, más que un proceso de postmemoria (Hirsch), lo que priva en un importante corpus literario de “La nueva narrativa argentina” integrada por hijos/hijas de desaparecidos es una “intermemoria”: “Son memorias entre, en medio de dos experiencias... Hay una circulación entre los dos estados, la recuperación del otro es atravesada por la necesidad de construcción de una identidad personal forjada en la experiencia directa, no de la desaparición pero sí de lo que les sucede a quienes tienen que convivir con ella” (191-92). Se trata de una voz literaria irónica, distanciada y desacralizadora que reacciona con encono a lo que estiman ser “una falsa memoria” gestada sobre todo por organismos de DDHH y testigos sobrevivientes. Este acercamiento es afianzado por Camilla Cattarulla en su análisis de dos novelas de Félix Bruzzone, *Los topos* (2008) y *Las chanchas* (2014), para concluir que tal irreverencia tiene que ver con buscar una “representación identitaria que les sitúa con pleno derecho tanto en el discurso sobre la memoria como en las nuevas letras argentinas” (222).

Si bien, como lo observaba Souto respecto de la obra de Bruzzone, existe allí un premeditado distanciamiento respecto de la narrativa de corte testimonial por constituir ésta la opción escritural adoptado por las víctimas sobrevivientes, en la sección (Re)visiones Emilia Perassi se detiene en un corpus de obras de corte pseudo-testimonial, o testimonial-ficticio. Perassi es enfática al sostener que no se trata de una narrativa histórica, puesto que las voces presentes en estas obras actúan como “sujetos póstumos” o “diferidos,” que cumplen una función “plural, transhistórica, transgeneracional” para facilitar una relación ética con los testimonios legados por los “sujetos históricos.” De cierta manera el análisis de Perassi dialoga con el acercamiento de Blejmar al enfocarse ambas en la ética del legado. El ateniendo es que en tanto la generación de los hijos/hijas recoge de modo crítico la herencia discursiva-valórica de los padres tanto para honrarlos como para autosituarse frente a dicha historia, Perassi enfatiza el valor ético-colectivo que la narrativa pseudotestimonial persigue pues, una vez superada la “era del testigo,” propician un compromiso para “hacerse testigos” (229) de dicho pasado volviendo posible así la construcción de un “nosotros.”

El análisis de Ilaria Magnani se detiene en la nueva narrativa argentina que opta por los formatos de “la literatura popular”, esto es, el relato policial, de horror y fantástico. Dichos géneros son utilizados para llevar a cabo lo que Magnani describe como “pesquisa,” no para

acceder al pasado “con finalidades procesales”, sino más bien para satisfacer necesidades éticas y psicológicas, pues “los afanes íntimos siguen sin solución y la buscan a menudo en la escritura” (244). En este sentido, lo que mueve a estos escritores es el deseo de entender emotivamente dicho pasado, y para lo cual los códigos de la cultura popular se presentan como los más idóneos al ser el albergue de lo cotidiano en el cual yace la niñez, punto en el cual convergen los mundos que hoy se busca conectar.

El análisis que realiza Fernando Reati de la novela *Quieto en la orilla* (2012), de Marcos Bertorello, cierra los estudios de caso del volumen. Resulta del todo apropiado concluir los análisis enfocándose en una obra que escruta en el destino fatal de un personaje guerrillero iconográfico, el comandante Roberto Quieto, apresado y hecho desaparecer por los aparatos represivos tres meses antes del golpe en un sector público de la ciudad de Buenos Aires. Tal “negligencia” y los rumores de que en el proceso de tortura Quieto habría proporcionado información estratégica sobre la agrupación Montoneros, hace que ésta lo declare un traidor. Al centro del análisis Reati ubica el concepto “sentimiento dilemático,” para dar cuenta de la disyuntiva en la que se debatía el personaje al existir entre su compromiso político-social y el familiar emocional. Del mismo modo, el carácter polifónico de la novela permite acceder imaginativamente a una variedad de actores y perspectivas que evalúan la realidad en la que se desenvuelven, y el “juicio” histórico y personal que hacen de Quieto su hijo y uno de sus hermanos. De este modo, tanto la novela como el análisis de Reati permiten reunir alegóricamente el actual foro discursivo, los dilemas, las interpretaciones, los juicios, las necesidades íntimas y colectivas que motivan la vastedad de rituales y lenguajes simbólicos que siguen produciéndose en Argentina, aún a 40 años desde los hechos que los engendran.

El volumen se cierra con el análisis que Margherita Cannavacciuolo desarrolla de todos los textos incluidos. Como ya habíamos observado en la Introducción, el trabajo que sirve de epílogo constituye también una suerte de meta-crítica, para concluir que “los textos representan la unión—límite—entre el esfuerzo especulativo por desentrañar, interpretar o volver a plantear—hermenéutica—y la resistencia que el objeto—lo hermético—que opone en su repliegue” (321). Todo lo anterior da cuenta de la solidez, el cuidado, el compromiso, y la perspectiva autorreflexiva ensayada en el libro, para hacernos recordar que la tarea crítica no se encuentra ajena a la problemática analizada, sino que forma parte de la misma necesidad y responsabilidad orgánica, social compartida de encarar el pasado, para así superarlo.

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Sánchez-Blake, Elvira. *Spiral of Silence*. Trans. Lorena Terando. Evanston Illinois: Northwestern U P and Curbstone P, 2019. 159 pp. ISBN: 9780-8101-3916-9

Spiral of Silence is the title of the recent translation of *Espiral de silencios* written by Elvira Sánchez-Blake and published in Spanish in 2009. Lorena Terando’s translation brings the novel to the English-reading public with strength and an understanding of the world portrayed by the novel. Debra Castillo’s prologue contextualizes the novel, giving the uninformed reader a framework for understanding Colombian history and the complicated human landscape that its ever-changing and constant war has created.

This novel in its original Spanish publication seemed directed to a narrower public, already familiar with Colombia’s violent situation and the complicated relationships between

military and paramilitary forces (*paracos*), the various guerilla organizations, the *narcos*, and the *sicarios*. Sanchez-Blake creates a narrative covering almost fifty years of the troubled history of Colombia, showing how these forces interacted with the existing social class and economic divides, corrupt or weak governments, a powerful Catholic church, and racial and gender inequities. Starting with the government of Rojas Pinilla, which we see through back-flashes into some of the character's histories, the novel weaves a tapestry of voices that do not follow a strict chronological order but provide us highlights of crucial moments in Colombian history up to 2004.

The value of such a narrative is achieved foremost by the voices of the women who tell the story, move the narrative, and let the reader know how it feels to be a woman in a historic juncture that is mostly dominated by a male perspective. In Sánchez-Blake's novel, men are husbands, brothers, lovers and sons. While it is usually the case with women to have their role in history depend on the connections they have with men who are the protagonists, here we find the reverse. As we read the novel, we learn about the ways in which this war affected women and how they decided to assume leadership roles that required great sacrifice but were crucial to the resolution of the conflict.

Terando's translation not only helps to publicize this novel that was not broadly known at the time of its publication, but also detaches the language from the original, tied to regional and local dialects across social class. While she creates the voices of each of the women with veracity and strength, the filter of standardized English lets the reader encounter Sánchez-Blake's protagonists: Mariate, Norma, Amparo and the woman narrator, without needing to decide whether a person in that social class or in that town or city would speak the way they do. What might be a loss for the Colombian native-Spanish reader, is in fact a gain for the international or American public reading in English.

But this is not a domesticized translation, to put it in Lawrence Venuti's terms. To capture some of the dialect, Terando has included several Spanish words and expressions in her English version. While sometimes these words seem out of place, mostly they manage the desired effect of bringing the reader to the source language culture. Such is the case with some food items or objects that are named in Spanish and paraphrased in English to make the word intelligible. For example, consider the following passage: "What powerful message? Mariate asked, while she pat-pat-patted into shape some *arepas de choclo*, his favorite cornmeal cake, made with special Andean corn" (67). The original Spanish "¿Acción contundente? Le preguntó Mariate mientras preparaba unas arepas de choclo" (73) is contextualized by the description of the patting, which indicates to the reader the flatness of the corn cake. The explanation about the "Andean corn" adds to the Spanish words and forces the American reader beyond their own experience of sweet corn to imagine a confection different from anything they have tasted before. In another instance: Mariate exclaims: "Nora! Hermana, my sister, this is a miracle" (79). In this case the word "hermana," not only reminds us of the Spanish original but brings a cultural insight into the type of relationship the two characters formed while in jail. Terando also keeps the cultural context by leaving the quoted words to songs in Spanish, even when those words somewhat help tell the story. Again, in this case, she leaves a seed of resistance to force the reader to learn something about the culture and remember where the novel comes from.

In Sanchez-Blake's Spanish-language text voices shift from chapter to chapter. Each of the women protagonists gets to tell her version of what is happening to her and to those around her. These voices emerge in a non-linear sequence, as explained above, and the reader needs to figure out from context, who is speaking each time. The novel is organized in two larger units or

parts that are divided into short chapters, each labeled with a thematic title. Terando's translation of the title of each of these chapters adds a subtitle announcing who is speaking. For example, from the first chapter, "El Comandante," Terando adds the subtitle "*Amparo*." As many of the clues given to the Colombian reader to identify the timing and the character of each segment may not be available to the English reader, adding this information guides the reader through the different segments. Also useful in this sense is the chart included at the end of the book with a chronology of events in Colombian history as they relate to the events in the novel.

As I learned recently when I taught this novel in my Latin American Women Writer's course, the English version of *Espiral de silencios* opens the narrative beyond the Colombian borders. My students in that class came from diverse backgrounds such Guatemala, Jamaica and Nigeria among others. Each student felt that in some way the novel represented their own country and circumstances they had experienced there. All my students felt the novel spoke to them. None of them was Colombian.

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Sánchez Prado, Ignacio. *Intermitencias alfonsinas. Estudios y otros textos (2004-2018)*. Monterrey, México: UANL, 418 pp. ISBN: 9786-0727-1092-4

Debo decir, antes de comenzar esta reseña, que yo tengo una marcada inclinación por los ensayos misceláneos, o, mejor dicho, por los libros que reúnen y ordenan ensayos diversos (y aquí el guiño a Georg Lukács es nítido), aunque traten, como en este caso, sobre un mismo tema: Alfonso Reyes, tal vez porque Reyes es un universo literario propio y pretender agrupar textos que tratan sobre su obra no garantiza un trabajo homogéneo. Y, sinceramente, creo que perseguir tal homogeneidad sería lo menos recomendable cuando abordamos a un autor de estas características.

Establecidos esos antecedentes, no necesito añadir la mezcla de curiosidad y emoción que me provocó la lectura de *Intermitencias alfonsinas. Estudios y otros textos (2004-2018)* de Ignacio Sánchez Prado. Un mismo libro reúne dos elementos que de entrada acaparan mi atención: ensayos misceláneos y Alfonso Reyes. La lectura resulta, en efecto, un ejercicio gozoso, pero no desprovisto de desafíos e inquietudes de diversa índole. De entrada, no es un libro complaciente ni halagador, lo cual se agradece. Es, por el contrario, un conjunto de ensayos críticos, riguroso y sugerente que cumple a cabalidad con su principal función: mover a la reflexión y al replanteamiento de lo dicho y escrito sobre el autor de *Visión de Anáhuac*.

El título mismo implica ya una práctica escritural ejercida a un ritmo personal. Intermitencia: interrupción y continuación sucesivas a intervalos irregulares. La intermitencia como ejercicio de lectura y escritura. Y más aún: como estrategia crítica para combatir las rutinas e inercias del campo cultural y del esquemático mundo de la academia. Esta práctica de escritura es para mí una de las claves del ejercicio reflexivo, de la práctica de la lectura y de la experimentación de la escritura ensayística.

Para Ignacio Sánchez Prado la presencia de Reyes ha significado muchas cosas, pero, sobre todo, un compañero de ruta y un punto de referencia de su pasión por la lectura y la investigación. Ideas y proyectos intelectuales que van más allá de los límites de los quehaceres escolares. Para ilustrar esta cercanía, el autor describe su biblioteca y la ubicación en ella de los libros alfonsino: las obras completas de Reyes ocupan el lado derecho en el estudio de Ignacio;

en mi caso, el izquierdo. La sensación es la misma: tenerlos al alcance de la mano, no como una figura de autoridad, sino como una forma de interlocución permanente.

Intermitencias alfonsinas agrupa tres tipos de escritura sobre Reyes: la académica, la que resalta las redes intelectuales y la de divulgación. Explica su autor y me permito citarlo en extenso:

Al releer los ensayos durante el proceso de edición pude verificar que una de las razones por las cuales Reyes está tan al centro de mis intereses es porque su obra y su archivo crean puntos de encuentro y tensión entre las dos tradiciones en las que me formé, y que frecuentemente se consideran irreconciliables entre sí en las conversaciones y debates que ocupan demasiado espacio en la crítica literaria mexicana y mexicanista. En los ensayos aquí incluidos aparece con frecuencia la negociación entre un crítico mexicano que aprecia las tradiciones del ensayo, los legados del humanismo y las discusiones sobre estilo y estética literarias, y un académico norteamericano que valora la teoría en todas sus manifestaciones, las posibilidades del *paper* académico en sus formas de artículo y ponencia y la densidad intelectual que permite escribir en exclusiva para sus pares. (11)

Al igual que Sánchez Prado, considero la obra alfonsina como una poderosa herramienta para entender y describir el proceso de estructuración del campo cultural y literario mexicano e hispanoamericano. Dicho lo anterior, regreso a mi punto.

El libro se divide en tres partes, o, podríamos decir, en tres maneras de diálogo. “Estudios en torno a Reyes”, “Estudios sobre Reyes en el contexto latinoamericanista”, y “Ensayos, prólogos, ponencias”. Leído en conjunto asistimos al tránsito entre la reflexión teórica, la crítica cultural y la articulación de un espacio intermedio entre la academia (la norteamericana y la mexicana con todos sus contrastes) y los medios de comunicación (“tradicionales” y “alternativos”).

Una de las intenciones que Ignacio expresa en el ensayo de apertura sobre *El deslinde* es válida para todo el libro: “El propósito de este ensayo es una intervención en esta paradoja [la condición “ambigua” de Reyes como autor y pensador en los ámbitos culturales de España e Hispanoamérica], un intento de recuperar los pasos de perdidos de Reyes y encontrar nuevos caminos en su quehacer teórico sobre la literatura” (20). No se trata entonces de ponderar o elogiar al escritor consagrado, sino de interpretar sus acciones, sus articulaciones críticas, describir su papel como protagonista no sólo de una historia intelectual, sino material de la cultura hispanoamericana moderna. Qué obras leyó, y cómo las leyó, cómo respondió a las circunstancias que lo envolvieron.

Sánchez Prado entiende muy bien que Reyes perteneció a una generación que hizo sus propios ajustes a la relación entre intelectuales y sociedad (lectores de Rodó, al fin y al cabo), interviniendo tanto en procesos educativos como políticos. La cultura fue para ellos un dispositivo para la transformación social, aunque cada uno la trabajó a su manera. La lectura desplegada en este libro nos presenta a Reyes como agente o protagonista del proceso de institucionalización de la cultura en México, y como articulador de las redes intelectuales latinoamericanas más productivas de la primera mitad del siglo XX.

La intermitencia permite ver el movimiento de estas estrategias manejadas por el escritor regiomontano: apropiaciones culturales; intervenciones concretas en las prácticas de lectura y difusión de obra y autores; resignificación de la filología; rearticulación del helenismo moderno; creación de formas literarias propias (su discurso ensayístico), o de la “forma literaria alfonsina”, como atinadamente la llama Sánchez Prado; la apropiación de ciertas manifestaciones

poéticas (Góngora, Goethe, Mallarmé) y su cristalización en un discurso lírico y político a la vez; reconfiguración de la relación entre la literatura española y las literaturas latinoamericanas (estrategias contracanónicas); y el uso de la utopía como estrategia decolonizadora.

He aquí uno de los puntos centrales de este libro: entender la polimórfica escritura alfonsina como la reconfiguración de la geopolítica del conocimiento en Occidente, y no como la mera reproducción de valores y nociones tradicionalistas. Sánchez Prado lo explica con claridad: “La contribución central de Alfonso Reyes a la posibilidad de un pensamiento latinoamericano está en lo que encierra este concepto de utopía. Para Reyes, un pensamiento que rompa verdaderamente con las relaciones de colonialidad se debe fundar en una intervención cultural directa, sin mediaciones, en la cultura occidental” (260). Y ya antes había establecido que la concepción de la utopía en el intelectual regiomontano había establecido a “América Latina como *locus* de pensamiento crítico y como espacio de articulación de proyectos de emancipación *vis-á-vis* la modernidad y el colonialismo” (144).

De esta manera el carácter misceláneo del libro se transforma en un repertorio de posibilidades de análisis, como si contempláramos un edificio desde diversos ángulos, encontrando aristas, pilares y cimientos otrora desconocidos. Sánchez Prado no busca solamente la arqueología literaria, sino la interlocución crítica. Su preocupación está el presente, y nunca en la rutina filológica: ensayar con el ensayo alfonsino y poner a prueba su vigencia ante los desafíos actuales.

Esta forma de intermitencia crítica coloca, o, mejor dicho, confronta al autor con algunos glosadores y críticos de la obra de Reyes. Ignacio Sánchez Prado rechaza con argumentos la imagen del escritor regiomontano como un erudito y defensor de las tradiciones (sobre todo de la hispanista y la clásica), alejado de las zonas de combate cultural, desposeído de cualquier tipo de hibris (como lo acusó alguna vez Octavio Paz), y, para colmo, carente de una “obra representativa” (como lo denunció Hugo Hiriart). A tirios y troyanos responde Sánchez Prado: a los críticos tradicionalistas les hace ver la índole revolucionaria de la escritura alfonsina; a los detractores: las falencias de sus ataques (que sólo confirman los dispositivos de poder –de inclusión y exclusión– que han operado en el campo literario mexicano desde hace más de cincuenta años), en ambos procesos demuestra como el “ejercicio performativo de la cultura es una de las estrategias centrales del *ethos* intelectual de Reyes: más que una acumulación erudita de conocimiento, se trata de una puesta en juego de elementos del archivo occidental en un contexto donde adquieren connotaciones políticas distintas” (330).

Intermitencias alfonsinas es, así, no sólo un “libro misceláneo” sobre Alfonso Reyes, sino la bitácora de un crítico y académico que ha sorteado con habilidad los obstáculos de su profesión y ha sabido trazar importantes líneas de reflexión en un campo cultural que suele padecer de amnesia a la hora de recordar sus tradiciones críticas.

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Slack, Dawn, and Karen L. Rauch, eds. *Disability in Spanish-speaking and U.S. Chicano Contexts: Critical and Artistic Perspectives*. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019. 216 pp. ISBN: 9781-5275-2750-8

Though Disability Studies has engaged with literary and cultural productions since its inception, the field was comparatively slower to find its home in Hispanic or Chicana/x literary

studies. *Disability in Spanish-speaking and U.S. Chicano Contexts: Critical and Artistic Perspectives* joins the good company of scholars who have sought to rectify this imbalance during the last ten years. The collection, comprised of nine essays interspersed with creative works by Khédija Gadhoum, is temporally and methodologically diverse with studied works ranging from the seventeenth-century to present and theoretical approaches from Mitchell and Snyder's narrative prosthesis to Homi Bhaba's mimicry. The varied essays are grouped together based on theme rather than proximity in time or geography. Gadhoum's visual art and poetry break up the sections, which are untitled. The decision to not use section titles encourages the reader to find the commonalities in works that might otherwise appear divergent. The collection's common thread is the fact that, as the editors state in the book's introduction, all of the "essays relocate individuals with disabilities from the margins to the center" (7).

After two opening creative pieces by Gadhoum, the collection moves to an introduction from the editors outlining the forthcoming arguments and breaking down the theoretical frameworks readers will encounter. All the essays are in English with translations of Spanish-language quotations, thus allowing an Anglophone audience to engage with these materials. The chapters examine a variety of cultural productions, including short stories (Dawn Slack; Karen L. Rauch), film (Meredith L. Jeffers), and theatre (Gloria Jeanne Bodtorf Clark). The remaining five chapters put their critical focus on novels, whether that be Lina Meruane's often-unsettling fiction in the analysis by Beth E. Jørgensen or Eduardo Gutiérrez's nineteenth-century novels in that of Carlos Rodríguez McGill.

What all the chapters share is an examination of the cultural importance of disability in Spanish-speaking and Chicanx worlds alongside a critical eye to how cultures form ideas of disability and normativity. In addition, the chapters should be commended for their interdisciplinarity and the editors for the unique juxtaposition of the pieces. Chapters five and six in the book's third section demonstrate the success in the collection's contrasts. At first glance, it would seem that twenty-first-century novelist Mario Bellatin and Golden Age dramaturg Juan Ruiz de Alarcón would have little in common. Nonetheless, the chapters by Jennifer Thorndike and Gloria Jeanne Bodtorf Clark, respectively, demonstrate how systems of power define bodies and how individuals with disabilities establish subjectivity in the face of these systems. As Thorndike states of Bellatin's *Perros héroes*, the novel establishes a space where those with disabilities fight back against those who classify their bodies as simply a burden, even if the protagonist of *Perros héroes* does so in violent or disturbing ways. Similarly, Bodtorf Clark examines how the body-shaming received by Ruiz de Alarcón influenced his work in her close reading of *Los favores del mundo*. In both cases, Bellatin and Ruiz de Alarcón subvert systems of power that work to subjugate those with disabilities by demonstrating their knowledge of those very systems.

Thorndike and Bodtorf Clark also demonstrate their interdisciplinary skills in their chapters. Bodtorf Clark weaves together critique of Ruiz de Alarcón alongside Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* and Michael Lewis's *Shame: The Exposed Self*, while Thorndike mixes examinations of neoliberalism, biotechnology, and Disability Studies. This mixing of theories and analytical tools unites both of these chapters and the collection as a whole. The combination of different theoretical approaches and primary texts similarly serves to demonstrate the timeless importance of disability and the body. In addition to the analyses throughout the collection, Khédija Gadhoum's artistic works are likewise multifaceted. Her creations, mixing visual and written forms, explore "Alzheimer's, autism, and cancer," per the collection's introduction (9). In this way, *Disability in Spanish-speaking and*

U.S. Chicano Contexts creates innovative analyses as it also displays new primary source materials that future Disability Studies scholars can explore.

One of the collection's most positive qualities is also connected to one of its downfalls. With the exception of Beth Jörgensen, who has long been a key figure in the world of Hispanic Disability Studies, the other contributors are primarily known for other types of literary engagement. It is refreshing to see more academics giving disability the same critical spotlight that has been afforded to other identities, such as race or gender, for decades. Nonetheless, disability scholars may be surprised to see several of the authors use language such as "suffered from" in reference to a character with spina bifida (28) or "wheelchair-bound," rather than wheelchair user, to refer to another (99). While this may seem like a small linguistic difference, the Disability Studies community prides itself on the careful use of language that reaffirms people with disabilities. Phrases such as these play into the negative associations with disability that the disability activist community seeks to undo, thus indicating that some contributors may lack a familiarity with the greater scope of Disability Studies and its activist past and present.

However, the book's positive contribution to Hispanic and Chicanx Disability Studies in particular and Disability Studies in general makes this critique a relatively small one. The collection concludes with a look to a future of more Disability Studies in which this book will be "a continuation, another dialogue in a larger encounter" (216). As both Hispanic and Chicanx Disability Studies continues to develop, *Disability in Spanish-speaking and U.S. Chicano Contexts* will hopefully be one book of many that participates in interdisciplinary work with an engaging disability base, demonstrating the fruitful analyses that are possible when academics bring disability into the critical conversation.

Elizabeth Jones, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Solá, Juan. *La Chaco*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Hojas del Sur, 2016. 176 pp. ISBN 9789-8718-8256-4

La chaco es una novela que explora los límites de la marginalidad porteña de Buenos Aires. En sus relatos se exponen las dolorosas circunstancias a las que se enfrenta el grupo de sexoservidoras trans. La protagonista es Ximena quien huye de la provincia argentina del Chaco para buscar un respiro de libertad en la capital, donde pretende llevar una vida tranquila y anónima. Sin embargo, sus expectativas se derrumban cuando para sobrevivir tiene que prostituirse y enfrentarse a la opresión sistemática, a la violencia de género, a la marginalidad y a la violación de sus derechos humanos.

En *La Chaco*, Solá, utiliza el estilo literario in media res, en este, presentándonos relatos fragmentados, escritos en una narrativa poética donde sutilmente construye los cuerpos y las historias de las protagonistas: Ximena (*La Chaco*), Hiedra y Galaxia, quienes son amigas y compañeras dentro del grupo de prostitutas trans. Su narrativa se convierte así en un ejercicio de deconstrucción de los personajes para mostrarnos las circunstancias primigenias que condicionan el devenir de estos seres abyectos quienes se ven atrapados en las redes de una sociedad y un sistema que las desprecia y aniquila por el hecho de ser diferentes.

La novela consta de un prólogo poético de la escritora, artista y activista trans Susana Shock quien se autodefine como "artista trans sudaca", en este, realiza un poderoso llamado a la libertad y la dignificación de los cuerpos y las identidades trans "Porque no somos peores ni

mejores, somos otras” y apela por la protección de las trabajadoras sexuales trans para dejar de ser “crónica policial”. Posteriormente la novela se estructura en tres capítulos: Gusano, Crisálida y Mariposa, sin embargo, en la contraportada del libro, Solá, nos advierte: “*La Chaco* no pretende ser la historia de un gusano que se vuelve mariposa, sino de una mariposa que nunca se olvidará que fue gusano”. Ante esta primicia, el autor nos sumerge brevemente en un contexto de metamorfosis, la cual es una experiencia universal inherente a los humanos, la evolución, la transformación y la exploración de las diferentes etapas de la vida, las cuales, dentro de la comunidad trans son mucho más enfáticas debido a que este colectivo (como el prefijo lo indica, “trans”) es una transformación, una transición psico sexual y de género. Las líneas divergentes que guían la vida de sus personajes nos llevan a transitar por una realidad ajena, nos pone frente a un espejo donde nadie quiere mirarse, también nos conduce a explorar los márgenes más recónditos de una sociedad que violenta, desprecia y mata a la comunidad trans por el hecho de vivir diferente, soñar diferente, amar diferente, desear diferente.

Dentro de las narraciones de las vidas de Ximena, Hiedra y Galaxia, Solá sensibiliza al lector sobre lo extremo que es vivir dentro de un cuerpo y una identidad no deseada, sobre todo cuando el sistema sociopolítico rechaza los reclamos y los derechos de la comunidad LGBTQ, a quienes incluso patologiza y criminaliza debido a las disidencias sexogenéricas. Las historias de estos personajes, son testimonios constantes de personas que han sufrido abuso infantil, violencia intrafamiliar, emigración temprana, pobreza extrema, abuso de poder, exposición a prácticas estéticas peligrosas, que en concreto, se revelan como una sentencia de muerte prematura. Estas historias también muestran al lector una forma de ser diferente, de vivir diferente y de amar diferente, apela por la empatía con aquellas minorías que desconocemos para emitir mensajes poderosos como “ninguna traba nace puta”. Las historias de prostitución trans son aterradoras, dolorosas, violentas, pero sobre todo son reales. Este tipo de testimonios se repiten incesantemente en los contextos latinoamericanos que a diario presentan cifras alarmantes de feminicidios, homofobia, transfobia y crímenes de odio.

Jesús Galán Díaz, University of California-Davis

Torello, Georgina. *La conquista del espacio: Cine silente uruguayo (1915-1932)*. Montevideo: Editorial Yaugurú, 2018. 275 pp. ISBN 9789-9748-9027-5

While scholarly attention to Latin American silent cinema has expanded greatly in recent years, much territory remains uncharted. As a result, the growing number of book-length studies in this area are typically obliged to seek a balance between comprehensive accounts of previously neglected topics and clearly focused arguments. In *La conquista del espacio*, Georgina Torello elegantly navigates this methodological tension by reading Uruguayan silent cinema through its fascination with documenting national landscapes. This “impulso al mapeo” (19), a term borrowed from Teresa Castro, stemmed in part from the desire to distinguish local productions from the imported cinema dominating the nation’s screens. By attracting audiences to domestically made films, film enthusiasts hoped to establish a self-sustaining industry, a longed-for testament to Uruguay’s modernity that was never consolidated in the silent era. Yet not all landscapes figured equally in these plans; rather, films of the period propagated elite visions of space. This tendency can be traced in part to the involvement of upper-class women’s charity organizations in filmmaking, a phenomenon unique to Uruguay. As the title’s metaphor

of conquest suggests, the symbolic control over space offered by the moving image proved to be deeply entwined with power.

The salience of cinematic space for national politics is the focus of the book's first chapter. It examines two non-fiction films from 1915—one depicting the transfer of power from president José Batlle y Ordoñez to his handpicked successor Feliciano Viera, the other documenting an official visit by Lauro Müller, Brazil's Minister of Foreign Relations—alongside the unfinished fiction film *Artigas*, which portrayed a national hero of Uruguay's independence wars. Whereas the first film made visible the urban masses (a move that earlier non-fiction films of upper-class life had avoided), the second visually maps the frontier between Brazil and Uruguay by depicting a public ceremony held on the border. The failed production of *Artigas*, Torello contends, extended these non-fiction films' explicit investment in state power and concern with the national. Marking the first incursion of female-led charities into filmmaking, *Artigas* participated in the ongoing consolidation of its title figure as a national icon and rallying point for political consensus (66).

Tracing the connections between philanthropic organizations and visual technologies in greater depth, the following chapter explores how the magic lantern—a device used for the still projection of photographic and painted slides, often as a complement to film screenings—made visible local landscapes in the face of barriers to domestic film production. The alternation between films and lantern slides worked to localize the viewing experience, with picturesque images of well-known sites and portraits of society ladies presented as audience draws in both commercial and charity screenings.

Mediated by cinema and the magic lantern, the public visibility of elite women proved central to the trio of 1920s fiction films examined in Chapter 3. Two of these works paradoxically stressed the cosmopolitanism of Uruguay's capital Montevideo by adopting European settings and characters. Sponsored by a woman-led charity, Uruguay's first completed narrative film *Pervanche* (León Ibáñez Saavedra, 1920) fused elements from two French novels. In its tale of cross-class romance between an aristocratic ingenue living in genteel poverty and the son of the family's former butler, the film capitalized on the supposed resemblance between Uruguay and France. Staging Uruguay's urban modernity in relation to an implied European gaze, *Una niña parisiense en Montevideo* (Georges M. De Neuville, 1924) contrasted prevailing stereotypes of the nation as "primitive" with images of order and progress. In the film's self-reflexive narrative, the title character reads an ill-informed book about Uruguay and dreams of being menaced by indigenous people. Her misconceptions are contradicted by her viewing of a film-within-the-film, which documents the nation's prosperous cattle industry, organized military, and impressive buildings. The charity-sponsored *Del pingó al volante* (Robert Kouri, 1929) dispensed with European elements while keeping its focus on the city. Narrating a love triangle between a modern girl, a wealthy landowner, and an urban playboy, it suggested the integration of city and countryside through modern transportation technologies.

The final chapter of *La conquista del espacio* expands its focus beyond hegemonic images of Montevideo to explore cinematic renderings of marginal spaces and their social afflictions, ranging from the working-class neighborhoods showcased in the never-completed *Puños y nobleza* (1921) to rural areas like the fishing village depicted in *Almas de la costa* (Juan A. Borges, 1924), home to the film's tubercular heroine, and the department of Treinta y Tres. This last locale was the site of the sensational real-life case depicted in *El pequeño héroe del Arroyo de Oro* (Carlos Alonso, 1932), in which a young boy, mortally wounded in an attack by his grandfather that also killed his mother, carried his young sister several kilometers to safety

before succumbing to his wounds. Both *Almas de la costa* and *El pequeño héroe del Arroyo de Oro* highlight its protagonists' agonizing journeys through space (the former film's protagonist wanders through the city and ends up in a sanitarium), with cinematic technique emphasizing the limits of (social) mobility. As in the previous chapter, analysis of fiction features alternates with discussion of relevant non-fiction works.

Torello confronts a series of challenges and opportunities that will be familiar to scholars of Latin American silent cinema. These include the many frustrated filmmaking efforts of the period and the dismal survival rate for films, which obliges researchers to recuperate the historical traces of cinematic texts from press accounts, film stills, posters, and programs. As with her analysis of these disparate historical materials, Torello's attention to unfinished films ends up being a strength of the book, highlighting the nation's tendency (according to contemporary commentators) to pursue grand ambitions that went unfulfilled (35). Offering a creative response to methodological hurdles, *La conquista del espacio* is a highly compelling account of silent cinema's intersections with power in early twentieth-century Uruguay. At times, the study's organizing metaphor can feel somewhat tenuous, with questions of state and elite agency potentially overshadowing the question of space per se. This caveat aside, *La conquista del espacio* should be considered required reading for scholars and students of Latin American silent film, Uruguayan cultural history, and the relationship between power and visuality.

Rielle Navitski, University of Georgia

Valladares-Ruiz, Patricia. *Narrativas del descalabro: la novela venezolana en tiempos de revolución*. Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2018. 192 pp. ISBN: 9781-8556-6331-2

Los estudios sobre la literatura venezolana contemporánea, tanto dentro como fuera de Venezuela, han sido muy escasos, sin embargo, no por ello inexistentes. Entre los títulos que abordan este tema, resaltan: *Figuraciones del hinterland: Notas sobre Maracaibo o breve estudio del monte y culebra en Venezuela* (2008) de Antonio Isea, *Literatura venezolana del siglo XX* (2009) de Rafael Arráiz Lucca y *El desengaño de la modernidad: Cultura y literatura venezolana en los albores del siglo XXI* (2017) de Miguel Gomes. Asimismo, el giro político que dio Venezuela tras la asunción al poder del gobierno socialista del presidente Hugo Chávez, ha dado fruto a dos libros de crítica literaria exclusivamente dedicados a la producción literaria durante la revolución bolivariana: *Writing and the Revolution: Venezuelan Metafiction (2004-2012)* [2019] de Katie Brown y el presente título, *Narrativas del descalabro: La novela venezolana en tiempos de revolución* (2018) de Patricia Valladares-Ruiz. En este último, se estudian las novelas que han aparecido durante el periodo que va de 2002 a 2015 y que la autora llama "narrativas del descalabro", pues todas ellas, directa o indirectamente, presentan la administración revolucionaria negativamente. En palabras de Patricia Valladares-Ruiz, "examino cómo estas ficciones hacen tambalear la reescritura de la historia, el nuevo contrato social y el culto personalista a Hugo Chávez, al tiempo que denuncian las contradicciones del aparato ideológico de la Revolución y el Estado fallido" (x).

Las novelas se estudian bajo bloques temáticos; en el capítulo 2, "La narración del mal: violencia, crisis moral e institucional en la novela venezolana del siglo XXI", encontramos: *Nocturama* (Ana Teresa Torres), *La más fiera de las bestias* (Lucas García) y *Nosotros todos*

(Manuel Acedo Sucre). En el capítulo 3, “País sin retorno: la experiencia migratoria en narrativas del periodo revolucionario”, encontramos: *Una tarde con campanas* y *Tal vez la lluvia* (Juan Carlos Méndez Guédez); *Blue Label/Etiqueta Azul* y *Los desterrados* (Eduardo Sánchez Rugeles). En el capítulo 4, “Alegorías de la inmediatez política”, encontramos: *El complot* (Israel Centeno), *El último fantasma* (Eduardo Liendo), *Las peripecias inéditas de Teofilus Jones* (Fedosy Santaella) y *Ausencias deja la noche* (Gonzalo Himiob Santomé). En el último capítulo, “Reescritura de la historia política venezolana en novelas del periodo revolucionario”, encontramos: *El pasajero de Truman* (Francisco Suniaga), *La ciudad vencida* (Yeniter Poleo), *Rosalía* (Sebastián de la Nuez) y *Patria o muerte* (Alberto Barrera Tyszka). Si bien estas narrativas se organizan temáticamente, en el primer capítulo, “Campo cultural y narrativas disidentes del periodo revolucionario”, se exponen los postulados metodológicos y se examina “la escisión del campo literario nacional” a partir de las políticas del gobierno socialista; esta escisión surge, según la autora, a partir precisamente de la implementación de las políticas culturales del gobierno revolucionario. Más aún, como estas políticas culturales son de carácter propagandístico y como no ha habido una producción literaria “revolucionaria” (todo esto, según Valladares-Ruiz), estas nuevas narrativas surgen “ante estas ausencias en el campo literario revolucionario” (ix) y como contrapeso, pues abordan su “disidencia” de una manera “creativa”.

En definitiva, el estudio es un análisis de las voces nuevas y disidentes ante un Estado que, según la autora, además de “fallido”, monopoliza e ideologiza los medios de expresión cultural como el cine, los concursos literarios, las editoriales, etcétera, lo que llevaría al lector a hacerse la siguiente pregunta: ¿si el Estado venezolano ideologiza la producción cultural, entonces, estas nuevas narrativas están exentas de ideología? Es decir, ¿son estas novelas muestras de una verdadera expresión libre que no sirvan a intereses ideológicos particulares e inclusive a mercados editoriales? Todas estas preguntas necesarias y legítimas quedan sin respuestas. Además, como en este estudio no se discuten los trasfondos políticos, geopolíticos y financieros mundiales, pero tampoco en los otros títulos mencionados que se dedican a la literatura venezolana (aunque el libro de Brown da atisbos de ellos), los cuales darían mejor y más clara cuenta de la situación político-social venezolana, y pondrían este estudio en un plano político más neutral, el lector queda limitado a pensar que se pudiese conocer una sociedad a partir de la posición y representación política, muchas veces parcializada y obcecada de sus escritores, pero esto en realidad llamaría desde ya a un debate. Por otro lado, como las novelas estudiadas se alinean ideológicamente bajo una misma bandera, el lector se podría volver a preguntar: ¿cuál es el valor estético de estas novelas?, pues esta exploración tampoco se lleva a cabo en este estudio. En consecuencia, esto nos remitiría inevitablemente a evaluar el valor simbólico-político, por ejemplo, de los premios literarios otorgados a *The Night* de Rodrigo Blanco Calderón, novela no estudiada en este libro pero que sí se menciona dentro del análisis, y *Patria o muerte* de Alberto Barrera Tyszka, novela que sí tiene un apartado, pues son novelas “disidentes” pero que han entrado en el “campo cultural” y lo determinan. O, al mismo tiempo, evaluar cómo es que las novelas *La ciudad vencida* de Yeniter Poleo y *Ausencias deja la noche* de Gonzalo Himiob Santomé, publicadas por editoriales completamente desconocidas, ganan su espacio en este estudio.

Todo esto, claro está, para ser consecuentes con el mismo Bourdieu, el cual es utilizado parcialmente para comentar el aspecto del “campo literario”, pero queda excluido como teórico de fondo para analizar el mérito (más allá del mérito ideológico) de estas novelas y su trascendencia. Pero, más allá de este escollo, *Narrativas del descalabro: la novela venezolana en*

tiempos de revolución, contribuye a la difusión y discusión de la literatura venezolana, una literatura de la que nos queda todavía mucho que aprender.

Héctor Jaimes, North Carolina State University

Valero Juan, Eva y Oswaldo Estrada, eds. *Literatura y globalización. Latinoamérica en el nuevo milenio*. Barcelona: Editorial Anthropos, Ediciones UNL (Universidad Nacional del Litoral), 2019. 238 pp. ISBN 9788-4175-5617-4

El libro *Literatura y globalización. Latinoamérica en el nuevo milenio* presenta catorce ensayos que, a la manera de Italo Calvino en *Seis propuestas para el nuevo milenio*, busca comprender el fenómeno literario latinoamericano en las dos primeras décadas de producción en el siglo XXI. Como dicen los editores Eva Valero Juan y Oswaldo Estrada, ambos reconocidos estudiosos de la materia, este libro se acerca a problemáticas y tendencias actuales de la literatura latinoamericana en “un paisaje marcado por la globalización” (5). Así, los editores plantean un diálogo muy enriquecedor con trabajos previos mencionados en la introducción, trabajos como los de Jorge Fornet, Jesús Montoya, Ángel Esteban, Pablo Brescia, Jorge Locane, siempre con el fin de debatir acerca del rol de la literatura dentro del marco mundial. De esta manera, este libro añade también una discusión acerca de la transformación del mercado editorial ahora determinada por un mercado financiero alejado, casi completamente, de un manejo estatal. Al mismo tiempo, se reflexiona en el cambio en la figura del escritor de “mesías de la sociedad” a “ciudadano”. El proceso de globalización ha desdibujado las fronteras entre lo nacional y lo extranjero, entre centro y periferia, y entre el proceso inconcluso de la modernidad y posmodernidad que viaja de manera paralela con los mecanismos del neoliberalismo en América Latina.

El libro consta de cuatro partes. La primera se titula “Literatura, mercado y globalización” y abre con el artículo “La crítica literaria contra sí misma” de Eduardo Becerra, quien hace una historia muy completa de los significados que han recibido tanto la literatura como la crítica literaria para así marcar su actual punto de crisis debido al auge de los estudios culturales, el poscolonialismo y el neoliberalismo. Así, Becerra propone repensar la literatura y lo latinoamericano dentro de esta crisis más amplia que es la de la Humanidades corroída por el neoliberalismo. Ana Gallego en “Poéticas del mercado global en América Latina” estudia cinco novelas de cuatro escritores: César Aira, Rosa Beltrán, Alberto Fuguet y Mario Levrero para analizar cuáles son sus relaciones y visiones acerca de la globalización y el mercado. Gallego argumenta que el mercado global transforma al objeto literario, y así se abandona un sentido o una finalidad estética en pos de un fin más comercial. Esta situación se debe en parte al impacto del neoliberalismo y de las poéticas o “ficciones del dinero” donde se insertan los escritores actuales. Javier de Navascués en “Tensiones extraterritoriales y meridiano editorial” analiza la creciente difusión de la literatura argentina en España sin alcanzar los números del *Boom*, y cómo esto tiene un impacto en la construcción de un nuevo canon, argentino, de escritores. El papel de España, en ese sentido, parece haber cambiado poco desde los años sesenta. En “Desplazamiento, mercancía, traducción”, Raúl Rodríguez Freire hace una lectura de aquella nueva literatura que se aleja del realismo mágico y que renuncia a categorizarse como latinoamericano en esos términos. El crítico analiza el caso del cubano José Manuel Prieto quien construye una literatura no para buscar un origen en los archivos de lo nacional sino “para

destruir el archivo mismo” (74). A contracorriente del mercado, el caso de Prieto revela otras narrativas que se desplazan dentro de este globalismo igualador.

La segunda parte llamada “Géneros en conflicto y debates étnicos” incluye tres artículos sobre autores específicos. El primero de Vinodh Venkatesh investiga la narrativa de Gioconda Belli, con un énfasis en los sujetos femeninos y en la evolución de ellos. Venkatesh muestra el cambio de sujetos centrados en un presente centroamericano que deviene en sujetos femeninos más preocupados por su rol en el mundo global y posmoderno del siglo XXI. El segundo artículo de Brenda Quiñones-Ayala analiza el caso de hibridación de la mujer afro-latina en la novela *Fe en disfraz* de Mayra Santos-Febres. Quiñones-Ayala muestra cómo la protagonista negocia su status de mujer negra dentro de los Estados Unidos, denunciando así la desigualdad social como los prejuicios contra la comunidad de descendencia africana. En el último, Catalina Quesada-Gómez analiza la obra Julio Olaciregui y Juan Cárdenas, en donde se construyen estéticas de resistencia con el fin reivindicar la cultura afrocolombiana desde dentro y así ampliar el concepto de nación cuestionando maniqueísmos de blancos-negros.

En la tercera parte titulada “La ciudad en la era globalizada” se revisa la ciudad de La Habana a partir de las crónicas habaneras de César Aira, Pedro Lemebel y Sergio Pitol. El crítico Jorge Fonet estudia la tensión existente entre el espacio cubano, la literatura latinoamericana, y el proceso de globalización del que Cuba participa desde un punto de resistencia. Por su lado, José Manuel Camacho Delgado estudia el caso de la novela *Los días de la peste* del escritor Edmundo Paz Soldán donde la enfermedad y la cárcel funcionan como metáforas para hablar de la ciudad hoy, un espacio urbano que al encerrarse busca mantenerse alejado de los males externos que la amenazan. Finalmente, Wesley Costa de Moraes utiliza la novela *El ruido de las cosas al caer* de Juan Gabriel Vásquez para analizar la experiencia urbana de Colombia sometida a la violencia del narcotráfico. Costa de Moraes se centra en las referencias animalescas como materialización del proceso de modernización de Bogotá.

La última sección del libro “Viajes poéticos, inmigrantes y desplazados” contiene cuatro artículos. El primero es el único de todo el libro que tiene como tema central a la poesía. José Ramón Ruisánchez Serra analiza los trabajos de Mariano Blatt, Angélica Freitas, Yanko González, y Mario Montalbetti. El crítico analiza la búsqueda de la felicidad en estos poetas partiendo de la idea de la ausencia o de la falta, no en sentido lacaniano. Esta falta permite la creación de un espacio donde puede aparecer el otro, aquel lector que se encuentra así en un mundo desglobalizado, lo que permite una intersubjetividad íntima del nosotros. En el segundo ensayo Agustín Prado Alvarado analiza los cuentos de la escritora mexicana Guadalupe Nettel y de la peruana Nataly Villena, donde los sujetos son migrantes latinoamericanos instalados en París o Madrid, dos grandes centros europeos. Prado examina las nuevas relaciones que crean estos nuevos sujetos en el siglo XXI, cincuenta años más tarde del *Boom*. En el siguiente artículo, Eva Valero Juan analiza el caso de los escritores peruanos Grecia Cáceres y Fernando Iwasaki, quienes desde su espacio de enunciación (Francia y España respectivamente), cuestionan lo global/local en su narrativa. Para la autora, los escritores crean nuevas identidades que buscan borrar las fronteras de lo nacional con el fin de incluir nuevas identidades y naciones. Desde esta perspectiva, la patria no es un país sino su propia escritura. En el último artículo, Oswaldo Estrada se centra en la narrativa del peruano-norteamericano Daniel Alarcón para mostrar que la literatura latinoamericana también incluye a aquella que se produce en inglés. Ejemplo paradigmático, la narrativa de Alarcón incluye a sujetos migrantes, precarios que se trasladan de Perú a Estados Unidos, escapando de la violencia. Estrada examina la creación de

esta nueva identidad de sujetos que, dislocados e híbridos, se insertan en la comunidad latina y global del siglo XXI.

Finalmente, *Literatura y globalización. Latinoamérica en el nuevo milenio* propone un valioso diálogo al inicio de la tercera década del siglo XXI. Sus catorce artículos se sumergen en la historia de la crítica tanto latinoamericana como global para buscar respuestas al rol de la literatura en el mercado neoliberal.

Carlos Villacorta, University of Maine

Viera, Marcelino. *Modernidad sublimada: escritura y política en el Río de la Plata*, Madrid-Frankfurt: Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2019. 352 pp. ISBN 9788-4919-2065-6

Existe una tendencia del campo de los estudios culturales latinoamericanos del siglo XX en tomar a la modernidad como problemática central, que develan las contradicciones entre su ideación europea y la realidad latinoamericana, por ejemplo, en los libros *The Catastrophe of Modernity* (2004) de Patrick Dove o *Cruel Modernity* (2013) de Jean Franco. En este registro se inscribe *Modernidad sublimada*, aunque éste combina un agudo análisis literario con el teórico, psicoanalítico, histórico, prosaico, artístico y meta-teatral. Organizado como obra de teatro en dos actos de tres escenas cada uno y un intervalo de dos, *Modernidad sublimada* analiza cómo existe en el seno del trazo impuesto de la modernidad sudamericana, una “modernidad sublimada” coexistente en su desajuste como su otra cara de la moneda. El autor propone un “fracaso” trágico (aunque adquirido) que se vive como plus-de-goce en la inconmensurabilidad moderna. Las escrituras de Florencio Sánchez y la de Roberto Arlt son dos prácticas que se desentien de la formación del sujeto moderno del Estado-Nación, gesticulando una modernidad “a medias”, que transgrede la discusión política limitada a la calidad de la administración, para una crítica a los fundamentos de la cultura burguesa que abre la posibilidad a una política otra. La escritura sublimada se relaciona con partes extra que, aunque perdidas, se reclaman como propias, lo que abre una grieta insuturable en el sentido unívoco de la identidad del Estado-Nación. Las ominosas escrituras de Sánchez y Arlt develan así lo trunco de la escritura moderna y su deseo de identidad universal, al mismo tiempo que desestabiliza los roles entre letrado y público, abriendo a otras formas de relación artística, política, de comunidad y de vida, que se escapa del orden institucionalizado.

Luego del planteamiento del libro en la Escena uno del primer acto, pasamos a la escena dos y tres que analiza la escritura del objeto perdido, principalmente, en la cobra de Florencio Sánchez. Respondiendo a la demanda moderna por la escritura que entiende a este proyecto como obra por venir si es acorde a la *performance* de sus intérpretes, Sánchez escribe problematizando el duelo de la tragedia moderna en clave costumbrista. En *Barranca abajo el gaucho* (Don Zoilo) queda arrasado por el trabajo asalariado y el “robo” de la tierra (objeto *petit a*) por la letra moderna en la escritura legal de su título. Sánchez responde con su letra a la letra que mata las costumbres en pos del duelo por el objeto perdido que se iguala al retiro del gaucho manifestado en el suicidio de Don Zoilo: una abyección radical sin restitución posible. En *La gringa*, la tragedia es la transformación cultural al progreso tecnológico como pacto que constata la servidumbre voluntaria del gaucho al capital a cambio de su supervivencia, que hace a la permanencia de un elemento del pasado que desajusta el presente. En la escena tres las obras *Canillitas*, *Los derechos de la salud* y *La gente honesta*, se cuenta de la contracara de la misión

homogeneizante de la educación del Estado moderno. Estas obras, muestran la carcajada consecuente del desajuste entre letra sublimada y disciplinaria, quedando la última ridiculizada en su profanación que ya no puede auto-legitimarse más que por la fuerza. Por último, Viera analiza *M'hijo el doctor*, donde desde el título se devela un deseo truncado, ya que la ausencia de las letras se iguala a la falta de la herida abierta de la tragedia de la modernidad letrada, semejante al robo de propiedad que sufre Don Zoilo. *M'hijo el doctor* como el cuento "Las fieras" de Roberto Arlt, están escritos desde un no-lugar de la modernidad, demostrando el fracaso su deseo.

La primera escena del intervalo analiza la relación de Sánchez con la muerte que interrumpe la soberanía moderna desestabilizando el humanismo liberal-criollo. Viera observa que esta escritura interrumpe el *telos* político al herir el humanismo burgués en sus valores morales. Así en *Puertas adentro* Sánchez diagnostica su época como una nihilista, contraponiéndole un nihilismo activo cuyo humanismo desestabiliza la vida cotidiana. La segunda escena trata de la intención pedagógica que tenía el anarquismo en su producción de una "infra" escritura, en la que se despliega lo im-propio de la modernidad que deviene en política impropia, sin autoridad ni dueño, sublimada, vía las imprentas clandestinas como se muestra en *Trescientos millones*, *Saverio el cruel* y *Prueba de amor* de Roberto Arlt.

El último acto propone un más allá de la sublimación en la obra teatral y novelística de Roberto Arlt. Aquí el personaje Remo Erdosain, cual *flâneur*, desajusta la unidad patriótica para mostrar una falta en su habitar que se vive como un fuera de lugar: el lugar de la vida, que aparece cuando se le da muerte al individuo burgués. El futuro aquí se vive abismalmente y no como promesa moderna, a partir de un ejercicio cínico de escritura contra la ciudad letrada, de una unión diferente al *telos* cristiano.

Modernidad sublimada es un importante aporte a los estudios literarios del cono sur, pero su intervención también es un serio análisis de la relación entre escritura, verdad y vida. La *praxis* de la escritura sublima a la modernidad, pero lo que en ello se juega, es la verdad en el sentido de la *parrhesia* griega que Michel Foucault estudiara al final de su vida. La *parrhesia* como verdad menor (individual, propia) expresada contra la verdad del poder (sentido común), cuyo efecto es la imposibilidad de reestablecer la normalidad *a posteriori*. Como en estas escrituras sublimantes, es la vida la que se gana por la *parrhesia*, ya que ella abre la vida cotidiana a otro modo de vida posible, en este caso, que no sea burgués. Según Foucault la *parrhesia* habilitaría en el siglo XX otras formas de vida más allá del orden biopolítico-neoliberal, al que se lo ha categorizado como un sistema contra la vida. Es esto lo que analiza *Modernidad sublimada*, lo que hace que no sólo sea un importante aporte a su campo de estudio, sino también dona lenguaje para el análisis político más allá de la modernidad, en el contexto del agotamiento de las grandes narrativas.

Matías Beverinotti, San Diego State University

Zavala, Oswaldo. *La modernidad insufrible: Roberto Bolaño en los límites de la literatura latinoamericana contemporánea*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2015. 262 pp. ISBN: 9781-4696-2715-1

Roberto Bolaño has published more in death than many will in life. To date ten books of fiction, poetry, and essay have appeared on stands since the author succumbed to liver disease in

2003. And that number does not include the four books that gather his interviews, journalism, short stories, and poems into single volumes. A couple of years ago, the Mexican newspaper *Milenio* asked twenty-five national authors for a hot take on *Sepulcro de vaqueros* (2017), the tenth of these posthumous publications, and their responses ranged from guarded enthusiasm to outright incredulity. Wherever readers might fall on that spectrum and however they might view Bolaño's afterlife success, one thing is clear: he has become a central figure in our reckonings of contemporary Latin American writing. As others have pointed out, this postmortem existence and exuberance is due, at least in part, to a publishing phenomenon in the United States which turned his writing into the sine qua non of Latin American literature, on the one hand, and the proliferation of scholarly work in favor of and against him, on the other. Just as academic niches emerged around figures like James Joyce, Jorge Luis Borges, and Juan Rulfo, a cadre of professors, editors, and critics have produced copious volumes about the Chilean author. Oswaldo Zavala correctly points out that appreciations of Bolaño's works, both those published in life and those which came after his death, "se han gradualmente polarizado entre entusiastas fervientes y detractores tajantes" (243). Zavala's book, *La modernidad insufrible* (2015), attempts to bridge these contrary positions by inviting readers to approach Bolaño, not as a hip publishing trend *du jour*, but as an intellectual whose work offers unusual and productive interrogations of literary modernity.

La modernidad insufrible opens with an anecdote about meeting the author at book fair in Paris. There are no lines of enthusiastic fans and an editor at a neighboring bookstand has no idea who Bolaño is. More important than schmaltzy pathos the story evokes, it functions as an effective metaphor for Zavala's approach to reading Bolaño's position in the greater field of literary studies: the unrecognized Latin American luminary sits alone, both literally and figuratively, on the outskirts in capital of the world republic of letters. Here Zavala subtly asks whether we, as reader, also misrecognize the importance of this writer. Throughout the book, Zavala argues, with outstanding research and compelling textual analyses, that Bolaño's critique of literary modernity hinges on two important approaches: first, he critiques the publishing world "y su explotación de la literatura complaciente con un lector promedio, legible para un gusto poco sofisticado y adverso a proyectos literarios complejos que se apartan de las modas del momento"; second, Bolaño establishes a complex intertextual dialogue that allows formal technique to become an analytic tool for examining society and the literary world, a critique that ultimately culminates "con la dispersión de los fundamentos de esa modernidad, llevados a un extremo donde su significado pierde sentido y se difumina en lo absurdo, lo ridículo o lo patético" (19).

From here, the first three chapters begin fleshing out a conceptual framework for Bolaño's overarching literary project. The first suggests that Bolaño interrogates modernity by abandoning the Boom writers—who had previously substituted one group of European masters for another ("las lecturas del realismo y naturalismo francés de Zola y Balzac con los referentes más inmediatos del *high modernism* de autores como Faulkner y Joyce" [29])—and recentering Jorge Luis Borges as the central figure. Borges becomes a paradigm through which he explores the foundation, consolidation, and later dispersion of the literary field because, as Zavala notes, "Borges propone una *praxis* estética bajo la cual es posible transformar los discursos de conocimiento no-literarios en objetos de ficción, transgrediendo los límites de su conceptualización y efectuando grietas en su discursividad" (29-30). The second chapter, which focuses on the essays found in *Entre paréntesis* (2004), shows how Bolaño deconstructs the verticality of the literary canon by underscoring affinities with writers situated at the margins of

the canon. He observes that Bolaño adopts, “una ética de lectura en los mismos términos de Borges para reconsiderar la obra de autores ‘menores’ de su generación..., atípicos o raros... the work of Sergio Pitol. O que a pesar de cierto éxito editorial en sus respectivos países están lejos de ser bestsellers” (78). The third chapter considers the narrators at the heart of two dictator novels, *Estrella distante* (1996) and *Nocturno de Chile* (2000). He demonstrates how these novels dramatize the “la imbricada relación entre literatura y poder en dos sectores de la sociedad chilena que se complementan desde las antípodas” (79): young poets who experienced the coup firsthand in the first, and the intellectual class that cozied up to the dictatorship in the second.

By now it should be clear that a central contention in *La modernidad insufrible* is the importance of the intertextual and personal connections that form between writers. Throughout the book, Zavala links Bolaño with Borges, Pitol, Felisberto Hernández, Horacio Quiroga, Alfonso Reyes, and others in order to demonstrate how Bolaño, instead of working in regional vacuum, predicates his approach to literature on meaningful literary interactions with predecessors and contemporaries. In the fourth chapter—which deals with the theme of friendship in Bolaño’s short stories and which I consider to be among the best chapters in the book—Zavala notes that the textual relationships between writers is means by which young authors can recognize and celebrate their indebtedness to older forebears. He goes on to suggest that, through these kinds of connections, “[la] literatura adquiere una dimensión política que articula formas específicas de conocimiento crítico que someten a juicio los preceptos de nación y tradición literaria y sus implicaciones en la violenta historia latinoamericana y europea moderna” (122). Likewise, the fifth and sixth chapters continue this line of thinking about friendship and marginal writers. Chapter five deals with *Los detectives salvajes* (1998) and the ways in which two friends, engaging in philosophical dialogue and under the influence of mezcal, set out to recuperate the avant-garde as a radical praxis for contemporary society. The sixth chapter, which deals with *2666* (2004), delves into the novel’s multiple ethical approaches toward representing intolerance and violence.

Possibly the best way to sum up this review is to take a page from Zavala’s—and Bolaño’s—recentering of Borges. In an essay from *Otras inquisiciones* (1952), Borges suggested that the Spanish poet Francisco de Quevedo, like Joyce and Dante and Goethe and Shakespeare, transcended mere individuality and became, in the process, an expansive and complex literature. *La modernidad insufrible* makes a similar claim *sotto voce* for Roberto Bolaño. Whether one likes or dislikes his writing is somewhat inconsequential; given his importance in the literary field at present, readers must take Bolaño seriously. Zavala’s book extends a compelling invitation to reread Bolaño, and by extension a wide array of Latin American writers, in order to understand the current state of literary affairs. It does so with urgency, elegance, and style. It is not simply directed at the true believers; it welcomes all, from the uninitiated to the specialist. In this manner, *La modernidad insufrible* is, without question, a great book and an important intervention in the field of Latin American literature studies.

Brian Price, Brigham Young University

FILM REVIEWS

A Media Voz [In a Whisper]. Dirs. Heidi Hassan and Patricia Pérez Fernández. Spain, France, Switzerland, Cuba, 2019. Dur. 80 min.

Heidi Hassan and Patricia Pérez Fernández's co-directed the full-length documentary, *A Media Voz* (2019), premiered at the International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam [IDFA] in 2019. Since winning IDFA's prestigious Best Feature-Length Documentary of 2019 Award, the film has also won the Best Documentary prize at the Havana Film Festival 2019. It will continue to travel the international film festival circuit in 2020 including the film festivals in Göteborg, Guadalajara, Costa Rica, Cartagena, Málaga, and Miami. The 83-minute documentary is in Spanish with English and French subtitles.

Through archival footage, photographs, voice overs, and contemporary material, Hassan and Pérez Fernández share their autobiographical stories of deep friendship, immigration, and the centrality of filmmaking to capture their paths, drive their careers and eventually form the means for their reencounter. The documentary opens with blurred images of buildings, rain, and puddles, eventually settling on the picture of two young girls in a public swimming pool brimming with water and people. As an off camera voice speaks in the first person affectionately addressing a dear friend who is also off-camera, we come to learn that the two voices are those of the girls in the past swimming photograph now decades later. Throughout the film water is a reoccurring image, which connects, separates, and eventually reunites the two friends.

These same women later appear in snapshots, this time from behind the camera, in film school making their way as filmmakers directing in Cuba. Lugging equipment and filming behind immense camera lenses, the women hang from cranes for aerial shots and sit on moving cars to film. Their work on filmmaking further solidifies another language that they rely on for communication: cinema. These documentarians came into their own forming part of an exciting time of change and visibility of Cuban cinema with a generation of *nuevos realizadores* in the early 2000s. While their studies and subsequent careers in cinema bring the two directors even closer together, the documentary also reveals it is cinema that will eventually separate them, at least temporarily. With an invitation to take part in a film festival in Amsterdam, Patricia travels to Europe representing their films, and makes the painful decision to defect to Spain and not return with her fellow Cuban travelers to the island. This decision means that she cannot return to the island for five years.

Like many Cubans, the two voices from the diaspora exist in a complex relationship with their country. While the fraught topic of leaving or staying in Cuba is omnipresent in Cuban fictional and documentary cinema, there is something special about this documentary's approach to representing the intricacies of immigration. The documentary does not focus on government top-down immigration policies, simplified politics, or sweeping generational stories. Instead in this complex film we not only see the decision of leaving Cuba being made, but we also discover the future ramifications of such a monumental change. Hassan and Pérez Fernández deconstruct the happily-ever-after story of leaving as well as the catastrophic suffering narrative of abandoning the island. They share their own gray spaces of beginning again after making this decision to migrate. Their stories are multi-faceted processes of constructing home despite the cold realities of their lives abroad, finding work in the face of racism and misogyny, turning forty, and struggling with fertility treatments and the prospects of motherhood.

Amidst this experience of change, both Hassan and Pérez Fernández have relied on filmmaking to communicate, to find themselves in foreign countries, and to find each other. Thus, this highly intimate look at immigration is also deeply rooted in the story of women filmmakers offering their own personal gazes to the worlds around them. Their gazes are made explicit as they show glimpses of themselves while filming, thus revealing the subjectivity of their filmmaking process, making it impossible to read their stories as universal. It is their highly personal form of filmmaking that they use to write themselves into the fabric of the cities that they have immigrated to -legally or not. They ensure that they are documented at least in cinema sharing the complexities of their stories for an unknown future audience which the film eventually concludes were each other all of these years.

As the water theme follows throughout the film, we realize that it is not a simple reoccurring image signifying immigration and leaving an island nation. Instead images of water are omnipresent as both filmmakers make visible their own struggles with infertility, questions of motherhood, the passing of time, change, and continuity. There is also another aspect of the water images throughout the film- these women, like water, find each other, and flow back to their deep friendship that they had as children. Through cinema the filmmakers rekindle the precious friendship that they had in the Cuban swimming pool decades before.

This documentary surpasses national identity with a complex story of co-production, and the international trajectories of the filmmakers themselves. It is a story of true friendship, immigration, and ultimately a love and need of cinema. This documentary shows another face of the Cuba's diaspora, and a powerful face of women's filmmaking. It is an exceptional addition to university-level explorations on Cuban studies, Cuban film, the *nuevos realizadores*, documentary studies, diaspora studies, and new medias.

Michelle Leigh Farrell, Fairfield University

ALAS. Sobre el poeta Jacobo Regen. Dir. Fabián Soberón. Argentina, 2019. Dur. 38 min.

En el camino tras los pasos del poeta salteño Jaboco Regen (Salta, 1935), el cineasta, Fabián Soberón, quien tuvo la responsabilidad del guión y la dirección del presente film documental, asume una misión desafiante. Porque debe en primer lugar interrogar con inteligencia los poemas de Regen. Esos poemas serán los que (en principio) adopten la forma de un guión. Y luego lo hará con distintos testigos, amigos o colegas de Regen, con quienes compartió la vida o parte de ella.

Regen, en una figura retórica compleja, por ausencia es de quien sin embargo todo el tiempo se habla. Ello acentúa su presencia metafísica. El cineasta va por dos veces a su casa a conocerlo pero no es atendido por el poeta, quien lleva una vida retirada. Este ostracismo monacal refuerza esa paradoja.

Pero ¿quién es profundamente Regen? O, mejor aún ¿qué son profundamente los poemas de Regen? Un poeta que acude de modo elocuente a la figura del ángel. Un ángel que encuentra su espacio en un corpus literario. Pero que no proviene de un dogma de fe. Un figura ambigua, connotativa, polisémica que, por lo tanto, alude a multitud de reminiscencias del pasado de distintas cosmovisiones.

Si la materia de los poemas de Regen es profundamente humana, esta metáfora del ángel o esta figura del ángel será, como bien afirma Santiago Sylvester, amigo del poeta, por

momentos “un ángel refulgente” y por momentos “una figura de la desolación humana”. El ángel no es ni un emisario de la palabra divina ni tampoco al mismo tiempo pierde todo vislumbre ético. Se trata de una entidad ambigua con la que el poeta evidentemente está jugando como un estratega de la palabra configurando su idiolecto.

Fabián Soberón no se ausenta del film por detrás de cámaras. Será un interlocutor y una suerte de gran orquestador. Hará su aparición en los diálogos con los amigos de Regen, preguntará acerca de qué es lo que verdaderamente le interesa conocer acerca del poeta para descifrarlo, en una suerte de crítica literaria implícita. En efecto, cada intervención de Soberón pareciera ser el producto de una decisión crítica. En tanto que escritor, crítico, académico, músico y, ya vemos, cineasta, Soberón pone todas las cartas sobre la mesa al tiempo que dispone con destreza de una multitud de saberes y recursos. Esta circunstancia es la que tal vez le permite construir un documental sobre una figura *in absentia*.

Este confinamiento de Regen no ha sido habitual. Aconteció a cierta altura de su vida, seguramente producto de la muerte de su mujer, y suele trabajar por las noches (explican sus amigos) hasta altas horas de la madrugada.

Pero, profundamente, íntimamente, ¿qué viene a aportar un documental de estas características sobre un poeta del noroeste argentino? En primer lugar descentraliza el sistema literario argentino para dar espacio discursivo a otras voces (no necesariamente nuevas pero sí redescubiertas) con otros temas. Con otras formas, producto de otras tradiciones y que al mismo tiempo, como afirma Raymond Williams, inventa nuevas en el marco de las cuales otros puedan inscribirse. Por el otro, da cuenta de que en el seno de los proyectos creadores de Argentina hay poéticas que mucho tienen para decir pero pocos espacios encuentran para la enunciación de su palabra de fuego.

Este documental no es un trabajo insular. Consiste, hasta el momento, en una trilogía sobre poetas del noroeste argentino. Forma parte entonces del proyecto creador de un realizador que se ha propuesto desde la así llamada periferia traer al centro del universo de la cultura el armado de un nuevo puzzle por fuera del circuito comercial. Un panorama de escasa o nula circulación. Se trata de una operación, por un lado, compleja, por el otro, de un enorme caudal subversivo. Porque en esa puesta en cuestión hay un intento de desmantelamiento de decenios de un poder destructor de culturas literarias autóctonas de otras zonas del país. O, sin ser tan terminantes, de invisibilización, lo que no resulta tan distinto después de todo.

El director interroga con perspicacia, no aspira figurar en un primer plano, sabe dar la voz y sabe, sobre todo, escuchar antes de preguntar. Este es un don sabio e infrecuente. Jacobo Regen, de ascendencia judía, no hace un culto de esa fe en sus textos literarios. Sino que por el contrario acude con inteligencia a un universalismo que (seguramente lo ha meditado) lo conecta con tradiciones mucho más amplias y también menos sectarias. Sin embargo, un amigo se apresura a afirmar que ha leído una antología de literatura judía, y todas sus formas y temas estaban en Regen.

La pregunta de por qué no abre su puerta queda flotando en el aire y tal vez sea la gran metaforización de todo el film. Un intento ¿fallido? que sin embargo cubre un vacío, una falta, que resulta imposible colmar estando a un palmo de la mano. Pero está la voz del poeta en sus poemas. Está la voz en off de sus poesías, está la polifonía de sus amistades. También la de sus intérpretes. Y está la presencia de este crítico/director que es Fabián Soberón, que con un impulso magnífico y una singular versión en el marco de las filmografías, no deja pasar oportunidad de indagar en los significados para de allí pasar a los múltiples sentidos que se ha

propuesto desentrañar. Desentrañar en su doble acepción de entrañable pero también de esclarecer.

Fabián Soberón está creando un nuevo cine en Argentina. Porque si bien reconoce antecedentes, en tanto que proyecto ya contorneado, films sobre vida y obras de poetas configuran una línea en el marco del cine al tiempo que reconstruyen biografías reconstruyen su voz lírica. Los libros ya no alcanzan. Hace falta la nitidez de una mirada de conjunto. “La poesía también se vive”, pareciera ser la gran lección de Fabián Soberón. Es por ello que resulta imprescindible narrarla.

Adrián Ferrero, Universidad Nacional de La Plata

Arnaldo Calveyra, tras sus huellas/sur ses traces. Dir. Mario Daniel Villagra. Argentina, Francia, 2019. Dur. 35 min.

La tarea de Mario Daniel Villagra, realizador de este documental, resulta simple y compleja a la vez. Porque, por un lado, consiste en dejar un testimonio (otra clase de huellas) mediante un registro audiovisual de ciertas pistas sobre la vida y la obra del poeta Arnaldo Calveyra (1929-2015): su relato. Ese relato se remonta a Mansilla (el origen de la luz) donde queda definida su identidad crucial, su casa: la lengua española. Más tarde, en Bs. As., su acercamiento a Carlos Mastronardi, quien lo apadrina al tiempo que lo alecciona para evitar los inexorables desatinos propios de todo principiante. Hasta ir al encuentro del anhelado destino en el que ya está o, quizás, estaba todo cifrado. Diera la impresión de que Calveyra marchara hacia lo que siempre fue por excelencia su morada: Francia. De modo que lo que se había inaugurado en Argentina, la escritura misma, comienza a desplegarse en la ciudad europea, indetenible, pero sin prisas. Allí se vincula en un deslumbrado azar con ciertas personalidades del ambiente literario latinoamericano (Cortázar, Alejandra Pizarnik). Luego, tendrá lugar la consolidación de una familia.

Existen tres temas significativos en el documental. El primero es cómo sus dos hijos insisten en que jamás sintieron que estorbaran a su padre en su tarea de escritor ni que esa tarea les robara su cariño. En esa armonía entre paternidad y escritura queda ratificada la afirmación del estudioso Pablo Gianera: la inseparabilidad entre biografía y textualidad en el poeta.

El segundo punto consiste en el que cita Silvia Baron Supervielle, su traductora y amiga. El lenguaje que subyace a la experiencia poética. Pasa por encima de la lengua, incluso materna. Dado que en el caso de Calveyra tiene lugar el fenómeno del bilingüismo, esta dimensión queda más acentuada aun. Hay una lengua “que hablan los poetas”. O, para ser más acotado, “que habla Calveyra”. ¿Un idiolecto, en términos de los estudios literarios? Quizás esa zona que se ubica por entre los intersticios del lenguaje. Lo que podría ser leído como una experiencia mística. En virtud de lo que menciona su hija Eva: en Calveyra hay una progresión de la espiritualidad en la medida en que su proyecto de escritura se despliega en el tiempo. Más aun si prestamos atención a los títulos de sus últimas obras: *Maizal del gregoriano*, *Diario de Eleusis* o *El cuaderno griego*. Ello ya despliega y pone en evidencia una escena.

Por último, el tercer punto en el que sí quisiera detenerme es en su relación con Mansilla, su pueblo natal. Porque de allí, o no se ha marchado, o bien se está siempre marchando (en un estado de incertidumbre suspensiva), o bien se ha marchado pero permanece en esa “cuarta dimensión”. La que experimenta cuando abre ventana en París por la mañana, según sus

palabras. Se trata de un “irse sin haber partido”. Una vivencia que podríamos definir como una ensoñación nostálgica, según la cual Calveyra percibe a Mansilla junto a la realidad empírica de la cotidianidad en forma simultánea.

Ir tras los pasos de Arnaldo Calveyra para el director Mario Daniel Villagra resulta una empresa difícil pero que simultáneamente tiene delante de sus ojos. Como si él mismo estuviera asistiendo a un film. La vida de Calveyra resulta tan profundamente coherente y cohesiva, tan elocuente a la vez, que sus huellas son sus pasos y su desplazamiento es, paradójicamente, su quietud. Por otra parte, el diálogo que ha de haber entablado Villagra con sus libros seguramente de seguro ha sido fecundo, interpelado por los poemas de modo persuasivo. Pero más circundado, más envuelto por ellos que sacudido. Porque ese es el efecto que produce la poética de Calveyra.

La banda de sonido, cuya música original estuvo a cargo de Gustavo Reynoso, es delicada y confiere personalidad al film. Ubica los silencios en los lugares acertados y las zonas tonales en los pertinentes. La voz en off ejecuta otra clase de ejemplos, los que “narran” aquello que está por detrás de los significados de la imagen. Una voz que en todo caso resignifica la imagen o bien repone una información imprescindible en el caso de un poeta radicado en el extranjero. En donde conocer ciertos detalles contextuales resulta relevante.

Y luego está esa otra cara del documental. La que plasma el segundo bilingüismo, el metafórico, el geográfico inclusivo del arquitectónico. Y del pictórico, me atrevería a afirmar, porque el film exhibe asimismo determinadas pinceladas. El pueblo de Mansilla, de naturaleza austera. Luego Concepción del Uruguay, de vida más agitada, y a continuación Buenos Aires, una urbe cuya modernidad hace contrapunto con lo pueblerino de los comienzos. Esta espacialidad argentina se distingue del panorama elegante de una ciudad europea. Esa París que abarca varias temporalidades. La de la llegada, la de su vida diaria, la inspiradora mediante paseos por sus jardines de una poética.

Los trazos, las huellas, pueden ser leídos en otra clave: la del tiempo. Esa que inscribe en el cuerpo su magnitud. La que señala nuestra condición finita. Nuestros límites tanto como nuestro devenir. Hay sin embargo en el poeta una suerte de fortaleza como de roca, que confieren a él y a su poética un atributo indestructible. Se trata del encuentro de una claridad feliz: la un rostro con la transparencia de un cristal, proyectados en una poética concreta.

Para cerrar, diría que “la ruta de la seda” es una buena metáfora que se ajusta a la materia del film: su carácter dúctil, sutil, que se adapta a toda forma, casi aérea y que a la vez pareciera no tener volumen. Es esa ruta que emprendió Mario Daniel Villagra, que antes había emprendido Arnaldo Calveyra. El documental, respetuoso de la esencia y la espiritualidad del poeta compone un friso, sin estridencias, mediante una serie de operaciones que denotan y connotan a Calveyra. Es en este sentido el más ético de los homenajes.

Adrián Ferrero, Universidad Nacional de La Plata

The Edge of Democracy. Dir. Petra Costa. Brazil, 2019. Dur. 121 min

This 2019 Netflix documentary, narrated in voiceover by Costa, addresses the recent political corruption in Brazil and profiles the intricacies and relationships amongst many of Brazil’s political leaders from the last three administrations. In her story, Costa details how the liberals from the PT party went from being the political darlings to being kicked out of office and

everything that transpired afterwards. We learn from this riveting documentary that former President Dilma Rouseff was impeached four years ago, and another PT leader (left winger) and former President Lula Da Silva was implicated in a corruption scheme, too and was until very recently, serving a lengthy prison sentence, until granted a temporary appeal due to Prosecution improprieties. Costa also gives the viewer a look into various connections that the two former leaders may have had with the “Lava-Jato”—the Car Wash corruption investigation in Brazil and how that may have impacted the government’s decisions across many social and policy fronts. She concludes the film by reviewing the current direction of the government under the newly elected and neo-liberal current president, Jair Bolsonaro, who prefers radical populism, aligns himself with the ideas of former dictators, and wants to limit almost all government safety nets.

In this film, Costa eloquently reviews some of the policy initiatives that lead to the Worker’s Party (PT) being loved by most Brazilians once Lula took power. However, the narrative quickly takes a turn after Lula is forced out of office and his successor, Dilma, is unfairly impeached due to political pressure from the extremist, right wing leaders of the country. Costa inserts herself into the discussion by questioning politicians in intimate interviews, provides interesting observations on relationships between leaders from both sides of the political aisle, and provides the viewer with behind the scenes access and recordings of both decisive and controversial conversations. This combination of using recent footage to let us consider how rooted in corruption many political operations are lets us speculate as to if and how these processes will continue to be run in Brazil.

Costa documents and conveys her opinions regarding the details that led up to the most recent impeachment in Brazil. She uses footage from rallies and her own personal family story to demonstrate how her own parents became skeptical of government handling of events thirty to forty years ago and how for her, those original right wing political ties that her family had over the years morphed into her being a skeptic and someone who wanted to tell a different story of how things unraveled in various cities of Brazil, including in Brasília—the national capital. Costa supports her argument by discussing her grandfather’s role in Brazil’s history and corruption. Costa's grandfather directed a large business for over thirty years in Brazil, in which he aligned himself with Brazil’s upper class to gain political clout and to also make sure his business could flourish – perhaps even doing so unethically. In providing us with her own unique perception of how political allies are forged between public and private entities, she is left questioning all players on both ends of the political spectrum. In fact, she discusses recent political events and the corruption investigations regarding Lula and Dilma by describing her mother’s life, including when she was held captive alongside Dilma Rouseff, and tortured to fight for human rights. She considers how her mother’s influence may have partially motivated her to become a documentarist and fight for human rights while also trying to expose the social inequalities that continue to prevent obstacles to everyday people in modern day Brazil.

Costa’s use of various documentary techniques really make the film memorable and in interesting albeit, fresh take details the intricacies of Brazilian politics and ideologies. Besides integrating her own family story into the fold by showing us candid conversations with her mother to give us a rare look into how she was personally affected by the destructive democracy ramifications of corruption, she also uses various recordings and images to detail issues with both police violence and government infighting through multiple different administrations that have been in power in the last fifteen years in Brazil. Costa’s constantly changing tone yet ability to connect the dots throughout the narrative with her storytelling skills show us how a country who appears to be in control of its party leaders, continues to spiral out of control due to inaccuracies with legal processes and rampant corruption issues across multiple industries.

Costa's use of camera drones and archived footage from multiple vantage points allows us to see the story from various perspectives but not feel overwhelmed by the details that surround the mayhem. Even though she grew up under Marxist parents who showed her how the business executives and corrupt politicians were getting rich while the underserved continued to struggle, Costa positions herself throughout the film to also question the motives of the PT and provide the viewer with a thrilling look at how dangerous participating in Brazil's democratic processes has truly become.

Timothy Ashe, Jr., Arizona State University

Las herederas. Dir. Marcelo Martinessi. Paraguay, Francia, Alemania, Noruega, Uruguay, Brasil, Italia, 2018. Dur. 98 min.

El cine paraguayo contemporáneo posee sólo una decena de títulos. Fruto de una coproducción en la que participaron seis países, la opera prima del director paraguayo Marcelo Martinessi (1973-), *Las herederas* (2018) ha cosechado una decena de premios en festivales internacionales y representó a Paraguay en la competencia de los Oscars. Las herederas son Chela (Ana Brun) y Chiquita (Margarita Irun), dos señoras de sesenta años que forman una pareja lesbiana y heredaron una casa, ahora venida a menos. Ambas pasan aprietos financieros: Chiquita que se ocupa de las compras y acumula deudas, es acusada de defraudación al no poder pagarlas. Sin embargo, Chiquita le hace frente a la adversidad disfrutando de sus amigas.

Las primeras escenas de la película se desarrollan en el ambiente oscuro y pesado de una casona familiar perteneciente a una familia de clase alta. Mientras Chiquita recibe a posibles compradoras de las pertenencias de valor, Chela las espía a través de las puertas entreabiertas y sufre resignadamente la exposición de sus bienes. Su actitud oscila entre la indiferencia y la depresión ante el desmoronamiento del orden de su vida. En el polo opuesto, Chiquita recurre al pragmatismo entrena a una empleada que le hará compañía a su pareja, mientras ella esté detenida.

Sin la presencia de Chiquita, la vida de Chela lentamente se transforma. Acostumbrada a una rutina solitaria en la que era atendida y consentida, es ahora ella quien pensando que hace un favor a una vecina, empieza a manejar su carro llevando a un grupo de mujeres a sus reuniones sociales. Así conoce la vida de mujeres aún mayores que ella que aceptaron roles tradicionales de género. La salida de su opresivo universo la expone a otras realidades. Aquí la cámara se enfoca en su mirada que busca, observe, aprender. Chela empieza a tomar decisiones independientemente, cambio que aparece marcado por su traspaso de la oscuridad y lugar de observación, detrás de la puerta para responde sobre los bienes que debe vender. Asimismo, Angy la expone a nuevas experiencias: salir de Asunción, conducir en ruta y una amistad con una mujer poco convencional. Ambas descubren la gran influencia paterna y la afición por la pintura. El escrutinio e interés de Angy hacia Chela son otros desafíos para la protagonista.

Las herederas tiene un ritmo lento adecuado para brindar un retrato intimista del proceso de cambio de una mujer. Los diálogos son cortos pero significativos por los prejuicios de clase y la liberación sexual que incitan en Chela. A su vez, los silencios comunican las emociones. Al mismo tiempo, es una película pudorosa en cuanto a la sexualidad femenina. El deseo de Chela y sus pensamientos se transmiten a través de sus miradas.

Para Martinessi, también el guionista de *Las herederas* era fundamental narrar la vida de las mujeres paraguayas quienes, si bien viven en una sociedad patriarcal, constituyen un componente importante de Paraguay. Aquí se debe recordar que en el siglo XIX la población masculina paraguaya fue decimada como consecuencia de la Guerra de la Triple Alianza (1964-1870) en la cual Argentina, Brasil y Uruguay se unieron contra el Mariscal Francisco Solano López, lo que significó que la reconstruir de la nación haya quedado en manos de las mujeres sobrevivientes. El interés de Martinessi en retratar un universo femenino—los pocos hombres que aparecen en la película lo hacen fuera de foco o de espaldas—lleva a preguntarse si es válida la premisa de que el cine de mujeres es un campo sólo para realizadoras. A su vez, *Las herederas* deja ver una sociedad con profundas divisiones de clases y vestigios de racismo, mostrando también actitudes de exclusión.

Las dos actrices protagonistas, Ana Brun y Margarita Irun, poseen una larga trayectoria en teatro. El trabajo de Brun quien encarna a una Chela sin mucha iniciativa pero con educación clásica le valió el Oso de Plata en el Festival Internacional de Berlín en 2018. Martinessi también recurrió a actrices no-profesionales: Maria Martins que da vida a Pituca es amiga de la familia de Brun. Además, una vecina del director también participa en la película.

La banda sonora en la película posee música clásica y boleros. Con los créditos finales, se escucha “Recuerdos de Ipacará,” canción compuesta por el músico paraguayo Demetrio Ortiz (1916-1975) y que habla de la añoranza de un amor perdido.

Por su original abordaje de cuestiones de género, *Las herederas* constituye una película indispensable. El hecho de que esté accesible a través de Netflix ciertamente contribuye a que se pueda visibilizar Paraguay por medio de esta original película.

Carolina Rocha, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Roma. Dir. Alfonso Cuarón. Mexico, 2018. Dur. 135 min.

Para entender el mensaje de la película *Roma*, sería conveniente situarla dentro del contexto histórico del cine latinoamericano usando la investigación de Jorge Ruffinelli (1997) y Amanda Rueda (2008). Por un lado, Ruffinelli anticipa cómo después de la llegada del cine a México en 1896, el cine pasaría a ser una “ventana feroz a la realidad, de denuncia de las lacras sociales y de las infamias del poder político” (p 4). Rueda por su parte, analiza la producción de cine latinoamericano para hacer ver que los nuevos directores han debido crear un tipo de cine en busca de financiamiento para sus propuestas, y encontrar audiencias fuera de aquellos países que no cuentan con una robusta industria cinematográfica subsidiada por el estado. Con este trasfondo histórico surgen interrogantes a esta obra de Cuarón: ¿Cuál es su mensaje? ¿A quién va dirigido?, y ¿cómo muestra “Roma” el sello de “HECHO EN MEXICO”?

Antes de abordar estas preguntas, es importante mencionar algunos segmentos que resaltan lo visual y textual en *Roma*. En lo visual, las escenas con tomas muy largas sirven para empatizar con Cleo, la protagonista y empleada doméstica de la familia en la que está centrada gran parte de la narrativa. El reflejo del agua rodando por el suelo nos sitúa en el ojo de Cuarón que mira el vacío existente entre cielo y tierra. Las frecuentes tomas a nivel del suelo evocan a Almodóvar en *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* (1998). Los pasos de Cleo limpiando el piso, el parachoques o las ruedas del automóvil entrando al garaje, el pequeño lagarto perseguido por los niños, la pala y la escoba que recogen el excremento del perro Borrás. Todos son

ejemplos de una magistral y absorbente cinematografía. Destaca también en lo visual la escena de Fermín, amante de Cleo, desnudo haciendo artes marciales antes de dar la espalda y relatar lo dura que fue su infancia. Otra escena memorable, es aquella toma en primer plano del hombre blanco que había estado asustando a los niños al llevar el disfraz de “Krampus”, folclor escandinavo que pocos reconocen. El hombre canta en un idioma ininteligible que deja al público a la par con Pepe, el niño menor de la familia, cuando éste oye y se queja de que Cleo hable en mixteco con Adela, la otra empleada doméstica; o igual a Paco, otro de los niños quien también se queja de pasar las navidades con su primo mexicano que solo quiere hablar inglés. Queda establecido en estas secuencias que México es plurilingüe y que entender otro idioma es el verdadero paso al entendimiento entre culturas.

Pasando a lo textual, se lee el significado de las jaulas de pájaros colgadas en las paredes del patio-garaje de la casa, el cual también encierra a Borrás. Cleo en su condición de empleada doméstica representa a los pájaros y al perro enjaulados ante la falta de poder sobre lo que pasa fuera de su vida. Cleo es una más de las protagonistas del cine mexicano que no sale bien librada. Vale compararla con Julia en *Danzón* (1991), con Ana Luisa en *Ladrón de Sábado* (1990), con Tita en *Como agua para el chocolate* (1992), y con Sofía, esposa y madre de la familia en *Roma*. Sólo en un contexto mágico-realista, Tita muerta es quien se supera al atravesar un túnel radiante para unirse por siempre con su amado Pedro. Tal vez para verse liberada Cleo dice que “es mejor estar muerta”, y como las otras mujeres, excepto Tita, regresa a su misma condición sin haber sido transformada después del viaje a Tuxpan en donde rescató de ahogarse a Sofi, la hija de Sofía. No se ha dado un cambio social que beneficie a la mujer sin importar su época, clase socioeconómica, etnia, raza, o idioma. De acuerdo a esto, surge un claro mensaje en *Roma*; en México y por extensión en América Latina, todavía el clasismo y el sexismo encierra y ata a las mujeres.

Se dice que la intención de Cuarón es mostrar en *Roma* un proyecto personal – nostalgia de su niñez en un vecindario de la Ciudad de México. Sin embargo, esa intención y su mensaje intimista pueden ser extendidos para señalar que aquella nostalgia de los años 70 en México fue influenciada por la estética del neorrealismo del cine italiano. La influencia se ve en las escenas de la colonia donde Fermín vive, y cuando Cleo va en busca de éste para reclamarle la paternidad de su hijo. Cleo camina detrás de un niño que se desplaza entre el fango con la cabeza cubierta por un balde. Otras lacras sociales se hacen presente. El gobierno del presidente mexicano Luis Echeverría Álvarez (1970-1976) está expropiando tierras haciendo que la gente se dispute y muera. La vida política del país cambia cuando Cleo y la abuela observan un ejército inerte ante la matanza de estudiantes a manos del grupo paramilitar al cual Fermín pertenece.

Usando los planteamientos de Rueda (2008) se observa que Cuarón fluctúa entre hacer un cine mexicano y uno de Hollywood, alternando así entre un “blockbuster” y un “low budget” fácilmente producido en México. Rueda ayuda a ver cómo Cuarón en “Roma” encaja en ese nuevo tipo de cine nacional latinoamericano que busca temas internos para destaparlos ante audiencias de afuera que ahora ven por Netflix y prefieren lo exótico, lo enrevesado, y lo incomprensible. *Roma* lleva el impreso de “Hecho en México” para consumo externo. Es así como se deben tener en cuenta los análisis del cine latinoamericano hechos por Myriam de Souza Rossini (2002). ¿Es *Roma* similar a otras películas que identifican al ciudadano latinoamericano como “además de pobre y atrasado, ... analfabeto, supersticioso, sensual e indisciplinado”? Si las imágenes ayudan a construir una representación de la identidad latinoamericana, dice de Souza, entonces esas imágenes deben ser analizadas para que sepamos qué es lo que ellas dicen sobre nosotros. En *Roma* todavía prepondera la idea que México es un lugar extraño, no moderno, y

muy religioso – después de todo, la abuela reza un rosario entre la matanza de estudiantes y la complicación con el parto de Cleo.

El espejismo del agua con que abre la película también la cierra. Es el vacío que separa el atraso social del sublime modernismo de un avión en vuelo. Es el elemento que lava, limpia, y refleja las vivencias de aquello(a)s en Latinoamérica que como Cleo están adentro de la jaula que el cine de ficción social históricamente ha venido denunciando y de la cual no parece haber escape.

Eduardo García-Villada, Drake University

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