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Review Essay: Poesía chilena de David Rosenmann-Taub y narrativa mexicana de Claudina Domingo

Domingo, Claudina. *Dominio*. México: Sexto Piso, 2023. 237 pp. ISBN 9786-0788-9512-0

Rosenmann-Taub, David. *Poemas y comentarios*. Ed. Kenneth Gorfkle. Editorial A Contracorriente/U of North Carolina P, edición revisada, 2022. 201 pp. ISBN: 9781-4696-7085-0

—. *Poemas y comentarios. Volumen II*. Ed. Kenneth Gorfkle. Editorial A Contracorriente/U of North Carolina P, 2023. 287 pp. ISBN: 9781-4696-7804-7

A partir de un criterio hermenéutico con base en la teoría de Paul Ricoeur, el editor y antologador Kenneth Gorfkle ofrece una lectura única de la selección de poemas del judío-chileno David Rosenmann-Taub. En la introducción al volumen, Gorfkle explica cómo procede en su método de interpretación traduccional, donde si bien no pretende cerrar las posibilidades de lectura a cualquier persona que se acerque a los poemas del chileno, vierte en prosa: en primer término una lectura que se ciñe al texto como tal (lo que dice en sí) haciendo uso de la paráfrasis, la cual se entiende como “la expresión más fiel a la intención del autor, en tanto que: 1) puede expresar libremente el entendimiento del texto sin estar encadenado a sus palabras, 2) se atiende a la complejidad del sentido conforme es transmitido no sólo de un idioma a otro, sino de un tiempo, lugar y cultura a otro” (6). Después, ya considerando el contexto del autor, por un lado, así como su propia compenetración con la obra, el intérprete Gorfkle ensaya una glosa (sobre qué habla el texto) de cada uno de los poemas.

El editor enlista en orden cronológico todas las publicaciones de poesía hasta el momento de la edición del volumen, pues en 2022 Rosenmann-Taub aún vivía y seguía escribiendo poemas. No obstante, las secciones del libro están organizadas a partir de un criterio temático: 1. Vida y muerte; 2. Conocimiento y autoconocimiento; 3. Dios y naturaleza; 4. Desarrollo y regresión; 5. Erotismo; familia, amigos y otros y 6. Conciencia e inconsciencia. De esa manera, el lector es llevado de la mano del experto en la obra de Rosenmann-Taub. Al tratarse de poemas breves (ninguno llega a los veinte versos), se ofrece en una página el texto en original y en la página siguiente la interpretación que a menudo se sirve de la primera persona, como si fuera una extensión de la voz poética de Rosenmann-Taub, y la glosa que generalmente cede a la tercera persona, distanciándose ya de la voz poética. Así, se tiene la oportunidad de revisar el original y la llamada traducción en seguida, como si se tratara de la versión a otra lengua.

Ajeno a la floritura y cualquier clase de adorno, la poesía de Rosenmann-Taub busca expresar en una forma concisa, en versos breves en los que se privilegia el sustantivo antes que el adjetivo, reflexiones y atisbos de imágenes cargadas de símbolos. La cultura griega y la hebraica, así como algunos elementos propios de la idiosincrasia chilena delatan no solo los orígenes del poeta, sino sus búsquedas personales donde destaca un afán por acercarse a verdades esenciales mediante la poesía. Sirva de ejemplo el siguiente poema del libro *La Noche Antes*: “De camarada a camarada, cuerpo, /te he pedido. Me has dado. / Pídeme. Anhele darte / mi riqueza: los verbos del silencio: / sus hálitos / empiezan a habitarme” (Rosenmann-Taub 24).

De una aparente sencillez y con profunda convicción de poeta-filósofo, David Rosenmann-Taub no busca una reacción fácil con su lectura; invita, en todo caso, a una aproximación minuciosa donde la imagen se abra en la mente del lector para inquirir, sugerir, dialogar. Quien se acerca a este primer volumen de poemas y comentarios, dialoga ya no solamente con el poeta

judío-chileno sino también con el hermeneuta estadounidense conocedor de la literatura hispánica que nos abre la puerta de una obra a menudo hermética.

En torno al segundo volumen, cito al poeta: “Acabo de morir: para la tierra/soy un recién nacido” (Rosenmann-Taub 168). La concisión y la contundencia son atributos difíciles de hallar de la mano, y sin embargo los caminos de Rosenmann-Taub llegan a menudo a ese lugar de feliz encuentro. Poeta concienzudo, busca una y otra vez deslumbrarnos con afirmaciones categóricas.

Continuando el trabajo del primer tomo, Gorfkle escribe en la introducción al segundo volumen, “La poesía de David Rosenmann-Taub le habla a la parte más alta del ser humano, independientemente de su tiempo, lugar o circunstancia” (Gorfkle 2). Esta aseveración del responsable de la selección y la edición de los poemas del autor chileno exiliado en Estados Unidos da una idea muy precisa de las intenciones de Rosenmann-Taub. Se trata de alguien que “desea comprender y expresar el mundo y la condición humana con rigor y exactitud” explica Gorfkle (3).

Kenneth Gorfkle ordena los capítulos en este segundo volumen bajo los grandes temas: 1. Conciencia, 2. Esencia, 3. El ciclo de muerte y transformación, 4. Metafísica, 5. Dios y 6. Jesucristo. En esta selección de poemas resalta el tono irónico de algunos poemas, cuando no directamente una cierta distancia que podría favorecer una lectura desde el humor, como en el siguiente poema del capítulo dedicado a Dios, originalmente publicado en el libro *Jornadas*: “Cuando yo sea humano, / Dios será divino.” (Rosenmann-Taub 212) o, en el capítulo de Jesucristo, el poema “De nada” procedente del poemario *Quince*: ““¿Me besas?’ ‘Te he vendido.’ / Tiene sentido sólo el sinsentido” (Rosenmann-Taub 234).

Cercanos a los poemínimos ideados por el mexicano Efraín Huerta, algunos de los poemas incluidos en este segundo volumen de la obra poética de Rosenmann-Taub, brillan como brevísimos aforismos en los que se reflexiona con tono irónico: “Despertar: / terso error.” (30); o bien, como en los kenningar nórdicos, se juega con los conceptos y las imágenes: “Rutina: bastón / de la perfección” (120).

Mas, el poeta que a menudo filosofa y pondera desde su yo creyente que es también un yo inquisidor, que pretende convencer desde las alturas del pensamiento, puede llegar a sonar también próximo e incluso íntimo: “En las eras, ajeno, / he raído los mismos sabores / que aprendí en las escuelas del sueño. / ¿Cuándo empieza la noche?” (34).

Si en el primer volumen de los poemas y comentarios editados por Gorfkle podría dar la impresión de estar frente a un poeta de franca aridez, y de seriedad rayana en el hermetismo, en este segundo volumen se ofrece una selección salpicada de imágenes nítidas y sugerentes, llenas de vitalidad que hacen la lectura más amena. De igual forma, el lector cuenta con la aproximación hermenéutica del antologador y especialista en la obra de Rosenmann-Taub para poder contrastar interpretaciones y ampliar los horizontes de significado.

Si *Tránsito* (Tierra adentro, 2011) fue el libro iniciático de Claudina Domingo en el que se revelaba una voz fresca de la poesía urbana de la Ciudad de México, donde ya se vislumbra el talento para captar imágenes lúcidas sobre un paisaje que se conoce y que al mismo tiempo se descubre a partir de sus versos, *Dominio* (2023) es una narrativa ficcional, si bien con una clara base autobiográfica, que dialoga con una idea de la poeta que escribe, y la mujer que ama, goza y sufre en una ciudad voluble e impredecible.

Escrita con un estilo ágil y provocador, la novela se sumerge en la cotidianidad al tiempo que construye metáforas que llevan a plantear una sólida relación entre la realidad más llana y el mundo de lo simbólico. La lucidez de las imágenes poéticas emerge una y otra vez en medio de

descripciones de atmósferas a menudo sórdidas que evocan los pasajes ficcionales de José Revueltas o los ámbitos frecuentados por los poetas infrarrealistas.

En esta obra de narrativa autoficcional cobra una dimensión casi surreal el pasado mesoamericano de la cuenca/valle de Anáhuac. No solo el personaje principal recorre zonas de la Ciudad de México en las que habitaron civilizaciones antiguas, sino que a menudo la novela sugiere un contacto entre ese pasado remoto y la más reciente vivencia. Lejos de un romanticismo acartonado, Domingo construye el vínculo entre el antes y el ahora para darle fuerza a la descripción del entorno.

...y más allá el ruido constante de la Avenida Aztecas.

El sonido se magnifica porque el terreno de la casa está en declive. La zona en la que se levantaron, primero los asentamientos de lámina de los colonos guerrerenses y michoacanos, y luego sus casas de tabique, fue hasta finales de los sesenta puro pedregal, es decir, el paisaje que el volcán Xitle creó cuando despanzurró la civilización de Cuicuilco. (23)

Uno de los temas centrales de *Dominio* es el cuerpo: el cuerpo intervenido de la mujer en la mediana edad que sobrevive dos cirugías en menos de dos años, y el de la muchacha que anhela una vida que parece un desafío a todas las expectativas sociales y familiares. “Mi madre hace hincapié en sus relatos sobre la pobreza que vivió: ¿y yo derramo la miel de un intelecto espabilado fuera de la vasija de la escuela y pongo en riesgo un futuro cómodo?” (108). La joven protagonista descubre el mundo fuera de esa vasija mediante su experimentación en el terreno de la sexualidad y sus recorridos por el entonces Distrito Federal para fraguar una identidad que le dé sentido a su vida.

Dominio es, también, la novela de una generación que surgió entre las ruinas de un sistema político corrupto basado en una revolución cuyo discurso se desgastó, y a la que se le fue entre las manos la promesa democrática. El personaje de Claudina se decepciona pronto de la ideología como se decepciona de la ilusión de un futuro económico estable al confirmar con los años las consecuencias de un capitalismo, que al igual que los proyectos políticos, se halla también en crisis.

La novela de Claudina Domingo apuesta por aferrarse a la literatura, y al ámbito de la imaginación en general, como una suerte de salvavidas en un mundo inclemente que arrasa con los sueños de juventud.

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Review Essay: Hyperhybridity, Concentration, and Race War: New Genealogies of Racialization in Mexican Studies

Nemser, Daniel. *Infrastructures of Race: Concentration and Biopolitics in Colonial Mexico*. Austin: Texas UP, 2017. ISBN 9781-4773-1244-5

Sabau, Ana. *Riot and Rebellion in Mexico: The Making of a Race War Paradigm*. Austin: Texas UP, 2017. ISBN 9781-4773-2422-6

Vinson III, Ben. *Before Mestizaje: The Frontiers of Race and Caste in Colonial Mexico*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2018. ISBN 9781-1076-7081-5

A long-standing dogma in colonial Latin American studies was that modern notions of race and racism, based on either biological or cultural determinations, were not compatible with the ethnic and communal dynamics of the *ancien régime*. Historians and anthropologists held that the ethnocultural formations of the early modern Hispanic world were intricate products of the period's specific categories of blood, lineage, and religion. Some scholars even argued that the very idea of "race" is a product of scientific racism. Thus, any attempt at studying colonial times through the critical lenses of race and racialization would lead to a blatant anachronism. Only a strict periodization separating viceregal and post-independence periods would shield colonial studies from historical inconsistencies. Many colonial and 19th-century scholars have been trained in this historiographical model, yet many of us can now celebrate that new genealogical approaches are superseding this paradigm. Indeed, as recent books in the fields of colonial and postcolonial Mexican studies show, there is an emerging genealogical methodology tracing continuities and changes in processes of racialization from the colony to the early republican times.

These books are Ben Vinson III's *Before Mestizaje: The Frontiers of Race and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (2018), Daniel Nemser's *Infrastructures of Race: Concentration and Biopolitics in Colonial Mexico* (2017), and Ana Sabau's *Riot and Rebellion in Mexico: The Making of a Race War Paradigm* (2022). In these publications, colonial and modern times are no longer discrete and separate fields; they rather illuminate each other's racial formations. Vinson studies the multiple racial identities in colonial Mexico by documenting the genesis of the *casta* system and paying particular attention to "extreme *castas*," the more profound and singular outcomes of racial hybridization, many of them related to blackness. Vinson focuses on the unique forms of *caste* mobility and reclassification of these extreme groups in the colonial legal system and traces bureaucratic instances of "unusual openness to *casta* shifts," which he calls "hyperhybridity." These unforeseen shifts lead him to reconsider *castizaje*, the formation and changing of *casta* identities, as a process "loosen[ing] *casta* enough to [. . .] serve as a credible precursor to *mestizaje*" (181). It is in the undoing and collapsing of racial categories, not in the programmatic fusion of identities, that colonial *castizaje* would relate to *mestizaje*.

For his part, Nemser examines the concentration of humans and objects as a primary mechanism of colonial governance and racialization, taking issue with the idea that modern concentration camps developed first in Spanish colonial settings. His reflection on the concentration of peoples in late 19th-century Cuba is the point of departure for a study of how colonial Mexican authorities "repeatedly returned to the promise of collecting and organizing human and non-human objects within architectural and urban space as the key to effective governance and a well-order population" (2). In Nemser's account, the concentration of peoples and objects in centralized towns, punitive institutions, segregated quarters, and comprehensive collections provided the physical structures of racialization in colonial Mexico. If, as Aimé Césaire

aptly argued, colonialism anticipated modern forms of violence and oppression, Nemser's genealogy of the colonial infrastructures of concentration helps historicize and track the material origins of a pervasive modern technique of domination.

Ana Sabau unveils another recurrence in colonial and modern Mexico: the paradigm of "race war," an array of rhetorical and policy devices used to depict racial conflicts and indigenous uprisings as the ultimate threat to the colonial and postcolonial states. In her fascinating study of the legal and cultural production surrounding the Bajío Riots of 1767, the Mexican renditions of the Haitian Revolution, and the Caste War of Yucatán, Sabau investigates "the inheritances of colonial race-making practices at both the material and symbolic levels" (2). Overall, Vinson, Nemser, and Sabau articulate new genealogical paradigms—hyperhybridity, concentration, and race war to explore the colonial origins of forms of racialization that the modern Mexican state rationalized and further developed. To be clear, it is not that these authors embrace anachronism as a historical methodology; instead, they explore continuities and changes in the legal, material, and cultural modalities through which racialized identities were constructed and experienced in colonial and postcolonial Mexico.

Vinson's *Before Mestizaje* begins with the narration of a common experience in any college-level survey about colonial Latin America: the surprise of the class attendants when the instructor displays *casta* paintings and relates them to the records of the ethno-social order of colonial times. The immediate reaction of the audience is to regard the most "extreme" identities of the *casta* paintings, those taxonomies deployed to mark different degrees of blackness, like *morisco*, *lobo*, *zorro*, *salto atrás*, and *no te entiendo*, as more fictional than real. However, the author takes issue with the fact that these extreme nomenclatures and identities actually existed: they "represented the limits of racial mixture and therefore offered clues into what has become known to the world as the ideology of mestizaje" (xiv). Exploring the genesis of *casta* racial order and its seemingly incredible, most extreme nomenclatures is instrumental for Vinson to theorize and link "the colonial and modern worlds in ways that made the two grand eras of mixture meaningful and intelligible to each other" (34). Thus, in addition to analyzing a rich legal archive of marriage certificates, inquisitional archives, and census records that document the emergence and use of *casta* categories, Vinson engages with modern intellectual and cultural debates about *mestizaje*. The result is a book combining social, legal, and intellectual history and intimating with the rhetoric of the Latin American identity essay.

Chapter 1 discusses the fall of the initial attempts at dividing the colonial population into a republic of Spaniards and a republic of Indians, a collapse precipitated by the mixing of peoples of African, Asian, Native American, and European descent. Chapter 2 fast-forwards into the modern *mestizaje* and details the intellectual origins of the modern discourse of racial mixture in Latin America. The chapter traces how this discourse opposed mainstream Eurocentric scientific approaches to race and miscegenation in the 19th and early 20th centuries and concludes by stating that "[m]estizaje rationalized what had been largely an ad hoc process, providing substantive meaning and direction" (34). Chapter 3 backtracks to the origins of the *castas* and their relation with the early-modern conception of physical bodies as malleable combinations of "humors" and with the notions of *limpieza de sangre*, *linaje*, *nación*, *calidad*, *clase*, *condición*, and even *raza*. None of these notions corresponds to the modern definitions of race; however, documenting the semantical fluidity of these cognates and their intricate links to *castas* unveils the fluid and hybrid nature of colonial racialization. The chapter fast-forwards again to discuss modern attempts at interpreting colonial racial mixtures as *castizaje* and elaborates on the similitudes and differences

between this concept and *mestizaje*. Unlike the homogenizing logic of modern *mestizaje*, colonial *castizaje* “helped push the idea of *casta* beyond being a segmenting force and into something that captured the spirit of colonial plurality and hybridity in its fullest sense” (68).

Chapter 4 studies the “jungle” of *casta* extremes and proposes that certain taxonomies related to blackness were metaphors for “deviant” social behaviors. These nomenclatures developed in a context where physicality became more important than lineage to determine one’s place in the colonial ethno-social order. Chapter 5 studies late-18th-century census records of the “extreme” taxonomies and shows how the documentary record shows both a simplification and overuse of these nomenclatures, which marked the transition from the late colonial to modern processes of racialization. Chapters 6 and 7 analyze marriage records of “extreme” taxonomies related to blackness, like *moriscos* and *lobos*. Commenting on the frequent marriages among these *castas*, the author posits that “endogamy for these two groups might be best conceived as embracing intermarriages within the larger set of Afro-castas,” which helps highlight the development of a broader black cultural sphere in late-colonial Mexico (132-133).

Chapter 8 analyzes cases of bigamous subjects changing their *castas* to hide records of their legal identities and documents and the ways colonial authorities reassigned multiple taxonomies to these subjects. Vinson reads the changes in self-identification as a form of colonial mimicry, highlighting which colonial subjects appropriated and refashioned the *casta* taxonomies for their own goals. Yet he also focuses on how colonial authorities turned that mimicry around in what he calls “hyperhybridity:” the ad hoc legal process in which “a person’s *casta* was repeatedly interpreted, reinterpreted, and reclassified” using unstable somatic and lineage clues, which could “precipitate an exponential proliferation of *casta* statuses” (179). If colonial subjects appropriated *casta* mobility for their own use (in this case, to hide their bigamy), the colonial bureaucrats reappropriated what these subjects had previously absorbed. The result was the legal sanctioning of a “cacophony of possible identities” (181). This hyperhybridity would flatten *casta* identities enough to anticipate *mestizaje*. This formidable category is by far the most important contribution of Vinson’s book and the term that allows him to present a credible genealogy linking *castizaje* and *mestizaje*.

Chapter 9 discusses how the *casta* system was conceptualized in the works of late-19th-century Mexican intellectuals like Vicente Riva Palacio, Lucas Alamán, Francisco Bulnes, Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, and Justo Sierra Mendez. Finally, the coda comments on the “*casta* states of mind” that still inform how present-day Mexicans conceive of their racial identities (203). While this book’s back-and-forth structure is a bit puzzling, its constant temporal jumps are fully justified in light of its provocative intervention linking colonial *castizaje* and modern *mestizaje*.

Nemser’s *Infrastructures of Race* steers away from Vinson’s fascination with extreme forms of racial mobility and privileges, instead, preferring the materiality of processes of hierarchization and racial oppression. The book proposes a genealogy of spatial concentration in colonial Mexico, tracing how this technique of colonial domination produced “the grid of intelligibility that g[ave] race its forms and ma[de] it legible, even thinkable” (2-3). While it is common to link space-making practices and racial policies in national contexts, Nemser claims the interweaving of politics of space and race precedes the nation-state and was instrumental in consolidating racial categories like “Indian” and “Mestizo.” In its introduction, the book recounts the debates about the (in)applicability of “race” to colonial Latin America and pinpoints how this paradigm takes at face value the language of nineteenth-century race scientists. Instead, the author takes a perspective closer to critical race theory, which has elaborated “more flexible accounts of

race that can acknowledge changes at the level of its signs [...] without ignoring important continuities at the level of domination” (10). This book traces these continuities by centering on the material practices enabling racial formations and racialized domination: the physical mechanisms for the concentration of peoples (congregation, enclosure, and segregation) and objects (collections).

Nemser uses a biopolitical perspective to approach the politics of space and racial making “in terms of the uneven distribution of vulnerability” (11). The book also engages with the mainstream biopolitical approaches to sovereignty and, following Schmitt, Agamben and Mbembe, reorients the discussion of sovereign power to questions of space. This focus on spatial configurations stresses how European imperial powers molded the colonial zone as spaces of exception where laws could be suspended. The creation of such spaces required their radical reshaping with works of infrastructure. While the book focuses on material structures for the concentration of humans and objects, it deploys a broad approach to infrastructure that includes ideological components. As Nemser claims, “[b]y bidding people, things, and knowledge into territorialized systems of production and circulation, infrastructure is both the condensation of an ideological project and a participant in the realization of that project” (18).

Chapter 1 studies 16th-century *congregación* or congregation: the policy of gathering dispersed indigenous communities and resettling them into newly created or reorganized towns. Planned as a mechanism to facilitate evangelization and the extraction of indigenous labor, congregations followed a standardized grid carefully measured and laid out for urbanization. Such a rationalized space was “the material condition of possibility for the construction of the category of the Indian as a socially meaningful category of identity” (64). Chapter 2 focuses on one specific institution in mid-16th century Mexico City, the Colegio de San Juan Letrán. Conceived as an establishment to discipline the growing population of Mestizos, the physical space of the Colegio was an architectural example of the policy of *recogimiento*, that is, “the overlapping practices of capture, enclosure, and subjectification” (66). By that time, colonial authorities considered Mestizos unruly vagrants; thus, their disciplinary enclosure was meant to turn them into productive subjects. Moreover, the chapter argues that “the Mestizo, like the Indian, was not the object but the product of the spatial politics of colonial rule” (68).

Chapter 3 examines the revamping of the spatial policies of *segregación* in the aftermath of the 1692 riots in Mexico City. The creation of segregated urban spaces dates to the division of the colonial population into two republics, one for “Spaniards,” the other for “Indians.” In the late 17th century, colonial authorities sought to re-segregate the capital along racial lines, yet there were different versions of this policy: some supported it to protect the “Spaniards,” others to rescue the “Indians.” However, in both versions, the new urban boundaries did not divide the two former “republics;” instead, what always appeared on the other side of the new lines was the Plebe (104). Regarded as the collective of those racially mixed living in the city, the Plebe was racialized in the new urban divides as a “surplus population, a terrifying new subject that is beyond redemption and will therefore require new practices of concentration to contain” (105). The Plebe was then an excessive product of the urban policy of segregation. Nemser’s accounts of the Mestizo and the Plebe suggest that these embodiments of the racially mixed were also the products of spatial policies of concentration. Whereas Vinson argues that the most extreme outcomes of racial mixture led to a proliferation of legal and disciplinary attempts at reclassification, Nemser posits that even the most common subjectivities of the racially mixed were already the result of disciplinary mechanisms and spatial politics.

Chapter 4 investigates general collections (*colección*) by exploring the spatial politics of imperial botany surrounding the establishment of a botanical garden in the capital. The chapter studies how the all-encompassing collection of colonial plant life was linked to a new concept of racialized life in which race “is never entirely fluid or entirely fixed, but rather is expressed differentially through particular kinds of bodies” (164). The book concludes with an epilogue discussing the recurrence of colonial concentration techniques in contemporary Mexico. One wonders why this study did not include the spatial racialization of Afro-descendants. Using Nemser’s conceptual tools to look at Vinson’s take on the census records of “Afro-castas” may result in a more comprehensive genealogy of concentration/segregation in colonial Mexico.

Sabau’s *Riot and Rebellion in Mexico* proposes the “race war paradigm” to trace legal and rhetorical continuities in the official treatment of indigenous insurrections and racial conflicts in late-colonial and modern Mexico. The book takes inspiration from Domingo F. Sarmiento’s diagnosis of racial conflicts as the biggest threat to the consolidation of postcolonial Latin American countries and explores how his threat was imagined and codified in Mexico. Racial conflicts did not begin with the nation-states but figured prominently in the Age of Revolutions; accordingly, the period going from the late 18th to the mid-19th centuries is a critical temporal frame to investigate processes of racialization. In the historiographical paradigm, a strict caesura kept colonial and modern processes of racialization apart; this caesura is what Sabau’s book dismantles. Moreover, Sabau specifically traces the institutional and cultural legacies of Spanish colonialism in a revolutionary period that has been largely associated with the rise of the nation-states. Instead, she explores the pervasive residues of colonial forms of cultural representation and punishment as instances of “accretion,” that is, as the “constan[t] repurposing [of] past racializing practices and discourses into new configurations” (7). Her approach stresses the ultimate purposes of the recurrences of the race war paradigm: situating New Spain/Mexico in broader Atlantic debates of racial difference and producing internal racial enemies threatening the colonial/modern body politic.

Like Nemser, Sabau links questions of sovereignty with processes of racialization, yet she is attentive to the nuances of sovereign power in modern liberal states. She explores the intricate debates to reintroduce the language of exception and emergency in the mid-19th-Mexico century. The race war paradigm was instrumental for authorities to consider racial conflicts as “singularly dangerous events” and defend “the need to suppress them by any and all means necessary” (12). Thus, the sovereign power of exception was repurposed to target indigenous and racialized subjects whose political dissidence fell outside the civil rights and liberties that the state granted to its citizens. These disposable members were not only indigenous communities but also racially mixed plebians. Whereas Nemser studies how the Plebe emerged as a racialized surplus of late 17th-century spatial politics of segregation, Sabau explores how plebian actors were legally and culturally contained in the Age of Revolution. Indeed, she claims that the race war paradigm “is part of a broader genealogy related to paranoid narratives about the dangerous rise of racialized plebian sectors in New Spain’s political landscapes” (18).

Furthermore, Sabau stresses the link between the racialization of plebian actors and the fall of the colonial *castas*, as the elites imagined race wars as “the undesired byproduct of having abolished the *casta* system and extending legal rights in disregard of racial difference” (19). If, as Vinson’s work shows, the *casta* order operated through a multiplication of identities, Sabau explores how that order was superseded by a new paradigm operating through simplification: it addressed any threatening racial difference as a war enemy that the state should eliminate. The

first example of this paradigm is the viceregal government's reaction to the 1767 Bajío riots, studied in Part I. Chapter 1 analyzes the repression and racialization of the riots in the campaign led by the Spanish José de Gálvez. The rioters were a variegated collective of free peoples of color and Indians, and Gálvez's reaction was to recreate racial boundaries. Sabau reads Gálvez's work as an exemplary instance of accretion, as "the intermittent and seemingly contradictory repurposing of past codes and practices" (34). Chapter 2 casts light on the rioters' collective action and emancipatory hopes by studying an array of their letters and notes. Part I's Coda studies the legacies of Gálvez's policies in Hipólito Villarroel's moral diagnosis of the social and political ailments of New Spain.

The next iteration of the race war paradigm is the representation of the Haitian Revolution in late colonial and early postcolonial Mexico, analyzed in Part II. Chapter 3 examines the "monstrous" rendition of Haitian leaders in the work of the colonial *letrado* Juan López de Cancelada. This portrayal created a "sense of distance between both colonies [Saint-Domingue and New Spain], keeping Haiti's revolution at bay" (84). Thus, while Cancelada considered the Haitian uprising as a race war of global repercussions, he presented Haitian founding fathers as racialized monsters inadmissible to a civilized body politic. Chapter 4 analyzes an array of newspapers, legal documents, and plays to see how the representation of Haiti changed on the eve of the Mexican Independence: from being portrayed as a distant monster of sorts, Haiti was now being "invoked as an internal mirror that reflected the 'monstrosity' and dangerous impurity of New Spain's racialized social body" (107). The Coda to Part II examines the changing images of Haiti in the transition from colony to republic in Mexico. In this context, while the local elites began to admire some of the state-building proposals in Haiti, they still deployed the race war paradigm to portray the events in Haiti as examples of anarchy that should be avoided (126).

The final example of the race war paradigm is the Caste War of Yucatán, examined in Part III. Chapter 5 studies articles, legal documents, and novels surrounding the selling of Maya prisoners from the Caste War into indentured labor in Cuba. The representation of the Yucatán rebels as combatants in a race war against the Mexican state helped the Yucatán white elite create "a zone of legal anomaly that allowed this 'exceptional' punitive practice" (140). Chapter 6 interprets visual and textual mappings of the Yucatán peninsula as cartographic mechanisms that the Mexican state deployed to regain control over the area where the Caste War took place. Thus, while the rebels were still occupying vast areas of the peninsula, the maps portrayed these territories as empty lands. The chapter argues that the political restructuring of the land in Yucatán occurred not only on the battlefield but also "through contrasting and overlapping strategies for producing, envisioning, and representing space" (167). The Coda to Part III discusses the racialized system of coerced labor that spread in Yucatán in the aftermath of the Caste War. Building upon the previous project to sell Maya rebels into indenture service, this new system racialized workers who were transported from other countries and other states of the Mexican Republic to labor in Yucatan's farms. The book's epilogue reflects on how the legacies of the race war paradigm still inform the repressive measures of the present-day governing groups in Mexico. Due to its cohesive structure and analytical rigor, Sabau's book smoothly navigates the complex temporalities of late colonial and modern Mexico and offers new paths for more Latinamericanists to trace the recurrences of colonialism in the 19th century.

Emmanuel A. Velayos Larrabure, The City University of New York-CUNY Hostos CC

Andrango-Walker, Catalina. *La construcción de la santidad en la región andina: la vida de la beata Juana de Jesús (1662-1703)*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2023. 322 pp. ISBN 9789-0045-1076-0

La construcción de la santidad en la región Andina. La vida de la beata Juana de Jesús (1662-1703), supone un nuevo y valioso aporte al estudio de la vida de las mujeres que habitaron en la época colonial el territorio de lo que hoy es Ecuador. Durante la última década, varios trabajos académicos se han dado a la tarea de explorar aquellos textos que dan cuenta de la experiencia femenina en el contexto de esta región alejada de los centros de poder y han centrado su atención en aquellas narrativas que permiten asomarse a la vivencia de la religiosidad femenina durante aquel período.

La contribución que hace Andrango-Walker con esta publicación es doble. Por un lado, saca a la luz, en edición crítica, un texto hagiográfico hasta ahora inédito, el *Resumen brebe... de la vida, virtudes y ejercicios de Soror Joana de Jhs Maria y Joseph*, de autoría del franciscano Antonio Fernández Sierra, último confesor de la beata, quien habría empezado a escribir la obra tras la muerte de su hija espiritual, en 1703. Por otro lado, realiza un riguroso análisis de este manuscrito tomando en cuenta su contexto de creación y sus relaciones transtextuales con una versión más tardía y más conocida de la biografía de la beata, *Vida prodigiosa de la venerable virgen Juana de Jesús*, de autoría de otro franciscano, Francisco Xavier Antonio de Santa María, publicada en Lima en 1756, y un borrador de esta, que Santa María habría concluido alrededor de 1747.

La construcción de la santidad en la región Andina se divide en tres partes: una introducción, un estudio comparativo de las tres hagiografías de Juana y el texto de *Resumen breve*. En la Parte I, Andrango-Walker delinea su propuesta de estudio: aproximarse a través de las variaciones y divergencias entre las tres obras al contexto de producción de cada versión de la vida de Juana. Muy acertadamente, la autora estudia los paratextos de las obras y sus modificaciones, elementos que prueban ser clave a la hora de comprender la obra, sus autores y sus lectores (8). Así, Andrango-Walker se acerca a las *Vidas* de Juana en tanto instrumento de los intelectuales quiteños para articular su sentido de identidad, lo que le permite concluir que “Juana, más que ser un sujeto de las experiencias narradas por Fernández Sierra y Santa María, es un objeto de la imaginación criolla que construye las experiencias femeninas para colocar a Quito en un sitio importante aprovechándose de la fama de la beata” (39).

En la Parte II, la autora se concentra en examinar las modificaciones realizadas por Santa María al texto de Fernández Sierra y a su propio manuscrito que precede la impresión de la *Vida prodigiosa*. Andrango-Walker asegura que estas modificaciones—especialmente las realizadas en los paratextos—responden a los cambios políticos y sociales que se dieron en la región. La difícil situación económica que atravesaba la Audiencia de Quito, las crisis políticas y los antagonismos entre criollos y peninsulares se dejan ver en las páginas de estos textos y cuentan una historia que va más allá de la vida de Juana de Jesús. Un ejemplo concreto que ilustra la evolución de estos textos en respuesta al escenario político del momento es el hecho de que, en el borrador de Santa María se dedica la obra al aragonés fray Eugenio Ibáñez Cuevas, predicador general y comisario general de todas las provincias del Perú, pero, cuando a su paso por la ciudad este personaje genera altercados y persecuciones a los friales criollos, se toma la decisión de eliminar su mención de la obra impresa (83-107). Queda claro, entonces, que “[l]as obras que se escribieron sobre la beata quiteña se alejan pronto de la tradición hagiográfica europea al hacer hincapié en los problemas locales y en la conflictiva relación con la metrópoli” (111).

La Parte III comprende el texto de *Resumen breve*, de Fernández Sierra. Para esta edición, Andrango-Walker ha modernizado la escritura y ha unificado la gramática para mantener la consistencia dentro del texto. Además, se ha servido de diversas notas al pie para proporcionar información que permite comprender mejor la obra y su contexto histórico, así como para aludir a las anotaciones al margen que pueblan el manuscrito y que, como ha quedado claro en las Partes anteriores, corresponden a las plumas de los diversos lectores del texto. De particular interés son aquellas notas al margen escritas por un lector no identificado que hacen referencia a Getrudes de San Yldefonso, monja de velo negro que habitó con Juana en el convento de Santa Clara y que, aunque Fernández Sierra no menciona en su obra, promovió junto a la beata la reforma espiritual del cenobio quiteño.

Más allá de la cuidadosa tarea de investigación y edición que realiza Andrango-Walker en esta publicación, *La construcción de la santidad en la región andina* sobresale como una obra en que coinciden la serendipia y el asombro: el hallazgo en el archivo de desconocidos manuscritos, los apuntes al margen que invitan a especular sobre los potenciales lectores que intervinieron a través del tiempo en la lectura y la narración de la vida de Juana, la propia figura de su protagonista que se hace invisible, pues, como explica Andrango-Walker, “no solo que no hay nada escrito por ella misma, sino que tampoco hay rastros de su existencia en otros documentos de la época” (40-41). Finalmente, otra mujer, doña Isabel de Santiago, insigne en el arte de la pintura, emerge en estas páginas como la única capaz de retratar a Juana, póstumamente y a partir de haberla visto algunas veces. En medio del discurso escrito dominado por los varones que redactaron, censuraron y aprobaron la vida de Juana, es la pintura de doña Isabel la que visibiliza nuevamente la figura de la beata y pone de relieve la estrecha relación que existió entre ella y las mujeres de su comunidad (110).

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Baker, Christina. *Sonic Strategies: Performing Mexico's War on Drugs, Mourning, and Femicide*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2023, 291 pp. ISBN 9780-8265-0598-9

What does it mean to listen to war? How do we collectively respond to the aftershocks of a sonic regime of fear? And if “sound has power” (4), what are the strategies at hand to dissect it? In her latest book, Christina Baker expands her expertise on theater and performance by focusing on sound phenomena in the context of various performances that respond to the ongoing wave of violence in Mexico. Through a careful analysis of various performance pieces from the last ten years, she foregrounds the “sonic strategies” that Mexican artists employ to respond and, potentially, combat the networks of power of a necropolitical nation-state. Baker offers a sorely needed intellectual and theoretical engagement with sound in the Mexican context, an element that has yet to be fully developed in scholarly work.

The first chapter is devoted to the work of *Las Reinas Chulas*, a group of theater performers that has been active in the Mexico City teatro-cabaret scene for decades. Baker centers her analysis on one piece titled “Nosotras las proles,” which seeks to revise a handful of Mexican melodramatic classics from the Golden Age of film. The group offers what Baker calls “acts of sonic disidentification” (57), centering the female voice and openly disregarding master narratives of *mexicanidad* that have been long promoted by mainstream cultural production. The author

discusses the act of listening as a point of entry into critical thinking: *Las Reinas Chulas* satirize the innate theatricality of “charro masculinity” through auditory expression and melodramatic aesthetics of excess. By offering an alternative to “the wounding tendencies of past and present” (57), the analysis of *Las Reinas Chulas* is key to understanding Baker’s approach to sound on stage and, moreover, to the ways in which sound is a potent signifier that allows Othered subjectivities to flourish.

In the second chapter, Baker turns her attention towards Mexico’s War on Drugs, a fundamental period in neoliberal Mexican history. She introduces the concept of “neuroauralities,” an interpretive tool that examines “how the audible contours of Mexico’s war, state of exception, and necropolitics reverberate through the terrain of the body, as citizen and performer” (63). Here, Baker analyzes three performance pieces: *Música de balas*, by Hugo Salcedo; *Ejercicio de percusión*, by Enrique Jezik; and *México exhumado*, by Lechedevirgen Trimegisto. For every individual analysis, the author centers the “sonicscape,” that is, the aural description of the battleground unfolding in Mexico. In what might be the strongest chapter in the book, Baker carefully threads between the “spatial and sonic occupation” (69) that the war machine enacts as she discusses the sounds of guns, antiriot squads, and even lamenting voices. She connects the aural experience of war with how it is embodied, both by the performers and by the audience, who are participating in a process of *wounding* that arises from the acoustic performance of pain and violence. However, none of these pieces seek to be reparative of the damage, instead, they intend to expose the gash. The neuroauralities proposed by Baker thus become a fundamental part of the assemblages that compose Mexican citizenship nowadays, where fear and horror are part of the daily lives of millions.

Chapter 3 revolves around work by Lukas Avendaño, one of the most prolific queer Indigenous performance artists in Mexico and maybe even the world, and by Violeta Luna, an international recognized performance artist who lives in the United States. Baker analyzes two pieces: *Buscando a Bruno*, by Avendaño; and *Réquiem #3: Fosas Cuerpo/Body Graves*, by Luna. Both pieces reflect the realities of forced disappearances and how loved ones are left to grieve spectral bodies, in the absence of an actual corpse to sustain a funerary ritual. Aptly, Baker titles the chapter “Antigone’s requiem,” establishing a comparison with Antigone’s own public grief and how her gendered body was punished because of it. While Luna is a cisgender woman, Avendaño is a *muxe*, the “third” gender recognized in communities on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Thus, the performances of grief are undoubtedly marked by both Luna and Avendaño’s gender identities. In this chapter, the author focuses on silence and sonic accompaniments that she calls “sounds against death,” and on the public nature of the artist’s work. She discusses the “vibratorium” (113) and the “communitas de dolor” (100) that envelop the audience, making them part of a sonic experience of loss and underscoring the collective nature of mourning and grief. Once again, she establishes a clear and strong connection between the sonic realm and spatiality, especially considering how the Mexican state has tried to erase mourners and seekers of justice from national narratives.

Finally, in the last chapter, Baker discusses three works of teatro-cabaret that center feminicide and trans feminicide, two issues that remain at the forefront of the feminist struggle in Mexico. The performances are *Ni una menos* (2019), by Las Pussy Queers; *La Prietty Guoman* (2017), by César Enríquez; and *El Desierto de Las Leonas* (2017), by La Mafia Cabaret. Here, Baker explores the “radical cartographies” (192) that emerge from the musical numbers performed by these artists. Through reggaetón, corridos, and odes to *cabareteras* and divas, Baker situates music as a narrative that can also be subverted and bent to work towards resistance and survival,

and that offer new, hopeful futurities. As she did in the first chapter, the author returns to the possibilities that excess and melodrama have to offer: here, melodramatic tropes become a means of escape from a country that devours cis and trans women. In this fourth and final chapter, Baker's sense of urgency is stronger than ever.

Christina Baker's book bridges the gap between visual performances and the sonic realm in a way unprecedented in the field of Mexican cultural studies. Furthermore, *Sonic Strategies* is a fundamental addition to the ever-growing body of sound studies in Latin America, providing us with new conceptualizations of the aural realm that will undoubtedly enrich the discussion around how we listen and think about/through sound in our corner of the world.

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Bell, Lucy, Alex Ungprateeb Flynn, and Patrick O'Hare. *Taking Form, Making Worlds: Cartonera Publishers in Latin America*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2022. 303 pp. ISBN 9781-4773-2495-0

What can the aesthetics of an object reveal about the social relations that produce it? This is one of the central questions examined in *Taking Form, Making Worlds: Cartonera Publishers in Latin America*. This co-authored book, which is the result of a multi-sited, transdisciplinary collaboration between cultural studies scholar Lucy Bell and anthropologists Alex Ungprateeb Flynn and Patrick O'Hare, takes readers on a journey through the different spaces that make up the many worlds of the underground publishing phenomenon known as cartonera. Publishing handcrafted books defined by their conspicuous use of cardboard covers, more than 250 cartonera presses now exist on four continents. The practice, which was born in Buenos Aires in the wake of the 2001 crisis, has attracted researchers' gaze since its inception, yet this 2022 book is the first comprehensive study of the transnational history of cartonera.

The book follows the path opened by *Akademia Cartonera: A Primer of Latin American Cardboard Publishers*, edited by Ksenija Biblija and Paloma Celis Carbajal, which compiles manifestos and images from cartoneras in seven Latin American countries, alongside a digital collection of academic articles, a cartonera catalog, and a bibliography. The 2009 book was groundbreaking not only in its documentation of a then still emergent cultural practice, but also in its insistence that cartonera was being theorized most richly by the practitioners themselves. Building on that important intervention, in *Taking Form, Making Worlds*, Bell, Flynn and O'Hare think alongside the "theorizing agents" they encounter in each site, developing an innovative "trans-formal methodology" that not only bridges disciplines, but also disrupts the very hierarchies and borders that cartonera also challenges. As they state in the introduction, "Cartonera inspired us as researchers to engage with the methods of its practitioners" (11).

Throughout the eight sections of the book, Bell, Flynn, and O'Hare make visible the continuous collective reflections, both methodological and theoretical, that gave shape to their project, not shying away from open discussion of tensions, contradictions, and challenges that emerged along the way. Early in the introduction they describe how they quickly realized that the question framing their initial approach was too simplistic and even "binary." This realization allowed them to move away from the academic and colonial impulse to categorize and classify, and toward the cartonera ethics which promote the transgression of boundaries and emphasize relations and process over product and consumption. While most scholarship on cartonera takes Argentina, the birthplace of the first cartonera Eloísa, as its focal point, Bell, Flynn, and O'Hare

chose to anchor their study in their participatory research with cartoneras in Brazil and Mexico: Dulcinéia Catadora (São Paulo), Catapoesia (Gouveia), La Cartonera (Cuernavaca), and La Rueda Cartonera (Guadalajara).

Following the introduction, the first two chapters provide an extended presentation of the project in which the authors present the “Histories” of cartonera and the “Methods” they developed. In combination, these three sections serve as a framework that grounds the examination of the four “cartonera practices” that each of the remaining chapters centers on: texts, encounters, workshops, and exhibitions. Rather than bog down the hefty volume, this first part of the book combines this necessary background and framing with the kind of vibrant ethnographic description, richly detailed formal analysis, and compelling conceptual development that each of the subsequent chapters is built around. The first example of this comes on page one, with the story of a book being crafted in São Paulo, *Arquipélago*, in 2018. Here, the reader is not only introduced to one of the research sites (the Glicério recycling cooperative) and one of the presses (Dulcinéia Catadora), but also to one of the many concepts developed by the practitioners themselves to theorize cartonera as a social-aesthetic practice and a transnational political movement: Thais Graciotti’s notion of the “archipelago.” With this intriguing opening story, the reader sees the authors’ key concept, the “double-fold,” in practice several pages before it is named. The “double-fold” concept, which playfully uses bookmaking imagery, works to reject and undo the binaristic logic the authors admit to having been initially trapped by: literary/artistic, social/aesthetic. They use the term “double-fold” to describe “the way the aesthetic hinges on the social and, crucially, the social hinges on the aesthetic,” which opens possibilities for understanding the “material sociality of practice” (12).

At the close of Chapter Two, the authors write “cartonera, for political reasons, is stubbornly resistant to definition” (75). They take this resistance as their challenge—to resist, as researchers, the impulse to define that which they are studying. In this way, they engage in a kind of cartonera method that is “processual, longitudinal, and open-ended” (65), allowing them to deeply immerse themselves in the diverse expressions of a broad set of practices that connect cartoneras around the world. Chapter Three opens what can be read as the second part of the book with the aspect paradoxically most neglected in studies of cartonera—the texts themselves—arguing, through a series of close readings, that cartonera literature is defined only by the extreme heterogeneity of its contents and its processes, and crucially, by the interplay between them. Provocatively, they argue that cartonera, as “a distinctly Latin American phenomenon” (15) might be understood as a chapter in the long history of a distinctly Latin American literary genre, *testimonio*, not because of some inherent characteristics in the form or content, but because of the political project of making visible the marginalized while foregrounding action.

The remaining chapters lead the reader through the various sites of encounter—another key cartonera concept. These are the sites where books are produced and circulated, including workshops and exhibits, and which the authors describe as the pluriverse that cartonera not only makes visible, but indeed helps to create. Throughout the book, the authors work through a set of concepts and frameworks emerging primarily from the fields of anthropological and decolonial theory, with the notion of the pluriverse standing out as that which articulates all the others. As a reader, I found the discussion of these bodies of scholarship compelling. At times, however, the lengthy and recurrent appearance of the academic citations weighed down the text, pulling attention away from what Bell, Flynn, and O’Hare rightfully name as their primary theoretical inspiration, the cartonera practitioners themselves. To be sure, the academic scholarship they engage with does important work for their analysis, yet much of it is also what a reader might

expect to find here, in a book about a radical cultural practice in twenty-first century Latin America. A word that appears again and again throughout the book in a wide range of descriptions of cartonera is “unexpected.” Bell, Flynn, and O’Hare’s project is, indeed, shaped by the “unexpected.” As researchers, they found themselves transformed by their own process, and as a reader, I found myself surprised and challenged in the most delightful and productive of ways.

This is a book about knowledge production: about where and how meaning is generated, about the practices and relations that enable the generation of diverse ways of seeing, thinking, and being in the world, and about the significance of the materials that connect people in those processes. It is also, crucially, a book about what it means to do research and to generate academic knowledge. As such, it is sure to have broad appeal to readers interested not only in literary and artistic production, but also in the contemporary histories of social movements and networks, the colonial legacies of print culture, and the ethics and politics of research. Thoughtfully researched, beautifully narrated, and richly conceptualized, *Taking Form, Making Worlds* offers an exciting on-the-ground view of a cultural phenomenon that is continually being reimagined and recreated, paired with a rigorous and compelling exploration of the stakes of politically engaged academic scholarship today.

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Cantú, Roberto. *Alfredo Vea’s Narrative Trilogy: Studies on La Maravilla, The Silver Cloud Café, and Gods Go Begging*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023. 340pp. ISBN 9781-5275-2866-6

The trilogy by Chicano author Alfredo Vea features the same protagonist in each novel. Despite autobiographical traits shared with Vea, the protagonist has a different name in each book. Mexican scholar Roberto Cantú’s *Alfredo Vea’s Narrative Trilogy*, a well-researched and engaging study on this important Chicano author, is divided into three parts focusing on close readings of this trilogy: *La Maravilla* (1993), *The Silver Cloud Café* (1996), and *Gods Go Begging* (1999). In parts I and II, Roberto Cantú includes two excursions—the first one on the influence of the Latin American novel in Vea’s writing and the second, on the influence of Andrew Marvell’s poetry on *La Maravilla*—to provide evidence of the “deprovincialization” of Chicano literature since the 1980s.

After the Introduction, Part I delves into the autobiographical data that informs *La Maravilla*, such the cultural history of Vea’s Yaqui father, which includes battles with Aztecs, Spaniards and Mexicans, dispossession of land, forced relocation, and enslavement in hemp plantations in Yucatán. Other life experiences in the trilogy echo Vea’s youth as a farm laborer in California’s San Joaquín Valley, the Vietnam War and subsequent PTSD, and working as a criminal defense attorney in San Francisco. Cantú then contextualizes *La Maravilla* with the autobiographical works of Chicana authors Eva Antonia Wilbur-Cruce, Montserrat Fontes, Ana Castillo, Helena María Viramontes, and Eliud Martínez. Cantú also studies issues related to narrative structure and points out the connection between *La Maravilla* and the Latin American, marvelous real tradition. The author glosses passages where we witness forbidden marriages and their adverse social consequences, peyote-induced trances, and a Yaqui initiation, while underscoring the humor, the Orpheus theme, and the anti-colonial bent of the novel, with its various references to wars of imperial occupation.

Part I includes a sarcastic critique of critics' expectations when analyzing Chicana literature; to their surprise, adds Cantú, *La Maravilla* dialogues with two seventeenth-century authors: Marvell and Cervantes. It also elaborates on the theme of homelessness and how this novel opts for a synchronic, mythic mode of storytelling that omits or delays information, and follows *Don Quixote's* co-author model and sub-plots. In addition, Cantú establishes the intertextualities with Octavio Paz's *The Labyrinth of Solitude* and explains the different meanings associated with the word "Maravilla" in the title. He then elaborates on the influence of jazz (Cortázar), the marvelous real (Fuentes), and surrealism (Carpentier) on Véa. According to Cantú, Véa interweaves ethno-historical studies as well as modern physics and scientific concepts in these descriptions, all the while attempting to decolonize Yaqui history. Closing Part I, Cantú elaborates on characterization in the novel as well as on the topics of clairvoyance, the thaumaturgy of the word, and the defamiliarization of the world.

Part II is devoted to *The Silver Cloud Café*, which shares its protagonist with the other two novels. However, his name now is Zeferino del Campo and he is a Vietnam veteran who works as a criminal defense attorney in San Francisco. The novel has a global setting expanding through Mexico, the Philippines, Spain, and the United States, and includes characters that are veterans of the Cristero Rebellion, World War II, and the Vietnam War. This part studies how the novel treats the secular and sacred doubleness in human life, its double-coded poetry/narrative expression, the marvelous in the novel, the protagonist's traumas, his experiences in the Vietnam War, and the Americanization process that led to a self-estrangement from Yaqui culture. The topics of homelessness, exile, and the double are also addressed. Cantú then looks at how the structure of the novel geopolitically unifies—through the protagonist's memory—a splintered world spread among the Philippines, the United States, Spain, and Mexico. *The Silver Cloud Café*, according to Cantú, has allegorical overtones and shares traits with crime mystery and comedy.

The study addresses the convergence of numeric symbolism, Biblical intertextualities, and historical events in a San Francisco setting. It also explores the trope of a multilayered memory, intertextualities with Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, and how Véa transcends the Chicana literary topic of the moment of recognition through the motif of the brown face, in a retrieved ethnic identity and consciousness. In turn, it looks at how the novel establishes connections among homelessness, the Gnostic gospels, and José Clemente Orozco's mural "El hombre en su hoguera." This part also examines the encrypted event of the lost memory of a murder mystery and the cryptogram of Zeferino's name, and proposes a Freudian reading of the association between Zeferino, the protagonist, and the Biblical Moses, based on the double meaning of distortion and the narrative's distorted structure. Cantú comes to the conclusion that the protagonist's homecoming points to "the second birth of an ethical subject" (210).

Part III turns to *Gods Go Begging*, the most autobiographical of the three novels, where we witness how the memory of the same autobiographical protagonist, now called Jesse Pasadoble, undergoes a downward trip toward the unconscious. According to Cantú, the novel blends two narratives: a war veteran who needs a cure and a chaplain who searches for the love of his life through suicide. The plot provides codes, encryptions, intertextualities, riddles, and double meanings that Cantú masterfully decodes. Cantú then insightfully returns to an analysis of myth, symbolism, the double, and a Freudian analysis of desire in the novel.

Part III hones in on the relationship between the autobiographical, Chicano lawyer and his White supremacist client, including the Ethnic Studies reading list the protagonist provides for him. It also discloses Véa's use of parable and his autobiographical representation of the protagonist's disillusionment upon learning about war crimes committed by American troops

during the Vietnam War. In the end, explains Cantú, Vea goes from the tragedy of the grim reality of war to overcoming or forgetting it through comedy, irony, and satire. The intertextualities with Alejo Carpentier's 1929 short story "El estudiante," Adrian Lyne's 1990 film "Jacob's Ladder," the Têt Festival, Andrea Mantegna's 1455 painting "The Agony in the Garden," and other cultural production are also revealed. Cantú then studies the novelist's narrative, rhetorical style, and stress on language in "novels written not only to be read; but to be studied" (262). Vea's challenging and fragmentary prose, he adds, demands an active reader, as it draws us to rereading the text in order to reorganize the apparent "dismembered chaos." The author also examines Vea's recurring themes of communion, community, and love in dialogue with Paz's *The Labyrinth of Solitude*.

Cantú considers *Gods Go Begging*, like the other two novels, a total work of art, as it blends and makes indirect references to Renaissance, Mannerist, and Baroque art, among many other cultural references. He then discloses the interplay between fiction and autobiography in the novel, including the real-life existence of some of the characters. In addition, we learn that Jesse's mental conflict and PTSD are articulated through obstacles, riddles, puzzles, and a Hall of Mirrors. Furthermore, Cantú analyzes the role of the double and the mirror images, all the while detailing the variegated geographical settings in the novel and addressing the references to El Greco, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), and Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (1609).

Part III reveals the inherent references in the characters' names and signals to the frequent time and space displacements in *Gods Go Begging*. It also explores the different transitions from dramatic, to tragic, and to ironic tones. Closing this meticulous study, Cantú associates this "novel as a time machine" with jazz and with Vea's lived experiences as a criminal defense attorney. Finally, he explains how the denouement of the novel circles back to its fateful beginning and then insists on the active reader's need to interconnect and assemble narrative fragments in Vea's writing.

All in all, this expansive and impressive study offers an extremely detailed analysis of Vea's trilogy, leaving no stone unturned. *Alfredo Vea's Narrative Trilogy* is a major contribution to Chicana and Latina literary and cultural studies that will, hopefully, bring attention to the oeuvre of this important and unconventional writer.

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Castro Ricalde, Maricruz. *La invención iconográfica: Identidades regionales y nación en el cine mexicano de la edad de oro*. Ciudad de México: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Unidad Cuajimalpa, División de Ciencias de la Comunicación y Diseño, 2022. 390 pp. ISBN 9786-0728-2692-2

En *La invención iconográfica*, Maricruz Castro Ricalde analiza el papel que jugó el cine de la edad de oro en la configuración de imaginarios regionales en el México posrevolucionario. Por un lado, su investigación se centra en Yucatán como un ejemplo paradigmático para examinar las estrategias de incorporación y homogeneización de imágenes y expresiones culturales desde el centro. Por otro lado, explora las tácticas regionales de reapropiación y resistencia ante la invención e imposición iconográfica de la mexicanidad. Yucatán le permite abordar las tensiones entre espacios de la "provincia" idealizados o imaginados como vacíos, la exotización y la creación de estereotipos sobre pueblos originarios como los mayas y la incorporación de imágenes,

prácticas y cultura material propia del sureste mexicano. Para ello, se enfoca en *La noche de los mayas* (Chano Urueta, 1939), *La selva de fuego* (Fernando de Fuentes, 1945) y *Deseada* (Roberto Gavaldón, 1951).

Castro Ricalde recurre a una metodología propia de los estudios culturales para contextualizar dichas obras más allá del “hecho filmico” en sí y enfocarse en el “hecho cinematográfico” en la producción de una iconografía yucateca (267). Es decir, recurre a la incorporación de instrumentos descriptivos (como la identificación de bloques narrativos audiovisuales), citacionales (el análisis de aspectos formales como el encuadre y la iluminación) y documentales (guiones, reseñas, entrevistas, reportajes, testimonios, carteles, *stills*, fuentes literarias, etc.) (45). Es quizá la incorporación de los instrumentos documentales lo que le permite situar con mayor precisión la producción, circulación y recepción de los imaginarios yucatecos derivados de la realización de dichas películas durante las presidencias de Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946) y Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-1952), respectivamente. Para Castro Ricalde, la “identidad mexicana promovida desde el centro es desafiada por las imágenes transmitidas por estos filmes, a pesar del conservadurismo de sus tramas y la tendencia a ratificar estereotipos sobre la región” (28).

Para ahondar en la creación y consumo de imágenes sobre lo maya, su producción simbólica y material, así como la exploración y explotación de la selva, recurre a la noción de “cronotopo” de Bajtin, las “tradiciones inventadas” de Hosbawm y la tensa relación entre las “estrategias” de apropiación y “tácticas” de resistencia de De Certeau. Castro Ricalde resalta el papel que jugó el cine en la “invención” de regiones que posteriormente devinieron en sinécdoques de lo mexicano y aborda el papel de agentes y públicos locales ante la imposición de imaginarios mitologizantes que borrarían la gran diversidad etno-racial regional a la par que apelaban a una “otredad irreductible”. Asimismo, Yucatán aparece por medio del cronotopo filmico como un espacio inmóvil, enigmático y exótico. Tanto *La noche de los mayas* como *Deseada* fueron filmadas *in situ*, lo cual facilitó la exotización del pasado indígena y sus zonas arqueológicas, particularmente el Templo de Kukulcán de Chichén Itzá. Por otra parte, *La selva de fuego* resalta la naturaleza indomable de la región en el contexto del extractivismo chiclero. Es así como aparece el Caribe de forma explícita como parte de una geografía nacional hasta entonces no vista.

Uno de los principales aportes es el enfoque en la figura del intelectual Antonio Mediz Bolio. Mediz Bolio participa de forma directa en las tres producciones, ya sea desde la creación del guion y/o diálogos hasta su adaptación y realización (30). El autor yucateco logra insertar dentro del proyecto nacional lo maya como parte del paisaje nacional, particularmente las zonas arqueológicas de Uxmal y Chichén Itzá, al igual que la complejidad cultural indígena con su obra *La tierra del faisán y del venado* (1922) y la traducción del *Libro de Chilam Balam de Chumayel* (1930), entre otras. Aunque sus contribuciones reproducen el indigenismo posrevolucionario que reducía a “los indígenas como testimonio viviente de un pasado glorioso que contrasta con su atraso y miseria actual” (124), las imágenes de lo maya propuestas por Mediz Bolio “muestran cómo las manifestaciones culturales de esa etnia ancestral fueron unos de los principales instrumentos discursivos para sostener la idea sobre la herencia superior recibida por la región” (126), permitiendo una serie de identificaciones, lecturas y tácticas de resistencia más allá de aquellas impuestas por una iconografía homogeneizante de lo nacional.

La invención iconográfica se divide en tres capítulos con una extensa introducción y un breve apartado con conclusiones. El primero se enfoca en *La noche de los mayas*, con guion de Mediz Bolio y fotografía de Gabriel Figueroa. Para la autora, la película “colaboró en la celebración de un pasado indígena imaginario, a través de la fotografía de sus expresiones

arquitectónicas y la estetización de sus ceremonias y rituales” (159), lo cual refleja las políticas indigenistas propias del cardenismo. El segundo analiza *La selva de fuego*, protagonizada por Dolores del Río y Arturo de Córdova, cuya trama “alimentó los imaginarios sobre la selva que devora y degrada, y reafirmó el estereotipo de la mujer en desgracia” (166) enmarcada en el contexto de la explotación chiclera y el legado de la Guerra de Castas, con la presencia del tránsito de trabajadores afrodescendientes, centroamericanos y migrantes de distintos orígenes como libaneses, chinos y griegos. En ella, el cuerpo de la mujer aparece como territorio para ser conquistado y se presenta al trópico “como un sitio vacío y sin historia” (260). Finalmente, el último analiza *Deseada*, también protagonizada por Dolores del Río, lo que permite la exploración de arquetipos femeninos al presentarnos una mujer madura que “se asume como una mujer maya” pero que debe “blanquearse” culturalmente (266). A pesar del encajonamiento melodramático que lleva a la protagonista a suicidarse en un cenote evocando un sacrificio ritual, según Castro Ricalde, “laten el potencial transformador del personaje femenino protagonista, el poder de la cultura yucateca a través de su música, y la perdurabilidad y ensanchamiento de su paisaje visual (selva, haciendas, pequeñas comunidades, zonas arqueológicas)” (342). Es decir, *Deseada*, al igual que las otras dos películas, facilita la circulación de cuerpos, discursos, prácticas y paisajes que permiten otro tipo de identificaciones y percepciones sobre la región que van más allá de una representación estereotipada de lo yucateco.

Castro Ricalde recurre al cine entonces para abordar las complejas respuestas contradictorias ante la imposición de imaginarios que borran la diversidad etno-racial de la región, su historia y su gran complejidad cultural a la vez que reproducían el imperativo del mestizaje como fin y horizonte político, con sus respectivas demandas heteropatriarcales con respecto al papel de la mujer y, sobre todo, las aportaciones culturales, materiales e inmateriales de los mayas.

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Coelho Neto, Henrique Maximiano. *Sphinx: A Neo-Gothic Novel from Brazil*. Trans. Kim F. Olson. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2023. pp. 234. ISBN 9781-6032-9623-6

Henrique Maximiano Coelho Neto (1864–1934), was a prolific Brazilian author, journalist, educator, and statesman. He was born in Caxias, Maranhão, in the Northeast of Brazil, to a Portuguese father and indigenous mother. After his schooling, he attempted medicine and law, eventually deciding on a career in education in Rio de Janeiro. By some estimates, he published around 130 volumes in a variety of genres: novels, short stories, theater, poetry, *crônicas*, as well as academic and didactic essays on literature, art, history, politics, society, and religion. He was one of the most widely read authors in Brazil during the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He helped establish the Academia Brasileira de Letras (Brazilian Academy of Letters) in 1897 and was nominated for the Nobel Prize in 1932. Nevertheless, Coelho Neto is virtually unknown in English translation. Until now, only Isaac Goldberg’s 1921 translation of the short story, “Os pombos” (“The Pigeons”), was available. Kim F. Olson’s translation of *Esfinxe* (*Sphinx*), therefore, marks Coelho Neto’s first novel in English, and the first translation of his work in over a century.

Given his popularity during his lifetime and prodigious output, why is Coelho Neto not more widely known, such as his contemporary Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis? In the introduction to the translation, M. Elizabeth Ginway notes Coelho Neto's "florid literary style and historical subject matter caused him to fall out of favor among readers and critics," especially after the *Semana de Arte Moderna*, an avant-garde exposition held in São Paulo in February 1922 (viii). Iconoclastic in nature, the younger *modernistas* challenged traditional forms of art. They sought a complete rupture from the Parnassian and symbolist poets for their formalistic, rhetorical artifice and the realist and premodernist novelists "for their combination of nationalist themes and traditional (ornate) literary style" (viii). Consequently, Coelho Neto suffered an intellectual and literary ostracism that lasted until the 1990s when publishers began reprinting his major novels, which renewed academic interest.

Sphinx is a story of forbidden attraction and desire of a transgender protagonist, James Marian. Set against the lush backdrop of belle époque Rio de Janeiro, the novel is replete with fantastical and supernatural elements, such as visions, dreams, ghostly apparitions, astral projection, occult magic, and science. The novel opens on the Barkley Boardinghouse on Rua Paissandu in Rio de Janeiro, housing mostly white, middleclass men: students, writers, artists, musicians, and businessmen. The only women are Miss Barkley, the proprietor, and Miss Fanny, both from England. Soon, the eccentric and reclusive James Marian, also British, takes up residence. His presence provokes an aura of mystery due to the juxtaposition of his Adonis physique and feminine face. Some boarders find his appearance unnerving, while others, like Miss Fanny, find him eerily attractive. James approaches the unnamed male narrator, asking him to translate his diary into Portuguese.

An orphan, James was raised by a housekeeper and Arhat, an older gentleman who serves as his guardian and tutor. After several years, Arhat passes away but visits the young man as a spirit, revealing the truth of his identity. A decade before, a brother and sister had perished in an accident. Combining occult powers with his skills as a surgeon, Arhat joined the body of the boy to the head of the girl, thus creating James Marian. (The title of the novel refers to the mythical creature with a woman's head, lion's body, and eagle's wings.) After receiving a sizeable inheritance, James travels the world. Unable to fully live as a man or a woman, he wrestles with two competing genders while repressing sexual desires. When James fails to reciprocate Miss Fanny's romantic feelings, she falls ill and dies of tuberculosis. The narrator is also drawn to James, knowing his secret. They soon grow close, but James collects his manuscript and abruptly leaves the city. The narrator experiences a mental breakdown, awaking months later in an asylum.

Readers will find the paratextual materials especially useful. Kim F. Olson includes helpful footnotes explaining place names, vocabulary, and cultural allusions. In her "Note on the Translation," she views the novel as a series of contrasts: aristocracy and working classes, the spiritual and corporeal, melody and discord, man and nature, attraction and repulsion. In the "Introduction" and "Afterward," Ginway and Jess Nevins, respectively, situate Coelho Neto's *Sphinx* within the Brazilian sociohistorical context, as well as the novel's place in neo-gothic horror and science fiction. Perhaps the greatest contribution of these essays is the treatment of issues of gender, specifically queer and transgender identity. Nevins views *Sphinx* at the vanguard of queer world literature (218), and Ginway observes, "James Marian's character raises issues of repressed homosexuality and bisexuality as a threat to heteronormative society, evoking fears of degeneration that could undermine the values of Brazilian society at the turn of the century . . ." (xxiv). In the sympathetic character of James Marian, according to Olson, we see the conflict

between “darkness” and “brightness” (xxxvi). He is “male and female, emotional and physical, beautiful and repugnant” (xxxvi).

Olson deftly renders Coelho Neto’s “authorial style and exoticism [...] so that readers of English could have the opportunity to experience similarly remarkable thrills and repulsive horrors (xxxiv). The translation captures Coelho Neto’s “esoteric vocabulary” and “flowery language” while balancing the dialogue’s formal and informal registers, idiomatic expressions, and vernacular particular to belle époque Rio de Janeiro (xxxv). Coelho Neto’s *Sphinx* is a welcome contribution to Brazilian literature in English translation long overdue for wider critical recognition and consideration.

James R. Krause, Utah Valley University

Enjuto-Rangel, Cecilia, Sebastiaan Faber, Pedro García-Caro, and Robert Patrick Newcomb, eds. *Transatlantic Studies: Latin America, Iberia, and Africa*. Liverpool, UK: Liverpool UP, 2022. 467 pp. ISBN 9781-8020-7742-1

Upon opening this collection of essays on Transatlantic Studies, readers enter an ongoing debate in which they find no static definition of Transatlantic Studies, if that is the right label, nor a clear indication of how we should understand or use it, nor to what end. Quite the contrary, we find a discussion of a complex field of studies in constant movement, full of fissures and contradictions, without definitive borders, categories, or areas. Such an understanding requires readers to relocate their perspective—and here I am appropriating Francisco Fernández de Alba’s conceptualization (21)—in order to rethink how we study history and culture in the diverse transnational spaces of Spanish and Portuguese-speaking Africa, Latin America, the Iberian Peninsula, and the US. In its transgression of national and linguistic boundaries, this volume questions the whole notion of area studies. By understanding Transatlantic Studies as a critical space of conflict, of tension, we can re-evaluate cultural histories, geographical divisions, nationalistic narratives, and academic fields. Hence, this volume gives us the tools to relocate ourselves, as Fernández de Alba tells us, and to recognize the lack of universality, to seek to break limitations, and to accept fluctuations (21).

With this movement in mind, this volume’s structure inserts readers directly into the debate. In “Transatlantic Methodologies,” the first section of the book, the editors set the stage to explore “meta-critical debates and the field’s ideological underpinnings” (11). Here, we find a set of very different perspectives when it comes to Transatlantic Studies, which emphasizes conflict, and hence, flux. There is not a singular definition, but rather, positions, ranging from the almost utopic concept of a third space, where we find a new kind of “neo-Hispanism,” aware of and free from “its colonialist burden and its concomitant baggage of superiority and resentment, but also of needless theoretical complexity” (5), to a “skeptical and outright dismissive” perspective that “sees Transatlantic Studies as an opportunistic attempt to shore up the hegemony of the Spanish language as the basis for Iberian and pan-Hispanic identities” (6). We find a wide variety of approaches: from the more outright approach of Julio Ortega’s understanding of Transatlantic Studies, in which we still have one language (Spanish) and one axis (Latin America/Spain), to more complex approaches such as that of Abril Trigo, in whose definition nonetheless one could find some limitation in her excessive focus on right-wing Spanish political discourse to justify the pitfalls of Transatlantic Studies. Extremes and minor critiques aside, the different levels and

approaches in this section set the tone for a rich and fruitful discussion in which Transatlantic Studies seems to escape any attempt to be constrained by an exclusive perspective. This impossibility of pinning down what Transatlantic Studies should or should not be is refreshing for how it allows for the inclusion and widening of perspectives, presenting readers with the clashes, unexpected presences, geographies, relations, and problems of a field in flux, which in turn promotes dialogue that encourages us to dismantle traditional structures.

In the five sections and thirty-five chapters that follow, the volume contains a multitude of case studies of how we could practice Transatlantic Studies, ranging from the more traditional categories focused on novel, cinema, painting, or poetry to more unexpected proposals such as islands, the media, and classroom pedagogy. Here, readers will find some pearls, such as Aurélie Vialette's, Sebastiaan Faber's or N. Michelle Murray's contributions, just to mention a few, in which authors question the canon and widen the archive by drawing our attention to new voices that make us reconsider not only the past but also the present, specifically, the traces of coloniality that may remain in our views. The use of case studies in the form of short essays responds to the pedagogical approach that guides the book, which is addressed to "an audience of undergraduate and graduate students" (1). Some of the examples, shortened versions of prior publications, have been previously published in a volume on the same topic, which might make readers question the evolution of Transatlantic Studies. However, these older yet not outdated articles make the field's past instantly accessible as they combine in dialogue with more recent analysis, the same way that the more relevant voices of the many diverse fields included, such as Joan Ramon Resina or Julio Ortega, are intertwined with up and coming figures, such as Aurélie Vialette and N. Michelle Murray, which allows us to see how the discussion is being reconsidered and expanded in exciting new directions.

Although the editors divide all these contributions under general sections, the chapters transcend their labels and are consummately linked by their themes and subthemes. Once again, the goal of establishing a stable limit seems to fail, which is the editors' stated intention and one of the many laudatory aspects of this volume: conversation and conflict here remain ongoing between sections and even within each specific contribution. To mention only one of many instances of inter-volume dialogue, Pedro García-Caro, for example, brings back Abril Trigo's argument on the reinstatement of Hispanism to show how Transatlantic Studies is not the beginning of Hispanism, but its end (188). Indeed, this volume's internal dialogue precludes the isolation of the analyses contained therein, interconnecting and extending the authors' meta-critical discussion of the field.

As the editors recognize in their epilogue, this might not be a perfect volume: Africa is under-represented; scholars working in Spanish outnumber those working in Portuguese; and English is still the chosen language of communication (443). However, they achieve their goal with flying colors: they create an example of an interactive space always in the process of rearticulation (Ortega 145), in search of a supranational horizontal space, as Antonio Gómez López-Quiñones calls it (320), in which diversity is the norm. *Transatlantic Studies* acknowledges the pitfalls of the field but sidesteps them by critically addressing and folding them into its ever-developing framework.

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Falconí Trávez, Diego. *From Ashes to Text: Andean Literature of Sexual Dissidence in the 20th Century*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2022. 258 pp. ISBN 9781-5095-5016-6

Six years after winning the 2016 Casa de las Américas Prize, Diego Falconí Trávez's essay *De las cenizas al texto* has been translated into English by Carrie Hamilton and published by Polity Press's Critical South series. An insightful and creative intervention on literary theory, *From Ashes to Text* discusses the textual representation and writing of sex-dissidence in the Andes—a region sidelined in “certain fundamental Latin American theoretical volumes” on the subject (14). With a vindicative but playful tone, Falconí Trávez resolves this omission by reconstructing the violent and fragmented history of Andean sex-dissidents, who were misrepresented as sodomites and punished by burning since the 16th-century Spanish colonization. *From Ashes to Text* analyzes the textual remains of those sodomites' bodies in modern and contemporary writing from Ecuador, Perú, Bolivia, and Colombia.

By employing “a critical standpoint that brings together gender and post/decolonial studies,” Falconí Trávez creates a terminology (e.g., “Andeansodomite time” and “methodology of the ash”) that aspires to reflect the Andes' fractured sociocultural fabric (8). Such terms (and others proposed throughout the book) are not just “academic gimmick[s]” but tools to highlight the incommensurability of Andean sex-dissidence (15). One of the major accomplishments of *From Ashes to Text* is how it maneuvers the geopolitics of knowledge, which legitimizes theories developed on the Global North, such as Queer studies, and promotes their acritical reproduction on regions under colonial or neocolonial rule. Falconí Trávez chooses a strategic approach “to think of different and productive ways of circulation” for knowledge production (157). The aim is not to assemble a literary canon for Andean sex-dissidence but to discuss how sexuality intersects with ethnicity/race, class, and the colonial divide.

Although the paratexts only acknowledge a new section at the end of Chapter 3, *From Ashes to Text* is not only a translation but a revised edition that includes several changes and an updated bibliography to the original Spanish text. Chapter 1 analyzes the Ecuadorian Pablo Palacios' short story “Un hombre muerto a puntapiés” and the critical discourse that opposes Jorge Icaza to him, each representing one side of the binaries “social literature/cosmopolitan literature” and “true Andean/alienated Andean, Indigenous character/modern character” (51). To challenge these clichés, Falconí Trávez proposes a reworking of Antonio Cornejo Polar's concept of “contradictory heterogeneity” through “*loca*-lizing” and “re-sent(i)ment,” critical operations that “consider the materiality of the body and its participation in the text” (32). As a result of this “heterofagcontradictory reading,” Palacios' short story is reinserted in the Andean literary cannon as a text showcasing the historical erasure of sex-dissidence, traditionally presented “as a foreign and neocolonizing issue” (53).

Chapter 2 discusses the Peruvian Jaime Bayly's autobiographical/autofictional novels *No se lo digas a nadie* and *La noche es virgen* to illustrate the incorporation of global labels for sexual dissidence (gay and bisexual) in the Andes in the late 1990s. Since the migration to the Global North is a significant episode in both novels, Falconí Trávez proposes to read Bayly's alter egos as “*mestizos*” (in a cultural sense) who, notwithstanding their privileges in the Andes, recognize that their whiteness is insufficient to participate in the US or European white sexual economy. For that reason, although Bayly's alter egos aspire to the consumerist model of gay, they ultimately yearn for their national belonging and activate “*mestizaje* as a place of legitimate international enunciation” (67).

Chapter 3 focuses on the Bolivian Julieta Paredes, whose poetry and activism embody an impurity that challenges traditional understandings of ethnicity and sexuality in the Andes. An Aymara author who doesn't write in Aymara due to colonization, Paredes employs the “*Puruma* myth” (which means “uncultivated land” and “virgin woman”) “to insert the history of women [and lesbian women] into the Indigenous cosmology” and its man/woman binary (102). As stated before, this chapter includes a new section, “Epilogue, 2021,” that acknowledges the accusation of abuse against Paredes by part of the collective Comunidad Mujeres Creando. In contrast to the other Andean writers discussed in *From Ashes to Text*, Paredes seemed to have an “exemplary value for sexual dissidence at the national or regional level,” similar to Pedro Lemebel and Néstor Perlongher for the Southern Cone (19). Now Falconí Trávez sadly recognizes that Paredes's case confirms “the hypothesis of contradictory heterobutcheneity,” the violent fragmentation implanted by cisheteronormativity in the region (120).

Chapter 4 shares several similitudes with Chapter 2 since the Colombian Fernando Vallejo's autobiographical/autofictional novels articulate another version of the “*mestizo*” migrating to the Global North. A controversial aspect of this chapter is to consider Colombia as a “sub-Andean” country due to the less significant presence of a “political Andean body... expressed under community law” (122); that is to say, the ancestral Indigenous traditions that were synthesized by the Tawantisuyu/Inca empire. Falconí Trávez employs an anthropological understanding of the Andes over a geographical one that sometimes leans towards essentializing and uniformizing the sociocultural dynamics in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia (e.g., Andean urban reciprocity in Chapter 2).

Finally, Chapter 5 has the most significant revisions compared to the 2016 Spanish edition, including a new section and several changes to the subtitles. By analyzing the Ecuadorian Adalberto Ortiz's short story “La entundada/bewitched,” Falconí Trávez discusses the articulation of “possible dissidents that came before the explosion of queer and that did not need queer in order to be disobedient” (159). Significantly, the new version of the chapter eliminates a reference to the Tunda mythical character as a trans or intersex person. On the other hand, Falconí Trávez includes an extensive discussion about Ortiz's “*mestizo/mulato*” identity and the transposition of Afro-Andean peoples' historical trauma in the Tunda, whose polymorphic body expresses the incommensurability of sexual dissidence from the Global South.

An original and provocative work, *From Ashes to Text* successfully applies a decolonial framework to the literary study of Andean sex-dissidence. Although the anthropological definition of the Andes is open to debate, Falconí Trávez offers a sophisticated review of the historical and structural complexities surrounding sex-dissidence bodies in a region marked by a foundational act of violent colonization—the burning of sodomites.

Javier Muñoz-Díaz, Farmingdale State College

Fornoff, Carolyn. *Subjunctive Aesthetics: Mexican Cultural Production in the Era of Climate Change*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2024. 264 pp. ISBN 9780-8265-0618-4

Subjunctive Aesthetics is the first book-length study that examines how contemporary Mexican artists, writers, filmmakers, activists, and other cultural agents respond in variegated ways to the current environmental crisis characterized by the effects of anthropogenic climate change and the intensification of profit-driven extractivist practices. A leading scholar of

environmental humanities, author of award-winning articles such as “Planetary Poetics of Extinction in Contemporary Mexican Poetry” (2022 LASA Mexico Best Article in the Humanities Prize) and coeditor of volumes like *Pushing Past the Human in Latin American Cinema* (with Gisela Heffes), Fornoff is particularly well-equipped to analyze the profound repercussions of climate change and extractivism in planetary, transnational, national, and local contexts.

In this book, Fornoff shows that the current socioenvironmental conditions crucially inform not only the production and consumption of cultural products, but also their content, aesthetic strategies, predominant affects, and views of the future. Fornoff’s main argument is that cultural initiatives and artistic production touching upon environmental themes in twenty-first century Mexico are not primarily involved in “realist, forensic, or evidentiary strategies of truth telling” (4) that often go accompanied by “doom and gloom” (116) narratives or, alternatively, “elegiac or nostalgic” (101) emotions. As Fornoff shows, these traditional, didactic strategies were predominant in pioneering environmental production of authors like Homero Aridjis or José Emilio Pacheco, who endeavored to establish environmental issues as crucial concerns in artistic, political, and social arenas during the second half of the twentieth century. A few decades later, evidentiary strategies continue to play a sizable role in contemporary Mexico but are increasingly supplemented by what Fornoff theorizes as “subjunctive aesthetics,” that is, forms of cultural intervention that embrace imagination, desire, ambiguity, supposition, contingency, and relational positionality in search of opening new ways of inhabiting the planet. This aesthetic is how contemporary Mexican artists and activists creatively engage in a context in which environmental issues have attained legitimacy across political and cultural sectors, while at the same time the effects of climate change are rapidly intensifying and traditional rhetorical strategies are seemingly losing potency and/or have been co-opted by the state.

In each chapter of the book, Fornoff’s acute critical eye identifies and theorizes distinct aesthetic trends and cultural strategies that respond *subjunctively* to the existential “foreclosure” brought about by detrimental effects of climate change and extractivism in Mexico (8). The first chapter, “Environmental Rewriting,” centers on Verónica Gerber Bicecci’s artistic practices to theorize rewriting as a defining subjunctive strategy of the current times. Fornoff argues convincingly that Gerber Bicecci’s *Otro día... (poemas sintéticos)* (2019) and *La compañía* (2019), which rewrite José Juan Tablada’s *Un día... (poemas sintéticos)* and Amparo Dávila’s *El huésped* respectively, engage in thematic and formal terms with “the expansive, sedimented temporalities of the Anthropocene” (28) in service of imagining a planetary future devoid of “the toxic legacies of colonial-capitalist accumulation” (40). The second chapter, “Land Defense and Counterfactual Mourning,” turns to performance artist Naomi Rincón Gallardo’s *Trilogía de cuevas* (2019) to think through the emerging, imaginative ways of mourning in response to the murder of Indigenous environmental activists such as Samir Flores and Bety Cariño. While antiextractivist art predominantly employs serious or moralizing tones, Rincón Gallardo’s work mobilizes sensuality and playfulness to stage alternative, hyperbolic worlds characterized by Indigenous and feminist ways of relating to the land.

The third chapter, “Extinction Poetics,” deals with a corpus of poetic works, including Karen Villeda’s *Dodo* (2013), Xitlálitl Rodríguez Mendoza’s *Jaws (Tiburón)* (2015) and Maricela Guerrero’s *El sueño de toda célula* (2018), that interrogate the material, structural, and even symbolic frameworks enabling extinction of species. Fornoff persuasively contends that these poetic works instantiate experimental grammars grounded on ambiguity and contiguity that complicate and destabilize anthropocentric narratives, paving the way for “more inclusive modes of relating across species” (113).

The last two chapters depart methodologically from the rest of the book because they take into consideration how the sociological conditions of production, distribution, and reception can shape cultural products in crucial ways. The fourth chapter, “The Rural Resilience Film,” focuses on documentaries like Everardo González’s *Cuates de Australia* (2013), Betzabé García’s *Los reyes del pueblo que no existe* (2015), and Laura Herrero Garvín’s *El Remolino* (2016), that sensorially immerse spectators in the life of Mexican rural towns enduring the damaging effects of environmental crisis, particularly scarcity or excess of water, drought or flooding. Since these documentaries share aesthetic qualities valued by film festivals and primarily consumed by urban populations, Fornoff argues that they can provide an apt image of communal responses to environmental degradation, but also run the risk of presenting “rural crisis as a commodity to be sold to urban audiences,” whose fears, hopes, and anxieties are purposefully addressed in the films (147, 148). The final chapter, “Greening Mexican Cinema,” centers on initiatives of filmmaking and film exhibition that do not rely on the structures of fossil-fueled modernity, but instead imagine alternative models of sociability. Cine Móvil ToTo, an ambulatory cinema fueled by bicycles and solar energy, is one of the main initiatives considered in this chapter.

Subjunctive Aesthetics successfully probes the heterogeneous entanglement of processes and scales at stake in the era of climate change: geological temporalities and systems; nonhuman agents such as biological species and weather phenomena; transnational dynamics of capital accumulation; national state policies undergirding fossil-fueled development; local movements of land defense led by Indigenous activists; prevailing social categories of class, race, and gender; sociological dynamics of art production and consumption; aesthetic/formal strategies of writers and filmmakers—all these components intersect and play a role in Fornoff’s highly complex, nuanced analysis. In this sense, *Subjunctive Aesthetics* is a timely contribution to a growing scholarship that includes Cristina Rivera Garza’s *Escrituras geológicas* (2022) and Jens Andermann’s *Tierras en trance* (2018), to name just two, that introduce planetary, nonhuman agents and processes in the examination of cultural production, relating them with predominant categories of cultural studies, like race, gender, class, and nation. *Subjunctive Aesthetics* is an innovative, necessary contribution that will make an enduring impact on the fields of Mexican cultural studies and Latin American environmental studies. Fornoff opens up productive lines of thinking that will generate further discussion as the global climate continues to change in the coming decades.

Jorge Quintana Navarrete, Dartmouth College

García Blizzard, Mónica. *The White Indians of Mexican Cinema: Racial Masquerade throughout the Golden Age*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2022. 326 pp. ISBN 9781-4384-8803-5

The White Indians of Mexican Cinema: Racial Masquerade Throughout the Golden Age por Mónica García Blizzard, analiza roles de personas indígenas jugados por actores blancos en el cine mexicano, principalmente durante la época de oro. La obra hace una intervención en la historia del cine mexicano, en la historia de las cuestiones de la raza y de la clase social en México y muestra como la estratificación social afecta el desarrollo del cine en el país. El libro de García Blizzard tiene muchos aspectos que valen la pena enfatizar en cuanto a su intervención teórica e histórica. El primero es el diálogo que se realiza en la introducción entre varios campos teóricos—entre cuestiones de raza, blancura, indigeneidad, y teorías de cine—junto con una investigación

impresionante de archivo. Estos aspectos se destacan en su análisis de cada película también. Para cada película se analizan los aspectos cinematográficos, de la ropa, del maquillaje y cada comentario se relaciona de forma clara con esos temas mayores. Además de su diálogo con la teoría y la crítica, agrega observaciones a partir de la cultura visual manifestada en periódicos.

Mientras que analiza las películas, García Blizzard comunica con varios públicos a la vez: un público muy familiarizado con el cine mexicano, y las manifestaciones de raza y clase en su cine, y otros, por ejemplo el de estudiantes en un curso introductorio al cine latinoamericano, o colegas expertos en otros cines, que podrían aprovecharse de su familiarización con teorías e ideas raciales de los Estados Unidos. Estos últimos grupos podrían aprender de la relevancia del análisis del cine mexicano en el desarrollo de estas ideas en este país. El diálogo en la introducción y a principio de cada capítulo entre las ideas propuestas por García Blizzard y con teóricos de la raza y críticos del cine mexicano tiene algo para lectores de varios niveles de conocimiento de los temas del libro.

Otro aspecto importante de *The White Indians of Mexican Cinema* es su enfoque temporal e histórico. Además de corroborar sus planteamientos con lo que se ven en las películas, se presenta evidencia de una investigación en la recepción original de las películas, además de la investigación de archivo ya mencionada. Los capítulos del libro de García Blizzard siguen la trayectoria del cine comercial durante y después de la época de oro, y de esta manera en el libro no solo se analizan los melodramas bien conocidos, sino que también lleva su perspectiva crítica hacia otros ejemplos de cine comercial durante esta época. Las discusiones de película también comentan conexiones con cine en décadas posteriores. García Blizzard realiza un comentario sobre como surgen temas de raza, clase social, y el desarrollo del cine, durante épocas distintas de gran cambio político y social en el país.

Cada capítulo tiene un enfoque particular, por ejemplo, en el primer capítulo se enfocan en el rol de las mujeres en las películas *Zitari* (1931) y *Chilam Balam* (1957). En el segundo capítulo, se aborda el tema de la idealización de zonas rurales, particularmente Tehuantepec, en *La Zandunga* (1938) y *Tierra de pasiones* (1943). El tercer capítulo conecta roles de “indios” con el indigenismo y la ideología revolucionaria, en *La india bonita* (1938), *El indio* (1939), *María Candelaria* (1944), y *Maclovía* (1948), y se dan contra-ejemplos de un indigenismo no apoyado por programas gubernamentales en *Janitzio* (1935) y *Raíces* (1955). De manera similar, en el cuarto capítulo se problematiza la representación de un mestizaje blanco en *La noche de los mayas* (1939) y *Deseada* (1951). Luego se muestran cambios en la representación de “lo indio” en torno al 68, en *María Isabel* (1967) y su secuela, *El amor de María Isabel* (1970). El último capítulo sigue los temas de género tocados en los capítulos uno y cinco con una discusión del deseo y la mujer ‘india’ en *Tribu* (1935), *Lola Casanova* (1949), *Tizoc (Amor indio)* (1957) y *El violetero* (1960).

Al tocar temas de género, deseo, mestizaje, identidad nacional y aspectos religiosos de la cultura mexicana, *The White Indians of Mexican Cinema* muestra cómo como los cambios sociales afectan la representación de personajes indígenas por actores blancos en el cine. Sin embargo, como se sostiene en la conclusión, a principios del siglo XXI la representación visual de comunidades indígenas en el cine es todavía problemática, y esta representación refuerza o justifica la desigualdad social.

Glickman, Nora, ed. *Gonzalo Sobejano-Rafael Gutiérrez Girardot. Epistolario de dos hispanistas (1981-1995)*. Murcia: Edit-um (Ediciones de la Universidad de Murcia), 2022. 240pp. ISBN 9788-4189-3656-2

Abundan los libros que recogen la correspondencia entre figuras literarias porque estos nos ofrecen acceso a sus juicios privados que no siempre están al alcance público. A veces se trata de un arte poética; otras un anticipo de sus proyectos, una revisión de sus lecturas, sus predilecciones, sus amistades. Este tomo recoge la correspondencia entre Gonzalo Sobejano (Murcia, 1928-2019), el insigne crítico literario, catedrático de las universidades más prestigiosas y hasta poeta (un aspecto de su vida literaria poco conocido) y Rafael Gutiérrez Girardot (Colombia, 1928-2005), uno de los más respetados investigadores del modernismo hispanoamericano y catedrático de filosofía de la Universidad de Bonn, ambos doctorados en Alemania y muy involucrados tanto en el mundo académico y literario alemán como en el europeo e hispanoamericano. Entre 1981 y 1995 se establece un diálogo literario entre Sobejano desde los Estados Unidos y Gutiérrez Girardot desde Alemania—largas cartas sobre sus actividades literarias y personales ya que los dos estaban casados con mujeres alemanas que en cierto sentido los unía y reforzaba su pertenencia simultánea a dos mundos: el hispano y el germánico.

Aquí se pueden apreciar las relaciones trasatlánticas que ya existían entre España e Hispanoamérica. Aunque una revisión de la bibliografía de libros y artículos escritos por Sobejano revela la gran amplitud que abarcaba su conocimiento, desde la filosofía alemana (*Nietzsche en España*), a la teoría e historia literaria (*El epíteto en la lírica española, Novela española de nuestro tiempo*), esta correspondencia nos confirma su increíble avidez por conocer: se interesaba por todos los siglos y todos los géneros tanto españoles como hispanoamericanos, desde el XVII con sus artículos sobre Cervantes, el siglo XIX con sus numerosos estudios sobre la obra de Clarín, el siglo XX con Delibes y la novela de posguerra, los escritores del Boom y los poetas de la llamada generación del 50, como José Ángel Valente. En sus cartas comenta sus lecturas y su recelo ante la comercialización de la literatura y la gran (y equivocada) celebridad de las novelas de García Márquez. Gutiérrez Girardot, a su vez, comparte esta preocupación y con su estilo provocador y vehemente reitera su batalla incesante contra la interpretación e importancia erróneas que se han dado a la obra de Ortega y Gasset. Más que la ansiedad de influencias a lo Harold Bloom, aquí se nota la obsesión con rectificar una falsa idolatría.

La vida de los dos es una prolífica marcha cultural constante. Nada los detiene. Toda su vida es literatura y trabajo intelectual: congresos, invitaciones, artículos, puestos de profesor visitante. Se mandan copias de sus estudios y ponencias para recibir los comentarios del amigo, casi siempre halagadores, y se quejan del incesante trabajo de su vida ajetreada acudiendo a invitaciones, a congresos y homenajes en que tienen que participar y la queja sempiterna de los mayores de lo afortunados que son los críticos más jóvenes. En esta correspondencia se ve cómo funciona este mundo literario donde hay una red de conexiones que facilitan oportunidades para ponencias y charlas, una verdadera red a la que es imprescindible pertenecer para triunfar. También hablan de la política académica, las rencillas y enemistades entre hispanistas y colegas que llevaron a Sobejano a cambiar de universidad más de una vez y a Gutiérrez Girardot a mantenerse en un exilio voluntario.

El tomo fue editado por Nora Glickman, catedrática de la Universidad de la Ciudad de New York, quien nos proporciona una excelente introducción a la vida y obra de los dos escritores, un resumen de los temas más significativos de las cartas y unas notas aclaratorias muy útiles de las referencias encontradas en las cartas.

Este libro complementa y amplía los epistolarios ya existentes como *Miguel Delibes Gonzalo Sobejano Correspondencia 1960-2009* que consta de 25 cartas de Sobejano entre otras de hispanistas y escritores del siglo XX y *Cinco ensayos sobre Rafael Gutiérrez Girardot y Rafael Gutiérrez Girardot y España: 1950-53*, los libros de Juan Guillermo Gómez García que recogen cartas inéditas de distintas figuras literarias, entre ellas Sobejano, y ofrecen una stampa magnífica de los años que pasó Gutiérrez Girardot en el Colegio Guadalupano de Madrid donde también estudió Sobejano. Este nuevo epistolario recogido y editado por Glickman es una aportación muy valiosa a los ya existentes ya que nos proporciona muchos datos nuevos y una visión aun más íntima y personal de dos figuras estelares del hispanismo académico del siglo XX, iluminando la “intrahistoria” de una época fascinante de la literatura hispánica contemporánea.

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Hernández, Gloria, ed. *Desde el centro de América: Miradas alternativas*. Ciudad de México: Alfaguara, 2023. 278 pp. ISBN 9786-0738-3601-2

Gloria Hernández ha hecho un trabajo admirable al reunir cuentos de veintiuna escritoras centroamericanas contemporáneas de gran talento en esta antología que cumple con la promesa de su título de ofrecer “miradas alternativas” a la región. La antologadora, quien en su valioso prólogo promete una segunda entrega, ha dividido el volumen en siete secciones, con representación de escritoras de todos los países de la región: Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Belice, Nicaragua, Panamá y Guatemala. Como se verá a continuación, la colección se destaca tanto por la importancia de los temas tratados como por la notable destreza narrativa de las escritoras.

Honduras está representado con tres relatos que presentan los problemas que enfrentan las mujeres en la casa, el trabajo y en el matrimonio. “La cinta roja” de María Eugenia Ramos revela las consecuencias nefastas del incesto para todos los miembros de una familia. “Correr desnuda” de Jessica Isla explora con un grado de humor las vicisitudes de la vida laboral de las mujeres, tanto fuera como dentro de la casa, y cómo terminan estas por trastornar sus vidas. “Aquellos que fuimos” de Sara Rico-Godoy narra la historia de una pareja que por motivos políticos se ve obligada a vivir en el exilio, donde termina separándose.

Los tres aportes de Costa Rica hablan de cómo el paso de los años afecta a una mujer, una relación fallida y como la lengua puede afectar a las personas. “La memoria es un pájaro” de Karla Sterloff ofrece una reflexión sobre el envejecimiento y la pérdida de la memoria de la abuela de la narradora, la cual se da cuenta de que también va envejeciendo. “Carcajadas” de Catalina Murillo es un estudio de un matrimonio de cuyo fracaso no puede recuperarse el marido. “Martita o el arte de arrasar con un diminutivo” de Laura Flores presenta la vida regimentada de una secretaria de escuela condenada a convivir con su nombre infantil y cómo ella, una mujer que aparenta tener mucho autocontrol encuentra una sorprendente válvula de escape para expresar su frustración en los extramuros del colegio.

Los tres cuentos de autoras salvadoreñas hablan de la compasión, la explotación económica y la inseguridad pública. “Amable” de Ligia María Orellana relata la muerte prematura de una alumna universitaria y cómo las mujeres pueden ayudarse mutuamente, a través de actos de bondad, a sobrellevar las injusticias y tristezas que con frecuencia les depara la vida. “Casting” de Michelle Recinos expone las injusticias y abusos de la sociedad contemporánea a través de la explotación de una pobrecita mamá adolescente de unos doce años y su hijo por parte de la

fundación Querubines, que busca un bebé fotogénico para su publicidad. “Diálogos infecundos” de Patricia Lovos enfrenta la situación de una madre del campo con la de una mujer de la ciudad que no quiere tener hijos debido a la problemática social, específicamente, por la violencia que azota a su país.

Belice está representado con dos relatos que ofrecen una radiografía de la sociedad beliceña. “La verdad es que aquí una mujer jamás florecerá” de Holly Edgell presenta los prejuicios sociales y el machismo que enfrentan las mujeres que les impiden realizar sus sueños y vivir sus vidas a plenitud. “El vendedor de pepitos” de Zoila Ellis demuestra como el crimen puede destruir la vida de una familia humilde. El cuento de Holly Edgel aparece en dos versiones, la original en inglés y una traducción al español.

Los tres cuentos de Nicaragua ofrecen diversas visiones de la violencia, la evasión y la violencia de género. “Fuera de foco” de Madeline Mendieta presenta las desaventuras de un bienintencionado documentalista que se propone filmar la vida de las prostitutas travestis de Managua con el fin de denunciar cómo ese grupo sexual minoritario carece de derechos. “Encuentro azul” de Aura Guerra-Artola narra las vacaciones de una mujer hastiada con su vida en Chefchaouen, la ciudad azul de Marruecos, donde ella tiene un encuentro fantástico con otra persona que altera su estado de ánimo. “Los enseres del hogar” de Carmen Ortega presenta un caso extremo de violencia de género e infanticidio que lleva a una mujer pobre a planificar la muerte de su abusador.

Los cuatro relatos de Panamá tienen como temas el amor, el incesto, el autoerotismo y la prostitución. “Los remedios de Miss Harrington” de Eyra Harbar es una historia de amor que demuestra cómo los productos del horno de una vendedora ambulante pueden, como por arte de magia, sanar y animar a un viejo a enamorarse de ella. “La llena”, también de Harbar, presenta un caso de incesto que destruye la vida de una joven de catorce años, al igual que la destrucción de su casa por una inundación que tal vez resulte en su muerte y la de su abusador. “Exploraciones” de Nicolle Alzamora Candanedo plantea el dilema de una mujer abandonada por su pareja que busca y encuentra consuelo en el autoerotismo. “Humedades” de Ela Urriola muestra la degradación y disgusto que experimenta una mujer joven que se ha prostituido por primera vez.

Finalmente, Guatemala está representado con cuatro cuentos, dos de los cuales de rasgos fantásticos sobre la muerte y la naturaleza. Los otros dos tratan los temas de la demencia, traición y violación. “Oficios inesperados” de Nicté García relata la historia de una muchacha que descubre que no solo tiene un gran talento para maquillar a los muertos para que luzcan bien en sus funerales, sino que también puede comunicarse con una de ellas, una joven asesinada por su pareja. “Los sueños perdidos” de Ixsu’m Antonieta Gonáles Choc presenta la magia del mundo infantil para unos niños indígenas que descubren los secretos de la naturaleza. “Cómo se construye un ser humano” de Marta Sandoval narra la tragedia de la pérdida de memoria de dos ancianos que solo recuerdan las experiencias de su niñez que más les afectaron. Finalmente, “Elisa y el mar” de Gloria Hernández presenta la historia de una mujer adinerada que se escapa de un yate y huye a nado, en mar abierto, después de que el capitán y el cocinero la violan con el beneplácito de su depravado esposo. El cuento de Ixsu’m Antonieta Gonzáles Choc aparece en español y cachiquel.

En cuanto a estilo, las escritoras dominan el arte de narrar, y sus textos, a pesar de la gravedad de los temas tratados, captan y mantienen el interés de los lectores. Algunos de los textos se narran en primera persona, lo cual crea intimidad entre los personajes femeninos y los lectores. Varios de los cuentos son notables por el manejo del suspenso y por sus finales inesperados. También las escritoras han sabido manejar muy bien el lenguaje de sus relatos, que refleja las

idiosincrasias y riqueza del español actual de los países de la región. Con la excepción de tres cuentos que pasan de 15 páginas, todos son breves, de menos de diez páginas.

En resumen, las escritoras incluidas en esta antología enriquecen la literatura con aportes que presentan un calidoscopio de experiencias y visiones femeninas del istmo. Los veintidós cuentos de la antología ponen el dedo en las llagas de la sociedad centroamericana contemporánea. La colección contribuirá a concientizar más a sus lectores al llamar la atención sobre los abusos a los que están expuestas muchas mujeres de la región (y del mundo entero) debido a las relaciones desiguales entre géneros, etnicidades y clases sociales. Sin lugar a dudas, hay motivos para celebrar la publicación de esta antología y esperar con gran interés la publicación de la secuela.

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Larrazabal Cárdenas, Hilda. *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. De reliquia histórica a texto vivo*. Madrid, Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2023. 267 pp. ISBN 9783-9686-9415-3

En su libro *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. De reliquia histórica a texto vivo*, Hilda Larrazabal Cárdenas explora cómo autores mexicanos de los siglos XIX y XX han utilizado la figura y la obra de sor Juana para reforzar su estatus como ícono nacional. Este libro representa una contribución significativa a la crítica literaria sobre sor Juana en un periodo crítico posindependencia y posrevolucionario, durante el cual se estaba configurando la identidad sociocultural de México como nación. Larrazabal Cárdenas opta por enfocarse en cómo estos autores, predominantemente hombres, reinvocaron la figura icónica de sor Juana en el ámbito literario mexicano a finales del siglo XIX y a lo largo del siglo XX. Según la autora, es mediante esta reinvocación masculina que la obra de sor Juana se transforma en un “texto vivo”. Al concluir la introducción, Larrazabal Cárdenas presenta la tesis central de su estudio, argumentando que “desde el siglo XIX se inicia un gradual proceso de rehabilitación de sor Juana, marcado intensamente por un conflicto sobre cómo incorporar a la monja como ejemplo paradigmático de lo que se debe incluir o excluir en la narrativa nacional” (36). A pesar de que el libro amplía los estudios sobre sor Juana, la manera específica en que su figura ha sido apropiada por estos autores masculinos canónicos no se explora profundamente. En contraste, la autora aclara que su contribución radica en “identificar momentos clave en la consolidación de sor Juana como ícono nacional... y examinar la evolución gradual de la figura y obra de Juana Inés” (37).

El libro se organiza en seis capítulos, incluyendo cuatro capítulos centrales, una introducción y una conclusión. Después de la introducción, en el segundo capítulo, se aborda la inserción de sor Juana Inés de la Cruz en el periodo posindependencia, momento en el cual se estaba forjando la identidad nacional mexicana dentro del imaginario colectivo a través de las discusiones de una élite cultural. Este capítulo profundiza en los diversos discursos que promueven la integración de sor Juana en el imaginario nacional, así como aquellos que se oponen, destacando el caso de Ignacio Manuel Altamirano. Se destaca la ambivalencia de estos discursos, los cuales “facilitan reconfiguraciones polisémicas por parte de los intelectuales que, mediante su inclusión o exclusión, delinear linajes” (49). Un segmento crucial de este capítulo se dedica al análisis de la velada en el Liceo Hidalgo en 1874, evento que contó con la participación de figuras como Laureana Wright, Francisco Sosa y José de Jesús Cuevas, entre otros miembros de la segunda generación del Liceo Hidalgo. La autora concluye que todos ellos coinciden en reconocer a sor Juana como parte del patrimonio mexicano.

En el tercer capítulo, la autora nos adentra en el mundo de las antologías e historias literarias. En particular, analiza la *Historia crítica de la literatura y de las ciencias en México desde la conquista hasta nuestros días* (1885) de Francisco Pimentel, así como antologías elaboradas tanto en España como en México con motivo del IV Centenario del Descubrimiento de América, por autores como Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, José María Roa Bárcena, Casimiro del Collado y José María Vigil. La autora explica que tanto Vigil como Menéndez Pelayo “apelan a un *hispanismo* desde el que se deriva la legitimidad y el valor del pasado literario,” utilizando la figura de sor Juana como eje para tender puentes entre las naciones española y mexicana (119). Pimentel, sin embargo, concibe a sor Juana como parte de la literatura novohispana y, por extensión, mexicana. El cuarto capítulo aborda en detalle la integración de sor Juana en la obra de Amado Nervo a principios del siglo XX, principalmente a través de su biografía, *Juana de Asbaje*. Sin embargo, hay ciertas dificultades teóricas al presentar a Nervo casi como un defensor feminista de sor Juana. Sería necesario clarificar mejor los argumentos sobre la relación entre el misticismo y el respeto hacia sor Juana, tanto en su faceta de mujer como de poeta, ya que en ocasiones estos argumentos parecen entrar en contradicción.

El quinto capítulo explora cómo Jorge Cuesta, Xavier Villaurrutia y Salvador Novo integran a sor Juana Inés de la Cruz en sus obras “como un medio para expresar sus posturas estéticas y personales” (179). Se analiza el empleo de sor Juana como vía para discutir la masculinización o feminización de la escritura de estos autores. Además, se examina cómo estos autores utilizan la figura de sor Juana para replantear la idea de la escritura “masculina” en sus textos, las concepciones machistas sobre el género en la literatura y la distinción entre la alta cultura y la cultura popular en los contextos posrevolucionarios. El capítulo concluye argumentando que “cuando a los Contemporáneos se les acusa de afeminados, por no adherirse al discurso nacionalista, el potencial simbólico de sor Juana se reactiva y les sirve para decir que, como a ella, ellos mismos son acosados” (226). En la conclusión, al igual que en la introducción, la autora retoma su motivación inicial para este estudio, señalando que esta crítica literaria nos brinda una oportunidad para reflexionar sobre cómo sor Juana se ha consolidado como un ícono nacional canónico.

El libro de Larrazabal Cárdenas ofrece un valioso recurso para académicos interesados en la historia de la crítica literaria de México durante los siglos XIX y XX, así como en la evolución de la crítica sorjuanista. Este estudio también proporciona un sólido punto de partida para investigaciones con enfoques feministas. Con respecto a este último punto, personalmente, me hubiera gustado que la autora explorara y criticara más a fondo cómo los autores abordados utilizan y explotan la figura de sor Juana para avanzar en sus propias agendas políticas, culturales o literarias. Aunque Larrazabal Cárdenas toca este aspecto en puntuales ocasiones, deja de lado un enfoque de investigación que podría enriquecer significativamente el estudio, especialmente en lo referente a la crítica de la hipermasculinización en el tratamiento de la obra de sor Juana. No obstante, este texto es imprescindible por la claridad de sus planteamientos y el rescate de fuentes poco examinadas anteriormente.

Juan Manuel Ramírez Velázquez, Colgate University

López, María E. and Stephen M. Hart. *Gender Violence in Twenty-first Century Latin American Women's Writing*. London: Tamesis, 2022. 240 pp. ISBN 9781-8556-6316-9.

In recent decades, urgent campaigns raised awareness about femicides and sexual violence against women around the world. María E. López and Stephen M. Hart situate their edited volume in the intersecting field of Latin American literature, Sociology, and Gender Studies. In their introduction, they mention Mexican writer Elena Poniatowska's words that reveal the extent of patriarchal culture in the region and the important work of feminist activists that seeks to make visible violence against women (1-2). The questions that orient their examination are: "how do the less visible dynamics of resistance to masculine power operate in twenty-first-century Latin America? How do women writers in particular approach the dynamics of gender violence in their countries? What does the 'resistance literature' against the patriarchal ideology show about the reality 'on the ground' in each of the countries of Latin America?" (2). López and Hart contextualize the fact that 14 of the 25 countries with the highest rates of violence against women are in Latin America and the Caribbean and link this information to a *machista* ideology, widely disseminated in popular music [*bachata and reggaetón*], that is "a breeding ground for discrimination, femicide, and sexual abuse" (12) and that still influences public policies and the under- or misreporting of victims. The introduction also provides a solid survey of femicides around the world and efforts by the United Nations to mitigate them. *Gender Violence in Twenty-first Century Latin American Women's Writing* is divided into five sections, each offering textual close analysis of novels written by women writers from Colombia, Cuba, Argentina, Chile, and Mexico.

The section dedicated to Colombia, situated at the intersection of Sociology and Creative Writing, includes Hart's analysis of Alejandro Jaramillo Morales' *Acaso la muerte* (2010) and Laura Restrepo's novel, *Delirio* (2004), which was awarded the prestigious Alfaguara Prize. For Hart, the femicide of *Acaso la muerte* "is a synecdoche... of gender-based violence in Colombia" (25). The novel, which centers around the death of congresswoman Irene Carmona, starts as a *whodunit* and appears to be a feminist *testimonio* that investigates a trial and brings to the fore the impunity in the Colombia of the 1990s given that Carmona dies when witnessing the sadistic torture of her lover Camila. About *Delirio*, Hart proposes that Restrepo's novel "offers a powerful twenty-first-century statement about the inter-relation between delirium and political oppression, and between sexual and economic torture" (39) and suggests that the fictional narrative that investigates the death of a sex worker mimics the role of truth commissions and critiques members of Colombian society who distance themselves from the violent crimes committed by narco-traffickers.

In the second section, López analyzes novels by two Cuban writers: Ena Lucía Portela's *Cien botellas en una pared* (2002) and Wendy Guerra's *Negra* (2013). Portela's novel revolves around the life of Zeta, a gender-violence survivor, who submits to her lover's Moisés's sadistic violence, both out of fear and pleasure, and is marginalized because of her political beliefs; thus, *Cien botellas* provides a glimpse into the LGTB community's resistance against political violence. Similar to *Cien botellas*, *Negra* describes discrimination, but this time, focuses on race: institutional racism affects Nina, an educated woman identified with Santería and her African ancestors, and who succumbs to femicide. Using the concept of intersectionality, López points out that Guerra's novel complicates violence against women, showing the still pervasive bias against Afro-descendants in Cuba.

López is also in charge of the third section, dedicated to two novels by Argentine writers: Selva Almada's *Chicas muertas* (2014) and Claudia Piñero's *Quien no* (2018); this section opens with an illuminating background on the extent of gender violence in contemporary Argentina. The author notes that Almada's novel presents features of several canonical genres, such as chronicles and testimonios, and examines the unresolved deaths of three young women who lived in Northeastern Argentina. Almada involves herself in the investigation of these crimes and concludes that "violence against women and feminicides are perpetuated in Argentina through regulatory and exclusionary mechanisms and points to the relevant authorities" (99). It is relevant that López places Almada's narrative among other journalistic accounts and non-fictional works that explore the epidemic of gender violence in Argentina. In this section, López also analyzes some of the short stories of *Quien no*, a judicious decision given that Piñero's novels have been studied in different publications, but that fate has eluded her short stories. In her analysis of four short stories, López asserts that Piñero "challenges hegemonic masculinity as a tool that appropriates women's bodies in Argentinian society" (119). However, the reason for including the short story "Claro y Contundente" that deals with a middle-class mother whose son is medicated to attend a private school and learns that he will not be able to continue his studies at that institute, is not clear in a monograph that analyzes gender violence. Nonetheless, López highlights in Piñero's narrative the pervasive effects of the repressive violence of the military junta still evident in many institutions, such as the Church and the ideology of upper-middle class characters. The attention paid to "Basura para las gallinas" is quite judicious given the Argentine writer's activism in favor of legal abortion. López interprets "El abuelo Martín" as an example of Piñero's debunking the morality of the family patriarch, whose death allows his grandson to remodel his house and accidentally discover the walled-in body of his grandmother.

In the next section, Hart takes up the novels by Chilean writers Diamela Eltit's *Fuerzas especiales* (2015) and Carla Guelfenbein's *Contigo en la distancia* (2015), linking to laws that regulate gender-based violence. The unnamed protagonist of *Fuerzas especiales*, a sex worker of one of Chile's poor neighborhoods, suffers economic oppression, and as a result of police brutality, her father's health deteriorates, prompting her to prostitute herself. Hart notes that violence against women and gender-based violence "are revealed to be the central focus of the State's oppression" (153). For its part, Guelfenbein's novel, *Contigo en la distancia* is a *roman à clef* that starts with the fallen body of Vera Sigall. The suspects for perpetrating violence against her are a vagabond, the man named Daniel who was having an affair with Vera and discovers her inert body, Daniel's wife named Gracia, and Horacio Infante.

The final section, written by López, examines Lydia Cachos's *Ellos hablan: testimonios de hombres, la relación con sus padres, el machismo y la violencia* (2018), which gathers accounts of several men and centers around the family as encouraging gender-based violence. Finally, the concept of necropolitics is deployed to analyze Fernanda Melchor's *Temporada de huracanes* (2017), a novel in which the author "experiment [s]with form" (196). Set in the port of Veracruz, *Temporada de huracanes* narrates the real-life murder of a sorcerer who wanted to have her lover back and also explores the dimensions of violence against women in Mexico, particularly domestic violence. In the conclusion, López and Hart describe violence against women as affecting the whole world but highlight the crucial contributions of literary works from only five different Spanish-speaking Latin American countries.

One of the merits of this volume is its examination of works by canonical figures such as Eltit, Restrepo, and Piñero along with lesser-known female writers from Latin America. One aspect that could make this monograph more persuasive is a better dialogue with recent

publications about the selected novels and short stories published in Latin America and the United States. Because *Gender Violence in Twenty-first Century Latin American Women's Writing* touches on an important and current sociological topic and offers insightful interpretations, it will be an indispensable monograph to those who teach contemporary Latin American Literature.

Carolina Rocha, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Ruiz, Jason. *Narcomedia: Latinidad, Popular Culture and America's War on Drugs*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2023. 264 pp. ISBN 9781-4773-2819-4.

In *Narcomedia: Latinidad, Popular Culture and America's War on Drugs*, Jason Ruiz looks at how mass-consumed TV series and films have been building an image of Latina/os as narco-traffickers since the 1980s. The book aims to understand the process for which *latinidad* is expressed in serial media about narco-trafficking from Latin America into the U.S. and how the broader policy of the "War on Drugs" is referenced around the idea of what it means to be Latina/o. The book is structured in seven chapters, each approaching a different aspect of the subject. In its first chapter, Ruiz does efficient and convincing research on the historical origins of the representation of Latina/os in American media as narco-traffickers, looking at the different iterations of the film *Scarface*. Ruiz reconstructs how the original film from 1932, based on the crimes of alcohol trafficker Al Capone, was remade in 1983 by Brian De Palma, starring Al Pacino as a criminal Cuban-American turned narco-trafficker. Ruiz demonstrates how the film contributed to forging an understanding of cocaine trafficking in South Florida during the 1980s that became indissociable with the Latina/o community living there.

The second chapter develops from the first, analyzing the TV series *Miami Vice*. Through a review of the entire series, Ruiz demonstrates how, during its run, the show painted a portrait of urban South Florida as a place ruled by violent people of colour, mostly Latina/os, who would not survive the episode they debuted on. In Chapter 3, changes scenery as Ruiz reconstructs how Cuban immigrants into the U.S. integrated much more quickly and without much friction to American society. Instead, the new Latina/o enemy, as presented in *narcomedia*, became Colombians. At the height of the spectacular rise of Pablo Escobar's narco-empire in Colombia and tougher policing of the cocaine trafficking through South Florida, the media turned its attention to the next phase of the War on Drugs, now centering on the South American country.

Ruiz doesn't reference any particular form of media from the time and instead focuses on the more contemporary Colombian telenovela *El patrón del mal* about the life and death of Pablo Escobar and the Netflix-produced TV series *Narcos* (just the first three seasons centered in Colombia). For Ruiz, the telenovela is centered around the moment of the death of Escobar as a moment of healing for the country, while in *Narcos*, the ending of Escobar's narrative arc is not the end of the larger War on Drugs as there were still evil Latina/os trafficking tons of cocaine into the U.S. (85). The differences between the Colombian telenovela and the American TV series correlate with the different formats of these forms of media: while a Latin American produced telenovela usually starts and ends telling a main story, an American TV series has to consider the possibility of multiple seasons after the end of one of its narrative arcs. This is why *Narcos'* season centred on Pablo Escobar was followed by several more. The serial nature of an American television series like *Narcos* perpetuated the link between Latina/os and narco-trafficking.

In Chapter 4, Ruiz does his best to find examples of queer representation in narcomedia. While the author recognizes the difficulty of his task, he references briefly the novel *La Virgen de los sicarios* by Fernando Vallejo, which portrays a homosexual relationship between a writer and a killer for a narco-trafficking gang in Medellín. However, Ruiz dismisses it rapidly, along with its 2000 film adaptation by Barbet Schroeder, for not being a mass-consumption product. The chapter then analyzes the character of Gus Fring in the TV series *Breaking Bad*, a Chilean-American gay man and villain for the later seasons. Along with it, Ruiz focuses on filmic portrayals of Griselda Blanco, an infamous queer Colombian drug kingpin from the 1970s to the early 2000s. Overall, the chapter seems a little forced and out of place with the rest of the well-placed continuity of Ruiz's book. While there are interesting discussions to have about queer representations in narcotextualities, the corpus chosen for this chapter does not appear to be entirely productive in this regard. The author seems to recognize these limitations as he introduces the chapter pointing out that there are not many examples of queer representation in narcomedia and that his corpus is mainly masculinist and heterosexist. In the end, it looks like this chapter would have been better suited as a preface to a specially dedicated monograph on queer representation in narcomedia.

Chapter 5 deepens the reflection about the TV series *Breaking Bad*. In it, Ruiz goes back to the Chilean-American villain Gus Fring and the previous seasons to analyze an early villain, Tuco, a Mexican drug dealer living in Arizona. Similarly to what had been the case in *Miami Vice*, in *Breaking Bad*, Mexican villains serve as empty vessels to be filled with evilness and to be disposed of by the white protagonists in their moment of triumph. In Chapter 6, Ruiz reconstructs the origin of the infamous Donald Trump's expression "bad hombres" as a harmful stereotype of Mexicans coming to the U.S. and traces it to a 1914 Western film. The chapter analyzes representations of drug trafficking in the U.S.-Mexico border and considers Steven Soderbergh's 2000 film *Traffic* and TV series *Weeds*.

Finally, Chapter 7 is dedicated once again to the legacy of Pablo Escobar, both in Colombia and the U.S., through its representation in TV series and telenovelas and as a pop culture icon and tourism magnet for the places in Colombia where he lived and conducted his illegal activities. With a potent, well-documented first three chapters, *Narcomedia* seems to lose a little of its coherence when trying to force a reading about queerness in these cultural artifacts, which can be more obviously seen in other forms of media not as mainstream as the ones that constitute Ruiz's corpus. Similarly, the material from the last three chapters could be incorporated into previous chapters to give the book a tighter coherence. A chapter dedicated to the later seasons of *Narcos*, centered in Mexico or other mainstream media representation of Mexican narco-trafficking, would have been a welcome addition. Nonetheless, *Narcomedia* is a well-researched book with interesting ideas about a subject that has been gaining academic and popular interest but about which there is still more to say.

Alejandro Soifer, University of Toronto

Sánchez Prado, Ignacio M. ed. *Mexican Literature as World Literature*. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2022. 280 pp. ISBN 9781-5013-7478-4

In many of its iterations, from Goethe to Pascale Casanova's revitalization of the comparative field, World Literature has doubled down on Eurocentric master narratives. Moreover, non-anglophone works enter only through translation in English (or French). What to do then with a non-anglophone and marginalized literary tradition steeped in worldliness but conceived as provincial despite the fact that these writers know their own canon and the canon of World Literature? Of course, structures of power have perhaps forced these marginalized populations to work twice as hard at their worldliness, but the irony is still the same. If we insist on representative individuals as literary models (*à-la-Européenne*), why not make a towering figure like Alfonso Reyes—and his vast knowledge of both Mexican and World letters—the model for World Literature?

Such is the underlying argument masterfully weaved in *Mexican Literature as World Literature*. With this edited volume, Ignacio Sánchez Prado not only sets out to expand a path of inquiry he set out to trace in his *Strategic Occidentalisms* (2018), he positions the periphery of a cosmopolitan canon as a corrective to World Literature, what he terms as “a symbolic product,” (2), because of and despite Mexican literature's marginalization. Carolyn Fornoff bookends the volume well when she states: “The turn to world literature asks what happens when we stop equating Mexican literature with the delimited confines of the nation-state” (231). Citing well-known founders like Casanova, David Damrosch, Pheng Cheah, Eric Hayot, and others, the collection moves into a canon of Mexican literature from the colonial period (New Spain)—notably featuring Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, into the 20th century male figures like Carlos Fuentes, Octavio Paz, and Juan Rulfo—to the contemporary period where real-world existential dreads of neoliberalism and climate change are centered.

At first glance, the volume presents the case for World Literature's lack of categorizations for the kinds of output that Mexican literature produces. For instance, while the Anglocentric dominance of anthologies like Norton and Longman have long been critiqued, Stephanie Kirk's refreshing take provides clarity on how these World literary bastions erase the geographical scope of major planetary figures of the scale of Sor Juana: from these anthologies producing ethnic expectations projected onto her “Aztec-Spanish” dialogues, to a deterritorialized approach to her work. World Literature also is at a loss when it comes to hybrid formats of the kind that Karen Stolley presents of Mexican 18th century literature. In what might make us nostalgic from our vantage point in the present, Stolley paints a portrait of neo-Aztecism as a literary space where labor, classical Nahuatl glyphs and pictography, and criollo-indigenous collaboration were valorized. This world-making or “convivencia” challenges the apolitical stances of World Literature (such as those of Emily Apter) and even anticipate many of its political motivations.

The ways which Mexican literature questions the confines of World literature categorization dovetail with the question of regionalism. Writers like Juan Rulfo, different from Paz but similar to Chicanos Tomás Rivera and Rudolfo Anaya, suffer from an inescapable regionalism pegged to their work; even Carlos Fuentes is labelled in this fashion as a “postcolonial exotic” (203). But just as critics have read Anaya as transatlantic or Glissantian, Nuala Finnegan reads Rulfo as not only a belated arrival to World Literature—through no fault of his own—but adopts a “multidirectional” axis that brings his work into dialogue with borderland necropolitics. His little-known “Paso del Norte” is a fascinating short story made all the more appealing by Finnegan's reading of the protagonist *manco* (one-handed) *bracero*—a signifier for the US's

extractivist economy during the Bracero program (178)—as intersecting with the Apache presence in Texas. Not only does she bring Mexican Studies into a necessary conversation with Ethnic Studies, her reading of Rulfo alongside Sarah Lawall’s “a new world in relation to the old” (179), position Rulfo’s work as emblematic of a host ground for world-making. If the world has commonly been defined as the sum of nations (212), Rulfo inverts this logic. This also happens in the early modern era in which Jorge Tellez places a Herodotus-like Balbuena in direct contestation of Casanova’s positionality. As if anticipating Rulfo, Bernardo de Balbuena accepts the periphery as a space of cosmopolitanism, placing Mexico City as the site of enunciation that also complicates periodization (15). In other words, these “peripheral” writers were always already the center.

Another urgent question this volume raises is how a Mexican literature addresses south-south relations. Laura Torres-Rodríguez’s intriguing exploration of a film’s fictional Mexicali Chinatown or a 17th century adventure narrative that travels to the Philippines are rooted in the real history of mercantilist networks between China and Mexico, from China’s colonial importation of silver from Acapulco to its trade with Mexico in the Prohibition era. By contrast, Carolyn Fornoff’s framework is not supported by historical continuities between Mexico and the globe but rather a comparativism aligned with the kinds of south-south engagements we see in the urgent work of Magalí Armillas-Tiseyra’s *The Dictator Novel* (2019) or José David Saldívar’s *Trans-Americana* (2012). In her chapter, Fornoff also builds a planetary framework in dialogue with Mary Louise Pratt’s *Planetary Longings* (2022) to address the presence of Australia and Madagascar in contemporary Mexican poetry through the lens of the existential threat of climate change and therefore pushes us to open spaces for absent axes in comparative studies.

These interventions above necessitate an attention to both the kinds of audiences that can attend to south-south networks and the assessments that one can make of their contact. After all, Mexico-Asia or Mexico-trans-oceanic studies circulate little in part because their content is characterized as unconventional or orientalist—an orientalism that as Adela Pineda Franco explains, is traced to the Porfiriato and found in works like that of José Juan Tablada, his travel to Japan, and his knowledge of Pierre Loti (92). Other times, Mexican literary institutions can pivot to the West. When Gustavo Guerrero takes on literary institutions like the UNESCO’s “Collection of Representative Works” and the primary role Mexico City played in this project’s first years (155), the centrality of Mexico is not without its constraints. The project’s director, acting Minister of Education, Jaime Torres Bodet, might have shaped much of the project’s ethos in 1945 when it started, but as Sarah Brouillette has argued in *UNESCO and the Fate of the Literary* (2019), not only was the translation of works in Spanish and Portuguese into English and French supported under the auspices of the US-backed Organization of American States (OAS), the “developing world” Brouillette goes on, would become the recipients of a paternalistic “Western imperial largess” and Eurocentric enlightenment.

The little space ceded in World Literature to a south-south axis speaks to a need to theorize south-south moments of tension. Many of the chapters in this volume engage with such a paradigm like Pineda Franco and Oswaldo Zavala. The latter discusses the representations of Mexican worldliness on opposite ends of the spectrum in Valeria Luiselli and Paco Ignacio Taibo II. This focus on south-south slippages is actually in dialogue with the rise of an interest in the south-south *field*, chiefly represented by Cambridge University Press’ new World Literature series, edited by Debjani Ganguli (cited in this volume), in which Asia or Africa are triangulated through Latin American concerns. In this regard, my only critique of the volume—if one can be made—would be that there are few incursions into Mexican texts that *actually* travel, especially to Africa. The absence of Africa as a productive axis with Mexican literature is surprising, given slight incursions

into this space in the volume, including Pedro Ángel Palou's attention to Carlos Fuentes's proximity to the South African Nobel laureates Nadine Gordimer and J.M. Coetzee. In fact, Ignacio Sánchez Prado himself has written a marvelous essay on the topic, "África en la imaginación literaria mexicana" (2018). In any case, this is a landmark collection, and given its linkages with postcolonial studies, the book will model sites of contestation not only for World literature, but categorizations in comparative, transatlantic, trans-oceanic studies as well.

Sarah M. Quesada, Duke University

FILM REVIEWS

Gloria eterna. Dir. Yimit Ramírez. Cuba, 2018. Dur. 13 min.

In the aftermath of the controversy surrounding the exclusion of his previous film *Quiero hacer una película* from the Muestra Joven film festival in Havana, Yimit Ramírez found redemption as he was awarded the Best Fiction Short Film for his thought-provoking piece, *Gloria Eterna*, at the very same event. This 13-minute masterpiece unravels the historical mythos within a totalitarian society, focusing on the tale of Julián LVII, a bureaucrat portrayed with uncanny realism by Mario Guerra, who is selected as a "model citizen" and consequently immortalized as a statue through a grotesque ritual involving his family, friends, co-workers, and neighborhood acquaintances.

With the stage set for a breathtaking exploration of idolatry and irrational state devotion within a dystopian framework, *Gloria Eterna* emerges as a masterfully constructed short film. Ramírez crafts a parallel future, one that is reminiscent of the seminal works of George Orwell's *1984* and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* but also interwoven with elements reminiscent of everyday TV quiz shows. The references to Orwell's masterpiece are undeniably vivid; much like Orwell's tale of a dystopian future in which citizens surrender to intensive surveillance for the ostensible welfare and freedom of the people, the ominous figure of "Big Brother" with his omnipresent telescreens is mirrored in the statues populating Ramírez's landscape. Drawing further parallels, the character of Julian LVII is situated within the dreary confines of government offices, dealing with archives, quite like Orwell's Winston Smith.

In an eerie similarity, Yimit Ramírez's short film assigns the statues a function analogous to the ever-watching telescreens of Orwell's world, executing the dual roles of surveillance and command issuance. As the narrative progresses, the subjects, in both tales, are revealed to live in constant fear of the state's wrath, and their obedience to the dominant ideology is rewarded. However, *Gloria Eterna* establishes its distinctive narrative voice through several deviations from the Orwellian tale. The oppressive ambiance of *1984*, with Winston's fixation on comprehending the social system of the past or his aspirations for a proletarian rebellion, finds no echo in *Gloria Eterna*. Rather, the society depicted in Ramírez's film has internalized surveillance and control to such an extent that they no longer perceive these as evils to combat. Julián's sacrifice emerges from obedience rather than rebellion, and in stark contrast to Winston's erasure from memory, Julián is immortalized as a statue, etched in the annals of the state.

Transitioning into the realm of economics within the meticulously crafted society of *Gloria Eterna*, we find that money, far from being rendered obsolete, occupies a pivotal role. It crucially ties together the citizens' welfare and the moral hierarchy established between individuals and

statues, becoming a key player in the narrative. The film introduces two forms of currency - "human bills" and "statue bills", ingeniously hinting at Cuba's dual currency system that held sway for nearly three decades. Within this system, a clear hierarchy existed with the Cuban peso dwarfed by the "freely convertible peso" (CUC) whose value exceeded the former by a whopping factor of 25. However, even though the circulation of the CUC in Cuban society was a norm during its existence from 1995 to 2021, the film represents the acquisition of a "statue bill" as an extraordinary event.

This novelty is underscored when Julián brings home one such bill and his wife Aidé reacts with uncontained astonishment. She wastes no time in weaving plans for a hypothetical income in this new currency, even extending to the suggestion that they frame the highest value bill her husband receives, symbolizing his sacrifices.

Notwithstanding, the emphasis on currency in the film unravels the multi-layered hierarchical system of "glory" within the narrative. A high-value "statue bill" proudly bears the image of figures who embody the epic heroism of previous eras: mounted guerrillas, armed men, or political leaders, all harking back to the messianic narrative of revolution. Contrarily, the lesser bill is emblazoned with an image of a commonplace statue, mirroring ordinary individuals like Julián. This intricate depiction forges a potent link between heroism, sacrifice, and glory, extending its influence beyond mere past recollections to resonate with the immediate present.

However, the director orchestrates a reality that seems ensnared in an unyielding, joyless eternity. The collective "glory" of the masses, in a bitter twist of irony, is commandeered by the state, thereby highlighting the beneficiaries of revolutionary heroism. The film strikes a poignant note as it underscores the bleak truth that the glory achieved by the masses, in the end, does not belong to them but is instead annexed by the state.

Skillfully directed by Ramírez, *Gloria Eterna* is strewn with omnipresent busts that signify the dehumanization and erosion of individual identity. A mechanical Voice of authority, lent by Ramírez himself, serves to further enhance the alienating nature of the bureaucratic system. The film delivers a scathing critique of nationalism and revolution, as it challenges Cuban national mythology and questions the human cost of perpetuating revolutionary ideals. This thematic tension has instigated conflict in Ramírez's career; however, despite facing official resistance, the director remains undaunted in addressing sensitive and provocative issues.

In conclusion, *Gloria Eterna* is a poignant and powerful short film that skillfully employs a dystopian backdrop, a critical examination of social conformity, and an adept cast to deliver a uniquely compelling cinematic experience. The film encourages viewers to reflect on the ambivalent nature of sacrifice, individuality, and conformity in contemporary society while exploring broader themes of power, control, and resistance. The narrative, in its entirety, serves as a thought-provoking commentary on societal structures, sparking critical introspection among its audience.

Santiago Juan-Navarro, Florida International University

Temporada de Huracanes. Dir. Elisa Miller. México, 2023, Dur. 99 min.

Después de su exitosa recepción en el Festival Internacional de Cine de Morelia, *Temporada de Huracanes* (2023), película dirigida por Elisa Miller, llega al fin a la plataforma Netflix. En el mismo festival este largometraje se hizo acreedor del Premio al Mejor Guion de

Largometraje Mexicano de Ficción. Esta película nace de la novela del mismo nombre escrita por la destacada escritora mexicana Fernanda Melchor. La trama se centra en un macabro hallazgo, derivado de un crimen pasional queer. El largometraje es, sin duda, una obra compleja de discernir, puesto que al igual que en la celebrada novela, los temas presentes implican zonas rurales precarias, relaciones sexoafectivas de riesgo, violencia, abuso de sustancias ilícitas y, por tanto, la película se tiene que ver, como si se estuviera leyendo el libro, es decir, cuidadosamente. Los protagonistas-actores: Luismi (Andrés Córdova), Brando (Ernesto Meléndez) y Yesenia (Paloma Alvarado) han magnificado esta producción cinematográfica por dos puntos a señalar: los actores que protagonizan este film no forman parte de un cuerpo físico hegemónico desde la visión heteronormativa; el segundo punto: la performatividad *Queer* sexual que en ellos observamos desencadena preguntas tales como: ¿por qué tienen relaciones sexuales a escondidas? ¿Por qué ese triángulo amoroso entre Luismi, la Bruja y Brandon? ¿Cómo podemos entender estos cuerpos *Queerxicans* desde la pantalla grande? Se puede entonces destacar el desafío a la norma establecida heteropatriarcal y con ello crear un despertar de conciencia hacia visibilización de identidades y vivencias que históricamente no han sido reconocidas a causa de sociedades desiguales y excluyentes.

Al igual que la novela, el largometraje nos lleva a La Matosa, lugar donde se originan los hechos. Hechos sórdidos que desencadenan todas las eventualidades, cuyo enigma abre un “Fold” deleuziano, primordialmente la encarcelación de Luismi y Brando por el homicidio de la Bruja después de la denuncia que Yesenia (prima de Luismi) hizo ante las autoridades. Eso, por un lado, por el otro lado, los temas que se desprenden de esta película son: la precariedad, el abandono del Estado, lo rural, la prostitución, el crimen organizado, la violencia, la trata de blancas, el aborto, las relaciones sexoafectivas *Queer* y la performatividad *Queer* en la vida nocturna.

Por consiguiente, esta reseña aborda la precariedad y la performatividad *Queer* sexual en *Temporada de Huracanes* desde la noción de Judith Butler. Definiéndose primero desde el marco contemporáneo y con las aproximaciones de la teórica estadounidense, la performatividad queer sexual es: un cuerpo que vive siempre o casi siempre en las sombras, donde ya desde su nacimiento hay una asignación de sexo sin pensar en el desarrollo de una orientación sexual que posteriormente llevaría a cabo una performatividad que va en contra de la norma establecida heterosexual y hegemónica. Por lo contrario, la performatividad queer sexual es un fenómeno que suele ser descrito como obscuro, asqueroso y, por ende, el morbo se presta para posicionar a estos cuerpos queer en la precariedad o en las periferias.

En el caso de *Temporada de Huracanes* la performatividad *Queer* sexual es presentada desde un punto precario, lleno de temores por los personajes que son involucrados en las representaciones de los *Queerxicans*. Luismi, la Bruja y Brando son el triángulo que manifiestan la performatividad queer sexual, la cual termina en tragedia al dejar al descubierto cómo es que se vive la performatividad queer sexual en la precariedad rural. La precariedad rural sexual se comprende en este largometraje la práctica sexual activa en la oscuridad, sin protección, debido a la nula educación sexual en estas zonas decadentes y falta de atención del Estado. Otro punto dentro de la precariedad aquí es que, ninguno de los personajes expresa su orientación sexual por temor a las represalias, en sus núcleos familiares, amistosos, o simplemente en la sociedad en la que se desenvuelven.

Los personajes de Luismi y la Bruja, amantes pasionales, representan la performatividad *Queer* sexual que la heteronorma rechaza y que el largometraje posiciona como centro. La importancia de ellos es relevante para la liberación del movimiento *Queer* actual. El largometraje, en conjunto con todos los elementos, hace una aportación poderosa al movimiento *Queer*, cuyas

acciones influyen positivamente en la reafirmación de cuerpos que importan y el “Feeling Queer”, palabras de Sara Ahmed, abriendo un panorama prometedor, un cambio social para estas disidencias que tanto sufren el rechazo y el abandono del Estado. Este abandono se denota, sobre todo, en la precariedad que reina en La Matosa y cómo la vida *Queer* es víctima de los matices de tragedia al presentarnos un cadáver como señal del “joto” no comprendido. *Temporada de Huracanes* acarrea el sufrimiento y la precariedad de la vida performativa *Queer* en La Matosa-México y con ello un mensaje subliminal: no se puede abrazar la diversidad sexual en lo rural por miedo. Es nula la representación queer en esos espacios, y por ello surgen estos cuerpos violentados cuya esperanza de vida es mínima, Melchor, Gómez y Miller se encargan de reivindicar estos cuerpos precarios *Queerxicans* colocándolos al ojo público en los cines, o plataformas virtuales.

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