

Reviews

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Juan Carlos Ramírez-Pimienta y María Socorro Tabuenca Córdoba, eds. *Camelia la Texana y otras mujeres de la narcocultura*. Culiacán: Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa, 2016. 290 pp.

En un México finisecular en donde el hiperconsumismo, la violencia e impunidad y el discurso hegemónico de género parecieran erigir la reconstrucción de la nueva imagen nacional, Ramírez-Pimienta y Tabuenca Córdoba compilan una colección de diez ensayos que aspiran a develar las consideraciones más representativas de la imagen femenina dentro del narcotráfico. A grandes rasgos, los autores equiparan a la mujer del narcotráfico con un vehículo cultural que evidencia la falla de un Estado-Nación regido por el narco. Los ensayos recurren a disciplinas como la literatura, el arte, la filosofía, el corrido y la cinematografía para emplazar esta nueva imagen femenina. Mediante la identificación de nuevos roles y particularidades se revela a la narco-mujer como sujeto de agencia que subvierte los patrones sociales tradicionales de género, mientras es inexorablemente consumida por una sociedad malograda que la utiliza como escaparate.

Las temáticas exploradas tienden a ser análogas. Sin embargo, se abordan desde diferentes ópticas disciplinarias sustentadas por referencias teóricas, filosóficas y culturales comunes a todas las propuestas, lo que le otorga al volumen un sentido de cohesión que permite al lector vincular los ensayos entre sí. El tomo presenta una panorámica evolutiva de la participación femenina en la narcocultura, comprendiendo la transformación de los patrones conductuales femeninos y las tipologías de estos modelos, la apoteosis y mitificación de la mujer en el narco, la disyuntiva ética y moral de las prácticas de la “narca,” el narco-empoderamiento a través del cuerpo y la violencia como procesos de desarraigo de los roles hegemónicamente tradicionales.

En *Camelia la Texana* los recursos estilísticos son de carácter persuasivo, sustentados con antecedentes históricos o con investigación de campo. Los ensayos están organizados con cierta tendencia cronológica, llevando al lector por un recorrido donde se familiariza con las múltiples representaciones narco-femeninas dentro de la cultura popular. De esta forma, Ramírez-Pimienta abre la colección con “Del dinero y de Camelia nunca más se supo nada’: Camelia la Texana en el cancionero y la narcocultura mexicana” en donde se explora esta figura corridística como un posible origen de la narcocultura. Dosinda Alvite con su propuesta “*La Reina del Sur*: Problemas éticos

de un protagonismo excesivo” analiza el personaje novelístico de Teresa Mendoza, buscando “comprender los modos en que el narcotráfico adquiere un capital cultural” (56). El trabajo de Itzelín Mata, “Género, cuerpo y violencia. La lucha contra el estereotipo de la mujer narco en México” analiza mediante el estudio de campo, cómo la identidad femenina se construye a partir de negociaciones específicas proponiendo una tipología de las jerarquías sociales en el ámbito del narco. Ruiz Méndez interviene con “Subjetividades femeninas y narcocultura en *Perra Brava* de Orfa Alarcón y *Las mujeres matan mejor* de Omar Nieto” en donde analiza “dos novelas asociadas a la narcocultura desde taxonomías discursivas recientes en un intento de visibilizar las conexiones de la narcocultura con el capitalismo tardío y exacerbado” (112). En “Jenni Rivera y sus corridos: La historia de un desafío,” Minnie Sawhney propone al ícono corridístico como un agente social reivindicador del género femenino. Por su parte, Gabriela Polit Dueñas interviene con “Dejemos en Paz a la Reina” en donde cuestiona la veracidad del mito detrás de Sandra Beltrán, mientras presenta una perspectiva histórica de las mujeres más influyentes en el mundo del narcotráfico. Rocío Irene Mejía en “Cenicienta remasterizada: narcotráfico y feminidad en la narrativa de Arminé Arjona” confronta a los arquetipos tradicionales de la mujer desde una perspectiva feminista contrastándolos con nuevos modelos narco-culturales. El arte visual se hace presente con el trabajo de Willivaldo Delgadillo, quien en “Teresa Margolles: voces de una obra forense en construcción” aborda el carácter necrológico en la obra de la artista, como un discurso que posiciona la violencia y sus efectos en el ámbito social. Por su parte, Sayak Valencia aporta “Género(s) y narcocultura” donde enfatiza la relación entre ambos conceptos y su contribución al proyecto heteropatriarcal capitalista. El tomo cierra con “Nunca en mi vida había visto damas con tantas agallas’: cine mexicano, mujeres y narcotráfico” donde María Socorro Tabuena reflexiona sobre “los códigos que utiliza la industria cinematográfica para construir el imaginario cultural de las mujeres relacionadas con el narco” (267).

Camelia la Texana y otras mujeres de la narcocultura es un libro fundamental que re-define el nuevo arquetipo de la mujer “narca.” A través de las propuestas, se busca despojar a estos narco-íconos artificiales del aura de glamour que las rodea, exhibiendo su verdadera naturaleza. Por otra parte, el lector podría encontrar en esta recopilación algunos vacíos, por ejemplo, no se incluyen propuestas que aborden las redes sociales como lienzo cultural de la narco-cultura, siendo que, en la actualidad, este espacio virtual constituye uno de sus principales transmisores. Además, siete de los ensayos están escritos desde una perspectiva femenina y tres desde la masculina lo que le otorga al material un trazo de parcialidad. Otro inconveniente que podrían enfrentar algunos

lectores es el exceso de jerga académica en algunos ensayos, lo que obliga a la audiencia a estar familiarizado con los marcos teóricos para lograr una comprensión total de la obra, de otra manera, algunos trabajos podrían resultar densos para el lector común.

En general el libro resulta recomendable para aquellos inmersos en la cultura, narcocultura, estudios de género y estudios sociales. El material es novedoso, directo y cuenta con un buen soporte teórico que le otorga características universales. Ramírez-Pimienta y Tabuenca Córdoba recopilan exitosamente una serie de materiales que permiten darle verdadera voz a las mujeres en el narco.

Zaida Aguilar
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Jorge Argueta. *En carne propia: Memoria poética / Flesh Wounds: A Poetic Memoir*. Prologue by Manlio Argueta. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2017. 128 pp.

The Salvadoran Civil War (1980-1992) lies at the heart of Jorge Argueta's bilingual poetic memoir, *En carne propia / Flesh Wounds*. It was a war in which it became normal to find "...un cachimbo / de baleados: / mujeres, niños y hombres/ de todo, hasta animales" ("No se asuste, maestro" 21).¹ The memoir is also punctuated by moments in which poetry reveals its transformative power: Argueta's "melodramatic" first poem, his political education via Roque Dalton's "Poema de amor," and lastly, returning "home" by writing children's verse. Argueta narrates these moments in prose and follows with poems detailing the experiences of many Salvadorans of his generation.

Jorge Argueta, now an award-winning children's book author, immigrated to San Francisco, CA in late 1981 soon after the war infiltrated his neighborhood in San Salvador. In ten chapters of a short prose introduction and series of poems, Argueta first retells his life as a youth in San Jacinto, a working-class *colonia*, and his short-lived participation in the resistance—he and other teenage boys were drafted to write *pintas* [political graffiti] in their neighborhood and eventually to bomb buses with Molotov cocktails—until he flees the *guardias* and the bloody civil war. We then follow him North to San Francisco where Argueta has to find his way away from El Salvador and its war and to a new life as an immigrant and exile. As in other Salvadoran-American texts, in Argueta's the war and the homeland are a persistent presence even after immigration. His nostalgia and longing for home does not abate

¹ Throughout this review, I cite the Spanish version of Argueta's text.

although his memories of death and his debts to his sister keep him in the U.S. As Argueta incorporates himself into life in San Francisco's Mission District, he maintains his sentimental ties to and memories of El Salvador—family, friends, war, food, love.

Argueta struggles in his new life away from his country and its war, eventually falling into drug and alcohol abuse. His way out of that personal war and back to his indigenous roots comes through a Navajo ceremony he was taken to by a friend. Argueta spends the night “viendo el fuego y escuchando canciones indígenas. Aquella noche sucedió algo maravilloso al observar las llamas. Vi a mi abuela en el fuego, ahí estaba mi mamita Wicha...La vi en las llamas, la escuché en las llamas. Era ella” (71-72). His remembrance and reassertion of a Pipil Nahua identity, “Volví a sentirme indio y orgulloso de serlo” (72), empowers him to look beyond his war-torn past to his childhood. His ancestral roots ultimately lead Argueta to poetry, but poetry for children. The children's poems Argueta chose to include in this volume highlight his connection to a simpler Salvadoran life—the rain, animals, fruit, a child's braids—all of which the war deprived Salvadorans. Argueta's children's poetry, with its celebration of Salvadoran traditions, allows him to return to the childhood games the war and his exile interrupted and then destroyed (72). This chapter of the memoir marks a pivotal point in Argueta's narration of his journey from San Jacinto to the Mission District; and from fear of and nostalgia for his Salvadoran past to a looking forward to his future as part of the Salvadoran diaspora. Fittingly *En carne propia / Flesh Wounds* ends with two longer poems that return to the fire that led him to poetry: “Lejos del fuego” and “Cerca del fuego.” These two poems also encapsulate the path of Argueta's life: San Jacinto, the Civil War, the Mission District, a return to post-conflict El Salvador. In the first of these two poems, Argueta describes the fires that contain Salvadoran immigrants between the homeland at war and the deep connections they continue to feel. Argueta closes “Lejos del fuego” affirming the “fuego náhuatl” that burns in him (81). In his memoir's final poem, Argueta returns to an El Salvador that “vuelve a soñar” (83). There, near the fire, Argueta encounters old friends and their (often) divided families; and compatriots returned and deported from the U.S. In this poem, Salvadorans' hope lies in the promise of the FMLN's leftist politics. Argueta concludes looking to a brighter future attesting his Salvadoran-ness—working-class, Pipil Nahua—in the U.S. and in El Salvador.

Yvette Aparicio
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Frederick Luis Aldama. *Latinx Superheroes in Mainstream Comics*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2017. 232 pp.

In his monograph *Latinx Superheroes in Mainstream Comics*, Frederick Luis Aldama's heroic alter-ego is revealed: He is "El Profe," a prolific academic "known in the Latino comics world," and beyond, for giving intellectual stature to Latinx cultural production and for "bring[ing] everyone together through his fiction, his social justice work, and his scholarship." So says scholar John Jennings, in a thoughtful foreword, and artist Javier Hernandez, in a purposeful afterword, that together demonstrate the intellectual community that Aldama has been fostering through his long-term study of Latinx media. Well-framed by Jennings and Hernandez, El Profe writes into action to analyze the Latinx superhero, an elusive figure who has been invisible and/or misrepresented in the popular consciousness of the United States.

Aldama's mission, in *Latinx Superheroes*, is to "[explore] the construction of Latinx superheroes in the mainstream"—i.e. in print comics, television, and film. To guide his analysis, Aldama deploys a handful of theoretical concepts. First, he defines Latinx superheroes as "simple [or] complex in terms of plot, visual shaping, and characterization." Complex Latinx superheroes—e.g. Miguel O'Hara in Marvel's *Spider-Man 2099* or Renée Montoya in DC's *Gotham Central*—emerge from what Aldama calls the *will to style* of comics writers and artists, or "the responsibility of the creator (or creators) in understanding well the building blocks of reality that they are reconstructing." Within this rubric, compelling characters emerge when comics creators "geometrize and storyfy" Latina/os, or present arresting visuals and narratives accountable to Latinx culture and history. Aldama also invokes readers as *co-creators* who use comics to "feel and think about identities and experiences distant from their own." Aldama supplements his own theoretical devices by using what he calls his "critical-race-theory superpower" and by referencing numerous scholars, including José Alaniz, Jan Baetens, Jared Gardner, Charles Hatfield, Karin Kukonnen, Pascal Lefèvre, and Shelley Streeby.

In Chapter One, Aldama digs into a capacious archive of print comics from DC and Marvel to "excavate" Latinx superheroes and villains. Aldama presents a mass of characters, artists, and writers, supplemented with numerous color images. The periodization can become confusing, as Aldama often interrupts his decade-by-decade chronology, jumping ahead in time to trace singularly successful—e.g. Marvel's White Tiger—or stereotyped—e.g. DC's Green Fury—characters across decades. However, these time shifts exemplify the difficulty of accounting for the

heterogenous corpus of serial comics, with its habitual retconning of characters' identities and storylines, and its fluctuating relationship to cultural politics. As Aldama shows, while some characters like DC's El Gaucho and El Diablo change appearance and attitude over time in relation to "struggles or experiences within the Latino community," others like Marvel's racially insensitive Vibe, or DC's sexually offensive Extraño, are abandoned.

The conceptual heart of *Latinx Superheroes* is Chapter Two, in which Aldama focuses on specific comics' covers, panels, and pages to explore how Latinx characters are shaped by and for Latinx and non-Latinx artists and readers. Seeking to move "Toward a Theory of Latinx Comic Book Superheroes," Aldama examines the relationship between techniques of representation and race, and the need for Latinx authors and artists to be given voice in the comics industry. Aldama is chiefly concerned with how the hybrid semantics of comics complicate superheroes' ethnicities, which are "constructed by the interplay of the visuals (phenotype) with the textual (name)." As Aldama shows, the unique power of comics is their ability to present Latinx superheroes' identities verbally and visually, and to "create tensions" based on differing ethnic markers like skin color, costuming, and naming.

As a survey of televisual and filmic Latinx superheroes, Chapter Three of *Latinx Superheroes* mirrors the organization of the first. Aldama acknowledges a handful of well-shaped depictions of Latinidad—e.g. *Dark Angel* (2000–2002)—but he criticizes "most" animated and live-action productions of the last three decades for lazy, insensitive casting and plotting—e.g. *Teen Titans* (2006) or *Ghost Rider* (2007)—or for evacuating the Latinidad of certain characters, e.g. Bane in Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012).

With comics becoming more academically institutionalized in the Americas and Europe, a text like *Latinx Superheroes* provides a resource that allows comics-, Latinx-, literary-, and cultural-studies scholars to diversify their analyses and their curricula. It also provides a model for political scholarship, in that Aldama compares texts and contexts, but also advocates for a democratic comics scene that respects the voices of Latinx creators, fans, and characters. *Latinx Superheroes* is another productive chapter in El Profe's swashbuckling saga of working for Latinx cultural voices to be commemorated and to be continued...

Marcel Brousseau
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Frank Varela. *Diaspora: Selected and New Poems*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2016. 112 pp.

The Puerto Rican diaspora has perhaps never needed her voices more. Frank Varela's poetry collection *Diaspora: Selected and New Poems* spans twenty four years of poetic work, and delivers the rare call and response experience poetry can sometimes offer. The poet calls out a reminder of who we are, have been and might be, and the reader responds with affirmation and hope. Varela puts the solitary work of the poet in the communal space of history: his own as a poet, that of the Puerto Rican diaspora, and the larger history of Latino/as and their status as citizens in a quest for identity and belonging in the United States.

Varela's newest collection offers selected poems from three previous books published from 1993 to 2009, with a section of new poems that bring his work forward into 2016. What remains constant is Varela's imagined map of the Puerto Rican "heartlands" from his grandfather's land in Cibuco, Puerto Rico to New York City to Humboldt Park in Chicago. Varela's poems render the Anzaldúan notion of "nepantalismo" visible. It is in the space in between where Varela does his most precise and beautiful work.

In the early poem "The Raccoons of Humboldt Park" (1993) he offers, "There's more found than lost in you. The bandit's face harbors a sly impenetrable eclipsing moon." He could be writing as easily about the stereotyped criminality of Puerto Ricans in Humboldt Park, a nucleus of Puerto Rican identity in Chicago, as he could be noting the long lost heritage of nature in the former prairie turned urban park. In either case, the idea that there is "more found than lost" does the poetic work of re-ordering the words "lost and found" to require that we re-imagine everything we think we know about what we see as other than ourselves. It is in the tradition of the pastoral with Varela imagining animals and landscape returning to a more pristine state. Except it is a return to the past by imagining a future transformed as "Von Humboldt himself would never believe ivy scaling up Sears Tower...fauna and flora repossessing the kingdom of man."

The use of juxtaposition, to reveal intimacy and estrangement at once, is a regular feature of Varela's work as he draws our attention to the spaces where diasporic peoples, lands and cultures meet but don't always collide. He uses this technique to greatest effect in the poems: "Contemplating Greek Mythology While Gazing at the Waters of San Juan Bay," "Gazing at a Picture of Ezra Pound While sitting in Humboldt Park Library," "Lessons from Chernobyl" (2001) and "Coyotes in Humboldt Park" (2016). Once again it is in Humboldt Park that Varela considers a symbolically feared animal as metaphor:

Coyotes, goes the thinking,
Steps from the park...
Have they escaped from a zoo?
...
Could it be that they, too, are members of the Diaspora,
who've lost their identity, their ancestral turf,
Their reasons for existence,
cast adrift in a city far from home?

By claiming the diaspora in the very title Varela aligns himself with a legacy and lineage of Puerto Rican writers. The most ambitious of his new poems is “The Country Without a Name” which opens with section I, “The Arrival,” and reminds us, in cadence and spirit, of Pedro Pietri’s canonical “Puerto Rican Obituary” but goes beyond the anonymous nature of Pietri’s “everyman” to the deeply personal. Varela does this especially well in the delicate, and vulnerably wrought, section VII, “My First Wife,” where he illuminates the intimate spaces where diasporic identity pressures are felt most acutely: “I envied your completeness, your identity, for the Spanish you spoke with such command. My love was lost in silence.” Varela closes his longest poem contemplating the diaspora as a country without a name: “In the country without a name, there is no death, just a lingering cancer, never cured, eating...the dead fly in metallic birds, steel condors with titanium wings, bound for destinations unknown.” He was writing about a past turned future as thousands more currently flee Puerto Rico post natural and economic disaster. Varela’s collected work is a much needed voice from the diaspora and closes with the perennial question of the legal status/identity of Puerto Rico: “If Puerto Ricans had wings, would there be a law against flying? ... And if we chose freedom, would they deny us a place on the map?”

Melissa Coss Aquino

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Karen Mary Davalos. *Chicana/o Remix: Art and Errata Since the Sixties*. New York: New York University Press, 2017. 336 pp.

Following *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965-1985*, a historic exhibition of Chicano/a art that toured several institutions across the United States in the early 1990s, scholar Alicia Gaspar de Alba published an interdisciplinary study of its inception, design, and reception in her book *Chicano Art Inside / Outside the Master's*

House: Cultural Politics and the CARA Exhibition (1998). Known as CARA, *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation* represented Chicano/a art history to a range of audiences and, while celebrated, it was not without controversy, meeting mixed reviews amongst art critics unfamiliar with Chicano/a art or reluctant to pushing the definitions of modernism and postmodernism in American art history, alongside entrenched notions of quality influenced by Eurocentric traditions of fine art. Gaspar de Alba's study of CARA accounted for these critiques but also interrogated Chicano/a art history from the inside out, particularly in regards to its androcentric historiography—or the male-centered ideological points of view that had shaped historical and scholarly interpretations of Chicano/a art in the late-twentieth century. Unpacking top-down relationships of power that nationally-recognized museums maintain in their collecting practices, funding plans, and curatorial choices, Gaspar de Alba's book echoed the title and paradigm of Audre Lorde's essay "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" (1984) in which Lorde identifies the elisions created by feminist praxis that neglects intersections of race, class, and sexuality in many women's lives in order to universalize gendered experiences of oppression.

I begin with Alicia Gaspar de Alba's analysis of CARA because it forecasts the significance of Karen Mary Davalos's *Chicana/o Remix: Art and Errata Since the Sixties* (2017). Similar to Gaspar de Alba's simultaneous critique of Eurocentric art traditions that fail to recognize nonwestern (alter-*Native*) art as aesthetic achievement, and the hetero-patriarchy that informed CARA's representation of Chicano/a art, Davalos asserts that public museums and other art institutions need permanent collections (and not periodic initiatives) of Chicana/o art, as well as fulltime curators and researchers trained in Chicana/o art history. Her mandates hinge on the intellectual intervention she makes on "authorizing institutions," which is, ultimately, what museums are, as she calls for an ideological and material shift away from the guiding structures, methods, and beliefs that maintain "white racial primacy and its ability to inhabit and control knowledge production" in such spaces (Davalos 13-14).

In her study of Chicana/o art exhibitions in Los Angeles from the 1960s to the present and, particularly, those held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Davalos exposes the ideological underpinnings of museum operations by utilizing a methodology that she calls the *errata* exhibition and its interpretative tool, the *Chicana/o remix*. Together, they enact a recovery of missing and elided records and their integration into Chicana/o and American art histories to date. Davalos's survey of *errata* exhibitions and the remixing of established art histories build on one another in seven chapters, as readers learn the breadth and depth of responses made by Chicana/o

artists and arts organizations to challenge “the artificiality of cultural authority and discernment by intervening against and analyzing the claims made” in mainstream exhibitions (21); she also uncovers the omissions of Chicana artists in exhibitions that spoke back to the mainstream shows, revealing the elisions of gender and sexuality in both the mainstream representations of Chicano/a art and the Chicano/a art shows that questioned the status quo (5; 26-28). Accounting for Chicano/a art both inside and outside the master’s house, Davalos foregrounds the actual interplay between the accepted aesthetic influences of Chicana/o artists and the unexpected European influences, as many Chicano/a artists went abroad throughout the twentieth century—and not only due to military service, but also on personal trips for artistic exposure as well as through family migrations (97-150).

Her book will prove important amid the 2017 *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA* shows in Southern California in which many of the artists and artworks she foregrounds appear. An unprecedented initiative, the Getty Foundation’s collaborative venture began in 2002 with over \$11 million dollars to “support research, exhibitions, programs, and publications on the LA postwar art scene,” launching a “six-month collaboration with over sixty institutions that presented the art of Los Angeles in a series of public programs and exhibitions that began in fall 2011” (5). In 2017, the second installation of PST shows began and one cannot help but consider the errata exhibition as a critical lens with which to think about who and what is and is not visible and the subsequent remixes that the PST exhibitions will bring forward, confirming, once again, the creative and intellectual force of what was, is, and will be Chicana/o art.

Ella María Díaz
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David Bowles. *Border Lore. Folktales and Legends of South Texas*. Beaumont, TX: Lamar University Press, 2015. 139 pp.

Los cuentos populares y leyendas repletas de significados culturales adquieren nuevas dimensiones desde la perspectiva de la literatura chicana en la obra del profesor y autor David Bowles, nativo del Valle del Río Grande, quien creció escuchando este tipo de narraciones de boca de sus familiares, especialmente su abuela. En su prefacio, Bowles afirma que estas historias contribuyeron a su formación e influyeron en su forma de escribir. La obra, conformada por 25 historias sobrenaturales, incluye una mezcla de inglés y español, así como elementos de la biculturalidad y la problemática

social que enmarca la zona fronteriza entre el sur de Texas y México, donde Bowles ubica los relatos.

Aunque escrita en inglés, Bowles hace uso del español para destacar relaciones de parentesco, frases populares o términos relacionados con brujería o curanderismo, al igual que conserva los nombres originales de algunas leyendas como la Llorona o la Mano Pachona. En cuanto al contexto espacio-temporal, la Llorona pasa de ser un relato cuyos orígenes podrían remontarse al México prehispánico a un episodio sucedido durante la fundación de alguna ciudad del Valle. Lo mismo sucede con otras historias en las que pasado y presente se mezclan, unas se actualizan y otras más son resueltas de manera que dejan de ser una amenaza para los pobladores.

Bowles destaca la importancia de las variaciones en las historias y la función que estas narraciones tienen en cuanto a una identidad comunitaria. En este sentido, en “The Lady in Black” la protagonista es identificada entre quienes acompañaban a Tomás Sánchez, fundador de Laredo y de otros asentamientos de la región. Pero en estas narraciones existen otros elementos de interés socio-cultural como la religión, la existencia del bien y el mal, y el fin último del ser humano como en “The Devil at Boccaccio 2000,” que relata la visita del demonio a la ciudad de McAllen un Viernes Santo. El demonio aparece para seducir a una joven y la historia advierte sobre el riesgo de caer en hechos pecaminosos. Mientras que en “Damnation at Toluca Ranch,” el diablo busca adueñarse de las almas de aquellos dominados por la avaricia u otras pasiones como lo sucedido a Florencio Sáenz, cuya ambición lo lleva a condenarse eternamente.

La creencia popular de que las personas que han muerto de manera inesperada o violenta se quedan en este mundo hasta resolver lo pendiente se ve reflejado en “The Ghosts of Fort Brown.” Aquí una estudiante de enfermería se da cuenta que su misión no solo es atender enfermos sino también ayudar a liberar aquellas almas en sufrimiento. Lo inverso sucede en “Ghost Tracks of San Antonio,” donde son los fantasmas quienes ayudan a los mortales, pues la historia cuenta que un autobús escolar es impactado por el tren y 26 niños fallecen. Ahora, cuando un automóvil se queda a mitad de los rieles por algún desperfecto con el riesgo de un impacto, las almas de estos pequeños intervienen dejando como testimonio huellas de pequeñas manos en la defensa del vehículo afectado.

Los relatos de Bowles incluyen historias tan recientes como “The Flying Witch of Monterrey” o “The Big Bird” que alcanzaron niveles mediáticos. También dentro de esta mezcla de lo antiguo con lo moderno surge “The Nagual of Río Bravo.” En esta ciudad tamaulipeca, varias mujeres han muerto a causa de este ser, pero otro

nagual aparece para actuar como carnada, atraerlo y darle muerte. Al acabar con él, éste aparece en su forma humana como un Mara de Guatemala: “Maras”... “More worse than wizards. Or wolves. Attacking women? Naguales no do that stuff. Maras, yes” (119). Este relato deja entrever realidades sociales como la violencia generalizada por los cárteles de las drogas que ha alcanzado a mujeres y niños en las ciudades mexicanas fronterizas.

Finalmente, Bowles reconoce que el problema acerca de la verdad de estas leyendas permanece, sin embargo acepta que no tiene otra opción más que retransmitirlas como algo verdadero ya que expresan realidades que explican quiénes son los habitantes del Valle. Así, en la historia “Chupacabras in Mission,” cuando el personaje principal da muerte a este ser en forma de reptil, el autor resuelve este cuestionamiento al final del relato: “In the end, he knew, and that was what really mattered” (49). Por esto, la certeza de estos relatos radicará en la credibilidad de quien los cuenta y en la continuidad de la retransmisión de aquellas historias que como Bowles asegura, le fueron contadas por una mujer sabia que preservaba los cuentos y las leyendas de la frontera.

Magdalena Guerra de Charur
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Rolando Hinojosa-Smith. *From Klail City to Korea with Love: Two Master Works.* Houston: Arte Público Press, 2017. 215 pp.

From Klail City to Korea with Love is a combined republication of *Korean Love Songs* and *Rites and Witnesses*, originally published in 1978 and 1982, respectively. Both books are written in English and are among the few books of Hinojosa’s fifteen-volume *Klail City Death Trip* that have never been translated into Spanish. The combined volume is neatly bound in color paperback. The cover features the image of a fountain pen superimposed over a photograph of soldiers wearing World War II French helmets and carrying German Mauser Karabiner 98k rifles, an image totally incongruent with the U.S. Army Korean War experience that informs Hinojosa’s works.

Hinojosa served as a military policeman in Korea, but *Korean Love Songs*, the only book of poetry in the *Death Trip*, is written from the perspective of the fictional Rafael Buenrostro, an artilleryman whose weapon system is a 155-millimeter howitzer capable of firing high-explosive shells at unseen targets miles away while risking the murderous effects of counterbattery fire from enemy guns. His verses convey the constant fear, the drudgery of Army life, the insanity of soldiers whose nerves have been

shattered by their experience, the horror of having fired on civilians and friendly troops, and the frustration and humiliation of never being considered to be fully American, even as he risked life and limb to serve the interests of the United States in combat. The “raza/bolillo” division is as palpable in Korea as it is in the Valley, and the writer is surrounded most closely by Chicano friends.

Hinojosa calls *Rites and Witnesses* a comedy in the sense that the Spanish Golden-age plays were *comedias* that combined comedic and dramatic elements. The first section, “Rites,” is episodic like his Quinto Sol award-winning *Estampas del Valle* (1973), alternating between snippets of dialogue during Rafa’s Korean War service and the start of Jehú’s employment with the Klail City Bank in 1960. The two threads seem to be incongruent, but they bridge to show that, in the post-war Valley, a subtle economic and political war continues as the Bank cynically manages the region’s politics and wrests the best land from its owners. More subtly, and perhaps more importantly, the juxtaposition of the two texts, as well as the combined republication of this book alongside *Korean Love Songs*, shows how their military service (in *Korean Love Songs* Rafa refers to Jehú’s service in another part of the Korean peninsula) equip them for success in the post-war years. In *Rites and Witnesses*, the Klail City Bank president, Noddy Perkins, employs Jehú to better deal with the growing economic and political power of the Chicanos in the Valley. Jehú is not a stooge like the puppet county politician Ira Escobar, but a decision-maker (he eventually becomes the bank’s president in *We Happy Few* [2006]) and Noddy’s valued advisor. Like Rafa, Jehú not only survives combat, but is fortified by it, managing to reinvent his post-war self into a successful, self-reliant man, totally consistent with what Erlinda Gonzales-Berry, in her introduction to *El condado de Belken* (1994), called the “Poetics of Aguante.”

The “Witnesses” section comprising the second half of the second book consists of monologues from minor *Death Trip* characters, intercalated with continued snatches of dialogue between Rafa and his fellow soldiers, this time covering Army garrison life outside of combat and field training, ending with the official morning report that details Rafa’s wounds in combat. The monologues sections are nearly all by Anglos speaking as if they are being interviewed, responding to questions about their opinions of the Valley’s Chicano community. The entire spectrum of anti-Chicano racism is voiced here, from “dog whistles” to Rebecca Verser’s horrific “worse than niggers” quote, a reminder of the profoundly racist sentiment that recently launched Donald Trump to the top of the heap in the Republican primaries as a result of his “Mexican rapists” diatribe in June 2016.

The only monologue of “Witnesses” by a Chicano is the book’s final one, in which Abel Manzano contrasts the long history of faithful military service of the Valley’s Chicanos with the murderous predations of both the Texas Rangers and Choche Markham, violence that Manzano characterizes as a “*cuento de nunca acabar*.” A cursory view of the United States’ current political landscape featuring policies toward the Non-White Other for which capricious cruelty seems to be the entire point, cause us to fear that Manzano may have been entirely correct.

Mark McGraw
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Jesús Rosales y Vanessa Fonseca, eds. *Spanish Perspectives on Chicano Literature: Literary and Cultural Essays*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2017. 204 pp.

Esta colección incluye diez espléndidos capítulos sobre literatura y cultura chicanas producidos por académicos españoles radicados en Estados Unidos y en España. Los temas tratados en *Spanish Perspectives on Chicano Literature* reflejan las preocupaciones de la crítica sobre estudios chicanos desde los años sesenta hasta la década presente como son el papel de la literatura—y en este caso de la mimesis literaria—en la conformación de la identidad étnica, racial y cultural de los chicanos (Manuel M. Martín-Rodríguez), el español chicano (Ana Sánchez-Muñoz), el papel social y político de los periódicos en el movimiento laboral chicano (Víctor Fuentes).

Además, algunos autores aplican conceptos relevantes de la crítica chicana a fenómenos de inmigración de España como en el caso del mestizaje aplicado por Carmen Sanjuán-Pastor a la representación novelística de los emigrantes marroquíes en la península ibérica. De manera semejante, Juan Pablo Gil-Olse establece una conexión entre dos representaciones fílmicas, la de *Bless me, Ultima* de Rudolfo Anaya y *Obababa* (basada en la novela *Obabakoak* de Bernardo Atxaga), argumentando que el uso de la magia y lo maravilloso en ambas representaciones ofrecen una interpretación abierta que trasciende fronteras culturales particulares y espacios históricos específicos.

La selección exclusiva de críticos españoles tiene el propósito de autorizar—desde la academia norteamericana—la perspectiva ibérica de estudios chicanos para la cual los editores y el autor del prefacio del libro, el distinguido catedrático Francisco Lomelí, enfatizan los orígenes hispanos de la literatura chicana que forman parte de su identidad mestiza (indígena y española) evidenciados por los descubrimientos en los

años ochenta de obras procedentes de los siglos XVII y XVIII producidas por los “los súbditos de la corona española” y por “los mexicanos hispanos” del siglo XIX (Lomelí xi-xii). Por tanto, de acuerdo con Lomelí, el discurso cultural chicano ha trascendido la retórica anti-española del movimiento nacionalista chicano de los sesenta y setenta que denunciaba la opresión y el racismo de la corona hacia sus súbditos mexicanos mientras romantizaba el sustrato indígena del mexicano (x).

Además de la conexión ontológica de la literatura chicana con España, Lomelí explica la selección exclusiva de críticos españoles por parte de los editores como resultado del papel relevante de figuras como Justo A. Alarcón, Armando Miguélez, Manuel M. Martín-Rodríguez y José Antonio Gurpegui (a quien Lomelí califica como “the lightning rod and undisputed leader” de los estudios chicanos en España, xii) en la consolidación e internacionalización de la literatura y los estudios chicanos. Tanto los editores como Lomelí, enfatizan el rol del Instituto Franklin, dedicado a la investigación de estudios Norteamericanos en la Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, que desde el 2006 co-organiza cada dos años congresos dedicados a temas chicanos y divulga temas latinos a través de la revista *Camino Real* y de las traducciones de poesía, crítica y novela de o sobre autores chicanos.

Los editores apuntan que el libro se inserta en un proyecto mayor de reflexión sobre el presente y futuro de las letras chicanas y que la intención del libro es presentar “una visión crítica externa sobre la literatura chicana que expanda su conocimiento y apreciación dentro de los parámetros de la literatura norteamericana y de otras literaturas del mundo para entender las diferencias y similitudes políticas y sociales que unen y dividen a las naciones” (3; mi traducción). De esta manera, los autores intentan enfocar temas ligados a la literatura chicana como los ya mencionados, a partir de una perspectiva global y transnacional.

A pesar del gesto de reconciliación promulgado por los editores y el autor del prefacio en cuanto al pasado colonial hispano y a sus efectos históricos en la cultura mexicoamericana, el artículo de Ricardo F. Vivancos Pérez “Toward Transnational Nos/otr@s: Scholarship in Chican@ and Latin@ Studies,” manifiesta que el sentimiento anti-hispano aun persiste en la academia cuando se trata de “compartir el poder” con los críticos no chicanos, como en el caso de Vivancos Pérez. Ante esta situación, Vivancos Pérez, aludiendo a la propuesta de Gloria Anzaldúa en *Borderlands/La Frontera*, propone abrir el debate en cuanto a la posibilidad de un “nos/otros” en los estudios chicanos, es decir, la combinación de el “yo” y el “nosotros”; lo individual y lo colectivo, la identidad en la diferencia: “the one dealing with the voice of the other as part of the collective other” (62). Vivancos Pérez concluye que es necesario que los estudios

chicanos incorporen las visiones de sujetos críticos que puedan ofrecer desde sus diferentes posiciones, perspectivas múltiples de la literatura chicana. La antología de Rosales y Fonseca se propone precisamente este cometido y constituye un primer paso para propiciar un diálogo en el que se reflexione sobre el por qué sigue siendo necesario justificar la visión/reflexión sobre temas chicanos proveniente de críticos originarios de España, como evidencia el ensayo de Vivancos Pérez.

María Esther Quintana Millamoto
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ire'ne lara silva y Dan Vera. *Imaniman: Poets Writing in the Anzalduan Borderlands*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2016. 216 pp.

Treinta y un años han pasado desde la publicación de *Borderlands/La frontera* (1987) por Gloria Anzaldúa; 31 años en los que las líneas divisorias (territoriales y epistemológicas) de las que hablaba Anzaldúa se han visto afectadas por la globalización y las migraciones a los centros urbanos del capitalismo estadounidense; 31 años en los que lxs chicanxs simplemente ya no son lxs mismxs que reflejaba Anzaldúa. Editado por ire'ne lara silva y Dan Vera, *Imaniman* (2016) es una recopilación de ensayos y textos poéticos que ahondan en la influencia del pensamiento de la autora y su posible aplicación al contexto chicano actual. Por medio de poemas, experiencias personales y reflexiones teóricas, los 52 autores del libro materializan la filosofía anzalduesca, (re) generando nuevas dinámicas político-identitarias en el chicanismo.

La gran mayoría de textos en el libro mantienen las líneas temáticas clásicas del pensamiento chicano anzalduesco. Por un lado, muchxs de los autorxs expresan la importancia que el hibridismo indigenista sigue teniendo en sus realidades, pues estos hacen uso del imaginario mitológico-cultural nahua/hispano no solo para desarrollar su estética, sino también para reivindicar una visión alternativa de identidad chicana y de sus problemáticas sociopolíticas. De este modo, la frontera ontológica de la que nos hablaba Anzaldúa, dividida entre lo hispano, lo indígena y lo anglo, pervive en una sociedad chicana mucho más expandida que la que vivió la poeta, manteniendo la imagen de las “nuevas mestizas”/“nepantleras” en un tercer espacio identitario en constante definición. No solo el triunvirato indígena-hispano-anglo sigue presente en el *ethos* chicano, en *Imaniman* también se pueden observar nociones más profundas de la teorización ontológica de Gloria Anzaldúa. De la misma manera en la que *Borderlands/La frontera* reflexionaba sobre la multiplicidad e interseccionalidad de las

distintas identidades (sexual, racial, de género y de clase) y su papel en la definición social del individuo, lxs autorxs de *Imaniman* enfatizan sus distintas marginalidades y las formas en las que éstas interactúan entre sí, a veces cooperando y otras cohibiéndose, pero siempre sirviendo como fuente de empoderamiento.

Quizás el aspecto más interesante que presenta esta recopilación de textos es la actualización del concepto de “nueva mestiza.” Pese a que Anzaldúa defendió la necesidad de generar identidades chicanas en las que lo indígena y lo rural tuvieran una presencia necesaria, lxs autorxs de *Imaniman* nos muestran cómo este modelo difícilmente se adecua a las realidades de muchxs de los chicanxs. De esta manera, encontramos textos en los que la frontera geográfica del activismo chicano se ha desplazado a los núcleos rurales de Aztlán, particularmente Los Ángeles, en las que contamos con chicanos con experiencias (y poéticas) en las que lo indígena ha dejado de ser una parte esencial de su reflejo social. Así como se cuestiona el indigenismo intrínseco a lo chicano, encontramos también autorxs que problematizan incluso la necesidad de una Aztlán como hogar natural exclusivo para lxs chicanxs. En este sentido, lugares muy lejanos, como Nueva York, se convierten también en espacios en los que se articula una disidencia legítima a la hegemonía cultural estadounidense. Los movimientos migratorios no solo consiguen generar nuevos sentimientos de arraigo entre estxs autorxs chicanxs, sino que, además, les permiten gestar nuevas relaciones de hibridismo con otras poblaciones marginalizadas y culturalmente emparentadas como los son lxs latinxs. Ni siquiera una ascendencia/cultura enteramente chicana se vuelve un requisito indispensable para crear discursividades chicanas; es más, son justo estos elementos los que hacen de los textos del tomo una representación de lo que Gloria Anzaldúa llamó “la facultad”: el potencial del hibridismo para discernir los mecanismos por los que las muchas estructuras identitarias de poder a las que estamos sometidos como sujetos.

En su conjunto, los textos incluidos en *Imaniman* nos presentan un retrato modernizado y adaptado de las ideas que *Borderlands/La frontera* suscitaba en 1987. Si la idea de la “nueva mestiza” se fundamentaba en la diversidad y adaptación de las distintas identidades de lxs chicanxs a su contexto, *Imaniman* nos presenta productos poéticos y ensayísticos que extrapolan esta diversidad a la inmensa variedad de contextos chicanos contemporáneos. Así, el indigenismo y su ausencia; las diferencias entre comunidades rurales y urbanas; y las experiencias de los migrantes y de los que se quedaron en Aztlán se convierten en elementos opcionales y negociables en la creación de identidades y políticas chicanas. Los autores de *Imaniman* absorben los paradigmas de la visión revolucionaria de Anzaldúa y los amoldan a sus propias realidades, visibilizando (y

por tanto transformando) los fundamentos más básicos de la identidad chicana. Ni la propia Gloria lo hubiera hecho mejor.

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Daniel G. Campos. *Loving Immigrants in America: An Experiential Philosophy of Personal Interaction.* Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017. 282 pp.

When philosophers reflect on immigration they tend to focus on its moral, juridical, or political aspects. Because they want to talk broadly and *philosophically* about it, they render it into a *notion*, or an abstract idea that can then be theoretically dissected and analyzed. Few are the philosophical treatments that consider the *experience* of immigration; few are the philosophers who think immigration in its concreteness and *lived reality*. Daniel Campos' *Loving Immigrants in America* is one such treatment—it begins and ends with a consideration of immigration as a *lived experience* that is personal, situated, historical, and, while different in virtue of being personal and situated, is nonetheless familiar and universalizable to the human experience itself.

The 15 chapters that make up *Loving Immigrants in America* construct an autobiographical narrative of being an immigrant in America. Throughout, Campos often and consistently breaks from the immediacy of the narrative to *philosophically* meditate on (or mediate) those experiences. His philosophical resources are rich and lean heavily on the American philosophical tradition. Thus, an operative theme in his philosophical analysis is “agapic resilience,” a theme he borrows from Charles Sander Peirce (and José Martí), and one that does a great deal of work in this text. Agapic resilience, Campos tells us, is “the habit or disposition to continue to love, while caring for one’s own well being, even in the face of adverse conditions, such as divisive politics” (251). That is, in spite of the hatred, the anti-immigrant sentiment, the racism, it is *love* that binds us and holds us in communion with one another (despite our differences).

The narrative style of the book serves an important purpose. Campos tells us in the “Philosophical Prelude” that his aim is to open up a dialogue with his readers about immigration; that, ultimately, his own personal narrative will highlight those common experiences that immigrants and non-immigrants share as members of the human community. As he puts it: “I suggest that anyone who is receptive and attentive to the commonality of human experience can empathize with immigrants once they

see their experience as one of search for personal well-being (affective, material, and social), growth, and self-realization" (2).

The reader will thus find value in every page of this book. Of note, however, is the reminder that immigration as a lived and situated experience involves a real confrontation with the *narrative* of immigration itself, that in the U.S., or "*el Yanai*," as he calls it, referring to the way Central American immigrants pronounce "United" in United States, influences everything from policy to the body of the immigrant herself. This narrative is familiar, and so anyone, immigrant or not, can empathize with those experience that constitute Campos' own experiences as an immigrant in *el Yanai*. Whether on the soccer field or on the subway, racist sentiments surprise us all, and Campos facility with his prose allows us to experience those moments with him, to experience the shock of prejudice that creeps up in unexpected moments, forcing us to ask *why* someone would think the way they do while concluding that they simply *do not know* enough, that they lack the experiential resources to be sympathetic or kind.

Campos' is a necessary narrative for our times. Ignorance and hatred of difference can only be challenged with knowledge, with exposure, with familiarity, and Campos' experiences of *being* an immigrant in the U.S. certainly enlighten us, expose us, make us familiar not only to his experiences, but to experiences of this kind. Campos' narrative makes us more human.

This is not your usual philosophy book. It does not take any particular position, defending it against all comers; it does not offer a unique interpretation of text or life that at once challenges previous interpretations; and it does not seek to present a new philosophical concept, one that would enrich our already saturated conceptual registers in the task of thinking philosophically. What the book does do, what it offers, is a first-person philosophical narrative of a specifically situated lived experience that challenges its readers to think beyond the abstract *idea* of immigration and to the concreteness of immigrant life. Gregory Pappas, in his blurb at the back of the book, tells us that "narratives sometimes provoke more philosophical reflection and understanding than argumentation." This is a shared insight amongst American philosophers such as Pappas and his predecessors who found in the narratives of Whitman, Emerson and Thoreau the key to understanding the "American" spirit. Looking toward America's future, narratives such as Campos' will provide the key to understanding one another, to accepting each other, and fostering the love necessary to keep us together in spite of ourselves.

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Juan A. Thomas. *Diary of a Small Hispanic Community*. Utica, NY: The Eugene Paul Nassar Ethnic Heritage Studies Center / Utica College, 2017. 190 pp.

Diary of a Small Hispanic Community takes a close look at sociocultural, political, and economic realities for Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and other Latinos in Utica, New York, from the 1940s through the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Local in scope, the book highlights changes, successes, and challenges that parallel those in other small U.S. cities with significant Puerto Rican/Latino population growth. The author's linguistic research is backgrounded here to focus on sociocultural and political issues in these communities, with thirteen chapters, introduction, and epilogue that are organized chronologically. Documentation relies heavily on local news media sources and on interviews with community members. Eighteen photos illustrate key points, and tables, figures, and maps elucidate the demographics of Utica's Puerto Rican/Latino population. The book shows how religious and community organizations supported Puerto Ricans who first arrived in the 1940s, documenting the ebb and flow of advocacy in the face of challenges, including a lack of political representation, discriminatory hiring practices, police abuse, growing unemployment as factories closed, high school dropout rates, racial insensitivity toward Puerto Ricans, and conflicts between long-term Puerto Rican residents and more recent arrivals. One chapter focuses on the presence of Spanish in churches, restaurants, and businesses, and its absence in health care, social services, law enforcement, and schools, with first-person narratives that reference language shift, dialectal variation, and the lack of access to medical interpreters, as well as the role of Spanish as a unifying force in the community. Another chapter is a lengthy treatise of Census Bureau data and demographic changes in Utica as well as in the United States. Near the end of the book, individual narratives by Chicanos and New Mexicans are included, although their individual stories do not communicate substantially about the community as a whole; this section also describes how the arrival of Dominicans in the early 21st century has contributed to the current mosaic of Puerto Ricans/Latinos in Utica.

Diary of a Small Hispanic Community's strengths are due to the close-up historical account which yields specific snapshots of the community's development over decades. In this way, the book is reminiscent of Carmen Teresa Whalen's *El viaje: Puerto Ricans of Philadelphia* (Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), which documents change and growth in Puerto Rican communities in 20th century Philadelphia and the role of community organizers. Nevertheless, *Diary of a Small Hispanic Community* sometimes bogs down in minutiae that detract from the larger picture (e.g., the presentation of a certificate to a given individual for teaching cardboard carpentry or the amount of

money raised on a particular fundraising date). The concerted use of newspaper sources provides detail-rich content, which at times sacrifices a level of analytical depth. One example is the treatment of *Hispanic* and *Latino*, notoriously problematic terms that vary from one community to another. The author acknowledges that “many considered [*Hispanic*] a label that does not adequately capture the complex cultural and national mix of people of Spanish-speaking origin” (93), yet he does not elucidate why the term was chosen for the title of the book. Utica is predominantly Puerto Rican, and many Puerto Ricans reject both labels. It’s unclear whether Utica’s residents self-identify as *Hispanic*, although there is some indication that some do not—Jorge Hernández, “as a Puerto Rican, preferred the label Boricua” (58). The author recognizes heterogeneity among Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican populations, yet coverage of non-Puerto Ricans in Utica is given short shrift (Dominicans are covered more than others). There is some negative stereotyping in that when Mexicans/Chicanos are first mentioned, they are described as being “at the center of the national debate regarding illegal immigration” (7) with little exploration of their arrival, challenges, and successes in Utica. There are also points where more editorial review is needed. One sentence states, confusingly, that “of the 236 people sent to New York prisons on assault charges in 1994, 251 were black or Hispanic and 79 were white” (82). Other examples include a detailed description of a local reporter doing earthquake cleanup in El Salvador, information that is not clearly relevant to the book’s focus (59-60), as well as an abrupt shift in topic from local political candidates’ educational backgrounds and work histories to a description of undocumented workers (105). The epilogue, however, shines, as the author succinctly synthesizes Utica’s ongoing realities with the issues described above. Given that “the story of Hispanics in Utica is certainly ‘a work-in-progress’” (150), the author’s honesty about internal strife, ethnic tensions, and intergenerational conflicts is the book’s greatest strength.

Elaine M. Shenk
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Alberto Sergio Laguna. *Diversión: Play and Popular Culture in Cuban America*. New York: New York University Press, 2017. 296 pp.

La carátula es de fondo negro y el título alterna entre el amarillo, el rosado y el anaranjado. En el centro destaca una foto de Robertico, uno de los comediantes cubanos más exitosos de los últimos tiempos. *Diversión: Play and Popular Culture in Cuban*

America es el primer libro del académico Alberto Sergio Laguna. El texto entretiene, documenta, teoriza e indaga críticamente sobre la diversión enfocada en la comedia cubana desde el cambio del siglo XX al XXI. Un libro sobre cómo se divierten y acercan los cubanos entre Miami y la Habana a través del humor. Por medio de observaciones participativas y entrevistas, el autor analiza formas de transnacionalización de la comedia cubana en la isla y Miami a partir de los cambios generados por la profunda crisis económica de los noventa y del restablecimiento de las relaciones diplomáticas entre Cuba y los Estados Unidos desde el 2014. Asimismo, identifica continuidades sobre cuestiones de género y raza, en las formas de experimentar y reproducir “emociones nacionales” en la comedia cubana asociadas al choteo.

El primer capítulo examina la recepción en Miami de grabaciones de programas en vivo del legendario comediante cubano-americano Guillermo Álvarez Guedez desde la década de los ochenta. Laguna estudia también formas de consumo de la comedia de Álvarez Guedez en la isla, a través de grabaciones piratas que circulan de forma clandestina a pesar de su prohibición por la censura “revolucionaria.” El segundo capítulo brinda luz sobre el tratamiento del dilema del exilio tradicional en la comedia cubana, a partir de la incidencia en la radio local de los comediantes Enrique Santos y Joe Ferrero. Ambos pertenecen a la generación de cubano-americanos conocida como 1.5 según el crítico Gustavo Pérez Firmat, que se refiere a americanos de origen cubano que nacieron en los Estados Unidos o que emigraron desde pequeños, y que poseen una cosmovisión bilingüe. El tercer capítulo se adentra en las formas de producción, consumo y comodificación de la “nostalgia” en una feria-expo que tiene lugar anualmente en el suburbio cubano-latinoamericano y latino de Kendall, en Miami. El cuarto capítulo es uno de los más informativos del texto y se refiere al proceso de normalización de las presentaciones de comediantes residentes en la isla en teatros, radio, televisión local y lugares de entretenimiento en Miami. Asimismo, el autor se detiene en las intervenciones inéditas de comediantes cubanos residentes en Miami en la TV de la isla, y en cómo estos adoptan y negocian la autocensura en sus narrativas por el temor de poner en riesgo la fragilidad de sus empresas transnacionales entre “ambas orillas.” El último capítulo analiza negociaciones de lo cubano que se producen en espacios virtuales a través de la Internet. La inmediatez y presencia de la comedia online cubana es una de las formas alternativas más populares de entretenimiento actualmente, lo que se ejemplifica en el texto a través del análisis del éxito de Los Pichy Boys, comediantes cubanoamericanos de Hialeah. Este capítulo se adentra también en el fenómeno de “El Paquete” en la isla, uno de los medios de consumo de entretenimiento transnacional más populares que legitima formas alternativas de “disfrute” audiovisual de lo foráneo,

hasta el momento toleradas por el establishment. Laguna identifica este fenómeno como un mecanismo de reproducción en la isla de formas de consumo de la industria del entretenimiento norteamericano y de formas de vida de la diáspora cubana.

Uno de los principales aciertos de este libro es su foco en los importantes cambios que están teniendo lugar en las negociaciones de narrativas de identidad cubana en el espacio transnacional para sectores del entretenimiento, más allá de las barreras políticas bilaterales. La comedia como diversión es vista por Laguna como uno de los espacios pioneros en el acercamiento cultural y apertura de oportunidades económicas que han tenido lugar entre cubanos de la isla y Miami. La asociación de la comedia cubana al choteo resulta útil para el análisis de los capítulos de Álvarez Guedez y la radio de Miami. Sin embargo, no se brinda una reflexión del fenómeno de “dar cuero,” una de las formas más populares adoptadas en el humor cubano desde hace algunas décadas. A pesar de que el autor reconoce a Alexis Valdés como el comediante cubano más popular, no se utiliza como uno de los casos de estudio en el texto.

El libro puede resultar de interés para los estudios culturales cubanos, latinoamericanos y latinos, de emigración, étnicos, de relaciones internacionales, de comunicación y de la industria del entretenimiento, entre otros. *Diversión* es recomendable para los interesados en indagaciones sobre el papel del humor como diversión y paliativo para negociar la cotidianidad de las tribulaciones existenciales de los cubanos tanto en la isla como en la diáspora de Miami.

Eva Silot Bravo
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June Carolyn Erlick. *Telenovelas in Pan-Latino Context*. New York: Routledge, 2018. 154 pp.

With this volume, June Carolyn Erlick makes an invaluable contribution to the study of the Latin American *telenovela*. In the first two chapters, “Discovering Telenovelas” and “Change Agents: Beyond Melodrama,” Erlick describes *Pan-Latino* identity as the fusion of Latinos based on their related cultural, geographic, racial or linguistic origins. In addition, the author provides a clear explanation of the differences that exist between soap operas (mainly U.S.-based) and Latin American *telenovelas*. Some of the most important differences that the author points out are that, unlike soaps, *telenovelas* have a clear beginning and ending, and that these include a definite goal—which can include love or the overcoming of obstacles such as class, poverty,

discrimination and machismo. They are also different because *telenovelas* are aired during prime time and are watched by families, groups of friends or a community.

In the following three chapters of the book, “Beyond Betty: Gender and Sexuality,” “Gay Love, Gay Kisses,” and “Black, White and Brown: Telenovelas and Race,” Erlick provides the history of *telenovelas* in different countries of Latin America while she illustrates the transformation that these serials have gone through. These changes have also affected the way that gender, sexuality and race are presented or represented on screen. Erlick takes the valuable *telenovela* scholarship that has been done by Jesús Martín-Barbero, Carolina Acosta-Alzuru, Esther Hamburger, José Ignacio Cabrujas, Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes and Guillermo Orozco Gómez, just to name a few, to present the most comprehensive and up-to date account of the historical development of this Latin American phenomenon.

The reason why *telenovelas* are such an important fiber in Latin American culture is because they not only present a mirror image of the society they portray but also because they bring to the forefront political and social issues that are not easily discussed in either public or private spaces. These issues may range from machismo or race to incest or homophobia, to abortion and, recently, to immigration and human and drug trafficking. Erlick asserts that Latin American screenwriters decided that no one else could tell the history of their cultures better than them. It is necessary to present the history of Latin America from within Latin America. These *telenovelas* have actually brought about social change by exposing some of the most controversial topics and issues that Latin Americans have had to face or are currently facing.

Chapter 6, “Narconovelas: Beyond the News,” addresses the transition from *telenovelas* that reflect the growing pains of industrialization and globalization on Latin American countries to those that directly take on “the new glistening lifestyle of the underworld that taps into the collective imagination of a continent struggling with its identity, trapped between poverty and underdevelopment and oft-painful world of relentless growth and modernization” (133). From regular melodramatic *telenovelas*, countries such as Colombia and Mexico now address a past and present tightly related to the drug trafficking reality that has permeated society at all levels: social, political, economic and security issues that have been derived from this “business.” Nothing is currently more real in a country such as Mexico than the narco-world and its impact on society. According to Erlick, social media suggests that *narconovelas’* audiences have found these stories highly personal as they relate to their everyday life. The audience is able to see their lives on screen as the *narconovelas* reflect how drug trafficking has affected them personally through the “economic trickle-down” effect and the fear and

bloodshed that surrounds them. In viewing these *narconovelas*, audiences come to understand the multi-dimensional social nature of the narco-world (135).

Narconovelas are “stories that are being told night after night with Latin American actors and screenwriters. It is a way of remembering; it is a way of understanding; it is a mirror to society past and present” (138). It is through these *telenovelas* and *narconovelas* that there has been a “successful projection of female in Latin American identity in the global context,” which, at the same time, “strengthens the influence of *telenovelas* in the Pan-Latino context. What is recognized abroad often becomes even more important at home” (143). There are female characters in these *narconovelas* that have come to be seen as role models because of their strength and the key roles that they play within the drug cartel organizations.

In her conclusion, Erlick uses a very effective comparison between the fairy tale and the *telenovela* since they both “tap into primal emotions” (144). They also “tap into the archetypes” and “hold a mirror to our own desires and our fears and our multiplicity of identities. And despite the fact we may have read fairy tales in school, or had them read to us at bedtime, they are part of an oral tradition” handed down to us directly by our teachers or family members and indirectly by cultural references (144). Since *telenovelas* are a prevalent part of everyday conversations being had at home, school, work, on buses and subways they percolate into the general knowledge of society. These serials become the fabric through which a historical memory is being constantly built and rebuilt in Latin America and around the world.

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