Review Essay: Humor, resistencia y revolución: tres acercamientos a la heteronorma

Bisbey, Brandon P. *Between Camp and Cursi*. *Humor and Homosexuality in Contemporary Mexican Narrative.* Albany: Sunny Press, 2022. 240 pp. ISBN 9781-4384-8665-9

Emmelhainz, Irmgard. *Toxic Loves, Impossible Futures: Feminist Living as Resistance*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2022. 194 pp. ISBN 9780-8265-0244-5

Galindo, Maria. *Feminismo Bastardo*. Ciudad de México: Editorial Mantis y CanalPress, 2022. 287 pp. ISBN 9781-7347-0271-2

En *Between Camp and Cursi*, Brandon P. Bisbey propone la literatura como uno de los productos culturales que desafían las representaciones heteronormadas de lo queer en México a través de estéticas que promueven la ambigüedad, la parodia y el humor. El libro es un ejercicio de traducción que actualiza diferentes temáticas de los estudios queer que parecen haber caído un poco en el olvido dentro de los estudios culturales mexicanos. Por ejemplo, el libro comienza con el viejo debate de cómo traducir el concepto angloamericano de lo camp para el contexto latinoamericano actualizándolo con referencias a la nueva teoría queer producida en Estados Unidos, principalmente al concepto de desidentificación propuesto por José Esteban Muñoz y a las prácticas de lectura paranoicas y reparativas de Eve Kosofsky Sedwick. Con este ejercicio de traducción, Bisbey abre un diálogo horizontal entre el conocimiento producido en el llamado norte global y las ideas de teóricos latinoamericanos como Lidia Santos y Carlos Monsiváis.

Dividido en dos partes, en los primeros dos capítulos el autor desarrolla el marco teórico que sustenta sus lecturas y establece lo camp, la cursilería y lo naco como formas de humor que ilustran cómo las representaciones de lo queer—específicamente en la narrativa mexicana publicada a lo largo del siglo veinte (salvo un par de excepciones que se publican en el veintiuno)—funcionan como alegorías de los conflictos sociales de una nación permanentemente en disputa con la modernidad y en un estado colonial. Además de trazar la historia de lo cursi y lo camp, en estos estos capítulos Bisbey hace lecturas paranoicas (entendidas como críticas) y reparativas (o celebratorias) de los textos fundacionales de la literatura gay mexicana para develar sus contradicciones y desidentificaciones. A manera de ejemplo, el primer capítulo cierra con una lectura atenta de *La estatua de sal* y la performance de Salvador Novo para demostrar que los usos del humor camp y cursi funcionan a través de la desidentificación y reafirmación simultanea de la cultura dominante. El segundo capítulo continúa con esta línea temática pero a través de *El vampiro de la colonia Roma* de Luis Zapata y *Utopía Gay* de José Rafael Calva. Una vez más, el interés recae en los usos del humor como formas de reconciliar la identidad sexual de los personajes y su deseo de entrar en la modernidad mexicana.

Cabe mencionar que algunas de las obras elegidas y estudiadas en los capítulos siguientes están fuera de circulación y no han recibido mucha atención crítica o no necesariamente se han identificado como ejemplos de literatura queer, ya sea porque lxs escritorxs no se identifican abiertamente ni personal ni políticamente con lo queer; o bien porque sus redes intelectuales y/o performances están lejos de la cultura queer. Además, los siguientes capítulos están organizados a través de las identidades de los personajes que aparecen en los textos estudiados.

El tercer capítulo se enfoca en textos cuyas protagonistas son travestis, vestidas o jotas que se desidentifican con las normas de género a través del reciclaje paródico de la cultura de masas.

Los últimos dos capítulos son los más interesantes porque tocan temas de los que nunca se ha hablado como la bisexualidad masculina o la frecuente omisión de la literatura lésbica. A pesar de que en estos capítulos se reproducen ciertos clichés sobre la bisexualidad o el lesbianismo, Bisbey hace un esfuerzo por explorar las posibilidades reparativas del humor y dar cuenta de cómo la bisexualidad es utilizada como "an expression of unresolved social conflicts regarding gender, sexuality, and modernity" en *Fruta verde* de Enrique Serna así como en *Mátame y verás* de José Joaquín Blanco y *Púrpura* de Ana García Bergua (11). De manera similar a la bisexualidad, Bisbey argumenta que las representaciones cursis del lesbianismo muestran una relación ambigua que alimenta estereotipos de género y al mismo tiempo enfatiza posibilidades decoloniales.

A lo largo del libro, el autor menciona que la literatura queer propone diferentes métodos decoloniales y que el humor permite leer los textos en cuestión desde una perspectiva decolonial (6). Sin embargo, no hay una definición clara de prácticas decoloniales ni un marco teórico que aborde la colonialidad del poder críticamente. A veces parece que lo decolonial es entendido como una simple resistencia a la modernidad. Me resulta difícil pensar textos como *Fruta verde, La marrana negra de la literatura rosa* o *El vampiro de la colonia Roma* en clave decolonial, especialmente cuando no sé establece ningún diálogo con autorxs o textos que representen cuerpxs queer racializadxs que no habiten la gran urbe, personajes a los que constantemente se les niega no solo la entrada a la llamada "modernidad" sino a las discusiones que se generan sobre ella. Por ejemplo, fuera de una o dos menciones esporádicas, las concepciones de sexualidad y género de los pueblos originarios no se toman en cuenta. La selección de los textos analizados en contraposición con las menciones esporádicas a otros textos, me lleva a señalar un problema en el corpus. Si bien Bisbey se plantea trabajar un conjunto de novelas y libros de cuento poco estudiados, el autor sigue privilegiando una literatura más o menos canónica, publicada en editoriales de renombre y con una circulación más o menos importante. Además, su análisis se limita al género narrativo y a textos escritos por plumas masculinas con las excepciones de Ana García Bergua, Gilda Salinas y Elena Madrigal, y géneros han sido ampliamente estudiados por la crítica. Quiero cerrar esta reseña mencionando que uno de los aciertos más interesantes del libro es la cantidad de referencias no solo a objetos culturales sino a diferentes genealogías y teorías de lo queer que todavía no se estudian. *Between Camp and Cursi* es un recordatorio urgente de la deuda que los estudios culturales mexicanos tienen con los estudios sobre la sexualidad, el género, lo queer y lo decolonial.

Toxic Loves, Impossible Futures: Feminist Living as Resistance de Irmgard Emmelhainz se une a una sólida lista de libros que desde las historias personales ensayan un pensar situado en los feminismos. Pienso, por ejemplo, en el trabajo de Paul B. Preciado, Maggie Nelson o Sara Ahmed. Sin embargo, el libro de Emmelhainz se distingue de estos porque no se enfoca en un tema en específico ni en un cuestionamiento teórico ni pretende acercarse a resolver nada. Todo lo contrario. Los ensayos recopilados en *Toxic Loves…* se presentan como un caleidoscopio que a través de diferentes láminas discursivas—un trabajo de montaje entre el ensayo, el género epistolar y la conversación—presenta objetos irregulares que no se pueden enfocar con facilidad. Además, estos objetos se van multiplicando a través de un coro de voces y situaciones aparentemente disimiles: un giro a la derecha sitúa al lector en Palestina; otro nos lleva a la pandemia de COVID-19 y un movimiento a la izquierda nos sitúa en la escritura de Julián Herbert y el MeToo. Esta posible incoherencia no es un desacierto sino el ejercicio de una escritura que sitúa la duda y lo aparentemente desconectado como el lugar de enunciación para la resistencia feminista. De los pensamientos feministas y queer, Emmelhainz toma la actitud ético-política de pensar en colectivo

y desde la auto-reflexividad mientras que de la tradición ensayística francesa toma la idea del ensayo como una forma de poner en práctica una cosa—en este caso, ensayar la misma escritura—parar ver si funciona o resulta en algo diferente. La autora sugiere que este ejercicio crítico es necesario para imaginar futuros (im)posibles.

Si bien las innumerables referencias y el caos pueden disuadir al lector, me parece que Emmelhainz deja varios hilos sueltos para que encontremos de nuevo la bola de estambre. De entrada, el libro está pensado como una serie de conversaciones reales o imaginadas con pensadoras de diferentes tiempos y contextos—Alaíde Foppa, Simone Weil, bell hooks, Yásnaya Elena Aguilar Gil, Marta Lamas, entre muchxs otrxs—para resistir en comunalidad las nuevas normalidades, la violencia neoliberal y la crisis de relacionalidad en la que vivimos. Al igual que en las conversaciones que sostenemos en la vida cotidiana con nuestros círculos sociales, poco importa si llegamos a tiempo o nos perdemos por unos momentos, lo que nos motiva a seguir conversando es la circulación de afectos y la continuidad de las preguntas. Es en este sentido que me parece que la propia escritura de Emmelhainz funciona como la guía del estambre: hay que seguir leyendo que ya nos volveremos a encontrar en su escritura.

Los otros hilos conductores son temáticos. Uno de ellos es el sistema capitalista y sus violencias, que además es uno de los temas de los cuales la autora escribe habitualmente. El otro tema es la mujer como creadora. Me parece que, a lo largo del libro, Emmelhainz traza una genealogía de mujeres que han revolucionado el mundo de las ideas, del arte o de la misma lucha. Por ejemplo, en el ensayo "Love Revolution Fear Strike", la autora sintetiza las historias de varias guerrilleras que han desafiado al Estado: "We need to recupeate their stories, their voices, and turn up their sound" (27). Además de trazar esta genealogía y dialogar con estas mujeres, *Toxic Loves…* es el producto textual del propio devenir creador de Emmelhainz que se va descubriendo como una mujer creadora con sus lecturas, argumentos, experiencias y sobre todo a través de la escritura: "But you do know I need to write to figure things out for myself" (59). Por ejemplo, en "Water Running under the Bridge", la autora cuenta una experiencia personal de abuso por parte de quien ella llama 'el artista'. Escribir sobre esta experiencia la lleva a profundizar sobre las disparidades de género promovidas en el mundo del arte y la literatura, y la cultura de la cancelación como respuesta a los casos de hostigamiento y abuso: "The practice of cancellation […] have resulted in the accused, instead of apologizing and promising to change, going to lawyers who recommend they deny the charges: negation becomes an instance of salvation" (63). Este ensayo y otros ponen en evidencia muchos de los obstáculos que enfrentan las mujeres creadoras dentro del mundo heteropatriarcal del arte. El punto no es entrar en el juego de la victimización—nos recuerda Emmelhainz—sino desmontar frases conocidas y convocar el mayor número de voces para hacer otras preguntas.

Uno de mis ensayos favoritos es "Vulnerability", texto donde Emmelhainz nos invita "to embrace own fractures, shatterings, vulnerability […] to come to terms with the fragmentation of our own being" (70). Para mí el mayor acierto de *Toxic Loves…* es escribir desde esa vulnerabilidad para ensayarla como un método discursivo de resistencia feminista. La vulnerabilidad se manifiesta en el texto a través de muchas maneras: una foto de la autora en el cumpleaños de su hija, la posición queer desde la que se escribe, la rebelión contra lo académico e incluso escribir un libro en una lengua que no es la tuya es abrazar esa vulnerabilidad de pensar en la diferencia. Ahora bien, a veces esa vulnerabilidad se pierde en el yo fragmentario desde el que se escribe. Quiero decir, a veces Emmelhainz escribe con una duda tan refrescante y otras veces es tan tajante en lo que dice que siento que no hay lugar para la réplica o espacio para la conversación. Aquí pienso, por ejemplo, que quizá por ello Yásnaya Elena Aguilar Gil no

respondió la carta abierta que la autora escribió y publicó en un medio digital, aunque esto es obviamente mera especulación mía. Además, a lo largo del libro, Emmelhainz insiste que le interesa la escritura como proceso colectivo. Pero no me queda del todo claro quién es ese colectivo. Por ejemplo, a veces la autora escribe desde la tercera persona del plural pero no queda claro a quién incluye ese "we": ¿la academia? ¿lxs artistxs? ¿solamente la gente con la que está en diálogo?

A pesar de estas dudas que el libro me deja, la lectura de *Toxic Loves, Impossible Futures* es estimulante no solo por la manera en que piensa (o duda) Emmelhainz sino por la forma en la que se escribe acerca de la cultura en nuestro presente. Es un libro que debe ser leído por todos aquellos que tengan intereses en los estudios culturales mexicanos, en los movimientos feministas y sobre todo para aquellos estudiantes que quieran seguir imaginando revoluciones (im)posibles.

Hacer una reseña de *Feminismo bastardo* para una revista académica de Estados Unidos es absurdo. Me parece que el género mismo de la reseña contiene muchos de los elementos ante los cuales María Galindo se revela: la demagogia, la institucionalidad, la academia, el discurso higienizado, la teoría europea…. Sin embargo, *Feminismo bastardo* es un libro que debería ser leído tanto por investigadores como por estudiantes desde cualquier punto del hemisferio. Y las reseñas suelen ser muchas veces eso—una invitación de lectura. Así que propongo una reseña insospechada, anormal y quizá inservible: una recolección de frases tomadas del libro unidas arbitrariamente por mis afectos rebeldes y por la necesidad de preservar la incomodidad y el atrevimiento que María Galindo defiende.

El libro está dedicado a todas las bastardas anónimas que han incomodado o escarbado las grietas del sistema: "experimento y planteo el lugar bastardo como un espacio de huida de ese binarismo, como un espacio de legitimación de la desobediencia y la crítica cultural en todos los sentidos […]. El bastardismo es el acto de hurgar en la historia, escarbando lo que está prohibido preguntar" (41). Las prácticas políticas que sustentan al feminismo, según la autora, deben explotar los afectos incómodos generados por estos espacios bastardos. Por ejemplo, el espacio de calle: "Lo que planteo es que ese feminismo de la calle tiene nombre y se llama *feminismo intuitivo*. No responde ni a una instrucción ideológica ni a una lectura académica, sino que responde a una decisión existencial y a una lectura directa y vivencial de su cuerpo, de la calle, del barrio, de la cárcel, de los juzgados, del desempleo" (54).

El bastardismo también arremete contra el espacio mismo de la escritura "higienizada". Frecuentemente, Galindo repite y vuelve a repetir las frases que han incomodado históricamente a los feminismos; o bien, ideas que la teoría se ha dedicado a pensar y discutir pero sin muchos efectos prácticos. Por ejemplo, las siguientes frases se repiten casi palabra por palabra, entorpeciendo la lectura de quienes estamos acostumbrados a rastrear argumentos:

> "Sin trabajadoras sexuales no hay feminismo" (60).
>
> "Y opto por incomodar en todos los espacios" (73).
>
> "Indias, putas y lesbianas juntas, revueltas y hermanadas, desobedeciendo sus límites para juntar sueños y fatigas entre quienes está prohibido hacerlo y para construir y reconstruir un sujeto político-histórico transformador que es por principio incompleto que está por principio repleto de ausencias" (77).

"El enlatado GLBT, que yo desgloso como gorda, lesbiana, terca y boliviana" (157).

La vulnerabilidad también es para Galindo una forma de lucha cuando las "revoluciones" o las "vanguardias" son conceptos vacíos que producen vértigo sensación que no necesariamente es negativa puesto que también "convoca y provoca" (92). Como habitante de la anormalidad por ser gorda, lesbiana, terca y boliviana, Galindo sugiere que "Es hora de comprender que no necesitamos derechos sino utopías" (99) y que la revolución es eso que acontece en la urgencia y la necesidad ineludible del feminismo bastardo por rebelarse: "Dan ganas de desmembrar los moldes del concepto mujer y armar un nuevo Frankenstein: poner en un mismo cuerpo la vulva de la puta, el cuello de la fabril, los ojos de la loca, las piernas de la vieja, la barriga de las parturientas, los pies de la migrante, los brazos de la trans, las orejas y el cabello de la india, la saliva de la autista y entender que somos una metáfora política de indias putas y lesbianas hermandas en rebelión" (86).

Siendo una persona que trabaja en la academia estadounidense, con lazos afectivos a los movimientos feministas y lxs personxs que en México están utilizando la escritura para impulsar incomodidades desde una rabia que ya no puede ni deber ser contenida, la interrogante que Galindo me deja es cómo traer esa rabia sin desinfectarla a mi contexto y a mi escritura académica. Galindo dice: "A eso de le llama extractivismo intelectual. Se escribe sobre nosotrxs, sin nosotrxs, desinfectando, destiñendo y limpiando la rabia y las pasiones de nuestras palabras, complicándolas inútilmente hasta convertirlas en discurso elitista incomprensible" (90).

Hay dos ediciones de *Feminismo bastardo*: una edición estandarizada y otra producida en risógrafo por los estudiantes del Programa de Doctorado en Escritura de la Universidad de Houston. Un hoja suelta en la edición en risógrafo señala lo siguiente: "Hay en este objeto-libro lo que en la lógica capitalista pueden llamarse "defectos de impresión" y que, sin embargo, acariciamos como cicatrices o marcas de aprendizaje. Un aprendizaje compartido que cuenta la historia del trabajo desinteresado, de la enseñanza pródiga, de la curiosidad salvaje y voraz. Cada libro de esta serie es distinto e imperfecto y precioso porque laten en él muchos corazones de tinta".

Evidenciar el trabajo de producción material del texto y los cuidados que conlleva una edición en risógrafo implican un ejercicio de comunalidad que desafía esa escritura "sin nosotrxs" que denuncia Galindo. Por otro lado, a mi me interesaba llenar esta reseña con puras citas enrabiadas y sin sentido para que el lector se agobiara. Mi primer borrador agobió tanto a la lectora que el sentido original se perdía: A Galindo no se le puede reseñar sin destruir su fuerza y por eso, hay que leerla.

Concluyo señalando el perfil de la autora quien es una de las mujeres más insultadas de Bolivia. Su currículum está lleno de censuras. Por ejemplo, por pintar penes de colores en la plaza pública, el Estado inició un proceso por el delito de actos obscenos; o bien, ha sido expulsada por el periódico *Página siete* por denunciar a la Universidad Católica como sede de las deliberaciones golpistas contra Evo Morales. Es integrante de Mujeres Creando, un grupo de indias, putas y lesbianas juntas revueltas y hermanadas que han logrado juntar "el drama con fiesta y la tragedia con utopía". Este grupo es una "guerrilla urbana, feminista, anarquista, sediciosa y no violenta" (92) que ha marcado uno de los "múltiples caminos posibles de las luchas antipatriarcales en Latino-américa: el feminismo intuitivo, incómodo, bastardo.

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Review Essay: Race, Representation, and *Corpus Infinitum* in Denise Ferreira da Silva

Ferreira da Silva, Denise. *Homo Modernus: Para uma ideia global de raça.* Trans. Jess Oliveira and Pedro Daher. São Paulo: Editora Cobogó, 2022. 486 pp. ISBN 9786-5569-1085-7

---. *Unpayable Debt.* London: Sternberg P, 2022. 328 pp. ISBN 9783-9567-9542-8

---. *A Dívida Impagável.* Trans. Amilcar Packer and Pedro Daher. São Paulo: Oficina da Imaginação Política, 2019. 199 pp. ISBN 9788-5771-5615-3

---. *Toward a Global Idea of Race.* Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2007. 334 pp. ISBN 9780-8166-4920-4

Denise Ferreira da Silva's *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, perhaps the most important theoretical intervention on the topic since Omi and Winant's watershed *Racial Formation in the United States* (1986), has appeared in Brazil as *Homo Modernus: Para uma idea global de raça*. Translators Jess Oliveira and Pedro Daher are assiduous readers of Ferreira da Silva, who worked with them on revisions of the final text. The volume includes illuminating introductory notes by each translator, and their lucid Portuguese delivers a faithful translation. As is also the case with Ferreira da Silva's 2019 *A Dívida Impagável*, an anthology of articles first written in English, the translated version seems clearer than the original.

The appearance of *Homo Modernus* is festive, as Ferreira da Silva is an important philosopher whose work should be accessible in Portuguese. It is also timely since her second major work, *Unpayable Debt*—not the same book as *A Dívida Impagável* despite the parallel title—came out just weeks earlier. *Homo Modernus* offers a general theory of race and subjectivity that should transform our understanding of both concepts. Its central argument, that racialization enables the rise of the modern subject, has broad implications for the study of literature, including literature that, ostensibly at least, does not thematize questions of race. In the essays and manifestos of *A Dívida Impagável* Ferreira da Silva goes on to theorize subjectivities not grounded in raciality or the assumption that knowledge is mastery by an autonomous, self-determined subject like *homo modernus*. *Unpayable Debt* centers on *Kindred*, Octavia Butler's 1979 novel whose African American heroine is transported back in time to save the life of a white ancestor, also her owner. Ferreira da Silva treats the novel as a project toward thinking outside Western representation, from the ontological context modern subjectivity excludes or, as Ferreira da Silva puts it in *Toward a Global Idea of Race* and *Homo Modernus*, engulfs.

Omi and Winant changed the way we thought about race by discussing it not as a "thing" but as a *formation*, in the way E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1966) conceived of class not as a static category but as a *relation*. As sociologists, Omi and Winant see race as a social-scientific category and interpret it at that level. For Ferreira da Silva, by contrast, race is a symbolic strategy "que estabelece a diferença humana como efeito da razão universal" (*Homo Modernus* 64-65). She is therefore able to de-naturalize race yet further, showing how as a symbolic strategy it produces the modern subject and global space. Modern representation is therefore inherently racial. Since the post-Enlightenment subject depends upon racialization for its own composition, racialization and racism will persist if this subject is preserved.

This is to say that race is *constitutive* of modernity, not a flaw to be superseded or rubbed out. Since the post-Enlightenment Subject, endowed with *interiority*, is an effect of the *transparency thesis* ("o relato ontoepistemológico que insitui 'ser e significado' como efeitos da interioridade e da temporalidade," 65) and depends upon the engulfment of an affectable Other, that excluded Other cannot become an autonomous Subject within modern representation. It is because the affectable Other is indispensable to the modern subject that racism is not eradicated despite repeated efforts, and hyper-racial strategies like mestizaje and hybridity fail to confound

racialization. The peripheral and "alternative" modernities discussed by scholars like Dipesh Chakrabarty (*Provincializing Europe*, 2000) and Dilip P. Gaonkar (*Alternative Modernities*, 2000), variations on rather than alternatives to the Western model, do not dismantle the transparency thesis (*Homo Modernus* 324-30), and postmodern theory does not lead to the end of Man—the Subject may be fragmented, but his ghost walks (29-32). Foucault, for instance, retains *interiority* as the feature of man that distinguishes him from other beings and therefore cannot dismantle the transparent "I" (94-97). Paul Gilroy (*Against Race*, 2000) wants to achieve racial emancipation by doing away with racial difference, while retaining the Subject of knowledge that is constructed by and through the racial (72-74). Ferreira da Silva insists that only the dismantling of the modern subject will end the reproduction of raciality and coloniality since as she puts it, "o que cai nas garras da Razão ao tornar-se objeto da mesma não tem lugar no reino da Liberdade" (22).

Readers of Sylvia Wynter will recognize an affinity with her project of separating the *human* from the Enlightenment idea of Man, but Ferreira da Silva differs from Wynter in that she does not share Wynter's investment in the Human as an *ethical* concept (*Unpayable Debt* 66-70). Ferreira da Silva explains that both Wynter and Foucault retain the understanding of *being* and *meaning* as effects of *interiority* and t*emporality*. Gayatri Spivak's critique of modern representation and knowledge in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), with which Ferreira da Silva concurs, is a key reference here. Because race produces the universal Subject of knowledge, raciality also constitutes any "solution" to racism or colonialism imagined from within the transparency thesis. Further, as titles like Eric Wolfe's *Europe and the People Without History* (1982) or Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (1983) also suggest, *historicity*, another descriptor of the modern subject, necessarily institutes the others of Europe as *lesser* subjects (*Homo Modernus* 327-28). Racialization is thus naturalized in the transparency thesis and will be reproduced so long as the transparent subject is not dismantled.

Since Ferreira da Silva interrogates race as symbolic category and works at that level, *Homo Modernus* does not bog down in comparisons among systems of racial categorization as does much sociological work on Latin America and especially Brazil. She does emphasize specificity in racial formations and variation in racial meaning, identifying a logic of *exclusion* in the United States and one of *obliteration*—sometimes masked as inclusiveness or post-raciality—in Brazil, where formal segregation was never instituted. The way these logics alternate and intertwine in the transparency thesis is an important strand in the book and helps to explain the fluctuating meaning of race as well as its resilience and, I would suggest, the conflicting logics in its literary representation. Many have noted that Blackness and indigeneity are routinely "disappeared" in Latin American literary texts and from the canon, and that questions of race and its representation are underexamined despite broad awareness of their centrality. Has our training to the vantage-point of the transparent "I" prevented us from investigating further? *Homo Modernus* offers philosophical tools that can lead us beyond such critical and epistemological impasses.

Homo Modernus is fruitful reading for scholars of literature and Latin America. It offers new theoretical concepts including *poesis transcendental* and *estratégia de engolfamento* (102-08), develops fresh insight on the question of the national subject (318-344) and national narrative (384-424), and gives incisive commentary on the "(slightly) tanned" or subaltern transparent subject that is so prevalent in Latin American cultural discourse (397-402). Ferreira da Silva's account has more facets than a brief note can convey, but the idea of globality itself is fundamental (97-103, 331-33). The global here is not the world-system but the onto-epistemological context

excluded from Enlightenment universality. This *other* onto-epistemological context recuperates *extension* (exteriority and spatiality), as opposed to historicity, as a possible horizon of existence, and does not presuppose a "being" that precedes the context it shares with its other(s). Extension, she says, is the only analytical position from which it is possible to dismantle the *interiority* that locates man, or the Subject, in transparency (97). In this *other* ontological context, the horizon of death, there is no self-determined Subject. The racial resides here, and the (Kantian) Thing, and the chthonic but regenerative force that, in *A Dívida Impagável* and *Unpayable Debt*, is associated with Blackness. To open our imagination to this space is, Ferreira da Silva says, the purpose of *Homo Modernus.*

A Dívida Impagável includes essays from *Social Text* (2013), *The Black Scholar* (2014), *e-flux Journal* (2017), and *The documenta 14 Reader* (2017). Ferreira da Silva's introduction sheds light on all her work, as does Pedro Daher's interpretive afterword. Heading the volume is Jota Mombaça and Musa Michele Mattiuzi's electrifying essay-manifesto "Carta à Leitora Preta do Fim dos Tempos," a response to Ferreira da Silva that appeals to both imagination and intellect.

Ferreira da Silva calls these essays "experimentos poéticos" (34). The speculative pieces take concepts from *Homo Modernus* into an imaginative dimension, to begin thinking the world from that *other* onto-epistemological context. They work as philosophy but also as art, challenging the reader both conceptually and sensorially. Their prose draws us toward globality and the Kantian Thing—outside and beyond the transparent "I" and its gaze. The book argues that race underlies capital and the state, such that analyses of this duo require attention to the racial *grammar* that organizes global space while, at the same time, masking its own effects (37). Ferreira da Silva emphasizes, however that she is not interested in discovering meaning or explaining events but in "a dissolução daquilo que sustenta toda e qualquer explicação de qualquer evento" (57). The discussion of race, capital and the state is connected to the questions of debt and value that give their titles to this collection and *Unpayable Debt,* an expansion on the final essay "A Dívida Impagável: Lendo Cenas de Valor Contra a Flecha do Tempo" (149-180). In the modern paradigm, the Black person is one who *permanently owes* but also *lacks value* and *cannot pay their debt.*

This association of Blackness with ontological death, however, is re-imagined creatively as a source of renewal, beyond the onto-epistemological bases of modern thought. Ferreira da Silva proposes a Black feminist poetics that shows how the results of total violence came to be considered natural attributes of Blackness, but also mobilizes the *excess* sustaining that logic as "um índice de uma outra imagem do mundo e das possibilidades que esta abriga" (36). Temporality is important here since historicity is an attribute of the modern Subject, whereas for its others what was still is, and what is now is already what will come. Yet in Black feminist poetics the "Mundo Ordenado," the modern world, built on separability, determinability and sequentiality, can give way to the "Mundo Implicado." This world emerges in "diferença sem separabilidade" (44-46) and, as we see most clearly in *Unpayable Debt*, infinity, indeterminacy, and fractality (15-17).

Unpayable Debt, we remember, draws its main example of "diferença sem separabilidade" from Octavia Butler's *Kindred.* The time-traveling heroine, Dana, risks her life repeatedly to preserve the life of her white ancestor, since her only his survival can ensure her later birth. When he attacks her violently enough to put her life in danger, she kills him in self-defense. Until that moment she owes him, and he is poised to extract yet more from her. Dana owes this debt, but it is one she has not made; she is its object, not its subject. This is the legacy of slavery.

When Dana escapes from 1830s Maryland through the wall of her 1970s Los Angeles living room, a porous boundary between times and places, her ancestor Rufus is still clinging to her arm. This arm becomes encrusted in the wall, so that to free herself Dana must pull away from

her own limb, losing it. She has escaped a scene of complete annihilation and paid her debt, at a heavy price. Ferreira da Silva's central image in *Unpayable Debt*, the "wounded captive body in the scene of subjugation" or total violence is a figure for the way "raciality governs the political architecture of the global present" (49), but it also breaks through the onto-epistemological "pillars" *separability, determinability,* and *sequentiality* that anchor the "Mundo Ordenado," where meaning is produced by and for the modern subject. *Unpayable Debt* begins here and goes on to immerse the reader in the power of what is subjected in and excluded from meaning: the Thing, Blackness, and the "poethics" arising from them. We remain outside, beyond universality or modern thought, which by now look terribly narrow. This is the "Mundo Implicado," to which Ferreira da Silva also refers as *corpus infinitum*. "And once existence is imagined as a corpus infinitum, everything else—I mean everything, including each and every one of the master's tools, as well as the formulations, objects and subjects they have created—is up for grabs," she writes (270).

I began to read Ferreira da Silva because I had questions she also begins with—questions with standard answers that to me seemed incomplete. What to think about the disappearance of Black characters in and from so many Latin American literary texts? What about the fact that mixed-race women characters are needed to accomplish this? Who dies in the attempt to produce a Latin American subject that will be different from the European but equal to him? What "imagined community" can Caliban join? Ferreira da Silva does have new things to say on questions like these, but she goes far beyond them. Her thought is illuminating for anyone working on questions of representation. She must be read.

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Review Essay: Unsettling Academic Disciplines and Interrogating Literary Canons

Herlihy-Mera, Jeffrey. *Decolonizing American Spanish: Eurocentrism and Foreignness in the Imperial Ecosystem*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2022. 255 pp. ISBN 9780-8229-4726-4

Quesada, Sarah M. *The African Heritage of Latinx and Caribbean Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2022. 290 pp. ISBN 9781-3165-1435-1

Decolonizing American Spanish: Eurocentrism and Foreignness in the Imperial Ecosystem by Jeffrey Herlihy-Mera speaks to the need to re-envision the role of Spanish in higher education in the United States. Engaging multiple methodologies, the book urges readers to question the ways Spanish education has been traditionally structured in the United States and how its current state is at odds with the country's actual Spanish-speaking population. Given these goals, ideal readers of this text are those located in departments of Spanish language and culture, such as graduate students and faculty, as well as administrators overseeing budgets and approving hires in these areas.

Herlihy-Mera's book departs from the premise that Spanish is not a foreign language in the United States. Although this fact has been voiced by multiple scholars for decades, it continues to be resisted by institutions because its acceptance requires a dislodging of the Eurocentrism upon which Spanish departments were created, one that hinges, precisely, on emphasizing foreignness vis-à-vis the heralding of Spain. In the book's introduction, aptly titled "Colonialism in US Spanish Departments," Herlihy-Mera proposes "transitioning from *multiple* Peninsular specialists across

effectively all US departments (the perceived 'best practice') to a model that has *at most* a single Spain specialist per department: the lines transitioned away from Iberian-foci could engage cultures more local to each institution" (5, emphasis in the original). In the author's view, this approach would enact an essential shift in the curriculum of Spanish departments, one that counters how "Eurocentric Spanish-language cultural studies implicitly maintain that cultures and texts […] produced in European communities, are more important to students' lives than their own languages, cultures, and experiences" (7).

Chapter 1, "After Hispanic Studies: On the Democratization of Spanish-Language Cultural Study," expands on the importance of reducing the Eurocentric imprint of Spanish departments. As Herlihy-Mera points out, "The academy is structured in such a way that one cannot graduate without proficiency in histories, literatures, and knowledge of Spain in the way one may graduate without similar knowledge of the United States, Mexico, or any other equivalent grouping" (46). In addition, the prioritization of Peninsular content strengthens the implicit "foreignness" of Spanish departments, creating a system in which "the percentage of faculty who specialize in US Spanish hovers near zero, despite the number of Spanish-speakers in the United States being greater than that of Spain" (33). Chapter 2, "Vetting the Decolonial Turn," introduces readers to landmark ideas in decoloniality and addresses how the overrepresentation of elite institutions in the tenure-stream (a fact that has been abundantly documented in higher education at large), is another deterrent for the hiring of specialists in areas that center the knowledges and Spanishes (including Spanglishes) of local communities. This first half of the book, which largely revolves around the composition, curriculum, and hiring practices of Spanish departments, addresses some aspects of the current state of the humanities and academia at large. Readers, however, would do well to ponder how the increasing enrollment crisis and the multiple tolls of the COVID-19 pandemic further complicate the state of affairs discussed by Herlihy-Mera.

Chapter 3, "Multilingual Cognition and Ethno-Lingual Relativity: Expanding 'Spanish' Maps of Meaning," is a departure from previous chapters. It presents key concepts in language acquisition and details the linguistic context of authors such as William Carlos William, John Steinbeck, and Ernest Hemingway. Readers may find that these individual cases open the door to additional conversation regarding the social capital Spanish affords English-dominant speakers even as it exacts a toll from those deemed to be "heritage speakers." Chapter 4, "Spain: The Arabized Province of Latin America, or, Which Quijote Do We Need?," hinges on two claims: "1) Spain should be considered a province of Latin America, and 2) Arabic and Islamic cultures should become central to Peninsular curricula, balancing the traditional received Latinate, Christian, Castilian-centric ontologies" (121). A valuable addition to this perspective would be a pedagogical centering on the growing Caribbean and Latin American populations in Spain, as this would present a direct point of contact with local communities in the US.

Herlihy-Mera's revisionary cartography for Peninsular studies sets the stage for the final chapter, "On the Puertoricanization of US Higher Education, or, The Awkward Constraints of Using One Language." Lauding the interplay between Spanish and English that demarcates daily life at UPR, the author contends that "Multilingual maps in an educational setting allow (and in effect nourish) not only the coalesce [sic] of varied realms of thought, social, and intellectual traditions, they also expand the implied dimensions of citizenship in ways that needle the subtle controls on whom may participate in civic affairs" (149). The chapter also includes select comments from anonymous UPR student surveys conducted between 2018-2021 regarding their non-monolingual language practices. The book's conclusion "Overcoming the Tradition of Silence," points to how external funding sources for the humanities often reify the biases upon

which Spanish departments (and higher education as a whole) are structured and offers possible solutions, all in light of the systemic realities of institutions such as UPR.

Decolonizing American Spanish offers readers multiple vantage points from which to evaluate the changes that higher education, the humanities, and Spanish language and culture departments in particular must undertake in order to better serve their diverse student populations. Furthermore, as a professor of the humanities at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), Mayagüez, Herlihy-Mera makes a significant contribution by placing knowledge about the quotidian language practices at UPR into wide circulation, underscoring that the island's cultural environment can aid in transforming the role of Spanish in higher education on the mainland. Broad in scope, this book is certain to spark critical conversations regarding the future of Spanish education in the United States, and it will prove to be beneficial reading for the primary stakeholders in this process.

The African Heritage of Latinx and Caribbean Literature by Sarah M. Quesada is a similarly ambitious piece of scholarship. Incorporating a wide range of primary and secondary sources spanning various geographic locations, the study brings together literature, colonial archives, and heritage tourism in order to "rehabilitate the Latin-African Atlantic" (22). Undoubtedly, one of the book's strengths is its engagement with multilingual materials from a vast range of time periods. As a text anchored in World Literature, it also provides a useful introduction to the major frameworks of this field for scholars grounded in Caribbean, Latin American, and Latinx literature, all of whom are potential readers of this study.

Quesada's study aims to identify the "Latin-Africa axis" (12) in the work of Junot Díaz, Achy Obejas, Gabriel García Márquez, Tomás Rivera, and Rudolfo Anaya. Given that both "Latin" and "Africa" refer to places and cultures that are simultaneously real, imagined, and often distorted through the application of power, Quesada's "Latin-Africa" refers not to a place but to a methodology that "unearths buried African influences in five of the most recognized Latinx and Caribbean authors of World Literature through their texts' active engagement in African historiography" (5). Such a description of the study's focus explains the centrality of the canon in the book since World Literature "is inevitably canonical by virtue to the field's attention to circulation" (12). Still, *The African Heritage of Latinx and Caribbean Literature* proposes that the "the legacies of Belgian, French, Iberian, and British colonialism, and, later, US imperialism have reproduced, *in Africa*, antiblack discourses that stymie African historiographical inclusion in literature" (6, emphasis in the original). As such, this text also seeks to offer a critical framework to scholars of African literature, broadly conceived.

Chapter 1 of *The African Heritage of Latinx and Caribbean Literature* places Junot Díaz's short story "Monstro" in conversation with the legacy of "the marvelous real" in Latin America, neoliberalism, the Slave Route in Ouidah, and African religiosity in order to nuance the story's portrayal of Blackness as disease. Chapter 2 brings together the proposed ideals of the Cuban Revolution, Cuba's involvement in Angola, and the Slave Route in Badagry in light of Achy Obejas's novel, *Ruins*. Drawing attention to how "Cuba's marginalization of blackness at home was [at odds with] its glorification of Black internationalism" (84), Quesada relays how the island's failed intervention in Angola compounded the impact of the Special Period in the 1990s. Chapter 3 continues to center Angola, this time through the writing of Gabriel García Márquez, specifically his journalism and short novel *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*. Quesada argues that García Márquez's coverage of the Cuban presence in Angola is key to reading his "failed and forgotten Latin-Africa" (120). Chapter 4 turns to the United States Southwest through the poetry of Tomás Rivera and Rudolfo Anaya's novel, *Bless me, Última*. In this section, Quesada

contemplates how the apparent rejection of Blackness enacted by these canonical Chicano writers can be used to "rehabilitate a severed Latin-Africa connection" (163) through a discussion of literary representations of the Congo and African religious beliefs in their works.

Quesada's analysis of García Márquez is a particular strength of the book. *The African Heritage of Latinx and Caribbean Literature* presents García Márquez's "understudied journalism [as] a mournful textual memorial to the death of a Latin-Africa foretold" (120). By emphasizing coverage on Cuba's involvement in Angola, Quesada not only bolsters the cohesiveness of the book (since the preceding chapter discusses the memory of this intervention in Obejas's *Ruins*), but also adds a nuanced reading of race in one García Márquez's best known works, *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*. As Quesada states, "by focalizing on the centrality of García Márquez's Angolan writing, other traces of an evident Latin-Africa in the novel emerge, such as Bayardo San Román's blackness and subsequent racialization, his repossession of a Catalan mansion as a memorial, and a conjuring of spaces of slavery and the slave trade within a plot that is far more cosmopolitan than appears at first glance" (119). Given that *Crónica* is still widely taught in classrooms around the world, Quesada's reading has the potential to add much needed complexity to current pedagogical approaches to this novel.

The chapter on García Márquez also epitomizes Quesada's careful attention to the confluence of history and literature, a line of inquiry sustained throughout the book. For example, in her discussion of one of García Márquez's Angolan chronicles, "Operación Carlota," Quesada informs readers that the name "Carlota" refers to "an African-born slave leader of the 1844 La Escalera slave rebellion on the Triumvirate plantation in Matanzas, Cuba" (140). Subtly gesturing towards an attention to gender in the turmoil of revolutions, Quesada argues that "'Operación Carlota' immortalizes a female Cuban slave through a renowned Latin American voice, addresses the unending problem of racism in postrevolutionary Cuba, and justifies Cuban intervention in Angola vis-à-vis relentless US involvement" (141). The depth gleaned through the contextualization of this chronicle's title serves as a prime example for how all aspects of a text must be examined when seeking to re-consider a work, a critical approach that distinguishes the overall methodology of the book.

The multiple interventions proposed by *The African Heritage of Latinx and Caribbean Literature* can generatively dialogue with frameworks such as Lélia Gonzalez's "Améfrica Ladina," a critical stance that extends the bounds of Quesada's already expansive cartography by bringing in Brazil and highlighting the urgency of engaging with Indigeneity when considering Blackness in the Americas. Quesada's study will elicit necessary conversations regarding the complexity of representation in the work of canonical writers, conversations that, as Quesada notes, should also extend to the ongoing cultural canonization of active sites of memory such as the UNESCO Slave Route. Driven by its desire to "rehabilitate a submerged Latin-African literary heritage in World Literature" (6), *The African Heritage of Latinx and Caribbean Literature* exemplifies how reading within and between disciplinary fields and sites can lead to pivotal theoretical interrogations.

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Almenara, Erika. *The Language of the In-Between: Travestis, Post-Hegemony, and Writing in Contemporary Chile and Peru*. U of Pittsburgh P, 2022, 242 pp. ISBN 9780-8229-4727-1

Erika Almenara's book examines the ways in which heterosexual national identities are questioned by the *travesti*, a Spanish-language term used to designate gender and sexual identities that reject gender binarism. Focused on novelists, artists, performers, and marginalized individuals whose cultural productions challenge hegemonic national narratives, this in-depth study rewrites in a clear manner the *cuir*/queer experience in these two South American countries during the second half of the twentieth century. The result articulates a persuasive dialogue with theorizations on subalternity, queerness, and oppression.

Almenara's introduction, "There Was Something Different in the Way that Body Danced and Sang," highlights why a normative regime excludes and annihilates racial, gender and sexual differences. She narrates her own experience as a lesbian who was silenced in her inner circles. Following a trend developed by Jay Prosser, Viviane Namste and Vek Lewis, from the onset Almenara rejects the extended trend of studying *travestis* as metaphors of national crises and identities. The object of her analysis is the nationalist discourse that was employed as the main source for the modernization of the Chilean and Peruvian nation-state. Through the analysis of literary and performative productions, she demonstrates that consciously or unconsciously these cultural artifacts reproduce the exclusion of specific groups or populations. For Almenara, the language of the "in-between" breaks the binarism of Spanish language and transforms its representational power. This section of the book is particularly interesting because the author establishes a dialogue between North American queer theory and the knowledge produced in Latin America by sexual dissidents who produce *cuir* theory.

In "*Cuiring* the Birth of the *Modern(a)* Nation-State in Chile and Peru" Almenara analyzes José Donoso's *El lugar sin límites* (1966) and José María Arguedas's *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (1971) to explore the limits of their respective national projects. She argues that both national hegemonic identities were constituted by the exclusion of different races, ethnicities, sexualities or some gender expressions. She proposes that homosexual and effeminate men were depicted as a menace to national identity, which was built on the discourse of purity and superiority of white race. The author also questions the representation of sexual dissidents in Arguedas's novel, an excellent work whose transcultural background nonetheless excludes women, homosexuals, *maricones*, and Afro-Peruvians. Almenara's statement about the way in which Arguedas's posthumous novel reproduces a hegemonic masculinity that neglects diverse gender and sexual expressions in the Quechua world is an interesting revision of this canonical author.

In "The *Travesti* as a Language of the 'In-Between,'" Almenara proposes that the *travesti* has the potential to question the modernizing Peruvian and Chilean nationalist discourses. Based on Jorge Salessi's and Héctor Domínguez Ruvalcaba's ideas, Almenara states that *cuir*—the equivalent of "queer" in Spanish—is both a practice and a place from which "to unsettle and challenge identities, seeking instead identity fluidity and mobility" (79). Drawing from Giuseppe Campuzano's theorization about the *travesti*, the critic emphasizes how the figure of the *travesti* uncovers "the inadequacy of the existing gender norms" (82). Almenara persuasively argues that the *travesti* has the potential to resist and to question hegemonic discourses. The analysis of the Peruvian performer Hector Acuña and the Chilean writer and activist Claudia Rodríguez allows Almenara to state that the language and the experiences of *travestis* transform the circumstance of a social group marginalized by historical discourses. Almenara follows Marlene Wayar's postulates about the necessity to *cuirizar* ('queer') academic language and knowledge using the experiences produced by dissident identities. Building on the ideas of Arnaldo Cruz-Malave and Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes, the author also argues that analyzing the figure of the *travesti* is, indeed, a decolonial exercise.

In "Pedro Lemebel: The *Loca Travesti* as a Site of Resistance", Almenara argues that Lemebel's "in-between" narrative challenges established meaning imposed on sexuality and gender during the Chilean military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990). She points out that the in-betweenness of Lemebel's narrative would be "a way of reinventing the texture of language" (127), considering that he revises and critiques the discourses of Chilean modernization. In her analysis of Lemebel's *La esquina es mi corazón* (1995), Almenara highlights the counter-hegemonic space created by the Chilean writer and his own experiences as a *travesti*. She points out how the military regime excluded and persecuted *travestis* because of their alleged danger to the nation based on gender-specific roles for men and women. Subsequently, she describes how the performances of the homosexual art collective *Yeguas del Apocalipsis*, created by Pedro Lemebel and Francisco Casas, exposed and positioned the figure of the marginalized *travesti*, known as "La Loca", as a political subject within an oppressive society. Almenara also agrees with Nelly Richard, who proposed that *travestis*' performances during Chilean military dictatorship offer a model of opposition to heterosexual male hegemony.

"The 'In-Between' in the works of Giuseppe Campuzano and Claudia Salazar" delves into the authoritarian tradition of Peruvian governments during the second half of the twentieth century in the construction of a national identity. The main historical framework of this chapter is the Peruvian armed conflict (1980-2000) and the authoritarian presidency of Alberto Fujimori (1993-2000). Almenara offers a close reading of Campuzano's *Museo travesti del Perú* (2008) and Salazar's novel, *La sangre de la aurora* (2013). In these works, the critic identifies a clear resistance against the modern national identity project using what she calls an "in-between" narrative structure, a strategy that implies the inclusion of excluded voices that confront hegemonic discourses.

In the epilogue, "An invitation to Opening", Almenara insists on the need for a dialogue between *cuir*/queer studies, and Latin American subaltern and post-hegemonic studies. She emphasizes the relevance of combining theoretical approaches with the dissident voices of subaltern subjects. The author highlights a diverse and productive tradition of intellectuals who advocate for the development of *cuir*/queer studies, in order to reclaim a change in the Latin American literary, cultural, and *cuir*/queer academy.

In many ways, Almenara's book establishes a fruitful dialogue with Margarita Saona's *Despadre. Masculinidades, travestismos y ficciones de la ley en la literatura peruana* (2022) and Fernando Blanco's *La vida imitada. Narrativa, performance y visualidad en Pedro Lemebel* (2020), among other studies focused on gender and sexuality in contemporary Latin American literature and culture. In doing so, Almenara provides a solid foundation to assess the problematic relationship between hegemonic national identities and marginalized subjectivities, with a solid subaltern and post-hegemonic theoretical background. Researchers who work on the intersections of gender, sexual identities, nation building, dictatorships, and *cuir* and post-hegemonic studies, will find this book helpful and theoretically enriching.

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Blanco, Fernando y Cristián Opazo, eds. *Democracias incompletas. Debates críticos en el Cono Sur*. Santiago: Cuarto Propio, 2019. 398 pp. ISBN 9789-5639-6075-4

Frente a definiciones preconcebidas y reificadas de la gubernamentalidad democrática, *Democracias incompletas. Debates críticos en el Cono Sur* editado por Fernando Blanco y Cristián Opazo se pregunta, desde un pensar situado en las repúblicas democráticas de Argentina, Chile y Uruguay, en las posibles redes de interpretación que la democracia puede tender sobre nuestro frágil presente político. El libro analiza la conmemoración de los bicentenarios nacionales (ca. 2010) del Cono Sur y sus respectivos debates y resistencias respecto de la democracia en tanto concepto y práctica. Para ello, se rastrean los principales movimientos sociales y artísticos que, desde los márgenes de lo que denominamos ciudad letrada, cuestionaron y demandaron desbordes interpretativos a los encausados por los regímenes institucionales de los Estados-nación. Con el telón de fondo de las crisis democráticas que acarrearon los influjos del capitalismo transnacional —téngase en cuenta la revuelta de octubre en Chile motivada por los aumentos sostenidos del transporte público— y la fuerte polarización representacional que observamos desde los inicios de la segunda década de los dos mil en las papeletas de votación, *Democracias incompletas* se erige como un pilar insoslayable del pensamiento crítico desde y sobre los cortocircuitos gubernamentales de nuestro porvenir político convulsionado.

El primer capítulo "Los futuros de la memoria", se encarga de situar el *giro hacia la memoria* en las coordenadas de un presente que, tal como lo entiende Nelly Richard, se ha visto azuzado por una expansión de los límites de lo que entendíamos a finales del siglo XX como debates críticos en torno a la memoria. María Rosa Olivera-Williams despunta lo iniciado por Richard hacia el terreno de las políticas de clase, proponiendo que en nuestras democracias despojadas de sus políticas de bienestar, nuevas formas de división y repartición de la ciudadanía concurren debido a "la desaparición de ese fetiche llamado clase media y la aparición de comunidades salvajemente vulnerables" (54). Leonor Arfuch, cerrando las constelaciones de la memoria, se vale del concepto de posmemoria acuñado por Marianne Hirsch para expandir las formas materiales del recordar llevadas al cine y la literatura, para entramar un "legado generacional" de memorias que trazan sus propios surcos y nos delegan genuinas responsabilidades ciudadanas donde las temporalidades del pasado histórico se entrecruzan con los imaginarios de un nuevo porvenir democrático.

El segundo apartado, "Los mercados de la democracia", desgrana el principio de igualdad liberal de los conciudadanos que conforman al Estado con el cobijo de la radicalidad democrática y, en contraparte, sus respectivas zonas grises, los espacios de higienización de una ciudadanía que se reclama plural, pero que actúa sobre los sujetos bajo el lema de la segmentación. Los autores implicados, a saber, Kathya Araujo, Alfredo Falero y Gabriel Kessler, apuntalan al capitalismo extractivista propio de nuestras democracias del Cono Sur como el engranaje que, teniendo como timonel la promesa del enriquecimiento paulatino de los individuos con el modelo del derramamiento de los capitales de inversión, insufla en los ciudadanos de segunda categoría las etiquetas propias del capitalismo prestamista, como la bancarrota o *dicom*, atendiendo a las gramáticas y léxicos de las tarjetas crediticias. La densidad sociológica de Araujo nos da pistas para condensar lo que el capítulo nos propone: que las transformaciones sociales de nuestras sociedades contemporáneas "no pueden sino ser comprendidas como las consecuencias diversas y contradictorias que la particular encrucijada entre neoliberalismo y democratización ha producido y que se traducen como nuevas demandas a sus individuos y en un fuerte impulso a la reconfiguración de los principios relacionales en ella" (101-102). Demandas que, como puntualizan Falero y Kessler para el Río de la Plata, no son resueltas ni por los Estados-nación ni por los nuevos complejos mercantiles trasnacionales.

La tercera parte, “Los cuerpos del performance”, examina las *micropoéticas* que las artes convivales ofrecen como alternativas al descontento ciudadano que han provocado las políticas neoliberales de empobrecimiento. Como puntualiza María de la Luz Hurtado en la nota introductoria, buscar una alternativa a la temporalidad lineal del progreso extractivista nos permite cartografiar nuestro tiempo “como múltiples presentes preñados de lo cercenado en esos espacios y cuerpos de memoria” (164). El escrito de apertura de Lola Proaño-Gómez, interpela a las formas teatrales convencionales en contraposición a prácticas escénicas comunitarias, genuinas formas de un “monstruo biopolítico” como el grupo Fuerza Artística de Choque Comunicativo, que ponen “en práctica dispositivos organizativos que no encajan con los conceptos y procedimientos del sistema neoliberal, con la inclusión como el concepto fundante y básico para la formación de los grupos [actorales y humanos]” (224). Con un planteamiento similar, Ileana Diéguez escudriña los archivos artísticos de agrupaciones teatrales que se han valido de la documentación y el testimonio como formas de combatir las fallas democráticas en procesos de restauración de verdad y justicia, “apelando siempre a la imaginación, a la invención, a la ficción” (248). Mauricio Barría Jara, en consonancia, denomina a estas prácticas teatrales “emergencias documentales” donde “un ensamblaje de piezas-acciones” refutan los principios epistemológicos de la historia teatral desbordando sus lindes al establecer una “experiencia de transformación conductual en el nivel de las representaciones mentales y los significados con los que configuramos el mundo” (278).

Los devenires documentales son, entre otras derivas, formas particulares de pensar lo que el capítulo cuarto denomina “Las tensiones de la imagen”. Willy Thayer, Cristián Gómez-Moya y Alejandra Castillo buscan establecer los marcos conceptuales para entender la representatividad política de las imágenes en un contexto donde la democracia se ha puesto en jaque. El artículo de Thayer revisita las aeropostales de Eugenio Dittborn para establecer rutas de acercamiento a las técnicas de la imagen, donde se sincronizan formas “mayores y menores, vigentes y caducas, íntimas y públicas, extinguidas y recicladas” (299) del quehacer artístico, condensando tradiciones que, hasta ese punto, la institución museística había separado inextricablemente. Entre las técnicas menores, Gómez-Moya se pregunta por aquellas que se han infiltrado en el cotidiano de la ciudadanía, como Twitter o Instagram, las cuales se han erigido como verdaderos canales de información y medios de propaganda de partidismos políticos, configurando así una sociedad acosada por demandas de intervención o por la sobrepoblación de estímulos sensoriales. Esta sobrexposición, para Gómez-Moya, expone al descampado a una población que no se logra aferrar a significantes fuertes o trascendentales. Ahora bien, y como nos recuerda Castillo, la imagen aún resguarda un carácter emancipatorio, pues “lo propio de la imagen es la posibilidad de interrumpir la ficción de la unidad que esta recrea” (328).

A modo de conclusión, el quinto capítulo, “Los horizontes de las artes y las humanidades”, introduce una reflexión de cierre sobre el lugar de las universidades y de sus programas típicamente denominados como artes y humanidades. Desde el principio, la tesis resulta estridente: estos programas se han visto eclipsados perdiendo su centralidad en los nuevos mercados académicos, llegando a ocupar un lugar marginal que, debido a su desplazamiento, les conmina a plantear nuevas formas de interrogar e impugnar a las democracias neoliberales y sus políticas de reducción del pensamiento crítico, con el problema que, para tal menester, deben seguir la sintaxis del yugo mercantil. Como reza Cristián Opazo, “lamentablemente, como diría Naomi Klein, después del shock (golpe de Estado, 1973), la empresa cartográfica de las viejas universidades de vocación pública, así como la política a la que esta sirve, son desechadas por el Estado y quebradas por el mercado” (350). En este contexto, los programas que no contribuyen directamente a los manejos del capital se ven reducidos a una mera posición accesoria, obligándolos a justificar su existencia

en los mismos términos que el mercado impone. Entre las tecnologías que perjudican las directrices de las humanidades, se encuentran los sistemas de acreditación de excelencia nacionales, los cuales emplean una nomenclatura de calidad despojada de parámetros educativos, imponiendo métricas de evaluación que inquieren con exhaustivo rigor pautas injustas que, a duras penas, los programas de artes logran soslayar. María José Contreras Lorenzini, por su parte, discurre en las alternativas a tal modelaje del pensamiento y las prácticas artísticas, señalando que "debemos asociarnos, generar redes e interceder ante esta nueva institucionalidad en favor de políticas de fomento de la investigación artística. Es nuestro deber defender la especificidad de las artes para generar conocimientos que no son científicos pero que no por eso son menos sistemáticos o irrelevantes" (389). En resumen, y siguiendo la metodología del libro, pensar un cuerpo interdisciplinar de personas que, retomando el alero universitario, disputen el conocimiento a las redes del mercado tecnocrático.

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Brady, Mary Pat. *Scales of Captivity: Racial Capitalism and the Latinx Child*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2022. 300 pp. ISBN 9781-4780-1531-4

Given the 2018 child separation scandal under the Trump administration, which unabashedly revealed overwhelming misery, Mary Pat Brady's gorgeously written new book is resonant and timely for considering and challenging unfreedoms in Latinx studies. Building on her previous award-winning monograph on spatial regimes, *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies: Chicana Literature and the Urgency of Space* (2002), Brady traces the character type of the cast-off child while pursuing a larger decolonial project of naming and resisting modes of enclosure. Like Laura Briggs's *Taking Children: A History of American Terror* (2020), *Scales of Captivity* reminds us that the seizing of racialized children is not new. Akin to Black children stolen for the Virginia company during the Antebellum period, today's Latinx children are coerced into mass incarceration. Ambitious both in terms of geographies and chronology, Brady's book offers a telescopic view of Mexican, Chicanx, and Latinx writers and artists who simultaneously foreground different forms of containment and illuminate Latinx labor relations corresponding to scalar reconfigurations. In lucid prose, Brady persuasively lays out her central claim: "Utilizing the conventional understanding of scale as a mechanism to describe spatial-social relations (such as the local, the national, and the transnational, or the body, the family, and the group), I examine how spatial expansion of geo/economic power and reach, or what geographers call *rescaling*, necessarily involves forms of capture and captivity....I argue that with each wave of spatial rescaling, new variants of capture emerge; economic expansion is predicated on the production of new methods of movement and containment" (3-4).

The book is comprised of an introduction, five long chapters, and a conclusion. Following an introductory chapter that offers a theoretical foundation of the settler colonial and capitalist systems underpinning the scalar imaginary, chapter 1, "Captivating Ties: On Children without Childhoods," addresses the dialectic between consent and coercion within the layered captivity depicted in María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's 1872 bizarre novel *Who Would Have Thought It?* For Brady, Ruiz de Burton's use of burlesque, parodying conditions of constraint, teaches us the persistence of violent legal structures that deploy a logic of consent, such as the simultaneous implied innocence of DREAMers and assumed criminality of undocumented parents. In chapter

2, “Plausible Deniability: Pursuing the Traces of Captivity,” Brady examines the legacy of captivity in three novels portraying the hacienda systems in the southwestern United States. As such, Jovita González and Eve Raleigh’s *Caballero* (1930s/1996), Oscar Casares’s *Amigoland* (2009), and Lorraine López’s *The Gifted Gabaldón Sisters* (2008) illustrate children cast away in ranchos yet caught up in the coloniality of labor management. Chapter 3, “Submerged Captivities: Moving toward Queer Horizontality,” Brady takes up Helena Maria Viramontes’s novel *Their Dogs Came with Them* (2000), Jose Montoya’s 1972 poem “Gabby Took the 99,” and Manuel Muñoz’s short story collection *The Faith Healer of Olive Avenue* (2007), interpreting the highway not as a fetishized form of liberation typically associated with the open road but rather as a costly form of enclosure. A focus on freeways, illuminating the complex ways in which their construction both devastates and dispossesses Chicanx communities, reveals how these narratives critique and refuse scalar orientations.

The last two chapters bring migrant childhood into sharp focus. The fourth chapter, “N+1: Sex and the Hypervisible (Invisible) Migrant,” likens the threat of deportation for the undocumented in the United States to psychological captivity. Brady highlights how the queer male figures of John Sonsini’s and Eduardo Corral’s “portraiture” shed light on the nativism and homophobia undergirding migration politics. For Brady, even if our understanding of migration as a gendered phenomenon remains to be nuanced, Sonsini’s series of day laborer portraits and Corral’s poetry collection *Slow Lightning* (2012) complicate the relationship between sexuality and citizenship. Thus, these queer migrant subjects represent the “childless but childlike” (175). She further demonstrates how Laura Angelica Simón’s documentary feature *Fear and Learning at Hoover Elementary School* (1997), Reyna Grande’s novel *Across a Hundred Mountains* (2006), and Bettina Restrepo’s *Illegal* (2011) exemplify the migrant girl navigating the Operation Gatekeeper era and post-NAFTA political economy. These Latina texts unravel nativist thinking behind controlling migration as a means of regulating social reproduction. Chapter 5, “Misplaced: Peopling a Deportation Imaginary,” presents deportation stories in order to counter the invisibility and silence of the exiled child experiencing temporal dispossession and the shedding of affective ties. Through a discussion of three novels—Malín Alegría’s *Sofi Mendoza’s Guide to Getting Lost in Mexico* (2007), Maceo Montoya’s *The Deportation of Wopper Barraza* (2014), and Daniel Peña’s *Bang* (2018)—along with Alejandro Santiago’s sculptural project begun in the late 1990s *2501 migrantes*, Brady demonstrates how “forced removal and deportation are at the heart of US history, as much as chattel slavery, voluntary immigration, and the genocidal destruction of Indigenous peoples” (214). One of the book’s main strengths is Brady’s accessible language that makes plain how sovereignty relies on both scale producing borders and borders producing constraints.

In the book’s conclusion, “Density’s Resistance to Scale,” Brady usefully draws our attention to the bildungsroman and what the narrative of development might mean for the Latinx child protagonists of this study to underscore the implications of childhood locked in limbo without access to adulthood. Brady both rounds out and opens up issues of new iterations of enclosure and resistance. She makes the case that reciprocity should replace coloniality’s scalar model premised on producing racial capitalism and naturalizing castagories, the process of abstracting racialized peoples into differentiated yet homogenous categories buttressed by structures of property. For Brady, castagories establish and maintain a false global order steeped in nested hierarchy, an artificial verticality.

Spanning Latinx literature over the last 150 years, *Scales of Captivity* breaks new ground in Latinx studies, migration studies, and the flourishing field of childhood studies. This

provocative, paradigm-shifting book will be an indispensable companion for a senior undergraduate course on Latinx literature in which students examine both canonical and lesser-known texts in the Latinx literary tradition. This study would also benefit graduate students and scholars whose research addresses space, neoliberalism, and decoloniality. *Scales of Captivity* shows how critical cartographies of the Latinx past urge us to think beyond fettered futures.

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Cuellar, Manuel R. *Choreographing Mexico: Festive Performances and Dancing Histories of a Nation*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2022. 372 pp. ISBN 9781-4773-2516-2

Manuel Cuellar's volume is a necessary and illuminating study exploring the evolution of an aspect of *lo mexicano* as a cultural project in the first half of the 20th century that has been largely neglected in academic scholarship: the role of festive embodiments and Mexican regional dance, also known as *baile folklórico*, in the articulation national identity. While the impact of discursive and visual contributions to the forging of Mexico's cultural identity during the post-revolutionary period has yielded a rich bibliography, Cuellar perceptively argues that the corporeal and kinesthetic dimensions of this process have not enjoyed a prominent position in academic understandings of Mexican identity formation. On the one hand, Cuellar's book challenges the misapprehension of *baile folklórico* as a facile cultural exercise that merely aligns with hegemonic nationalist discourses. On the other hand, his study fully grapples with the limitations of traditional archives, which due to their institutional and material realities present challenges for the exploration of corporeal experience.

In dialog with various studies on Mexican cultural nationalism and its operations of exclusion with regards to race and gender (Robert Mckee Irwin and B. Christine Arce), theories of performance and dance (Diana Taylor and Jane C. Desmond), and Queer Studies approaches to archival research (such as that of Gayatri Gopinath), Cuellar's volume counters the traditional intellectual tendency to disregard the body as a legitimate source of knowledge. For this reason the author's approach to the impressive wealth of materials his volume analyzes, including historical photographs, pamphlets, newspaper articles, footage, feature-length film, interviews, and dance genealogies, is one that one that "queers the archive" by both considering some materials easily discounted as insignificant and by drawing attention to instances in which performance participants, particularly socially marginal ones, complicate straightforward interpretations of their corporeal presence and gestures.

Cuellar entices the reader to follow his detailed exploration of corporeality in Mexican identity formation by initially delving into a key moment in Mexican dance history: the Russian dance sensation Anna Pavlova's visit to the country in 1919, during which she delivered a balleticized rendition of the local regional dance, El jarabe tapatío, by performing it en pointe. Through this example, to which the author usefully returns throughout the study, the book establishes Mexican dance and festive performance as a cultural battleground in which ideological tensions regarding *mexicanidad* took shape and confronted each other time and again. The book's chapters, which address various performances and cultural materials in chronological progression beginning in the late nineteenth century and ending in the mid nineteen-forties, are cohesively linked through the consistent treatment of overarching themes including modernity, gender, *lo popular*, cosmopolitanism, and nationalism.

At the same time, the foci of the volume's core four chapters invite internal pairings due to the complementarity of their analyses. The first two chapters center Porfirian and post-revolutionary commemorations of Mexican independence from Spain, which took distinct approaches to choreographing the presence and participation of bodies in the nation's capital city. In chapter one Cuellar convincingly posits that many of the same ideological objectives that informed Mexico's pavilion at the 1889 World's Fair in Paris were also present in the execution of the elaborate celebrations of 1910, namely a desire to present the country as a cosmopolitan participant in Western modernity with a nationally specific identity for which the management of Indigenous bodies was key. On this occasion, Indigenous men were recruited from several states to participate in the "desfile histórico" for which they dressed as Emperor Moctezuma's subjects and moved through the capital's streets evoking diverse forms of corporeal engagements from onlookers. This analysis clearly complements that of the second chapter, which focuses on a festive patriotic celebration, La Noche Mexicana, in September of 1921. Here Cuellar persuasively shows how the event manifested breaks with Porfirian perspectives in that the celebration was conceived as a space for the comingling of broad swathes of Mexican society and explicitly aimed for a popular atmosphere by engaging in a distinct type of self-exoticization and self-aestheticization that mined Indigenous and mestizo cultural elements as raw materials. Crucially, Indigenous performances, the most salient of which were Yaqui and Yucatec dancers, were now presented as coeval vis-à-vis a mestizo Mexican nation. At the same time, however, cultural mediations such as the artwork of Adolfo Best Maugard and press coverage still attempted to re-present the nationalist event using frames of reference generated within foreign modernities, producing disjointed representations of the very social elements the event was intended to celebrate.

The latter two chapters in *Choreographing Mexico* address the dissemination of local dance traditions and their integration into a national imaginary on a mass scale via stadium performances, government-sponsored institutionalization, and cinema. Chapter three focuses on the role of Nellie Campobello as a key mediator, who by reinterpreting El jarabe tapatío, creating and performing mass choreographies, directing the Escuela Nacional de Danza, and publishing *Ritmos indígenas de México*, implemented an *indigenista* approach to consolidating a nationalist dance tradition. Cuellar deftly contends with the contradictions at work in her performative and discursive maneuvers in relation to race and gender. For instance, this chapter highlights the unprecedented visibility that Campobello's work gave to women in official forums, but also her own masculinized public persona that both reinforced and subverted societal gender norms. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the ways in which Campobello simultaneously praised and exoticized Indigeneity as a part of her overtly nationalist agenda. Cuellar applies a similarly nuanced approach to his interpretation of films that hold iconic status in Mexican film history, but whose dance numbers have previously been under-analyzed. Chapter four successfully posits a tension between the utopian representation of Tehuantepec and the indexical, socially and historically embedded nature of the dances captured in *¡Qué viva México!* that contest idealistic flattening. Furthermore, Cuellar proposes that the rendition of El jarabe tapatío in *Allá en el Rancho Grande* (1936) worked to conjure a sense of kinesthetic identity among Mexican audiences. Lastly, and perhaps most interestingly, this chapter argues that the *cabaretera* film, *La reina del trópico* (1946) projects two forms of kinesthetic Blackness; while one is rooted in an Afromestizo, jarocho milieu and presented as a part of wholesome tradition, the other carries sexual overtones and is linked to an aspiration of cosmopolitan urban Mexican modernity.

Due in no small part to the impressive wealth of materials Cuellar assembles for analysis in this study, *Choreographing Mexico* succeeds brilliantly in demonstrating that the ideation of a

national cultural identity in Mexico also took place through engagement with citizen's bodies via festive and performative movement. In fact, in reading the volume it becomes clear that the amount of performances, photographs, articles, events, mediators and films the author could have chosen for analysis is vast, which stimulates curiosity as to the author's criteria for selection as well as appreciation for his thorough and wide-reaching treatment of cultural products. In concert with its visual and textual analyses, by bringing to bear nearly thirty years of the author's dance experience, this essential contribution to the field of Mexican Cultural Studies convincingly insists on the corporeal dimension of knowledge making and transmission. Such a perspective has especially meaningful implications for getting at the ways in which social sectors who have not historically been the authors of logocentric and image-based projections of *mexicanidad*—both within and beyond the country's border— have long been involved in the negotiation its hegemonic cultural projects.

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Del Águila, Rocío and Miseres, Vanesa, eds. *Food Studies in Latin American Literature: Perspectives on the Gastronarrative*. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 2021. 280 pp. ISBN 9781-6822-6181-1

El término *gastronarrativa*, definido tanto como objeto de estudio como metodología, sirve como eje conceptual de este volumen. En tanto método, la *gastronarrativa* propone entender la literatura como objeto que textualiza los sistemas culinarios y lingüísticos de un periodo, sociedad o movimiento artístico. Leer en clave *gastronarrativa* supone un agudo énfasis en la minucia textual pues, según las editoras, sin importar lo mínima sea la referencia a la comida en un texto, usualmente es pieza clave en la lógica narrativa. Esta colección —además de evidenciar las posibilidades del signo gastrolingüístico—propone un método de lectura que pone a la comida en el centro de la práctica hermenéutica. En su conjunto, los trabajos de este volumen realizan importantes intervenciones críticas al campo, ya sea al proponer nueva terminología, establecer diálogos interdisciplinarios, o plantear nuevas formas de aproximarse al archivo.

La colección está dividida en cuatro secciones. En la primera, los autores exploran el periodo colonial. Alison Krögel examina los discursos de resistencia indígena a la "gastrocolonización," planteando el útil término de "food landscape" para referirse a la conexión indisoluble entre las práticas agrícolas y alimenticias. Por su parte, al rastrear la trayectoria simbólica de la papa, Regina Harrison demuestra la importancia de considerar los significados simbólicos de los alimentos a través de un lente transnacional y transhistórico. Finalmente, el trabajo de Paola Jeanette Vera Báez y Ángel T. Tuninetti discute un recetario manuscrito de dudosa atribución a Sor Juana. Como ya es costumbre en el discurso sobre la comida novohispana, los autores postulan la cocina como *locus* del "mestizaje" culinario (un paradigma que, dicho sea de paso, merece una examinación crítica) y consideran al recetario evidencia de la "filosofía de cocina" expuesta por la monja en el multicitado pasaje de la *Respuesta*. Si bien el ensayo no discute de manera crítica la historia textual del recetario, sugiere nuevas líneas de investigación que consideren las conexiones entre la cultura manuscrita y el canon literario coloniales.

El segundo apartado se centra en discursos de identidad nacional y relaciones transnacionales. En el primer ensayo, Lee Skinner demuestra que, para las élites mexicanas y peruanas, el consumo de ciertas comidas tuvo un valor performativo que aseguró su estatus social,

construyó identidades nacionales, y reforzó jerarquías de clase y raza. Por su parte, en su ensayo sobre narrativas de viaje en Colombia, Mercedes López Rodríguez aborda textos escritos por hombres viajeros en Colombia a través de las reacciones emocionales que suscita la comida, argumentando que ésta supuso para sus autores el peligro de una contaminación racial.

Como López Rodríguez, Vanesa Miseres estudia relatos de viaje de Eduarda Mansilla, un género que por su naturaleza textualiza las diferencias y tensiones culturales. En sus relatos, Mansilla contrapone el "buen gusto" argentino a la cultura "glotona" y rústica de Estados Unidos. Para Miseres, quien parte de las ideas de Bourdieu, Mansilla utiliza la *gastronarrativa* para enunciar una crítica política al materialismo y utilitarismo norteamericanos, a la vez que refuerza la superioridad cultural de las élites europeizadas argentinas. Miseres postula la *gastronarrativa* como espacio discursivo en que las mujeres participaron de la cultura política a la cual difícilmente tenían acceso por su sexo.

La penúltima sección examina la relación entre la comida y el género. Sandra Aguilar Rodríguez demuestra las posibilidades del archivo *gastronarrativo* al analizar panfletos de electrodomésticos, publicaciones periódicas y libros de cocina del México de los cincuenta; en su lectura de Rosario Castellanos, Elizabeth Montes Garcés contrapone el espacio represor de la cocina con el espacio liberador de la escritura creativa; Nina Namaste, quien analiza "Marina y su olor" de Mayra Santos Febres, dialoga con los estudios de los sentidos y propone el olfato como espacio simbólico en que la mujer resiste a los roles de género; finalmente, Karina Elizabeth Vázquez, quien interpreta "El budín esponjoso" de Hebe Uhart, examina las tensiones ideológicas intergeneracionales en torno a la cocina, postulando una experiencia culinaria emancipatoria para las generaciones más jóvenes. En conjunto, los ensayos de esta sección evidencian que existe una genealogía del tema en la literatura escrita por mujeres.

Los ensayos que cierran este volumen se centran en las relaciones entre la comida y la forma del texto literario. Ignacio Sánchez Prado, quien sigue las ideas de Caroline Levine, se aproxima a *Cocina mexicana* de Salvador Novo por medio de lo que llama "poética de la historia gastonómica." Sánchez Prado argumenta que el rol de los estudios literarios no es el de entender la comida en tanto representación, sino el de dilucidar las estrategias discursivas que permitan entender la historia y la escritura gastronómicas como formas culturales en relación con lo social (201). Por su parte, Ángel T. Tuninetti analiza las crónicas de viaje de Martín Caparrós. Como en los ensayos del segundo apartado, Tuninetti evidencia las tensiones entre lo local y lo extranjero. El autor alude a un tema fundamental que no aparece en ninguna de las otras colaboraciones: el del hambre. Bajo el lente de la "porno miseria", Tuninetti subraya los aspectos éticos de la escritura gastronómica, involucrando al lector en la discusión de estas importantes tensiones. Finalmente, Russell Cobb hace un fascinante recorrido hemisférico por la historia de la barbacoa. La mirada hemisférica, demuestra Cobb, revela las dinámicas transacionales y enfatiza el papel de las culturas indígenas y africanas en la formación de las culturas culinarias. Cobb pone el dedo en la llaga en cuanto se refiere a los discursos celebratorios, demostrando cómo el orgullo nacional supone un punto ciego en el entendimiento de la cultura culinaria.

En el contexto de América Latina, donde la comida y la industria restaurantera han catapultado a la región al prestigio internacional, es fundamental un examen crítico sobre los discursos con que concebimos, representamos y *narramos* nuestra comida. *Food Studies in Latin American Literature*, con las intervenciones críticas de sus autores, constituye un paso importante en esa dirección. Más allá de agrupar temáticamente una serie de ensayos, este volumen presenta herramientas críticas y metodológicas que prometen hacer del campo un espacio productivo para pensar y repensar la literatura latinoamericana.

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Gonzalez Seligmann, Katerina. *Writing the Caribbean in Magazine Time*. Rutgers UP, 2021. 216 pp. ISBN 9781-9788-2242-9

Writing the Caribbean in Magazine Time tells a history of the literary magazine as an ideological vehicle in the Archipelago. Set against the historical backdrop of World War II, this book investigates the emergence and evolution of four literary magazines in the 1940s: *Bim*, from Barbados; *Tropiques*, from Martinique; *Gaceta del Caribe* and *Orígenes*, from Cuba. Katerina Gonzalez Seligmann maps the history of these magazines and argues that they "assembled and advanced the debates that structure many of the Caribbean's political, social, and aesthetic trajectories until the present" (2). Geopolitical and epistemic conjunctions during this decade, such as military occupations, rising anti-imperial notions, and a greater sense of national, regional, and racial identity, led to the construction and consolidation of Pan-Caribbean visions evolving around these literary magazines.

For Gonzalez Seligmann, *Tropiques* ultimately contributed to an Antillean imaginary where a liberating practice of poetry and a poetics of freedom combats naturalized logics and tendencies of colonialism and imperialism. In her words, "*Tropiques* indicates that the potential for change first had to be imagined to become possible" (24). This publication emerged in April 1941, when France and most of its colonies were ruled by the Vichy regime, a collaborationist government during the 1940-1944 Nazi occupation. Early on, *Tropiques* and its main contributors Aimé Césaire, René Ménil, and Suzanne Césaire were in pursuit of the following questions: "*qui et quels nous sommes* (who and which are we)" and "*qui parle ici* (who speaks here)"? For Aimé Césaire, Antillean culture suffered from a lack, or void: *un manque*, which Gonzalez Seligmann reads as a fallow land upon which *Tropiques* tilled, rather than a void they filled. For Gonzalez Seligmann, they planted "decolonizing seeds" in the fallow fields overlooked by the Vichy regime (29). Neither the Césaires nor Ménil gave a definitive answer to the questions they addressed in four years of publications (1941-1945), but scholars like Gonzalez Seligmann continue to find in their work epistemic tools to understand and reimagine Antillean political and cultural discourses.

Another publication engaging in the "cultural combat" that Gonzalez Seligmann locates in *Tropiques'* poetics of freedom is *Gaceta del Caribe.* This publication began in March 1944, and it was sponsored by the Cuban Communist Party at the time, el Partido Socialista Popular. Differently from *Tropiques*, which was defined as a place for "cultural combat" after its initial publications, *Gaceta del Caribe* advocated for a literary battle right from its inception (Gonzalez Seligmann 62). In her book, Gonzalez Seligmann identifies two intentions of the magazine: Caribbeanizing Cuba and nationalizing Blackness. Gonzalez Seligmann's reading of this publication contrasts with perhaps the most canonical magazine in Cuba's literary history, *Orígenes* (1944-1956). Led by the prominent José Lezama Lima in partnership with a wealthy, Harvard graduate named José Rodríguez Feo, *Orígenes* favored a cosmopolitan vision of the Cuban arts and letters, in opposition to *Gaceta del Caribe*'s politics and aesthetics located in Black popular culture. *Gaceta del Caribe*'s combat, led by the figures of Nicolás Guillén, Mirta Aguirre, Ángel Augier, and José Antonio Portuondo, was cut short by January 1945, when the PSP lost the presidential elections and cut its funding (68). However, as narrated in Gonzalez Seligmann's *Writing the Caribbean in Magazine Time,* the battle these two magazines waged over the terms

that would shape Cuban literary landscape, continue to inform the debates that structure political and cultural affairs in Cuba today.

Following Gonzalez Seligmann's argument, *Orígenes* is closer to *Bim* in the way they both renounce a political program and reject ethnological theories of aesthetic or ethnoracial locations of literature. The title "Bim" was coined by the initial editor E.L. Cozier, and it refers to a person from Barbados. The only stated goal of the magazine was to promote and encourage the writing of West Indian authors. Gonzalez Seligmann suggests that *Bim* becomes a West Indian publication through the selection of writers and themes featured in the magazine. By the end of the 1940s, *Bim* was listing authors in their table of contents by their location: Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and Trinidad were all represented in the magazine, although the majority of contributors were still from Barbados. In the end, Gonzalez Seligmann recognizes that becoming West Indian was not a decolonizing panacea in the region. Arguably, none of these magazines were able to significantly impact the Spanish, French, or British-colonized Caribbean, due in part to the limited reach they had, in comparison to imperial armies and book publishers.

In *Writing the Caribbean in Magazine Time*, Gonzalez Seligmann defines the concept of location writing: poetic, fictional, and critical work that locates and also challenges the location of a place in macro-narratives. The imperial production of the Caribbean as a tourist hub has led to the anti-imperial effort of reconstructing the Caribbean in different terms, often contradicting those of hegemonic discourse. Contrary to tropes and "localisms" that exoticize the Caribbean, location writing here means precisely the work that disrupts those traditions. The polycentric maps of literary worldmaking proposed toward the ending chapters of this book represent a shift in perspective toward a geopolitics of knowledge: a governance of knowledge organized around multiple locations and *saberes*. Gonzalez Seligmann points to the tendency that competing European empires had of referring to the Caribbean as if their colonies represented it completely, a tendency that, following the author's argument, still persists in the anti-imperial tradition. For that reason, Gonzalez Seligmann proposes reading Pan-Caribbean discourse as synecdoche (4). Although she acknowledges the fallibility of Pan-Caribbean discourses, for it is clear from the beginning that it is impossible to unite such a diverse region in a single language or vision, Gonzalez Seligmann cautions not to misread this "tragedy": "the work of the empire and persisting forms of racialized power—and not of endemic racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or territorial difference—appears to be consistently embedded in the fabric that limits the decolonial dream of Caribbean unity" (151). Perhaps, the imagination of a sovereign, solidary consciousness is literature's most important contribution.

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Janzen, Rebecca. *Unlawful Violence: Mexican Law and Cultural Production*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2022. 242 pp. ISBN 9780-8265-0444-9

In *Unlawful Violence: Mexican Law and Cultural Production,* Rebecca Janzen provides an account of the context of extreme violence in Mexico by establishing a dialogue between legal texts and literary production in Mexico in the last two decades. This period, as Janzen explains, has been marked by an increase in violence in Mexico. Through the analytical focus on the form and content of both legal and literary texts produced in the last two decades, Janzen's text offers insight into the violence embedded in twenty-first-century Mexico.

Mexico's fifty-sixth President Felipe Calderón's self-proclaimed war on drugs in 2006, and the Mérida Initiative's military aid serve as the book's principal periodization. Janzen argues that both the Mérida Initiative and Calderón's war on drugs have transformed Mexican people's daily lives and led to the exacerbation of violence in Mexico. In addition, this period has been marked by a series of legal reforms that aimed to regulate the life of Mexicans in the twenty-first century. In *Unlawful Violence,* Janzen places into dialogue literary texts with a series of laws depicting Mexican people's lived experiences. Among such reforms, Janzen brings our attention to the reforms that altered Mexico's criminal justice system in 2008 (Chapter 1); the 2007 Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia (General Law for Women to Access a Life Free of Violence) (Chapter 2); the Ley General de Los Derechos de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes (General Law on Girls,' Boys' and Adolescents' Rights) (Chapter 3); the laws that decriminalize undocumented migration passed in 2008 and the Ley de Migración (Migration Law) passed in 2011. As Janzen establishes, the title of her book *Unlawful Violence* illustrates the tension between the laws passed in the last two decades that condemn violence and aim to protect vulnerable people and the violent context of twenty-first-century Mexico.

Janzen argues that, in addition to the fragmentation and non-linearity that characterize the forms of both literary and legal texts, both genres of law and literature depict reality and imagine better futures. Precisely, in this tension between description and aspiration, Janzen looks for the potential for social change. Janzen organizes her argument around the function of the form and structure of literary texts that, as she argues, relate to social structures. The author draws on the work of Anna Kornbluh and Caroline Levine to delimit the form as closely connected to the context, and she goes on to reiterate that "the content makes sense only within the legal or literary form" (6). For Janzen, the texts analyzed reveal the tension between the form that imposes social order and literary devices that contest this order.

In her first chapter, Janzen puts the changes in Mexico's criminal justice system in dialogue with Jorge Volpi's *Una novela criminal,* which reconstructs events surrounding the arrest of Israel Vallarta and Florence Cassez in Mexico in 2005. While maintaining the focus on form and structure, Janzen's account in this chapter demonstrates how both organizational strategies and disorganization in the Constitution and Volpi's novel accept the status quo yet paradoxically challenge it at the same time. Janzen parses similarities in strategies of disorder as well as the organizational strategies inscribed in legal texts and Volpi's novel. Among such strategies, Janzen identifies the familiar patterns of the detective novel, the authority of the narrator, and the organization of the legal text in headings and subheadings. These elements, as Janzen explains, depend on the strategies of disorder such as the non-linear narrative of constitutional and literary texts that challenge and contest the status quo.

The tension produced by formatting choices is emphasized in the two following chapters. Chapter 2 engages with the short story collection *¡Basta! Cien mujeres contra la violencia de género* and compares it with the Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia passed in 2007. In this chapter, Janzen draws on Rita Laura Segato whose work focuses on the situations of women in Mexico, to further refer to the intricacies of women's lives in twenty-first-century Mexico. She emphasizes women's voices and how they enter into dialogue with the law in their accounts of violence in short stories as well as in letters they address to the president. These letters together with the short story collection reproduce, as Janzen explains, the tension between organization and disorganization, or between maintaining and disrupting the social order.

This tension is equally emphasized in Chapter 3, where Janzen analyzes the Ley General de Los Derechos de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes passed in 2014 in dialogue with letters to the

president and the short story collections *Historias de niñas extraordinarias* and *Historias de niñas extraordinarias 2*. In all four chapters, Janzen finds the common denominator of the texts analyzed: laws, letters and short stories all exist in tension between describing the world as it is and imagining what it should or could be. Chapter 4 studies Nadia Villafuerte's short story collection *Barcos en Houston* (2005) in comparison with the Ley de Migración (2011). Although, as Janzen states, lived experiences of migrants are often interrupted by the punitive voice of the law, the author looks for hope in the disorder and confusion that characterize both texts.

Unlawful Violence makes an exceptional contribution to the ongoing discussions in Mexican and Latin American studies and the conversations on individual and systemic violence embedded in and perpetuated by social structures. Janzen remarkably illustrates the potential for better futures interwoven in legal texts and literary responses to these texts. Structured around the dialogue between literary and legal texts, this book successfully delineates a site of interpretation that promises to re-evaluate violent social structures in the context of twenty-first-century Mexico.

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Miller, Tiffany D. Creegan. *The Maya Art of Speaking Writing: Remediating Indigenous Orality in the Digital Age*. U of Arizona P, 2022. 286 pp. ISBN 9780-8165-4235-2.

In *The Maya Art of Speaking Writing*, Tiffany D. Creegan Miller offers a well-researched and nuanced analysis of the ways in which Maya orality is (re)mediated into different forms of expression. Drawing on a selection of texts ranging from written testimonio and poetry to murals, drawings, children's songs, and digital videos, she challenges the oral/written binary through a multifaceted exploration of tz'ib', or multimodal forms of recorded knowledge. Building on the contributions of Paul Worley and Rita Palacios (2019), Gloria Elizabeth Chacón and Jennifer Gómez Mejívar (2019), and others, Miller challenges assumptions that Maya people and their ancestral traditions are antithetical to technology and modernity. On the contrary, she demonstrates how authors, artists, educators, and others move fluidly between the ancient and the new, using media tools like YouTube to reinforce Maya culture and transposing orality into different modes of expression. Her analysis emphasizes myriad ways in which texts' form, meaning, and reception are (re)negotiated as well as what that process of remediation suggests about authorial agency. She draws on over a decade of fieldwork, language study, and advocacy as well as thorough knowledge of digital media studies, anthropology, Indigenous studies, and sociolinguistics, among other fields. Through her focus on Kaqchikel language revitalization, she emphasizes how technology can facilitate the transmission and maintenance of an endangered language.

The introduction, titled "Maya (Re)media(tions), Tz'ib', Orality, and Indigitizations," situates the theoretical framework and key concepts such as tz'ib', Maya forms of orality (tzij, choloj, and ch'owen), and remediation (the repurposing of "old" media with new technologies). She concludes with an impassioned and persuasive call for learning Indigenous languages. Part I comprises two chapters on "Mediating Tz'ib' and Maya Arts." The first chapter, titled "Remediations of Oral Histories and Tz'ib' in Guatemalan Testimonios of the Armed Conflict" analyzes Jakaltek Maya anthropologist and author Victor Montejo's *Brevísima relación testimonial de la destrucción del Mayab'* (1992) as well as a series of murals in the Kaqchikel town of San Juan Comalapa. Focusing primarily on the children's drawings interspersed throughout Montejo's text, she argues that Mayas are both subject and object of mediation. In this

case, Montejo leverages his position as both cultural insider and academic to mediate different perspectives within his community in complex ways. She then applies this framework to the murals of Comalapa as another instance of visual testimonio. The chapter includes twelve black-and-white photographs of the murals, which range from poems in Kaqchikel and depictions of traditional activities like weaving to scenes of genocide and dreams of better access to plumbing and computers. Her analysis considers how these images combat racist assumptions about Maya people.

Chapter two, titled "Kixinto', k'u xa jub'iq'": Humberto Ak'abal's Self-Translation and Mediations of K'iche' Maya Orality in "Xalolilo lelele'," examines how Ak'abal subtly challenges his audiences to learn Indigenous languages by refusing to translate an onomatopoeic traditional song about a parakeet from K'iche' to Spanish. Comparing various versions of the poem in print editions and video-recorded performances, Miller argues that Ak'abal strategically mediates the song in different ways according to context, navigating publishers' and audiences' expectations in an exercise of authorial agency. Although she recognizes the danger that some will perceive the untranslated text as an exotic expression of "Maya-ness," she interprets it primarily as an invitation to learn K'iche' rather than a rejection of outsiders.

Part II, "Ethnographic Mediations," opens with a chapter titled "Yojch'o' pa qach'ab'äl: The Politics of Language Use and Performances of Kaqchikel Children's Songs and Poetry." This section draws heavily on Miller's extensive fieldwork in Guatemala, with a particular emphasis on three children's songs used to advance Kaqchikel language revitalization throughout the highlands. Comparing the different forms in which these songs circulate—from poetry collections and CDs to online recordings and live performances—she situates them within the context of language revitalization efforts, noting that the ultimate goal is for children to adapt them into ch'owen, or informal, spontaneous discourse.

Chapter four, titled "Ninmatyöxij chiwe': Maya Migration and Transnational Subjectivities between Lake Atitlán and New York," looks at Maya diaspora in the United States and the role technology plays in maintaining a sense of community and cultural selfhood on either side of the border(s). Miller recounts that during her fieldwork, a Kaqchikel man saw her handheld camera and asked if she could help create a video to send to his sons in Brooklyn. This encounter and the resulting video prompt Miller to reflect on Maya identity in migration, Western assumptions about progress and development, and the limits of the term Latino in capturing diverse backgrounds and experiences. She concludes the book with a brief afterword on "Other Mediations and Marginalities of the Twenty-First Century" that raises ethical questions for scholars and activists and reiterates her call for Indigenous language learning.

The Maya Art of Speaking Writing will be of interest not only in the field of Maya studies but also, more broadly, to scholars and students invested in participatory ethnography, language revitalization, media studies, and digital humanities. Miller's examination of the power dynamics of (re)mediation offers a compelling and nuanced response to ongoing debates in postcolonial, subaltern, and Indigenous studies over how power and privilege impact texts' production and reception. By examining various facets of the ways in which artists and their public intervene in and on texts, Miller complicates narratives of subaltern victimhood. She shows how Maya exert agency over their own cultural representation as they navigate the fraught political landscapes of post-war Guatemala and its diaspora in the United States, where systemic racism and economic inequalities continue to threaten the survival of Indigenous languages.

Perhaps most productive is Miller's critical self-reflection on what it means to be a white settler scholar in Indigenous studies. She is consistently transparent and often vulnerable regarding

her positionality, demonstrating ways in which scholars can leverage their own positions to support the cultural, political, and intellectual sovereignty of Indigenous communities, understood here not as mere objects of study but as collaborators and interlocutors. Just as power and privilege can work for or against the interests of Maya sovereignty, Miller compellingly argues that (re)mediation can serve as a generative decolonial methodology.

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Navejas, José Ángel. *Ilegal: Reflexiones de un inmigrante indocumentado*. Traducción de Verónica Murguía y José Ángel Navejas. Prólogos de Marco Escalante y Francisco González Crussi. U of Illinois P, 2019. 122 pp. ISBN 9780-2520-8417-1.

Ilegal: Reflexiones de un immigrante indocumentado (2019), by José Ángel Navejas (Guadalajara, Mexico 1993), invites readers to witness how migrating from Mexico to the United States becomes a life-changing event for the narrator of this memoir. Through its absorbing firsthand account, *Ilegal* describes how through informal and formal communal practices, Navejas finds ways to belong that go beyond the state's recognition.

Navejas takes readers on his quest to belong to the United States throughout the narrative of this memoir. In Chapter 1, "Entre las sombras," the narrative uses metaphors of ghosts to allude to Navejas' undocumented status and the invisibility he experiences in the United States: "no soy más que un fantasma político" (87). Chapter 2, "De las cosas perdidas," forms a parallel between borders and death, and loss and mourning, and later in Chapter 3, "Mi educación adulta," Navejas depicts formal education as a social mobilizer for the undocumented. Subsequently, in Chapter 4, "La sombra de las cigarras," the narrative touches on the theme of language as territory. Along similar lines in Chapter 5, "En el trabajo," the narrator becomes a cultural broker (professional translator) and mediator at the linguistic and cultural level. Lastly, in Chapter 6, "El día que me contaron," Navejas reflects on the possibilities that arise out of anonymity and how reading, writing, gathering, and loving are practices that bestow him with a sense of belonging.

Ilegal welcomes those who desire to understand the complex migration system and its tentacles through a first-hand account. The author uses two registers to convey this message: the first is the English edition of this book originally published in 2014. And the second is the Spanish edition of this account (2019), translated by Veronica Murguía alongside the author, which effectively reflects the original. For Navejas, and throughout *Ilegal*, language functions as a social and identity marker. Escalante (2019) echoes this idea in the prologue of the Spanish edition of *Ilegal* when he mentions that for Navejas, "migrar no es solamente conquistar un territorio; es también conquistar su idioma" (xiv).

José Ángel Navejas successfully weaves together how national discourse excludes undocumented individuals from recognition throughout *Ilegal: Reflexiones de un immigrante indocumentado.* The memoir is a substantive addition to literature on Migration. Its clarity and accessibility in its English and Spanish editions make *Ilegal* a contemporary text strongly recommended for introductory courses in Latin American literature and its production in the United States, Diaspora Studies, and Literature in Translation, among other disciplines. And without a doubt, one of the greatest strengths of this book is that it provides insights into understanding how undocumented individuals find ingenious ways to perform *pertenencia*—belonging.

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Olivera-Williams, María Rosa & Opazo, Cristián. *Humanidades al límite: Posiciones en/contra de la universidad global*. Santiago: Cuarto Propio, 2022. 296 pp. ISBN: 9789-5639-6167-6

En 1947, Werner Jaeger publica el tercer volumen de su obra *Paideia: los ideales de la cultura griega*, cerrando su descripción de la cultura helénica desde las batallas culturales que se dieron alrededor de afirmar de distintos ideales educativos. Sócrates, Isócrates o Platón no son para Jaeger creadores de conceptos abstractos, sino educadores combatiendo por la fluctuante formación de los ciudadanos atenienses. La educación fue el lugar donde las ideas se volvían política. El pensamiento educativo de Atenas proveyó conceptos que duran hasta nuestros días, pero tras una guerra que había desgastado hasta los cimientos de la democracia ateniense. La estrella más resplandeciente de la constelación griega se nutría de las cenizas. Los escenarios aéreos de Platón surgían a contrapelo de la seducción y repulsión de los atenienses por la violencia espartana, sus ideales castrenses, y su educación colectiva. Jaeger escribía dos años después de la derrota de los Nazis en la Segunda Guerra Mundial. El gesto se repite: la crisis revela el valor de libertades que se creían eternas en periodos de acelerada descomposición y decadencia.

En esta misma tradición podemos localizar el esfuerzo del libro *Humanidades al límite: Posiciones en/contra de la universidad global*, recopilación de ensayos editada por María Rosa Olivera-Williams y Cristián Opazo. Los textos del volumen vuelven a pensar la propia disciplina en medio de una experiencia de crisis en cascadas. Visto desde Chile, lugar donde se imprimió, el libro responde al estallido social del 18 de octubre que inicia el proceso de crisis institucional que aún impacta las bases de la producción de conocimiento público en el país. Visto desde el mundo, las reflexiones se enfrentan a una universidad logística, material y espiritualmente devastada tras la pandemia del Covid-19. Visto desde el presente, el libro adquiere un matiz premonitorio, pues Europa, el inevitable nombre propio de cualquier genealogía de la universidad, ha entrado en un proceso de guerra patrocinado esta vez por Rusia.

La propuesta de *Humanidades al límite* es enfrentar este ataque encadenado a la relevancia del pensamiento humanista desde la historia más larga de su desintegración, que involucra la emergencia de la universidad global de mercado y la burocratización de la profesión del intelectual. La propuesta incluye un acto de honestidad, al declarar que ante la serie de catástrofes, "los ensayos que aquí presentamos prefieren concebir las humanidades como un conjunto de funciones intelectuales que, en continua iteración y traslapo, se orientan a disponer las huellas de los seres humanos en un horizonte de humildad y vulnerabilidad" (21).

Esta decisión ética se explica por el apremiante contexto en que se inició el diálogo que acabó en el libro. Desde el 2017, comunidades académicas de universidades en todo el continente salieron a manifestarse por la creciente precarización de la actividad académica. Fue en este marco que los autores decidieron reunirse en "un seminario de urgencia" (17) que les permitiera comenzar a diagnosticar el retorno de lo político al interior de los patios universitarios. Tanto más importante acaso es que todos pertenecieran a instituciones católicas. Los ensayos del presente volumen dislocan el anacrónico debate de razón y fe, que pondría a las organizaciones confesionales siempre en falta con la modernidad, para relocalizarlo en términos de ideales educativos: el de la universidad global, orientada al mercado y la especialización burocrática de las profesiones, y el

de la universidad católica, que integra la formación técnica, científica y ética de los estudiantes. Aunque parezca paradójico desde una visión reduccionista de lo moderno, el modelo educativo católico tendría mayor capacidad de absorber desde las humanidades las demandas de justicia social que hoy reclaman las comunidades académicas. Sería, en este sentido, más fiel al concepto tradicional de universidad y, a la vez, más contemporánea.

La narrativa de *Humanidades al límite* se mueve desde la amplitud de la reflexión abstracta hasta los límites de la intervención pública concreta. El libro abre con una revisión de la idea de universidad del filósofo Vittorio Hösle, quien además de ser uno de los defensores contemporáneos del universalismo moral, es el fundador del Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study. Santiago M. Quintero propone una reconceptualización de la educación superior desde el esquema de los debates de poshumanismo. Cristián Opazo realiza una rigurosa crítica a la transformación de los léxicos disciplinarios de las humanidades para legitimarse bajo los estándares de un régimen universitario global de mercado. La metamorfosis de términos tradicionales como teatro por performance habla, según Opazo, de la furtiva exigencia de disfrazarse bajo el alero de una mentada interdisciplina. El libro continúa con un ensayo de María Rosa Olivera-Williams que muestra el rendimiento del paradigma de la vulnerabilidad al aplicarlo a textos poéticos. Luis Bravo analiza los textos del artista y militante Ibero Gutiérrez para dar un perfil de la formación humanista integral, y luego muestra las consecuencias del neoliberalismo sobre este modelo educativo. John T. McGreevy, Kathleen McDonald y Ruth Nelly Solarte González ofrecen ensayos que ahondan en los efectos de la escala global en la universidad católica. Destaca el expansivo ensayo de McGreevy, quien entrega un pormenorizado relato del desarrollo educacional de la Compañía de Jesús como aliciente de la globalización. El libro termina con un texto de Catherine M. Brix que distingue la estrategia católica, sus beneficios y sus faltas, en la educación carcelaria tanto en Estados Unidos como en Chile.

Quizá el aporte central de *Humanidades al límite* sea apostar por un cambio de relación entre la academia y la política. En buena medida, los ensayos defienden una común agenda humanista en la que para intervenir en la sociedad no se necesita, en palabras de Opazo, "depredar tradiciones" (116), sino que se puede aspirar a un compromiso en el que no sea siempre el pasado el que sufra. Y, en lugar del niño alucinado imaginado por el psicoanalista Donald Winnicott que destruye el objeto de su amor solo para saber que sobrevive, podamos volver a poner en circulación antiguos nombres y saberes que potencialmente podrían asistirnos en la tarea de habitar un mundo que se desgaja a pedazos.

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Ruétalo, Victoria. *Violated Frames: Armando Bó and Isabel Sarli's Sexploits.* Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2022. 264 pp. ISBN 9780-5203-8009-7

In *Violated Frames: Armando Bó and Isabel Sarli's Sexploits,* Victoria Ruétalo reframes the history of sex onscreen in Argentina through the case of Argentine director Armando Bó and actress Isabel Sarli. Throughout the book, Ruétalo uses Sarli-Bó and Bó-Sarli interchangeably to emphasize the pair's consensual and collaborative approach to the twenty-seven films they made together between 1956-1981. The film style of Sarli-Bó signals their low budget and fast modes of production that audaciously centered Sarli's nude body and onscreen sex scenes. Countering the critical dismissal of Bó-Sarli sexploitation films as unworthy of critical study due to their visual

discordance and fragmented scenes of nudity and sex, Ruétalo contends that they notably advocated for the freedom of sexual expression during a time when moral regulation and suppression dominated quotidian life in Argentina. Ruétalo outlines Sarli-Bó's trajectory as they came up against censorship legislation by the Ente de Calificación Cinematográfica, also known as the Film Classification Board. Despite stringent domestic censorship, Bó-Sarli productions circulated transnationally, distributed around the world by Columbia Pictures International, successfully tapping into the growing popularity of sexploitation cinema. Ruétalo argues that the Bó-Sarli oeuvre rendered the female body legible to a mass public in a way that intersected with the sexual revolution, class struggles, and the national fascination with Eva Peron's body and Peronism.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part, "Bodies and Archives," integrates political and social contexts to compile a sexuality archive composed of different bodies in post-1955 Argentina. The first chapter builds on Diana Taylor's work to contextualize Sarli-Bó films within a specific historical context that traverses from Peronism to the sexual revolution to dictatorship and censorship. Ruétalo connects the fascination with Eva Peron's body with that of Sarli to demonstrate how knowledge about the sublime female body was constructed and reconstructed through their mediation. In the subsequent chapter, she discusses the Film Classification Board, which was established in 1963 to oversee all films screened in Argentina through 1984, and the role it maintains in the dissolution of original film clippings and files that were considered offensive to national security and the moral code of the state. The strict regulation of the Film Classification Board, alongside successive presidential regimes, resulted in an irrevocable loss of archival materials pertinent to understanding the corpus of Sarli-Bó and the draconian influence of the state throughout the history of Argentine cinema.

In response to an absent archive, Ruétalo creates what she calls "bad archives" from alternative resources such as close analyses of official laws of the period, Octavio Getino's curatorial work as the previous comptroller of the Film Classification Board, Diego Curubeto's documentary, and methodologies borrowed from postcolonial critics, Diana Taylor, and Eugenie Brinkema, whom all work to address deficiencies in historical documentation. The second part, "Censoring Bodies in Labor and Leisure," chronicles the strict laws that regulated what was exhibited in public arenas from 1955 to 1981 before continuing to explore the Sarli-Bó films, *Thunder among the Leaves* (1958), *Meat* (1968), and *Fever* (1972), among others, in the final two chapters, through the lens of bodies engaged in labor and leisure. By paying close attention to specific film stills, Ruétalo argues that the aesthetic design of Bó-Sarli cinema helps define sexuality outside of the objectification of the female body by isolating sexual moments against the backdrop of intimate settings in nature, such as the scene in *Fever* (1972) that exhibits Sarli masturbating on a field grass while horses audibly copulate near her. Both sections of the book emphasize the ability of bodies to carry memories amidst restrictions to enact future possibilities beyond national censors and identification.

Violated Frames offers a pioneering contribution to the growing field of Latin American adult film studies that works to confront sanctioned ideologies of sexuality and connect sexually explicit media forms to evolving media landscapes, historical events, and socio-political contexts. Specifically, Ruétalo argues that studying Sarli-Bó films fosters "the possibility of an archive that accesses sexuality in a period of sexual silences, to show who is excluded from the archive and who has access to it and why", which counters literature in the field about the futility of pornography and sexploitation films (22). Furthermore, Ruétalo contests previous literature about lesbian desire in Sarli-Bó films as primarily satisfying a male gaze. While Ruétalo notes the

harmful impact the fetishizing male gaze has on sexually marginalized communities, she highlights that the Sarli-Bó duo were groundbreaking through their persistent attention to the toxic effects of masculinity, the precarious situation of sex workers, homosexuality, and masturbation. Her meticulous work adds to a growing movement to preserve adult films as an object of study despite the absence of a comprehensive archive.

Ruétalo challenges facile interpretations by film critics and scholars of Sarli-Bó's erotic, camp cinema to (re)discover their genuine artistic and directorial merit that was disregarded until the 1980s and 1990s. Through archival research and close film analysis, Ruétalo shows that Sarli-Bó films offered, and continue to offer, viewers alternative experiences and possibilities oriented around the sexual body. Methodologically, Ruétalo grapples with archival absences and the stigma attached to sexploitation, arguing in favor of the scholarly creation of "bad archives" that allow for rich readings of "bad cinema." The book is helpful for anyone interested in Latin American film studies, adult film studies, and the history of sexuality in Argentina. It is an accessible and thought-provoking read that builds an important archive documenting the intimacy and excessive pleasure that results from the sexually emancipated female-subject position on screen.

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Film Reviews

Argentina, 1985. Dir. Santiago Mitre. Argentina, 2022. Dur. 140 min.

Argentina continues to grapple with the memory of and persistent wounds from the U.S.-backed military dictatorship of 1976-1983, a time when thousands of people were kidnapped, tortured, disappeared, and/or murdered in the government's war against alleged dissidents. Several films that have appeared since then depict the horrors of that time and their repercussions in Argentine society: the now classic *La historia oficial* (Luis Puenzo, 1985), paints the story of a history teacher who slowly realizes that her daughter was robbed from her biological mother in a detention camp. Other notable films include *Garage Olimpo* (Marco Bechis, 1999), which graphically depicts the rape and torture of a woman in the eponymous clandestine center and *Cautiva* (Gastón Birabén, 2003), which relates the coming of age of a teenage girl which is accompanied by her realization that her parents are not her own, and that her mother was killed in a clandestine center shortly after giving birth to her. Each of these films shock and disturb in their own way, inspiring a form of cathartic outrage in the viewer.

It seems that yet another film on this collective trauma might not innovate or diverge greatly from those that have already been created, yet *Argentina, 1985* (Santiago Mitre, 2022) successfully provides a nuanced renewal of the cultural memory regarding Argentina's past. The film takes place shortly after the end of the military regime and depicts the 1985 Trial of the Juntas against the perpetrators of these crimes against humanity. In choosing this specific moment in history, Mitre does not simply present the viewer with yet another emotionally fraught recollection of this phase in Argentina's history, yet provides a uniquely satisfying vision of the past, which perhaps viewers were not ready for until now, following the collective lament of previous films related to the dirty war.

The story centers on the prosecutor Julio César Strassera (Ricardo Darín) and his assignment to bring the leaders of the military dictatorship to justice, all of whom very likely will walk away free due to the lack of physical evidence against them. Since many Argentines at the

time were still full of fear from the disappearances of the recent past, no attorney is willing to take the risk of helping him in the trial. Strassera is forced to put together a team of young, novice lawyers to take on this gargantuan case.

One of the film's strengths lies in its depiction of Strassera in all his humanity: at first, he has absolutely no interest in taking on the case, knowing that he is putting himself and his family in grave danger. He avoids his supervisor at all costs to postpone his inevitable assignment to the trial. Eventually, and with the encouragement of a retired colleague (Norman Briski) and of his young partner, Luis Moreno Ocampo (Juan Pedro Lanzani), he finally completely invests himself into the fight to prosecute these villains. The film paints a powerful picture of this tremendous act of courage as we witness the death threats, intimidations, and obstacles that Strassera undergoes.

Argentina, 1985 does not highlight the pain and suffering of the dictatorship in the same way that its predecessors do. The film is even playful and beautiful at times, like when the young team of lawyers fan out to every region of Argentina to collect evidence or when Strassera escapes the stress to enjoy small moments of peace by listening to Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*. And the 1980's nostalgia is quite entertaining, with landline telephones, typewriters, endless paper files and legal books that the lawyers must sift through, and the dependence on television, radio, and newspapers for information. This realism also extends to the film's use of actual television footage from the time that characters watch and react to on television as well as a carefully recreated courtroom scene which, if compared side-by-side with pictures from the real trial, share stunning similarities. Yet, despite all of this, the traumas of the past echo throughout the film. When Strassera's team interviews the many victims that come forward, the viewer hears a sea of overlapping voices delineating the horrors of the kidnappings and tortures. The most powerfully tragic story comes in the form of Adriana Calvo de Laborde's testimony on her arrest that coincided with the labor pains and birth of her child and the utter humiliation she endured from the military men throughout the process.

Most notably, perhaps, *Argentina, 1985* is eerily relevant to our present time of polarization and bias in interpreting political and societal realities, as well as the Trumpian tendency to deny all wrongdoing despite evidence to the contrary. Strassera and his team face opposition from the police, conservatives and military sympathizers, many of whom believe the dictatorship stopped a country that, they believed, was on the point of civil war. The accused military generals refuse to recognize the trial as legitimate. The defense lawyer accuses Strassera of being a "defensor de los guerrilleros." Moreno Ocampo, Strassera's young partner, comes from a military family: his mother believes that Jorge Rafael Videla, the chief officer of the Junta, was "un buen hombre que hizo lo correcto." In fact, her attitudes serve the prosecution as a gauge of public attitudes regarding the trial through her eventual change of heart. As the publicly televised trial marches on, Moreno Ocampo expresses distress at his mother's continued support for Videla and the accused military men. Strassera tells him, "Nunca la vamos a convencer. Si nuestra misión es convencer a tu mamá, estamos jodidos." Yet, astonishingly, after hearing the Adriana's horrific testimony on the radio, Luis' mother calls him to apologize, while Strassera listens in, saying: "No es fácil para una que tiene sus ideas, que su hijo haga cosas con las que una no está nada de acuerdo. […] Siempre respeté al ejército, pero ahora, pienso que tenés razón. Videla tiene que estar preso." It is in understated yet poignant moments such as this that film offers its most powerful impact. Moreno Ocampo's mother's transition from ignorance to comprehension of the actual realities of the past provides hope for overcoming the plague of misinformation and propagandistic news and gives the film a universality with which today's viewers can relate.

Stephanie Gates, Wheaton College

Togo. Dir. by Israel Adrián Caetano. Uruguay, 2022. Dur. 95 min.

In the first Netflix film produced in Uruguay, *Togo*, the award-winning director Israel Adrián Caetano adds a new star to his constellation of films and television series about marginal characters in contemporary Latin American cities. His acclaimed *Pizza, birra, faso* (1998, co-directed with Bruno Stagnaro), about swindler youths in Buenos Aires was followed by *Bolivia* (2002), which tells the story of Freddy, an undocumented Bolivian immigrant who fights against racial prejudice and exploitation in Buenos Aires. More recently, Caetano has directed Argentine blockbuster series for Netflix such as *El marginal* (2016-22), *Apache* (2019), and *Puerta 7* (2020), which focus on prison inmates, life in shanty towns, and football hooligans respectively. Following a successful career in Argentina, *Togo* marks the first feature this Uruguayan director has filmed in his home country.

The eponymous title refers to the nickname of the film's protagonist: Togo is an ageing and taciturn homeless *cuidacoche* who guides drivers into parking spaces and looks after cars in exchange for tips in Montevideo. The toponymic reference to the West African country is linked to the ethnicity of the character (played by the Afro-Argentine actor, Diego Alonso) who lives and works in the black quarter of the capital city, Palermo, a historic and contemporary hub for Afro-Uruguayan culture. Akin to Caetano's other productions, the main stage for this one are the streets, and violence is always lurking around the corner.

As the film unfolds, the protagonist's backstory pierces the present action. A promising boxer, Togo's career was cut short after being hit by a car, which explains his present limp and need for a walking cane. After his wife left him, he turned to alcohol and ended up on the streets. He neglected his daughter who resorted to drugs and is now recovering in an addiction clinic. The damage caused by the drug trade is central to the plot, as the area in which Togo lives and works is threatened by violent dealers who propose an ultimatum: either he joins the expanding illicit business, or he will be forced to leave his street. The stage is thus set for an urban Western, where this unlikely hero uses his fists and cane to repel the armed invaders and restore peace to a land in turmoil.

Togo's shortcomings are all too clear for it to ever join the pantheon of canonical Uruguayan films such as *25 Watts* (2001), *Whisky* (2004), or *El baño del Papa* (2007). Amongst others, one could name the heavy-handed sub-plot where an affluent girl called Mercedes chooses to live on the streets to escape her dysfunctional family and becomes Togo's sidekick; or the rather Manichean way in which the film engages with the complexity of the drug trade. Having said that, Caetano's long-established interest in popular forms might give us clues as to what the film aspires to be. The way in which the protagonist subdues a legion of armed gangsters might seem farfetched, but it draws on conventions from established genres such as the Western, the superhero movie, or martial arts films. Indeed, the fact that this is the first Uruguayan film to have a Black hero as protagonist should not go unnoticed. If the acting is not always flawless, it is worth bearing in mind that most secondary characters were played by unexperienced performers discovered in acting academies and cultural centres in peripheral neighbourhoods of Montevideo. Akin to fairies, Togo sleeps every night under the protection of an enormous *ombú* tree, a useful metaphor to suggest that this film may be closer to a fable than to gritty reality. *Togo's* opening *in media res* scene, which acts as a prolepsis of the violence to come, includes one of very few wide shots in Caetano's otherwise intimate cinematography, used to capture this tree in its full magnificence.

The *ombú* typically grows on its own, symbolising Togo's loneliness – a loneliness that Mercedes will assuage.

Beyond the merits and demerits of the narrative, this piece marks a landmark moment in the history of Uruguayan cinema as its first Netflix-produced film. Within the first two weeks of its release in October 2022, it was among the top 5 most watched non-English language films on the streaming giant. *Togo* seeks to strike a fine balance in being a universal story easily accessible to international audiences without completely neutralizing its setting. The film only asserts its location an hour into it, when a policeman asks Togo for his nationality. The only reference to Palermo is a sign painted on the supermarket close to where the protagonist lives. Non-Hispanic viewers may thus watch it without any obvious indication of its specific cultural setting. For Hispanic viewers, some features of the original location are hard to miss: the drinking of traditional *mate* tea by characters, the distinctive Uruguayan accent, and the capital city's iconic promenade will remind watchers that the setting is not completely neutral. The drumming rhythms which are frequently incorporated into the soundtrack reflect the longstanding practice of *candombe* in the River Plate region, brought by enslaved Africans in colonial times and a hallmark of national culture today.

Togo was filmed during the height of the covid-19 pandemic, and that was not by chance. Uruguay's perceived competence during this period (early adherence to public health guidance, effective track-and-trace system, rapid distribution of vaccines), meant it was one of Latin America's few nations which never imposed a mandatory lockdown. As numerous societies shut down, international studios flocked to this small country to continue filming. Thus, productions by Amazon Prime Video (like *Manhas de Setembro*; *Sentença*; *Porno helado*; *Desjuntados*; *Iosi: el espía arrepentido*) and HBO (*Amsterdam*), although set in other Latin American countries, were filmed in this nation over the last three years. The current administration is keen to exploit some of Uruguay's famed qualities (e.g., respected institutions, macro-economic stability, speedy Internet) to turn it into a regional hub for the streaming industry. The government's efforts to attract international capital comprise several benefits and tax incentives, including – as from February 2021 – a rebate of 25% on investments of between 300,000 and 4 million US dollars in the audio-visual industry. The country's small size, paired with its road connectivity and variety of locations – modern cities, rural towns, an extensive coastline, vast meadows, as well as Art Nouveau and Art Decó architecture – allow it to become a malleable site used for different settings. In this context, *Togo* stands out as a film backed by a big-budget international studio which does not shun away completely the culture of its location.

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