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such as Marcela del Río's play *El sueño de La Malinche* (2002), Gioconda Belli's *La mujer habitada* (1988), and Inés Arredondo's *Historia verdadera de una princesa* (1984). In turn, chapter 4, "Not Just Kids' Suff: Time Travel as Pedagogy in the Americas," focuses on time travel in popular culture, particularly in children's literature, television shows, and pedagogical texts. Among these texts are *Me Oh Maya!* (2003), written by Jon Scieszka and illustrated by Adam McCauley, Mark Acres's *Temples of Blood* (1985), and Elías Miguel Muñoz's *Viajes fantásticos* (2000) and *Isla de luz* (2001). An afterword that explores links between fictional time travel and the contemporary social movement of Taino revival in Puerto Rico closes the book.

The study has a solid theoretical base, drawing from concepts from comparative literary analysis, postcolonial and cultural studies, the field of psychoanalysis (Freud, Jung, Lacan), Stuart Hall's studies on postcoloniality and race, Derrida's deconstruction, and Latin American and Caribbean thinkers, such as Octavio Paz, Alejo Carpentier, Leopoldo Zea, and Roberto González Echevarría, among others. Although, of course, many other texts could have been selected, I find Alcocer's choice of texts (literary and visual) quite appropriate. In fact, Alcocer's study would be an outstanding tool to analyze any of the other novels dealing with time travel (García Márquez's *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, Graciela Limón's *Erased Faces*, Sesshu Foster's *Atomik Aztek*, and Mario Acevedo's *X-rated Blood Suckers*, for example) that are not included in this study. Although *Time Travel* does not exclusively deal with science fiction literature, I believe that it will become a widely read, frequently cited, and well respected book in this subfield, as its methods of cultural critique are unquestionably unique. This book strengthens the study of Hispanic (and American, in his case) science fiction that had previously been studied in Yolanda Molina-Gavilán's *Ciencia ficción en español: una mitología moderna ante el cambio* (2002) and in Cristina Sánchez-Conejero's *Novela y cine de ciencia ficción española contemporánea. Una reflexión sobre la humanidad* (2009). One of its most original contributions is the fact that Alcocer does not limit himself to analyzing the selected works, but he also discusses the subgenres themselves from a theoretical perspective. Students of English and Spanish-language literature, Latin American Studies, Cultural Studies, as well as scholars interested in Latin American and American literature, or science fiction and film will find this study interesting.

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Anderson, Mark D. *Disaster Writing: The Cultural Politics of Catastrophe in Latin America*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2011. 241 pp. ISBN 978-081-393-196-8; 978-081-393-197-5 (paper).

Mark Anderson's comparative study of the cultural production elicited by natural disasters in Latin America is a trailblazing achievement. Two different types of disaster narratives are considered: those dealing with one-time events, such as the 1930 hurricane in the Dominican Republic or the 1985 earthquake in Mexico, and those addressing long-term recurring disasters, such as drought in northeastern Brazil or volcanic eruptions in Central America. According to Anderson, the main difference between single event narratives and recurring disaster narratives is that while the first tend to be incorporated as supporting tropes into preexisting narratives, the second are usually legitimizing narratives themselves. One-time event narratives use the disaster as a symbol of political rupture against the prevailing order; in contrast, long-term recurring disasters often lead to the creation of a tradition of disaster narratives that creates its own aesthetics and transcends the moment. They also tend to elicit foundational narratives that serve to sustain existing political orders.

The author focuses on how both types of disasters have been historically used to make radical cultural changes and to renegotiate political power through the assignment of blame. He also examines how writing has helped consolidate those changes by (de)authorizing politicians and their ideologies. These narratives' main strategy has been to frame natural catastrophes as political: "The

politicization of disaster hinges on this posterior assessment of vulnerability and the unequal distribution of risk, as well as the assignment of blame, which are all posited within the sphere of human, not natural agency. Indeed, the primary function of disaster narratives is to determine causality" (192). By re-inscribing natural disasters as political, human agency is psychologically restored: we are no longer at the mercy of nature. Of course, on the other side of the political spectrum, interpretations of the disaster tend to minimize the political, presenting theme as natural events.

Chapter 1, titled "Disaster and the 'New Patria': Cyclone San Zenón and Trujillo's Rewriting of the Dominican Republic," focuses on the political use of the cultural representations of a particular disaster: Trujillo conceived of his supporters' literature, together with the renaming of the national landscape and the use of architecture, as tools to legitimize his rule. More specifically, he presented his reaction to the 1930 Cyclone San Zenón as the nation's rebirth: "The hurricane became the cornerstone of what might be termed Trujillo's politics of disaster: that is, the discursive construction of a catastrophic national history characterized by perpetual vulnerability to attacks from outside sources, both human and natural" (31). Among the works published to justify Trujillo's authoritarianism and to glorify his government, Anderson analyzes José Antonio Osorio Lizarazo's *La isla iluminada* (1947), Túlio Céstero Burgos's *Filosofía de un regimen* (1951), Henry Gazón Bona's *La arquitectura dominicana en la era de Trujillo* (1949), and Rafael Trujillo's *The Basic Policies of a Regime* (1960), which was probably written by a ghost writer. Osorio, for example, proposes a "Dominican version of democracy" and presents Trujillo as the people itself. In turn, Ramón Lugo Lovatón, in his collection of chronicles *Escombros: huracán del 1930* (1955), mixes poetic language and description to collectivize the disaster and to depict Trujillo's new, optimistic social psychology as an infallible remedy for the nation's rebirth. Altogether, explains Anderson, Trujillo and his *lettered city* created a new foundational narrative of the nation to justify his rule. Curiously, adds the author, this creation of a culture based on the disaster has survived until our days, as evident in the number of references to disaster imagery in Juan Bosch's political discourse and in Vargas Llosa's novel *La fiesta del Chivo* (2000).

The second chapter, "Drought and the Literary Construction of Risk in Northeastern Brazil," examines the sociopolitical ramifications of the cultural construction of risk through drought narratives in Northeastern Brazil. As Anderson points out, literary tropes and symbolic abstractions often substituted for the use of statistics and scientific measurements in risk assessment until the 1930s. The chapter provides a long list of drought narratives by José de Alencar, José do Patrocínio, Rodolfo Teófilo, José Américo de Almeida, Rachel de Queiroz, Graciliano Ramos, and many others. Overall, it proves the Brazilian negative view of Northeaster drought as a disaster was consistently mediated by cultural production, which influenced perceptions of cultural citizenship and politics. Among the works analyzed in the chapter are José de Alencar's *O sertanejo* (1975), Francisco Gil Castelo Branco's *Ataliba, o vaqueiro* (1878), José do Patrocínio's *Os retirantes* (1879), Rodolfo Teófilo's *A fome* (1890) and *Os brilhantes* (1895), and Franklin Távora's *O Cabeleira* (1876). These works fluctuate between the descriptions of the *sertão* as an idealized locus of national identity and a danger to the construction of a modern Brazil. Naturalist authors, adds Anderson, tried to exposed the dangers that drought posed to the survival of the middle- and upper-class, as well as the risk the *retirantes* posed to private property and political stability. The chapter pays particular attention to Euclides da Cunha's *Os sertões* (1902), which depicts the drought-stricken environment as the source of the creation of a rebellious race that cannot adapt to democracy. In Anderson's words, it cemented "in the public imagination the view of the *sertanejo* as the product of a hostile environment and a national security threat" (82). The analysis of this novel is complemented with that of da Cunha's essay "Plano de una cruzada" (1904). The chapter also studies José Américo de Almeida's *A bagaceira* (1928), which coincides with *Os sertões* in the assessment of drought as an impediment for development, but considers the central government's neglect a much more crucial factor. Anderson closes the chapter with a coda in which he claims not to have overstated the role of literature in

assessing the risks that drought posed to Brazil's modernization. He also explains why he did not concentrate on the testimonials written by the drought victims themselves.

Chapter 3, "Volcanic Identities: Explosive Nationalism and the Disastered Subject in Central American Literature," reveals the struggle for legitimacy among competing literary and political representations of volcanic activity imagery. In Anderson's view, "The use of volcanic imagery in foundational narratives creates the impression that the national geography itself joins the rebellion against external oppression" (109). He studies the role of volcanic imagery in the interactions between the state and individual or collective identities. As he elucidates, volcanoes are portrayed as positive nationalist symbols in Rubén Darío's poem "Momotombo" (1907), where he links volcanism to political identities and foundational myths. Other texts, such as Luis de Lión's collection of poems *Poemas del Volcán de Agua: los poemas míos* (1980), turn volcanic images against autocratic governments. Volcanic tremors are also portrayed negatively, suggesting identitarian schisms and traumas under repressive regimes, in Claribel Alegría and Darwin Flakoll's *Cenizas de Izalco* (1966), Manlio Argueta's *Perros mágicos de los volcanes* (1990), Roque Dalton's "Parábola a partir de la vulcanología revisionista" (1974), and José Coronel Urteacho's "Oda al Mombacho" (1931). Overall, Anderson argues, in Central America volcanoes have become symbols of class and ethnic social divisions: "the conversion of the volcanic landscape into national emblem enshrined the conflict between the ruling classes that instituted volcanoes as key tropes in the national imaginary and the largely indigenous residents of the volcanoes themselves, who also identified with volcanoes as symbols, but of their struggle against oppression by those same ruling classes" (143).

The last chapter, titled "Fault Lines: Mexico's 1985 Earthquake and the Politics of Narration," concentrates on the struggle for control over the representation of the earthquake in Mexico City. As Anderson reveals, the PRI's official version was overpowered by informal, popular accounts and oppositional literary attacks that questioned the government. In the end, the state itself was seen as hazardous. The literary and cultural representations of the earthquake, claims Anderson, denoted the end of the PRI's symbolic order and the opportunity to re-write it. The chapter first concentrates on the *crónicas* written and published immediately after the earthquake, which, according to Anderson, were closely associated with the popular mobilization that responded to the earthquake. Although written by intellectuals who were not members of the popular movements themselves, they gave the latter a voice. Among these intellectuals Anderson lists Fernando Benítez, Marco Antonio Campos, Carlos Monsiváis, Cristina Pacheco, Elena Poniatowska, Enrique Krauze, and Octavio Paz. The other type of cultural production studied are book-length literary and filmic representations of the earthquake. Anderson asserts that they "construct a narrative of emerging democracy that locates the popular response to the earthquake, along with the Mexican revolution and the 1968 students' movement, as a key trope in the rise of civil society in Mexico. These works deploy earthquake imagery to depict the PRI as a regime on the verge of collapse" (146). Among the representative works studied in the chapter are Enrique M. de la Garza Toledo and company's *Esto pasó en México*, Humberto Musacchio's *Ciudad quebrada*, and Xavier Gómez Coronel's *Terremoto en México*, all published in 1985, Carlos Monsiváis's *Entrada libre: Crónica de una sociedad que se organiza* (1987), Elena Poniatowska's *Nada, nadie: Las voces del temblor* (1988), Marco Antonio Campos's *Hemos perdido el reino* (1986), and Cristina Pacheco's *Zona de desastre* (1986).

To my knowledge, no other study has analyzed in this depth the political implications of defining natural disasters through literary and cultural writing in Latin America. In dialogue with Lévi-Strauss, Benedict Anderson, Mike Davis and other critics who have dealt with development, risk, trauma, and vulnerability, Anderson constructs a convincing and beautifully written narrative using four specific examples from Latin American history, while at the same time acutely connecting these examples with pre-Colombian worldviews and their own use of natural disasters for political purposes. He demonstrates how disaster narratives have been used to (de)legitimize political discourse and how literary representations of natural disasters carry sociopolitical power. If I have any qualms with this otherwise outstanding book, however, is that, in certain passages, Anderson may have overstated the

political influence of literature. In one of these cases, for example, he claims, that "the canonizing function of literature is almost indispensable for a disaster to be endowed with lasting national significance in Latin America" (194).

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Cavarero, Adriana. *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence*. Trans. by William McCuaig. New York: Columbia UP, 2009. 154 pp. 9780-2311-4456-8; 9780-2315-1917-5 (paper).

Cavarero propone un nuevo término para definir nuestra época, el horrorismo. El horror se define como el "sentimiento intenso causado por algo terrible y espantoso" (según el diccionario de la Real Academia Española [www.rae.es]) para definir lo monstruoso, lo atroz. El terror es un miedo muy intenso y también un método expeditivo de justicia revolucionaria o contrarrevolucionario. Cavarero escribe: "linguistic innovation becomes imperative in an epoch in which violence strikes mainly, though not exclusively, the defenseless" (3). La académica de la Universidad de Verona y una de las más importantes teóricas feministas, recurre a una espeleología etimológica apoyada en fuentes literarias, mitos griegos y la evidencia de las guerras recientes para explicar el horrorismo. Sin embargo, su interés no es sólo componer un ensayo académico desde la "zona segura" de la torre de marfil sino presentar evidencias del sesgo barbárico que está adquiriendo nuestra sociedad contemporánea.

El sentimiento de terror está ligado al temblor de la tierra, al estremecimiento del cuerpo por el temor. El horror, aunque un concepto a veces intercambiable con el terror, se distingue etimológicamente del terror porque alude a la demostración biológica de erizar los cabellos, efecto que se preserva en el adjetivo italiano (orripilante) como en el español, horripilante, es decir, que eriza la piel y produce escalofrío. Y nos presenta algunas evidencias, por ejemplo, el relato de un padre checheno que explica su tragedia al recoger los restos mortales de su hija que detonó una chaleco bomba ajustada en su torso: "Todo lo que quedó de mi hija fue su cabeza, su cabello enmarañado, como si hubiera sido despeinado por el viento... Además de su cabeza, todo lo que quedó fue un pedazo de espalda y un trozo de dedo con la uña. Lo puse todo en una caja. Todo lo que quedó de Ajza fueron cinco o seis kilos, no más" (9). Como se sabe, las bombas ajustadas en el torso, al explotar, desprenden de tajo la cabeza dejándola casi intacta en relación a la pulverización del resto del cuerpo. Cavarero apunta que de acuerdo con la mitología griega, la medusa, la mujer sin cuerpo, es la Gorgona que aterroriza con su cabeza cercenada, esto es, "horror has the face of a woman" (14). Las bombas suicidas humanas son una nueva fase del horror porque el culpable de la masacre se destruye con la detonación. Los sobrevivientes deben limpiar la sangre del victimario, como en una última afrenta, que se ha mezclado con la sangre de las víctimas.

El horror se distingue por su intención por desfigurar el cuerpo humano, por deformarlo y borrar todo elemento de humanidad. Escribe Cavarero: "There is no more life to rip away from the dead body, only the uniqueness of its figure" (12). El desfiguramiento, como la decapitación, son la base de los orígenes del horror. Asimismo, la forma de violencia que caracteriza al horrorismo es la tortura, que etimológicamente se remonta al latín "torquere" (torcer, distorsionar, atormentar). Torturar es desfigurar el cuerpo, quebrarlo en pedazos. Cavarero alude a los campos de concentración Nazi, utilizando el relato de Primo Levi, donde metódicamente se ejercía la tortura aún antes de llegar al encierro, en los trenes, apilados, sin agua y comida y obligados a defecar en público para dejar una herida profunda a la dignidad humana. En los campos del nazismo lo monstruoso se salió de sus casillas, de sus propios límites convirtiendo a los prisioneros en "muertos vivientes".

En el capítulo sobre los suicidios y el horrorismo, la autora parte de los "kamikaze" cuyo nombre significa "viento divino" que hace referencia a la tormenta que salvó a Japón de la invasión de la flota mongola en el siglo XII. Los "Shahid" en la lengua árabe son los "mártires" o "testigos" de su fe

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