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The *LASA Forum* is published four times a year. It is the official vehicle for conveying news about the Latin American Studies Association to its members. Articles appearing in the *On the Profession* and *Debates* sections of the *Forum* are commissioned by the Editorial Committee and deal with selected themes. The Committee welcomes responses to any material published in the *Forum*.

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Alfred C. Stepan

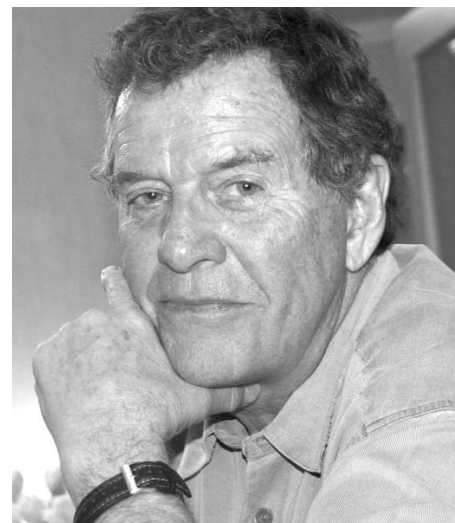
Recipient of the Kalman Silvert Award for 2009

Alfred Stepan is the Wallace S. Sayre Professor of Government at the School of International and Public Affairs and the Department of Political Science at Columbia University. He is also the Founder and Director of the Center for the Study of Democracy, Tolerance and Religion at Columbia, a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the British Academy, an Honorary Fellow of St Antony's College at Oxford University, and a holder of the *Ordem do Rio Branco*, Commendador, awarded by the Brazilian Government in 2002. He received his B.A. from the University of Notre Dame, a B.A. and M.A. from Balliol College, Oxford, in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, and a Ph.D. from Columbia University in Political Science.

His many books and articles have made him a leading figure among scholars studying Latin American politics as well as those studying comparative politics more broadly. His first book, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil* (Princeton University Press, 1971) was followed by *The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton 1978). His collaboration with Juan Linz, who was his professor at Columbia and then a colleague at Yale, has lasted into the present and produced the path breaking volumes *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (Johns Hopkins 1978) and *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe* (Johns Hopkins, 1996)—now translated into about a dozen languages including Farsi, Chinese, Croatian and Basa-Indonesian. Their latest opus, *Democracy and Multinational Societies: India and Other Politics* (with Yogendra Yadav), is forthcoming with Johns Hopkins University Press. At the same time, Stepan continued to write on Brazilian politics and the role of the military in politics more

generally, authoring *Rethinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone* (Princeton University Press, 1988) and editing *Democratizing Brazil: Problems of Transition and Consolidation* (Oxford University Press, 1989). As the titles suggest, the conditions supporting the establishment and preservation of democracy as a form of government securing peaceful resolution of conflicts and coexistence of different ethnic groups and religions have been the intellectual puzzle driving the research. Beginning with *The State and Society*, Stepan's work has profoundly shaped the agenda of scholars interested in the nature of the state and the role of political institutions proper in shaping regime forms and in the role of the military in politics.

Before going to Columbia University in 1999, Stepan taught at Yale (1970-83) where he chaired the Council on Latin American Studies (1972-1981, except when on leave); he served as Dean of the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia (1983-1991) and as first Rector and President of the Central European University and Member of the Board of Directors of the Soros Open Society Foundation (1993-96); and he was the Gladstone Professor of Government and Fellow at All Souls College, University of Oxford (1996-1999). He has been the recipient of numerous fellowships and research grants from organizations such as the Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Guggenheim Foundation, and the Social Science Research Council. He has lectured at more than 150 institutions in approximately 30 countries around the globe. He has lent his seemingly boundless energy to many professional and public service projects. Among them are the Annenberg/ WGBH 10-hour TV Series entitled "Americas," which took some seven years to complete, won two awards, and remains a great teaching tool for classes on Latin America. He served for a dozen years



on the National Executive Committee of the human rights organization Americas Watch (1982-1994). In 1981-1982 he was a member of Rev. Theodore Hesburgh's advisory group to design the Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame, and later he served for a dozen years on the Advisory Board of the Institute.

Among the many important roles Stepan has played, the role of mentor figures prominently. He has served on no fewer than forty Ph.D. dissertation committees, well more than half related to Latin America. His message to his students has been consistent: "You are writing this dissertation not for yourself and the committee—you are writing a book!" Indeed, at least twenty-five of the dissertations have been published as books, and more are on the way to publication. Colleagues and students, both present and former, from Latin America, the United States, Europe, and elsewhere, have always played central roles as intellectual partners for Stepan—members of his invisible colleges that span continents and decades. His enthusiasm for the study of politics, and his conviction that knowledge can have important practical implications have inspired generations of scholars.

The long interview in *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*, by Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007) illustrates well the way in which Stepan thinks about his invisible colleges and about his passion for political science and public affairs, which he passes on to his students. In response to

President's Report

by ERIC HERSHBERG | Simon Fraser University | eric_hershberg@sfu.ca

SILVERT AWARD continued...

the question how he manages to spend time in the field despite the many personal and professional obligations, he observed that "...e-mails back and forth to members of all my 'invisible colleges' make it easierFieldwork does not just happen in the field. I sometimes feel that some of my best fieldwork happens over a long dinner at my home, when someone is visiting and we have time for a four-hour conversation" (p.431). When asked about the role of normative values in his work and engagement with public affairs, he responded: "I have always chosen to work on problems that affect a lot of people. I never understood the argument that social science should be value-free....It is difficult to find a problem you care passionately about if you don't allow your values to influence your decision about what is important to study....I have always been much more interested in doing what I want by myself, rather than working for an administration. On the other hand...I have even been willing to insert myself into complex situations when I feel I have an analytic edge, and think I can also learn something, and make a useful contribution. In this sense, my fieldwork and my political involvement feed on each other...If I can contribute something because I have an idea about a particular public problem, I am willing to commit myself, as I have often done for human rights issues" (p. 437).

Professor Stepan will participate in the Silvert panel session at the XXVIII Congress of the Latin American Studies Association on Friday, June 12, 2009, in Rio de Janeiro. More details will be in the final program booklet. ■

As in so many other domains, the performance of the Bush administration with regard to Latin America can only be characterized as irresponsible. Relations with Cuba and several Andean countries deteriorated; meddling in domestic affairs of sovereign, democratic states was widespread; strategies for enhancing economic cooperation were limited to the pursuit of bilateral trade accords of dubious consequences for vulnerable sectors of the population in the region; counter-narcotics policy was carried out overwhelmingly in military terms; and by loading development assistance programs with military aid the United States abdicated its responsibility as a wealthy nation to provide aid designed to advance social welfare in highly unequal societies. The failure to enact comprehensive immigration reform adversely affected many countries in the region. Meanwhile, administration policies not directly aimed at Latin America—such as the illegal detention of putative terrorists at the U.S. military installation at Guantanamo—seriously undermined our country's reputation throughout the region as in other parts of the world. Largely as a result, U.S. influence in the region arguably reached an all time low.

The advent of a new administration in Washington opens the possibility for Hemispheric cooperation based on principles of mutual respect and reciprocity. Public opinion in Latin America is cautiously optimistic about the prospects for more equal partnerships with the United States under an Obama administration. The election of an African-American candidate to the Presidency offers a rare opportunity, moreover, to restore valorizations of American democracy that were tarnished by the Supreme Court's settlement of the contested Bush-Gore election of 2000 and the behavior of the U.S. government in the so-called War on Terror. But concrete

measures will be required in order to take advantage of this potentially watershed moment. The U.S. government could get things off to a fresh start by signaling a commitment to normalize relations with Cuba, enacting comprehensive immigration reform, and ceasing efforts by U.S. embassies and government-supported entities to influence domestic political dynamics in Latin American countries. An additional priority should be to re-orient narcotics control and development assistance programs from a military to a developmentalist paradigm.

The June 2009 LASA Congress will afford a timely space for exploring how these and other objectives can be met through concerted actions by governments and civil society organizations throughout the Americas. Leading scholars from around the world will have occasion to debate priorities and the means for achieving them. That the meeting of a still predominantly U.S.-based Association will take place in Rio de Janeiro is symbolic of the imperative for such discussions to incorporate voices from the South as well as from the North.

I hope that representatives of the new administration in Washington will look to the Association and its membership for insights, and that they will increase federal support for the international studies training that is crucial to the maintenance of scholarly expertise about Latin America and other regions of the world. The knowledge of researchers in American universities is a precious resource, and one that should not be ignored by policy-makers, as has so often been the case in the past. Whether we see a greater openness than in the past to scholarly perspectives, and a desire to expand understanding of peoples and cultures outside U.S. borders, will tell us much about whether the new administration is truly committed to inviting fresh perspectives on



U.S. policy toward the region and on the key challenges that Latin America faces as it continues to strive for equitable development and cooperative ties to the United States.

Sentiments similar to these were conveyed in an open letter sent to then-Senator Barack Obama during the closing days of the electoral campaign. In it, more than 300 scholars specializing on Latin America, including myself and a number of LASA past Presidents, called on Obama to extend his agenda for “change” to the realm of U.S. Latin America policy, and to understand that many of the injustices that his candidacy sought to address were analogous to those that have motivated processes of political renewal throughout the Americas, including in countries which the Bush administration had treated in a confrontational manner. I believe that the letter captured the views of a broad cross-section of the Latin Americanist community in the United States, and I wish to extend my thanks to Professor Arturo Escobar of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill for taking the initiative to draft it and to recruit an impressive array of signatories. However, it is important for me to emphasize that, contrary to some portrayals on the web, where the letter circulated like wildfire, this was not a communication from LASA as an institution: many of our members may well hold differing views, and it is not for me as President to speak on their behalf on such matters. For the LASA President to take advantage of the bully pulpit is to my mind fully appropriate, but throughout my period of service I have spoken on behalf of the Association only with regard to concerns

that directly involve our roles as researchers and educators.

* * *

This and the four preceding issues of the *Forum* have featured debates about a variety of issues relating to inequalities, a theme that the program co-chairs and I articulated as central to the 2009 meeting. We have dedicated sections to discussions of race, gender, labor and education, and the next issue, which will arrive just after the June Congress in Rio and will be the last of my presidency, will contain a scholarly debates section devoted to violence and inequalities. All of these have been crafted in hopes of engaging the core topic of the upcoming meeting. But of course that Congress will encompass work on countless other issues, and this is as it should be: the Congress is meant to provide a venue for scholarship across the social sciences and humanities—and beyond—regardless of its thematic focus. Throughout my period of service to LASA, I have sought to ensure that my own intellectual agenda does not take precedence over that of the membership, for it is the latter that must drive the agenda of our Congresses. And that pluralism should be reflected in the *Forum* as well. Thus, we have chosen for this issue of the *Forum* to depart from the theme of inequalities and to share with our readers contributions analyzing contemporary debates in literary analysis and, in the *On the Profession* section, reviewing developments in film studies. I wish to acknowledge here the assistance of Professors Cynthia Steele, of the University of Washington, and Claudia Ferman, of the University of Richmond, in recruiting authors to contribute to this discussion and in introducing their essays.

* * *

My LASA-related efforts over the past several months have been focused largely on preparations for the Rio Congress. In a previous note in the *Forum* I stated, erroneously, that this would be the first LASA Congress held at a University. As several colleagues with first-hand memories of LASA’s initial years pointed out to me, a number of the Association’s early Congresses were held on American campuses. At that point in our history the meetings involved hundreds of scholars rather than thousands, and one of the principal challenges we face in Rio is managing a volume of participation that is unprecedented. We anticipate that as many as 8,000 people will register for the meeting, well above the 5,500 who took part in our largest event to date, the 2007 Congress in Montreal. Above and beyond the logistical question of where to lodge so many people and how to transport them from hotels to the Catholic University—challenges that we believe we have resolved thanks to the tireless efforts of LASA’s remarkably capable Secretariat staff and of our local organizing committee—we have struggled with numerous other challenges relating to the size and venue of the meeting. Let me note three of these that I believe will be of particular interest.

First, as I have noted in previous issues of the *Forum*, the growth in numbers carries with it a growth in the demand for travel funding. LASA has steadily increased the level of resources allocated to this end, focusing on the needs of researchers based in Latin America and of graduate students from around the world. I am pleased to report that despite the adverse economic climate we have managed to raise funds to award an unprecedented number of travel grants. Still, given the disjuncture between rapidly growing demand and slowly increasing funding levels, we are able to support an ever smaller percentage of all requests. This simply highlights the imperative that

PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued...

members seek alternative means of financing their participation in this and future LASA Congresses. It is neither practical nor reasonable to expect that LASA can fill this need. Moreover, funding for travel is, unfortunately, uneven across Congress tracks, because some of the grants we receive are track specific. For example, the Open Society Institute will support travel for participants in panels on Citizenship, Rights and Social Justice, Political Institutions and Processes, Politics and Public Policy, and Parties and Elections; the Tinker Foundation has provided funds for Crossborder Studies and Migration, Law, Jurisprudence and Society, Economics and Development, Development and Regional Alternatives, and Violence and (in)security; and the Inter-American Foundation has provided funds for Afro-Latin and Indigenous Peoples, Crossborder Studies and Migration, Development and Regional Alternatives, and Economics and Development. Our newest source of support, the Mellon-LASA seminar program, will fund participants in eight panels at the Rio Congress, drawn from five different tracks: Histories and Historiographies, International Relations, Culture, Power, and Political Subjectivities, Literary Studies: Contemporary, and Labor Studies and Class Relations.¹

Second, to again revisit a topic addressed in previous issues of the *Forum*, when there is growing demand but a limited number of days for the Congress and a finite number of meeting rooms, there is no alternative but to increase the rate of rejection of both paper and panel proposals.

This year more than 899 individuals and 230 sessions, 28 and 20 percent of the total submissions respectively, were notified that their proposals were not accepted. I recognize the disappointment this causes, and deeply regret that quite a few scholars whose work I value immensely may not be

able to attend the Congress as a result of their proposals having been rejected. But decisions were made through a peer review process that, however imperfect, corresponds in my assessment to best practice in our profession, and I see no other way for the Association to do its work. Constructive and practicable suggestions would be most welcome, as I am certain that my successors will be compelled to grapple with this difficult problem for the foreseeable future.

Finally, I wish to alert the membership to an important downside to our decision to meet in South America, specifically our inability to organize a book exhibit at the Rio Congress. Beginning well before I was involved in LASA governance, several U.S.-based book publishers made clear their displeasure with the decision to hold meetings outside of the United States, as this imposed significant burdens on them, including transport costs and potential customs difficulties. As planning for the Congress evolved, it became clear that most would choose not to attend. My hope was that their absence would be compensated in part by an unprecedented presence of Latin American publishers, who after all had for many years attended our meetings held in North America. In the end, however, and despite concerted efforts by the Secretariat, virtually no publishers signed up to take part in the exhibit. Faced with the prospect of spending \$50,000 on construction of exhibit space that appeared likely to be empty, we were compelled to cancel this key component of the Congress. I deeply regret this, but countless hours were expended trying to come up with a feasible solution, and I am convinced that we had no alternative but to take the decision that we did.

I am optimistic that this will be a one-time problem, and will do all that I can to ensure that it not occur again. That the next

Congress will be held in Toronto (October 6-9, 2010) will reduce the transportation costs incurred by North American publishers, and we will arrange (as we had managed to do for Rio) to ease customs procedures for publishers transporting books across borders. Looking further ahead, my strong personal preference is for the next Congress, slated tentatively for March 2011, to take place once again in the United States. Whether this comes about will depend in part on how U.S. visa policies evolve under the new administration, but I am cautiously optimistic that we will see a reversal of the Bush-era policies that, beginning with the decision to move the 2007 Congress from Boston to Montreal, dissuaded us from holding our meetings in the United States. Here is another instance in which the willingness of a new administration to pay heed to the judgments of the scholarly community would have a salutary impact on Hemispheric relations.

¹ Our current plan, which is still being refined, is to open the Mellon program to all tracks and to the Sections in future years, and to support 15-20 panels per Congress. In addition, a second component of the Mellon initiative, grant support for research workshops to take place between Congresses, will get underway soon after the Rio Congress, when we will issue to the membership a call for proposals, with applications to be selected based on a peer review competition. Details on this will be announced in the next issue of the *Forum*. A description of the Mellon Program was provided in my statement to the membership in the Fall 2008 issue of the *Forum*. ■

¿De qué cine hablamos? Las tareas de los Estudios del Cine Latinoamericano

por Claudia Ferman | University of Richmond | cferman@richmond.edu

La introducción a este grupo de trabajos en los que se abordan los desarrollos recientes en los estudios del cine comienza con la pregunta acerca del objeto de ese estudio, es decir, de qué cine hablamos (o debemos hablar) cuando se piensa el cine latinoamericano. Los trabajos que siguen basan su discusión en el reconocimiento de que la expresión cinematográfica latinoamericana se ha multiplicado exponencialmente (Remedi) y que, gracias a nuevas tecnologías tanto de producción (digital) como de reproducción (DVD), así como a políticas más decididas por parte de algunos gobiernos nacionales del continente, el cine latinoamericano ha llegado en la última década a un público internacional más amplio (King). Sin embargo, como apunta Pessoa, los estudios del cine son todavía un área académica “en busca de reconocimiento” en cualquiera de los ámbitos académicos a los que se hace referencia en esta sección. Esto se comprueba en la gran dispersión de los programas dedicados a su estudio: desde los departamentos de lenguas hasta las facultades de arte, los programas de cine latinoamericano se acuartelan donde las lógicas de los sistemas académicos les han permitido encontrar un espacio (Newman).

La afirmación de que existe hoy una multiplicación de la producción cinematográfica en el ámbito latinoamericano tiene decididas implicancias metodológicas. Indica que, como propone Pessoa, no sólo se trata de considerar el cine industrial, en soporte fílmico (16mm ó 35mm), i.e. el cine de ficción, para el que existe una tradición crítica de consistencia, sino que se trata de considerar el vasto espacio del campo del cine, en el que se inscriben productos de muy distinto formato, en distintos soportes, fruto de distintos objetivos y métodos de producción, que tienen en común la “forma narrativa cinematográfica”. Los “estudios del cine”

requieren entonces una definición de su objeto “amplia y sin preconceptos” (Pessoa) que permita incluir la enorme variedad de la producción en lenguaje cinematográfico que está teniendo lugar hoy en Latinoamérica: desde el cine industrial, comercial, hasta el cine de comunicación indígena (del que nos ocuparemos con más detención en un momento); desde el documental de autor, hasta la producción fotográfica y fílmica como recurso de investigación académica, pasando por la producción de los Indymedia, o el video de arte.

Es decir, las graves condiciones de dependencia en las que nació y se ha venido desarrollando el cine en Latinoamérica, hoy se ven desbordadas por la generación de nuevas lógicas productivas, en las que las prácticas técnicas, estéticas y de mercado se desarrollan en direcciones múltiples y con racionalidades diferentes. Como apunta Remedi, “de la mano de las movilizaciones sociales y políticas” se está produciendo un cine latinoamericano que una vez que cumple con los objetivos de comunicación y movilización que le son internos a las comunidades que lo producen, recorren festivales, ganan premios internacionales, y crean sus propios circuitos de difusión.

Como señala King, la revolución digital ha tenido un impacto comprobable en cuanto a la difusión y el acceso a la producción cinematográfica más reciente, pero cabe también preguntarse en qué medida ha afectado la naturaleza misma del producto cinético, los paradigmas de su constitución como objeto comunicativo. Estas nuevas expresiones constituyen muchas veces tendencias colectivas de gran impacto social y cultural en sus propios medios, y muchas veces fuera de ellos, y por tanto deberían necesariamente afectar los acercamiento metodológicos a esa producción multifacética y prácticamente ubicua. El/la investigador/a hoy debería olvidar por un

momento las estadísticas sobre “el cine latinoamericano” para internarse en la abigarrada selva de la revolución mediática en Latinoamérica que está teniendo lugar muchas veces a espaldas de las salas de exhibición y las universidades. Precisamente, Remedi nos alerta de ciertos marcos post-nacionalistas y post-políticos con los que se pretende discutir la producción reciente desligándola de los procesos sociales y culturales nacionales (o comunitarios), e imprimiendo otra agendas críticas, cuyo peor pecado es simplemente desconocer y no poder interpretar estas producciones.

Para llevar esta discusión a terrenos más concretos, vamos a referirnos brevemente al CEFREC (Centro de Formación y Realización Cinematográfica), proyecto que encabeza Iván Sanjinés, como una muestra paradigmática de los movimientos que se desarrollan fuera del cine industrial. El CEFREC, cuyos pasos iniciales se remontan a 1985, cuando se crea CLACPI en México,¹ trabaja en la capacitación de *comunicadores*, y la producción de cine, radio y televisión;² su objetivo es consolidar un Sistema Nacional de Comunicación Originaria en Bolivia.³ Esta escuela ha logrado asentar una metodología de capacitación en comunicación cinética, con la que forma a miembros elegidos por las distintas comunidades indígenas sin limitación etaria, de género, o de educación previa (no se requiere que los participantes de los talleres estén alfabetizados). El presupuesto es que la comunicación es un derecho, y que los indígenas bolivianos tiene ya un legado, una serie de formas de expresión y de comunicación desde su cultura que son la base sobre las que se puede desarrollar las propias formas narrativas y de expresión audiovisual. El CEFREC impulsa formas de realización que enfatizan lo colectivo, y la responsabilidad de los comunicadores frente a su comunidad.⁴ La comunicación se conceptualiza como un medio que permite

FERMAN continued...

invertir la valores de la sociedad colonial, jerárquica, y construir sociedades más equitativas, más igualitarias.⁵ No se puede entender en toda su dimensión los procesos que hoy está viviendo Bolivia, si no se pone especial atención al movimiento de *comunicadores indígenas*, en su asociación con los procesos políticos actuales.

Indudablemente, estos proyectos son herederos, por una parte, de las propuestas de Jean Rouch, y por otra, del “cine minero” y de Jorge Sanjinés, de los debates impulsados desde las distintas corrientes del Nuevo Cine latinoamericano, y de algunas propuestas de capacitación en cine del INI (Instituto Nacional Indigenista) en México. Hoy, el movimiento de cine de los *comunicadores indígenas* se interesa especialmente por la ficción, y son precisamente estas producciones las que han recorrido los festivales internacionales y cosechado premios.⁶

Similares presupuestos, aunque no idénticos, encontramos en el proyecto de **Video Nas Aldeias** coordinado por Vincent Carelli y Mari Corrêa en comunidades aborígenes del Brasil. También se debe mencionar aquí al trabajo de **Promedios / Chiapas Media Project**, basado en México y Estados Unidos. No hay lugar aquí para explayarnos sobre la producción de estas organizaciones: los participantes del Congreso de LASA2009 tendrán la oportunidad de ver producciones de estas organizaciones y escuchar a Iván Sanjinés (CEFREC-CAIB), y a Vincent Carelli (**Video Nas Aldeias**), en esta edición del Festival. Lo que nos interesa destacar es que estas producciones surgen de propuestas, metodologías de trabajo y técnicas de producción innovadoras, que están impactando la naturaleza misma de la forma “cine”, y los modelos de comunicación que este “cine” establece: el mismo término “público” no resulta ya descriptivo de las comunidades de recepción-producción de

estos artefactos.⁷ Podríamos conjeturar que estamos frente a un “cine artesanal”, no solamente por los modos de producción de este cine, sino por el cambio en la distancia relativa entre productores y producto: el grupo realizador (coordinadores, editores, actores, etc.) no sólo no mantiene roles fijos sino que no necesariamente ingresa al sistema profesionalizado. Se trata de un/a comunicador/a “artesano/a”, no “moderno”, que resiste la profesionalización porque ve en ella el fin de la posibilidad de comunicar.

Estas nuevas metodologías y nuevos productos están asociados con un cambio en el equilibrio de los actores políticos en el espacio latinoamericano, y en consonancia con activas políticas comunicacionales de los estados. Por ejemplo, las iniciativas de canales nacionales o cadenas transnacionales que constituyen parte integrante de políticas de comunicación independientes, educativas, de alcance nacional o continental, tales como el canal de la UNAM (TVUNAM), México; el canal Encuentro, dependiente del Ministerio de Educación, y el Canal 7 (Argentina); así como la vigorosa cadena Telesur (Venezuela). Estos medios promueven, financian y transmiten programación de gestión latinoamericana. Si las salas de cine continúan cerradas a gran parte de la producción independiente latinoamericana, a pesar de las progresivas políticas de cuotas que han implementado muchos países,⁸ estos nuevos canales constituyen una ventana a la multifacética nueva producción. Acceso a estas señales permitiría a los/las investigadores/as una aproximación muchas veces más cercana a los fenómenos culturales, artísticos y comunicativos que se están dando hoy en Latinoamérica en relación con el cine que aquella que se puede extraer de los DVDs de distribución comercial internacional, como certeramente apuntan King y Remedi.⁹

A pesar de estas iniciativas en el área de las comunicaciones, la crucial problemática del *archivo* y *acceso* (como prefiero denominar a lo que también se designa como “preservación” y “distribución” o “difusión”) discutida con precisión por Newman, son, como apunta King, “los problemas permanentes del campo”, pero también los problemas permanentes para las propias comunidades latinoamericanas. No faltan aquí algunas buenas noticias, como las que se apuntan en los artículos que siguen, aunque necesariamente son aisladas e insuficientes: los proyectos de acervo y distribución como los citados, o el proyecto de la UNESCO con la Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano; Native Networks, dependiente del National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian); o los proyectos de información en páginas y revistas en Internet, aunque en general cubren aspectos de bastante inmediatez.

Una iniciativa más abarcadora es la de la plataforma **Docfera**. Cito sus objetivos: “**Docfera** es un proyecto cultural y educativo que tiene como misión convertirse en la primera plataforma web y archivo digital de Documentales Latinoamericanos más importante del mundo”. Precisamente, en el marco del Festival de LASA2009 en Río de Janeiro, la fundadora y directora de este proyecto, Andrea Hirsch, hará una presentación del proyecto.

Los canales comunicativos son verdaderos campos de batalla cultural, de importancia estratégica, y no necesariamente una cuestión “exterior” a la labor académica. Así como las bibliotecas no son extrínsecas a la tarea educativa, tampoco pueden serlo el debate de las políticas comunicacionales y la implementación de archivos y acerbos del cine latinoamericano.

Estudos de Cinema na Universidade Brasileira

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Notes

- ¹ La Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Cine y Comunicación de los Pueblos Indígenas (CLACPI) es una entidad formada por diecinueve organizaciones de diez países (Bolivia, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, México, Perú y Venezuela).
- ² El CEFREC tiene un convenio con la cadena de Televisión Boliviana, y produce dos programas semanales de televisión “Entre Culturas” y “Bolivia Constituyente”.
- ³ Los conceptos sobre la tarea del CEFREC provienen de entrevistas personales con Iván Sanjinés (coordinador general), Milton Guzmán Girona (cineasta y capacitador), y César Pérez (fotógrafo y capacitador), todos ellos pertenecientes a CEFREC-CAIB; y Santos Callejas (director de la Casa Juvenil de las Culturas Wayna Tambo, El Alto).
- ⁴ Los comunicadores se agrupan a su vez en el CAIB (Coordinadora Audiovisual Indígena de Bolivia).
- ⁵ Recientemente, Gabriela Zamorano completó un libro sobre la experiencia del CEFREC: *El camino de nuestra imagen. Un proceso de Comunicación Indígena*. La Paz: CEFREC-CAIB, 2008.
- ⁶ Por ejemplo, en el legendario festival Taos Talking Pictures (Arizona), y en el Festival de Toronto.
- ⁷ El Festival y Muestra de cine de LASA se ha esforzado permanentemente por presentar una muestra lo más extendida posible de las distintas tendencias que se están desarrollando en la región.
- ⁸ Para un análisis preciso de este fenómeno, ver Rovito, Pablo y Julio Raffo. “El mercado y la política cinematográficos.” En *Industrias culturales: mercado y políticas públicas en Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Edic. Ciccus, 2003.
- ⁹ Este recurso no resuelve, sin embargo, el complejo problema de la subtítulos. ■

Estudos de Cinema é ainda uma área acadêmica em busca de reconhecimento. No caso brasileiro, a área de conhecimento ‘Cinema’, para órgãos de fomento à pesquisa como o CNPQ (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico), situa-se no campo das ‘Artes’, embora historicamente tenha se vinculado a Departamentos e Sociedades Científicas da área de ‘Comunicação’. Assesores em ‘Artes’ muitas vezes não possuem familiaridade com projetos de pesquisa em Cinema, que acabam transferidos para ‘Comunicação’. A situação reflete-se igualmente na composição de cursos e currículos, em geral carregados de disciplinas próximas ao campo da ‘Comunicação’, com pouca incidência de disciplinas como História da Arte, Teoria Literária, História do Teatro, Antropologia Visual.

Temos hoje cursos de Cinema, ou de Cinema e Audiovisual, nas principais universidades do país, com uma expansão nos últimos dez anos. O curso de Cinema pioneiro no Brasil é o da Escola de Comunicações e Artes da USP, seguido pelo da Universidade de Brasília e pela Universidade Federal Fluminense. A universidade particular FAAP (São Paulo) também mantém, desde da década de 60, um curso pioneiro. Nos últimos dez anos, cursos de cinema têm proliferado pelo Brasil. Universidades como UNICAMP; Universidade Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Rio Grande do Sul); PUC/RGS; Universidade Católica de Recife; UFSC; UFMG; Universidade Federal de São Carlos, SENAC e Anhembi-Morumbi, possuem Departamentos oferecendo formação em cinema. Cursos particulares de cinema e audiovisual tiveram forte incremento nos últimos dez anos, tanto em São Paulo, como no Rio de Janeiro. Na pós-graduação, são oferecidos diplomas de mestrado e doutorado com orientação em Cinema, em programas da USP, UNICAMP e UFF, UFSCAR e também UFRJ e UNB.

Universidades particulares como Anhembi-Morumbi, UNISINOS, FAAP, Universidade Católica de Pernambuco, SENAC, mantêm cursos de especialização ou mestrado *stricto sensu* em cinema.

Algumas questões metodológicas devem ser mencionadas ao traçarmos a inserção institucional dos Estudos de Cinema na universidade brasileira. O campo coloca-se de forma abrangente dentro de Departamentos de Artes e Comunicações, possuindo a particularidade da demanda de formação prática. Uma boa parcela de alunos que entram em cursos de cinema tem interesse em aprender a fazer cinema: utilizar uma câmera, dirigir, produzir, atuar, fotografar, montar, sonorizar, fazer roteiros, etc. A maior parte dos cursos de graduação, no Brasil e no mundo, encontra-se predominantemente voltada para este público, sendo ministrada por professores com carreira profissional na produção cinematográfica. No currículo, acessoriamente, está presente uma série de disciplinas envolvendo história e teoria do cinema. Predominantemente, cursos em Estudos de Cinema encontram-se voltados para a pós-graduação.

A área de Estudos de Cinema envolve um conjunto de expressões audiovisuais, mais ou menos articuladas em dimensão narrativa, a partir de uma miríade de estilos. Cinema é antes de tudo uma ‘forma narrativa’ (em seus primeiros tempos, e em alguns trabalhos de vanguarda, também ‘espetacular’) que envolve imagens em movimento (em sua maioria conformadas pela forma da câmera) e sons. Nas extremidades da definição do campo cinematográfico encontramos animações digitais, trabalhos experimentais plásticos em proximidade com a vídeoarte, ou narrativas extensas que cotejam novelas ou mini-séries televisivas. A narrativa com imagens e sons pode ter um corte ‘ficcional’ (quando entretemos o espectador com

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hipóteses sobre personagens e tramas fictícias) ou ‘documentário’ (quando entretemos asserções, postulados, sobre o mundo histórico ou pessoal). Muitas vezes as definições não são tão claras e as cartas estão misturadas, mas o campo do cinema pode ser definido se pensado de modo amplo e sem preconceitos. Estudos cruzados, interdisciplinares, entre Literatura e Cinema, Pintura e Cinema, Teatro e Cinema, História e Cinema, Imagem Digital e Cinema etc. possuem ampla bibliografia. Estudos de Cinema, portanto, não é o ensino prático de como fazer cinema (embora possa e deva interagir com esta dimensão) e também não é o estudo das mídias (televisão, internet), nem das humanidades (antropologia e história), das artes plásticas, da literatura, ou do teatro. É tudo isso, trazendo em seu centro irradiador a forma narrativa cinematográfica.

No núcleo dos Estudos de Cinema vislumbramos três disciplinas diversas: ‘História do Cinema’, ‘Teoria do Cinema’ e ‘Análise Fílmica’. Em História do Cinema trabalhamos a dimensão diacrônica da arte cinematográfica, seus diferentes períodos e movimentos. Analisamos também as produções nacionais (História do Cinema Brasileiro, Chinês, Francês, etc). Neste campo cabem estudos autorais, centrados em personalidades da História do Cinema (o cinema de Bergman, Welles, Renoir, Rocha, etc). Em geral, estudos sobre História do Cinema detêm-se no cinema ficcional. Recentemente tem aumentado o espaço da pesquisa em cinema documentário dentro da história da produção cinematográfica mundial. Na abordagem dos momentos em que as vanguardas do século XXI cotejam o cinema (expressionismo alemão, construtivismo russo, impressionismo francês, realismo italiano, surrealismo, cinema experimental, o pós-modernismo, etc) podemos constatar uma abrangência se

delineia para além do estreitamento narrativo.

Temas que envolvem a própria noção de história e a possibilidade de sua periodização são trabalhados pela bibliografia em Teoria do Cinema. Noções essenciais para o estabelecimento desta história, como a noção de Autor, são aprofundadas. Outro ponto que tem chamado a atenção na Teoria do Cinema é o questionamento da noção de ‘nacionalidade’ na definição dos diversos cinemas nacionais. Temas caros ao universo dos ‘estudos culturais’ (feminismo, minorias étnicas, estudos de gênero, a questão do sujeito) percorreram de modo intenso o campo dos estudos de cinema nos últimos dez anos. Também o horizonte da filosofia analítica e do cognitivismo foi mapeado de modo polêmico. Nos anos 60/70/80, o conceitual do estruturalismo francês, a semiologia (Metz) e depois o pós-estruturalismo de Deleuze, Lacan, Derrida e outros, tiveram forte influência. A Teoria clássica do cinema também compõe este campo de estudo, através da influência do impressionismo (Epstein, Dulac, Balazs), do construtivismo (Vertov, Eisenstein), da fenomenologia (Bazin, Zavattini), do realismo (Kracauer). A reflexão recente sobre cinema documentário mostra-se densa, acompanhando um aprofundamento da tendência analítica/cognitivista na contraposição aos estudos culturais. A Teoria do Cinema é, portanto, uma disciplina dos Estudos de Cinema que fundamenta estudos históricos e autorais.

Um terceiro horizonte dos Estudos de Cinema pode ser delimitado na Análise Fílmica. Definimos assim a pesquisa que se debruça sobre o filme propriamente e suas unidades (fotogramas, planos, seqüências, cenas, etc). A análise fílmica detalha a dimensão estilística do cinema, servindo de substrato para a pesquisa histórica/autorais. O ponto clássico da análise fílmica é a

montagem, conceito em moda dos anos 20 até os anos 60. Elementos estilísticos como profundidade-de-campo, plano-sequência, entrada e saída de campo, espaço fora-de-campo, mise-en-scène, raccord, falso raccord, olhar, interpretação de atores, música, falas, roteiro, fotografia, cenografia, etc, compõem os tijolos sobre os quais se constrói a estilística cinematográfica. A análise fílmica fornece substância concreta para o trabalho com a teoria do cinema, embasando a reflexão. Olhar o estilo é o último degrau que se consegue percorrer no corpo-a-corpo com o filme. Em função do movimento contínuo, e da ampla quantidade de elementos que marcam a estilística cinematográfica, analisar exige uma verdadeira educação do olhar. O objetivo desta educação deve ser o abandono dos níveis mais imediatos de conteúdo, conseguindo o ‘leitor’ elevar-se até a dimensão da *mise-en-scène* propriamente.

Para terminar este breve apanhado dos Estudos de Cinema, é importante esclarecer uma questão. Na medida em que a arte cinematográfica sofre, desde sua origem, a mediação da técnica, é comum o discurso que nega sua especificidade histórica. Sobre-determinando a questão tecnológica, transforma Estudos de Cinema em estudos de mídia, posição expressa muitas vezes através do conceito de ‘audiovisual’. O cinema seria uma máquina, uma mídia, e não uma forma narrativa, que tenderia a desaparecer como outras máquinas antigas do século XIX. Nossa visão é que o cinema é uma forma narrativa relativamente estável, veiculada através de mídias diversas, oscilando em sua forma em função do quesito tecnológico, entre outros.

A sobreposição cinema/mídia no conceito de audiovisual leva à confusão entre instância narrativa e a mídia que é veiculada. Para esta visão, se uma mídia evolui tecnologicamente, a narrativa que veicula

Películas de papel Cartografía del estudio del cine de América Latina

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também deve desaparecer. Como isto não ocorre, surge uma esquizofrenia entre análise e conteúdo, expressa na demanda insistente de um outro Cinema, que se adequa a nova máquina midiática. Postura que traz um ranço normativo, querendo determinar como o cinema deve ser, ou desaparecer, com o surgimento da televisão, da internet, ou das novas máquinas produtoras de imagens. A visão tecnológica evolucionista, que possui forte presença na universidade brasileira, tem dificuldades em lidar com a evidência da simultaneidade entre novas e antigas mídias que não convergem. Para lidar com esta dificuldade criou-se o conceito de ‘audiovisual’ que expresa, entre outros aspectos, o desejo da redução cinema/mídia. Na realidade, o campo dos Estudos de Cinema tem em seu núcleo a dimensão diacrónica da narrativa cinematográfica, dimensão que realça sua estilística particular. É para esta estilística, e sua história, que se orienta Estudos de Cinema, abrindo-se enquanto campo de conhecimento. ■

Tan importante como hacer cine es hallar el lugar y el momento para reflexionar sistemáticamente acerca de él. Pero al igual que el cine de América Latina, que atraviesa un período de auge, lo que se ha teorizado y escrito también parece haber llegado a un punto de inflexión. Nos proponemos aquí echar luz sobre diversos aspectos del tortuoso devenir del estudio del cine e identificar algunas tareas pendientes, así como un conjunto de nuevos desafíos y riesgos.

No es aquí el lugar para repasar la historia general del cine en América Latina, ni tampoco la del cine producido en cada uno de los países del continente. Diversos autores, bastante establecidos, ya se han encargado de ello (Burns 1975, Chanan 1985, 2004; Burton 1986, Armes 1987, Schumann 1987, Mora 1989, King 1990, Pick 1993, Johnson y Stam 1995, Martin 1997). Sí es preciso señalar que fue en el contexto del surgimiento del cine comprometido de los años 60 y 70 (del llamado Nuevo Cine o Tercer Cine) que también nació, o por lo menos cobró impulso, un “discurso”—teórico, formal, histórico—acerca del cine latinoamericano. También se organizaron centros e institutos dedicados a estos efectos. Fueron los comienzos del pensamiento y el estudio del cine de América Latina.

En su mayoría, fueron los propios cineastas los que por medio de entrevistas, mesas redondas, manifiestos y artículos en revistas culturales, políticas, ocasionalmente de cine (*Cine Cubano*, *Cine del Tercer Mundo*, *Ojo al cine*, *1x1*, *Octubre*, *Cine y Liberación*) reflexionaban y escribían acerca de su arte: de su relación con la sociedad, con los desafíos políticos y culturales del momento, de los temas que debía abordar, del modo de tratarlos, la perspectiva a adoptar, el lenguaje y la técnica cinematográfica, la relación con el público, el problema de la financiación y

distribución. Tal es el caso, por ejemplo, de Gutiérrez Alea, Glauber Rocha, Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Jorge Sanjinés, García Espinosa, Fernando Birri, Fernando Solanas, Octavio Getino, entre otros. Algunos de sus ensayos más importantes—“La estética del hambre” de Rocha, “La dialéctica del espectador” de Gutiérrez Alea, “Por un cine imperfecto” de García Espinosa, “Un cine junto al pueblo” de Sanjinés, etc.—fueron recopilados y traducidos al inglés (Pick 1978, Chanan 1993, Martin 1997). Burton (1986) recoge, en sus entrevistas, una muestra del pensamiento teórico de estos realizadores.

La mayoría de estos realizadores-ensayistas cursaron diversos tipos de estudios universitarios (derecho, teatro, filosofía, historia, etc.) y experimentaron con diversas disciplinas artísticas (teatro, poesía, música). Eran, no obstante, intelectuales que concebían la cultura y el arte como un instrumento al servicio del cambio político y social. En cuanto a sus “estudios de cine”, la situación fue variada: Gutiérrez Alea, García Espinosa y Fernando Birri estudiaron en el Centro Esperimentale della Cinematografia en Roma. Al volver a Cuba, en 1959, año de la Revolución, García Espinosa participó de la creación del Instituto Cubano del Arte y la Industria Cinematográfica (ICAIC). A su regreso a Argentina, Birri fundó el Instituto de Cinematografía de la Universidad del Litoral. Patricio Guzmán, por su parte, comenzó en el Instituto Fílmico de la Universidad Católica de Chile pero se graduó en la Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía de Madrid. Sanjinés estudió en Chile y luego dirigió el Instituto de Cine de Bolivia. Los únicos estudios formales de Pereira dos Santos fueron en Derecho, aunque más tarde dictó el primer curso de cine en el Instituto Central de Arte de la Universidad de Brasilia y dirigió el Instituto

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de Arte y Comunicación Social de la Universidad Federal Fluminense.

En esa tarea de reflexión, discusión y elaboración de un discurso acerca del cine latinoamericano estos realizadores tuvieron por interlocutores a otros intelectuales o críticos que se desempeñaban en periódicos y revistas culturales, a los aficionados al cine nucleados en las cinematecas y los cineclubes (que muchas veces publicaban sus propios boletines y revistas), y por supuesto, a un segmento culto y radicalizado de la clase media—muchos de ellos jóvenes y universitarios—que constituían su público pero que también eran protagonistas de los procesos de cambio social, político y cultural que caracterizaron este acalorado período de la historia. Pese a ello, ni la academia latinoamericana ni la extranjera se interesaron mayormente por el cine en América Latina.

En América Latina, salvo contadísimas excepciones, la preocupación cultural y estética en el medio académico seguía centrada en las *bellas artes* (la literatura, la pintura, la música), con una casi total desatención y desinterés por “la cultura de masas”. La creación de las carreras de periodismo y las escuelas y licenciaturas en comunicación en los 70 y 80—en el contexto de las dictaduras y con intereses ya muy alejados del propósito del cambio social—privilegiarán la prensa escrita, la radio, la televisión, la publicidad. La reflexión sobre el cine siguió girando alrededor de los institutos y escuelas de cine privadas, los cineclubes y alguna revista, que nucleaban a realizadores, críticos (muchos de ellos, autodidactas) y amantes del cine. No es casual que la revista virtual argentina dedicada al cine se llame, precisamente, *El amante*. La revista virtual chilena *La fuga*, no obstante, deja entrever un cambio en el papel social del cine, muy diferente al que

habían imaginado los impulsores del Nuevo Cine.

Distinto fue el panorama en Estados Unidos o Europa donde debido a un mayor desarrollo de la industria de los medios masivos y a un mayor desgaste del tradicional paradigma de las *bellas artes* el estudio del cine se desarrolló en forma más temprana. Ello fue además alimentado y reforzado por la creación de áreas universitarias dedicadas al estudio de la cultura popular, la cultura de masas y los estudios culturales que de la mano de la Escuela de Frankfurt, la de Birmingham o la semiótica francesa (Getino 2002) incentivaron y organizaron el estudio, el análisis y la crítica de lo que unos llamaron “las prácticas culturales de las clases populares” (Williams), la “hegemonía” cultural (Gramsci), “la cultura de masas” (Adorno), el arte mecánicamente reproducido (Benjamin) y “la mitología de la sociedad de consumo” (Barthes).

De todos modos, según López “hasta la década de los 80 era casi imposible encontrar un libro o más de una o dos monografías en idioma inglés dedicadas al cine latinoamericano” (1991). Fue el interés y el compromiso con el proceso político de América Latina (el contexto revolucionario de los 60; las dictaduras militares de los 70, el retorno a la democracia en los 80) lo que motivó a algunos intelectuales en Europa y Estados Unidos a interesarse por el cine en América Latina, y en especial, el modo en que el cine acompaña y se articula con el proceso histórico cultural del continente.

En los 80 y 90, algunos cientistas sociales “latinoamericanistas” (interesados en la historia, la sociedad o la política de América Latina) también descubrieron y se ocuparon del papel que jugaba la cultura y dentro de ella el cine. Lo mismo ocurrió con una parte de la crítica literaria—que se aventuró un

paso más allá de la ciudad letrada—para quienes Gutiérrez Alea, Guzmán, Sanjinés, Rocha, Pereira dos Santos, Solanas y otros autores pasaron a ocupar en el campo del cine el mismo sitio que ocupaban en la literatura los autores del “boom” literario: Carpentier, García Márquez, Rulfo, Onetti, Cortázar. (Uno de los peligros que enfrentan los estudios culturales es, precisamente, caer en la tentación de reemplazar una forma de arte por otra, una vanguardia por otra, traicionando su objetivo de estudiar la cultura más allá de la alta cultura y del arte).

El (nuevo) cine latinoamericano, además, ofrecía una nueva visión y una nueva imagen de la realidad histórica, social y política, sostenida por el carácter iconográfico, indécico, espacial y poético propio de este poderoso medio expresivo. En efecto, aun cuando no fuera del todo nueva, era una imagen más incisiva, “tangible”, legible, memorable, y sobre todo, accesible al gran público, letrado o no. Esto vale tanto para el género documental como para el cine de ficción, que en América Latina, en buena parte, siguió intentando captar y explorar críticamente la realidad histórica, social y cultural.

A la luz de lo anterior, no ha de extrañar que quienes se dedicaron al estudio y enseñanza del cine de América Latina en el mundo anglosajón se formaran y desempeñaran en la intersección de diversas disciplinas y campos: por un lado, los programas de estudios de América Latina, una de las áreas geográfico-culturales de los programas de Estudios Internacionales. Tal es el caso, por ejemplo, de Burton o Shaw. Por otro lado, los estudios del cine y la TV, como en el caso de Chanan, Martin, Pick, López, Burton, Mora, Berg, Buchsbaum, Noriega o Aufderhaide. Y tercero, los estudios literarios, de la cultura popular y los estudios culturales. Tal es el caso de King, Johnson, Foster, Stock, Podalski y un sinnúmero de

autores que han publicado en revistas no especializadas en cine como *Revista Iberoamericana*¹, *Latin American Research Review*², *The Americas*³, o *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*⁵. También, en la intersección entre cine e historia, caso de Stevens (1997) o Baugh y Schoenecke (2004), o entre cine y literatura (Podalski, 2002).

Hoy los estudios del cine de América Latina atraviesan por una verdadera explosión pero deben sortear una serie de obstáculos. Para comenzar, la barrera del idioma, la dispersión que caracteriza los escritos sobre el cine y la dificultad para acceder a las publicaciones del otro hemisferio, incluidas las publicaciones virtuales. Segundo, el problema del desigual desarrollo y organización de los estudios latinoamericanos como campo transdisciplinario, tanto en el Sur como en el Norte. Tercero, la distinta evolución del estudio del cine en una y otra región. Cuarto, el problema de la circulación y el acceso a las realizaciones mismas, sobre todo en el marco de una explosión de creación cinematográfica y la coexistencia de al menos tres o cuatro generaciones. Quinto, el riesgo a una nueva mistificación, en donde el cine, en reemplazo de la literatura, y un pequeño número de películas y autores, pasan a tomarse como resumen y condensación de la cultura latinoamericana. Sexto, la emergencia de una nueva generación de estudios del cine, con nuevas preocupaciones y agendas que intenta ir más acá y más allá del Nuevo Cine, pero que enfrenta nuevos desafíos y riesgos.

Además de la dispersión y débil institucionalización del estudio del cine apuntada por diversos autores—y que pronto descubre cualquier investigador—el estudio del cine de América Latina ha generado dos bibliotecas: una en castellano y otra en inglés. Muchos de los estudios

recientes más sistemáticos y de referencia están publicados en inglés. Esto presenta dos obstáculos para acceder a estos trabajos desde América Latina: uno económico y otro lingüístico. Inversamente, se corre el riesgo de prescindir de investigar y acceder a lo que se ha escrito y publicado en América latina, y que debido a la distribución de libros y periódicos, o a los sistemas de compras, no siempre encuentra la forma de llegar hasta el mundo académico, las bibliotecas y el salón de clase. Es posible que algún día internet resuelva parcialmente este problema (*Cineaste* Otoño 2008), pero todavía las bibliotecas y la mayoría de las publicaciones virtuales ni contienen todo lo publicado en castellano ni son de acceso público.⁵

Otro obstáculo a superar es el menor desarrollo de los estudios latinoamericanos como campo transdisciplinario en América Latina. En contraste con el mayor desarrollo institucional de los mismos en el Norte, que nacieron al abrigo del proyecto de los estudios del área, la academia latinoamericana sigue estando mayoritariamente organizada—dividida—en disciplinas y facultades separadas. El estudio de América Latina, por consiguiente, ocurre en forma compartimentada y desigual (dependiendo de cada disciplina) y los centros interdisciplinarios (por ejemplo, para el estudio de América Latina) si es que existen, son incipientes y débiles. Si a ello le sumamos el desinterés histórico por el estudio de la cultura popular, la cultura de masas y el cine en particular, está claro que no ha existido un espacio institucional lo suficientemente apto como para albergar el estudio del cine latinoamericano. Los institutos y escuelas privadas en general también son débiles para consolidarse como usinas de investigación, enseñanza y divulgación, o como referentes de peso a escala continental, a excepción, quizás, de la Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano en La Habana. Lo mismo ocurre con las

revistas, en su mayoría de corta de vida. Son escasos los estudios de autor latinoamericano acerca del cine continental como conjunto, y los que hay fueron realizados en el extranjero, caso de Gumucio (1983), Getino (2002, 2006) y Paranaguá (1985, 2003). Distinto es el caso de los estudios de los cines nacionales, acerca de los cuales hoy disponemos de una cuantiosa bibliografía, principalmente acerca de Argentina, Brasil, Cuba y México. (Ver Getino [2002], Elena y Díaz López [2003], Shaw [2003], o las bibliografías en línea de la Universidad de California-Berkeley o el Centro de Información e Investigaciones de la Fundación del nuevo Cine latinoamericano, recién mencionado).

Aparte de los estudios históricos—que predominan—, debido a las carencias económicas, buena parte de la reflexión y el discurso acerca del cine en América Latina hoy gira principalmente en torno a la institucionalidad del cine, las industrias culturales, las formas de apoyar financieramente su producción; de viabilizar—multiplicar—la distribución y exhibición de las películas; de crear fondos, leyes, organizaciones, redes y formas de cooperación con tales fines; o socializar los medios de producción aprovechando la revolución digital. (Getino 2006) Más raros o escasos son los abordajes teóricos, estéticos y de análisis de obras más allá de breves reseñas periodísticas.

Las dificultades económicas también impactan en el terreno estético y de propuesta cinematográfica. Buena parte del cine mexicano, argentino y brasilero es un cine comercial, evasivo y para pasar el tiempo (que, pese a ello, es preciso estudiar). Por su parte, los realizadores y productores artísticamente más ambiciosos estéticamente y socialmente más comprometidos, sin claudicar por completo en su independencia, se ven forzados a optar por obras proliferas y

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fácilmente legibles para espectadores y críticos formados en las convenciones estéticas y cinematográficas de los grandes mercados, juegos sutiles pero no muy arriesgados, ejercicios virtuosistas y más de una concesión a las fórmulas de Hollywood a las que el público local ya se ha acostumbrado. Allí radica parte del abandono de la experimentación formal y la búsqueda de nuevos lenguajes propio de los 60 y 70. Cada vez más se recurre a las oportunidades de financiación que ofrece el Primer Mundo, y a las oportunidades de legitimación y promoción que ofrecen los grandes festivales y premios (Cannes, Hollywood) una vez superada la primera etapa: Rotterdam, San Sebastián, La Habana, Toronto o Berlín. Esto no significa que no existan méritos estéticos y diferencias formales y de tratamiento dignas de consideración y estudio siempre que las queramos descubrir, realzar y elevar a su justo plano. La necesidad de interesar y llegar al gran público nacional, de que el espectador local se sienta representado y tenido en cuenta, y a la vez aspirar a una exhibición internacional también ha resultado en no pocos aciertos y aportes en materia de temas y tratamiento formal. Es decir, los nuevos autores no se han conformado simplemente con “contar otras historias con los mismos medios” (el lenguaje de Hollywood) como sugieren Fornet (en Stock 1997 xiii) o Falicov (2007 418).

De lo anterior se desprende que otro de los desafíos que enfrentan los estudios del cine latinoamericano es poder escapar al hechizo—al carácter monumental—del Tercer Cine o el Nuevo Cine en su estado más crudo y radical (de los 60 y 70), y que por su diferencia formal, su carácter experimental, su sofisticación teórica, capturó y hasta monopolizó el interés—y la fantasía política—de los estudios del cine. Wood sostiene que parte de dicha atracción

responde a que la diferencia era más obvia que en obras y estéticas anteriores y posteriores, en las que la diferencia existe pero es más sutil y menos visible “a los ojos extranjeros”. Por ello recomienda usar “un peine más fino” (248). Lo cierto es que como muestran King 1990, Pick 1993, Chanan 2003, y numerosas colecciones recientes (Stock 1997, Stevens 1997, Noriega 2000, Shaw 2003, 2007; Elena y Díaz 2003, Shaw y Dennison 2005, etc.), tanto el “nuevo cine” como el cine emergente se las ingenió para sobrevivir, responder y aportar lo suyo en el marco de los distintos contextos y encrucijadas que le tocó afrontar: dictaduras militares, desilusión tras el retorno de la democracia, colapso del libre mercado, desafíos poscoloniales, lucha contra la discriminación étnica, racial, de género, la burocracia, la violencia, la fractura social y cultural, el drama de la migración y el exilio, la lucha por la memoria, etc. Pese al inmenso poder de las *majors* y las grandes corporaciones que dominan la industria cultural, el cine latinoamericano igual se hizo un lugar como uno de los principales instrumentos formativos de la opinión pública y la identidad cultural.

Al margen de los inconvenientes para acceder a lo que se escribe y publica en los infinitos rincones del continente, otro problema igualmente acuciante es la dificultad para conocer, poder ver y exhibir lo que se está produciendo en los distintos países de América Latina, sobre todo en las últimas décadas, por creadores jóvenes y en otros circuitos y formatos: cortos, documentales, videoclips. Al margen de las películas más fácilmente comercializables y digeribles que hoy conforman el nuevo canon (pongamos por caso, *Como agua para chocolate*, *Estación central*, *La historia oficial*, *¿Quién diablos es Juliette?*, *Los diarios de motocicleta*), la inmensa mayoría de las películas que se producen y se ven en

América Latina difícilmente entran en el mercado global o los ámbitos dedicados al estudio del cine, o lo hacen tardíamente. Unas veces esto se debe a problemas de distribución; otras de derechos; a veces porque no tienen subtítulos; otras porque vienen en formatos incompatibles; o porque se apartan demasiado del patrón que fija Hollywood, las distribuidoras y las propias salas de cine. El problema se agrava para las películas no comerciales, los documentales (Burton 1990, Paranaguá y Avellar 2003), los cortometrajes, los videos y las películas en soporte digital, todo lo cual ha crecido exponencialmente de la mano de las movilizaciones sociales y políticas (Aufderheide 2000) y las nuevas tecnologías. Como resultado, el estudio del cine latinoamericano sufre de dos males opuestos: o se basa en un pequeñísimo número de películas que consiguen penetrar el mercado global (pero que no es representativo y quizás sea lo menos interesante), o trata de obras muy importantes y significativas, tanto clásicas como contemporáneas, que más allá del ámbito local, o los conocedores, nadie vio ni verá nunca.

El interés por el cine de América Latina—reemplazante de turno de la literatura, las ciencias sociales u otras humanidades—y su utilización como instrumento para conocer y estudiar la realidad continental también corre el riesgo de crear una nueva clase de mistificación, en la medida que el cine es solamente una forma de representación entre muchas otras y no tiene por qué privilegiarse frente a otras prácticas sociales y discursos simbólicos.

López (2006) y Wood (2008) señalan que uno de los aportes de los estudios de cine más recientes es la preocupación por la historia del cine anterior y posterior al Nuevo Cine: dos continentes recién descubiertos. También, un interés por combinar el estudio histórico o

institucional—más frecuentado en América Latina—con los análisis textuales más característicos de la crítica europea y norteamericana (Wood 255).

Wood y Page (2005) advierten, no obstante, el peligro de subordinar el estudio del cine latinoamericano a los imperativos y debates teóricos del Primer Mundo perdiendo de vista aquello que queda fuera de “la mirada extranjera” o los intereses, agendas y fantasías de la crítica (Willemsen 2006). Tal la tentación de estudiar el cine latinoamericano desde marcos teóricos post-nacionalistas y post-políticos bajo la influencia de una vaga idea de “globalización”—mar de los sargazos en que ha naufragado parte de la crítica literaria—quitándolo de su contexto, desligándolo de procesos sociales y culturales nacionales, o no tomando en cuenta el modo en que los autores—o las distintas coyunturas y espacios culturales—modifican e imprimen su sello a los lenguajes, convenciones y géneros cinematográficos.

Notas

¹ Ver, por ejemplo, Geoffrey Kantaris, “El cine urbano y la tercera violencia en Colombia”, *Revista Iberoamericana* LXXIV 223 (Abril-Junio 2008), o el número especial dirigido por Podalsky (2002).

² Ver, por ejemplo, Virginia Higginbotham, “Fast Frames: Insights into Mexican, Latin American, and Brazilian Cinema” *LARR* 40, 3 (2005); Gustavo Subero, “Fear of the Trannies: On the Filmic Phobia of Transvestism in the New Latin American Cinema”, *LARR* 43, 2 (2008); Paul Schroeder “Latin American Silent Cinema: Triangulation and the Politics of Criollo Aesthetics” *LARR* 43, 3 (2008); o Virginia Gibbs (1992).

³ Ver el número especial sobre “Latin American Film History” dirigido por Ana M. López (2006).

⁴ Pienso, por ejemplo, en los trabajos de Joanna Page (2005), sobre la relación entre cine y nación; Luis Martín Cabrera y Daniel Noemi Voionmaa sobre *Machuca*; de Richard Gordon sobre *La última cena y Chico Rei*; de Deborah Martin sobre *¿Quién diablos es Juliette?*; de James Cisneros sobre Patricio Guzmán y Raúl Ruiz; de Ignacio Sánchez Prado sobre *Amores perros*, publicados en 2006 y 2007.

⁵ *Cabiers du Cinema, Close Up, Film Quarterly, Framework, Quarterly Review of Film & Video, Screen, Sight and Sound, 24 Images*, etc., están disponibles en internet pero salvo excepciones (*Jump Cut, Cineaste*) se llega a ellas mediante bibliotecas y bases de datos privadas o el pago de una suscripción.

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Latin American Cinema and Latin American Studies

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In the United States, Latin American film scholars have a variety of institutional homes: Departments of Art and Art History, Cinema Studies (which might include the study of filmmaking as well as film history and theory), Communications Studies, English, Media Studies, and/or Spanish and Portuguese. Many U.S.-based film scholars belong to two or three professional organizations: the Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS), the Modern Language Association (MLA), and the Latin American Studies Association. Both the MLA and LASA have film sections that meet at, and generate panels for their national and international professional meetings. In 1991, at a meeting of the Society for Cinema Studies (the original name of SCMS) in Los Angeles, scholars of U.S. Latino Film, joined by Latin Americanist and Spanish film scholars, founded the Latino Caucus, which over the years has functioned as both a film section and, at times, an advocacy group within SCMS. At the LASA International Congress in Montreal in 2007, the President of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, at the invitation of the LASA Film Section, spoke on the ways in which LASA and SCMS might combine efforts.

As would be expected for scholars in Latin American Studies, there are strong connections between film studies faculty based in the United States and those based in Latin America, often facilitated by LASA or SCMS. There are strong film studies programs at academic institutions in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Mexico City, Guadalajara, and other major cities in Latin America, and most national capitals in Latin America have public and private filmmaking schools (one major international school for filmmakers is based in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba). Graduate programs in film studies in the United States that support the study of Latin American Cinema include the University of Iowa, New

York University, University of Southern California, University of California at Los Angeles, University of California at Santa Barbara, University of California at Berkeley, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and University of Texas at Austin, among others. Scholars from both Latin America and the United States attend film conferences in the region: for example, the “Fourth International Congress: Women and Silent Film” was hosted by the Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades of the Universidad de Guadalajara in 2006, and, since 2002, U.S. Latin Americanist film scholars have attended meetings of the Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos de Cinema (SOCINE).

The change in media technology over the last decades has profoundly affected the study of film, though, while we have passed or are in the process of passing from the “celluloid age” to the “digital age,” film remains an ephemeral medium. For research on twentieth century film (fiction or documentary, features or shorts), scholars prefer to study the original 35mm or 16mm films, if they have been preserved in film archives under climate-controlled conditions, though most of our research is undertaken under much less optimal conditions. For teaching, while many more Latin American films are now available on DVD than even ten years ago, it is clear that the DVD is another media platform that will fall by the wayside, requiring media libraries eventually to upgrade, once again, their technologies and to review their film holdings. Most U.S. universities with strong graduate programs in film studies do attempt to build a collection reflecting the breadth and depth of Latin American film history, but funding can be limited and DVD releases difficult to obtain, even with internet purchasing. (When the *Maleta de cine colombiano* became available in Bogotá, it made its way to the University of Iowa in the suitcase of a

colleague, thus becoming our collection’s one and only *meta-maleta*.) One further note regarding formats: film teachers always prefer the widescreen format versions of film on DVD because it preserves the original aspect ratio, that is, how the film would have been seen when projected in a film theater. It is always news among Latin Americanist film scholars when a DVD version of a restored film is released, such as restored versions of films by Glauber Rocha currently available or under preparation in Brazil, or when museums, such as the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (MALBA), undertake to publish DVD collections of films by contemporary filmmakers. Every preservation effort is important because much of Latin American film of the silent period has been lost and few governments anywhere have committed sufficient funds to the preservation and/or restoration of films of any period.

The increase in scholarship in Spanish, English and Portuguese on Latin American Cinema over the last two decades has corrected a perception in U.S. film scholarship that all Latin American film was politically-committed New Latin American Cinema. Paulo Antonio Paranaguá’s *Tradición y modernidad en el cine de América Latina* and John King’s *Magical Reels: A History of Cinema in Latin America* (Second Edition) remain the two best overviews of Latin American film history (including popular cinema, commercial cinema, art cinema, and experimental and avant-garde cinemas), particularly when complemented by Ana M. López’s article “Early Cinema and Modernity in Latin America” in *Cinema Journal*, the publication of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. Preservation and access to film trade journals for the silent period varies from country to country: recently, for example, the Library of the Centro de Investigación y Experimentación

ON THE PROFESSION

Latin American Film Scholarship in the UK
Mapping the Field

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en Video y Cine (CIEVYC) in Buenos Aires acquired a copy of *Excelsior*, a trade journal first published in the second decade of the twentieth century, which reveals both the extent of Argentine film production and of the importation of foreign film in the silent period. The revision of the modernism currently underway in Latin American Literary Studies has found useful material in the subdiscipline of sound studies within film studies and in intermedia investigations of the relation between records, radio, and film sound. Likewise, comparative studies of the “Golden Ages” of national cinemas, genre films, and the current set of “new cinemas” (by generations of directors coming to the fore in the 1990s and in this decade) in Latin America are reshaping our understanding of the various trajectories of film production, distribution, and reception in the region.

Finally, there are moments of great excitement in the field and new research possibilities. Just this last year, in Buenos Aires, Paula Félix-Didier, Director of the Museo Pablo Ducrós Hicken, and Fernando M. Peña, the head film programmer for MALBA and past director of the Buenos Aires Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente (BAFICI), discovered a print of Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*, brought to Argentina from Germany in 1928, that contains footage thought lost to the world. The footage revises our understanding of the representation of the struggle between the workers and the corporate powers in the film. Since it is a print that showed many times over the years in *cine-clubs* in Buenos Aires, this discovery makes it possible for film scholars to review what impact, if any, this film might have had on Argentine political cinema and political culture, and to examine how such transnational exchanges shape film history. ■

The academic study of Latin American cinema in British universities has grown considerably in the past twenty years and is now one of the major areas of interest for staff and students in the broad field of literary and cultural studies. Most universities today offer courses, normally located in departments of Spanish and Latin American Studies, on aspects of cinema, and a number of faculty members publish articles, book chapters and monographs across a range of topics.

Before trying to define the main contours of this field, some brief comments on the reception of Latin American cinema in the UK might help orient the discussion. The biggest change in recent years, which facilitates research and teaching, is the availability of a number of Latin American films on DVD, many with English translation available. In the 1980s it was very difficult to find material in this country. Few movies received commercial release. Television would show some films from Latin America, which we would avidly video and recycle. The London Film Festival and the National Film Theatre in London would organize country-based programmes with the help of Embassies in the UK, but in order just to see most movies, even once, it would be necessary to travel to Latin America, to different film festivals, such as the Havana festival, or to work in the different national *Cinematecas* and film archives, since it was rare to find many Latin American films being exhibited even in their countries of origin.

The situation today is quite different. Apart from DVD access and the continuing stalwarts of Latin American film exhibition—the National Film Theatre in London, the different regional film theatres and the activities of Embassies (in particular the Mexican and the Brazilian Embassies)—contemporary Latin American cinema has

become part of the viewing experience of a broader public, not just the almost secret fascination of initiates. This has been helped, of course, by the extraordinary visibility of certain Mexican ‘crossover’ directors, in particular Alfonso Cuarón, Guillermo Del Toro and Alejandro González Iñárritu, and, of course, Mexican film stars: the face of Gael García Bernal is instantly recognised by many. There is also a strong interest in Brazilian directors like Walter Salles and Fernando Meirelles, and the ‘new wave’ of Argentine directors such as Lucrecia Martel, Pablo Trapero, Fabián Bielinsky and Adrián Caetano. Film festivals, such as the ‘Discovering Latin America’ festival in London, also screen a wide range of documentaries and fictional films from less ‘visible’ countries. This interest and activity helps to create a market for academic publication: mainstream commercial publishers as well as university presses are willing to consider books on Latin American cinema, and journals—both ‘mainstream’ film journals and also ‘Latin American Studies’ journals—are receptive to this burgeoning film scholarship.

I am not suggesting that scholarship here is necessarily market-led: interest in Latin American film studies had been increasing before the recent focus on contemporary cinema of the last ten to fifteen years. Nor am I implying that the problem of access to films has been solved: DVD can offer only a small fraction of production, the most commercially viable films. The most significant independent producer of contemporary Argentine cinema, Lita Stantic, for example, has yet to put her own remarkable film about the disappeared in Argentina, *Un muro de silencio* (1993), onto DVD. If scholars with no knowledge of Spanish or Portuguese wanted to develop studies of Latin American stars to add to the rich literature on stars and society in the Euro American tradition, they would be able

to write about García Bernal or Salma Hayek, to take the case of Mexico, but not about Dolores del Río or María Félix, because the films of even these most famous of 'Golden Age' stars are not readily available in subtitled versions. Work on stardom in Brazilian cinema—which is a very strong feature of UK film studies—can be found in the Centre for Brazilian Film Studies at Leeds. One of the most committed and successful producers of recent Latin American cinema, the British academic turned producer, Don Ranvaud—who has produced the work of Salles, Trapero, Meirelles and many other younger directors—is currently engaged on a project, through his company Ondamax films, of bringing to DVD some of the most important films of the sixties, directed by Jorge Sanjinés in Bolivia, amongst others. Even these films, that occupy a central position in debates on sixties cinema, are in danger of being lost from sight. The work of film preservation and then distribution remains one of the perennial problems of the field. Most work in the UK on Latin American film still comes from inside area studies or language departments rather than from film studies departments, although in recent years we find more scholars with Latin American expertise based in Film Studies departments. These scholars are often contributing to courses and publications on world cinema. But wherever they are housed, researchers look to mediate between research carried out in Latin America and the dominant interests of the Euro American film studies tradition.

If we look to classify this work, we find that most recent publications consider contemporary 'national' and 'transnational' cinemas. National and transnational are not seen as exclusive, oppositional categories. Nobody working in Latin American film offers an essentialist reading of national cinemas, since there is a

clear awareness that these cinemas, from their inception, long before debates about globalisation became fashionable, are a blend of national and transnational elements. The nation remains the bedrock for film production and distribution in Latin America and the state still plays a significant role in a number of countries. It is also far too simplistic to see film production from the nineties as being exclusively 'transnational', and to wave farewell to the national project, despite the obvious attraction of crossover star directors such as Cuarón, Salles and Del Toro, who are the exceptions rather than the rule. Stephanie Dennison (Leeds) and Lisa Shaw (Liverpool) have co-written the volume on Brazil for the Routledge national cinema series (Shaw and Dennison, 2007), whilst Andrea Noble (Durham) wrote the volume on Mexican cinema for the same series, concentrating on a close reading of representative films (Noble, 2005). Several scholars have looked at contemporary film movements from within a national framework: Lúcia Nagib (Leeds) has explored recent Brazilian cinema (Nagib, 2003, 2007), Miriam Haddu (Royal Holloway, London), has focused on Mexican cinema in the nineties (Haddu, 2007), while Joanna Page (Cambridge) has analysed Argentine film of the last decade (Page, 2009). Jens Andermann and colleagues at Birkbeck are looking at what they term the 'recovery of the real' in contemporary Argentine and Brazilian film, and Catherine Grant (Sussex) has published several significant articles on post dictatorship Argentine cinema. Geoffrey Kantaris in Cambridge is completing a major monograph study of urban cinema since the eighties, in Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Brazil, exploring how place and identity are reshaped by local and transnational forces. Lúcia Sa in Manchester is also working on images of the city in Brazil and Mexico (Sa, 2007). Paul Julian Smith at Cambridge regularly reviews Latin American

films and has written a guide to *Amores perros* (Smith, 2003), while Else Vieira has analysed another internationally successful film, *City of God* (Vieira, 2005). Smith's focus on the transnational in cinema finds its echo in much recent research. Deborah Shaw (Portsmouth) has offered key readings of contemporary films (Shaw 2003) and has also edited a book that features a number of essays that concentrate specifically on the global market (Shaw, 2007). Armida de la Garza (Nottingham) is also preparing for publication the symposium papers of a conference held at Puebla in 2008 on transnational cinema. The proceedings of another major conference held at Cambridge, edited by Page and Haddu, also offer a perspective on debates over the national and the transnational in fiction film and documentary (Haddu and Page, 2009).

In the main, the focus of UK-based research is on the 'big three' industries of Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. Some attention is being paid to contemporary cinema in Peru (Sarah Barrow, Anglia Ruskin) and Uruguay (Keith Richards, Sheffield), with examples of their work in Shaw and Dennison (2005), while Rory O'Bryen (Cambridge) has explored cinematic and literary representations of *La Violencia* in Colombia (O'Bryen, 2008). Cuba no longer receives the critical attention as in the heyday of discussions about 'imperfect' or 'third' cinema that the directors themselves led in the sixties and early seventies, though Michael Chanan (Roehampton) has updated his seminal book on Cuba to include developments into the twenty first century (Chanan, 2004). Stephen Hart has approached a century of filmmaking in the continent in his *Companion to Latin American Film* through a close reading of key film texts (Hart, 2004) and he is active in encouraging work with the International Film School in Havana. Survey books on national cinemas cover the pre 1960s period to some extent, and

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Dolores Tierney (Sussex) has published an analysis of the work of the Mexican 'Golden Age' director, Emilio Fernández, which locates itself specifically in debates concerning transcultural and transnational perspectives (Tierney 2007). A discussion of popular cinema in Brazil can be found in the work of Shaw and Dennison (2004), while Tierney and Ruétalo have edited a collection of papers dealing with exploitation movies in Latin America (Tierney and Ruétalo, 2009). I have concentrated my focus here on book publication, but many other researchers throughout the country are publishing regularly on cinema in specialist and non specialist journals based in the UK and throughout the Americas.

The significant number of recent titles, outlined above, the work in progress, and the numbers of postgraduates that are focusing on film-related topics, all point to an area of study that is now firmly established in the UK, and where scholars are forging productive working relationships with filmmakers in Latin America and with critics throughout the Americas and in Europe.

[I would like to thank Stephanie Dennison, Geoffrey Kantaris, Toni Kapcia, Andrea Noble and Deborah Shaw for providing me with bibliographical information. I would also refer the reader to an excellent article by David Wood which gives an illuminating theoretical account of the challenges and the pitfalls that await the 'foreign' critic: 'With Foreign Eyes: English Language Criticism on Latin American Film', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, Vol.17, 2, August 2008, pp. 245-259.]

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Inequality in Latin American Literary and Cultural Studies

Introduction

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Since its inception, through the foundational work of Jean Franco, Joseph Sommers, and Hernán Vidal, among others, and continuing into the recent presidency of Arturo Arias, literary and cultural studies have played a pivotal role in the Latin American Studies Association. While the six authors brought together in this edition of the *Forum* share a passion for literature and a commitment to democratization in the Americas, they differ widely in their views on how best to marry these two concerns.

In his provocative opening essay, Jon Beasley-Murray speaks for many of us in lamenting the reduction of the Latin American literary canon, in the United States, Canada and Europe, to Magical Realism, as exemplified by the works of Gabriel García Márquez and his imitators. As he acutely observes, the genre contained the seeds of its own obsolescence, and most literary critics long ago tired of it and turned their attention to experimental narrative and/or *testimonio*. Many of our students, however, have not followed suit, leaving us with the dilemma of either boring them with ‘good’ literature, or boring ourselves—and selling out—by teaching them middle-brow literature designed to compensate First-World readers for their “overdevelopment.”

Jean Franco invites us to step outside the canon and consider an emerging body of literature that seems to defy the forces of globalization: literature written in indigenous languages. This is a literature, Franco argues, that challenges “the distinctions that placed high culture over popular cultures, literary language over dialect, metropolis over province and thus tacitly affirmed class,

gender and racial inequalities.” Despite the historical forces of dispersal and acculturation, “languages that were scheduled to disappear with globalization...are being reinvigorated by indigenous writers.” Her two cases in point, mapuche literature in Chile and zapotec literature in Mexico, have both evolved through militant resistance to colonization by the state, and exemplify both the preservation of a rich oral tradition and its global dissemination through the Internet.

Idelber Avelar’s essay provides an excellent overview of the best works of recent literary and cultural criticism, many of which exemplify globalization in their trilingual publication. Moreover, they share a refusal to limit themselves to one or two overarching theoretical debates. Rather, Avelar posits, they share a “meticulously specific, object-driven [approach]...usually anchored in one or two national traditions,” and their theoretical concerns emerge inductively, rather than existing a priori to confirm a particular metacritical stance.

Ileana Rodríguez considers the applicability of the genre of Ecocriticism—which has thrived among U.S. and European literary critics in response to environmental concerns—to the Latin American context. She cautions against prioritizing concerns about the environmental over those about human exploitation—ecology over equality—, while acknowledging the common roots of both types of analysis in the political-social and against *desarrollismo*. The forces of modernization, she notes, have always regarded the natural world as exploitable frontier, in contrast to the ancient beliefs of Rigoberta Menchú and other indigenous peoples, who have often been excluded by both modernization and the environmental movement.

John Beverley, for his part, argues that the populist turn taken by many Latin American countries in recent years has elicited a neoconservative response from one sector of the Latin American critical establishment. For some critics who came of age in the Sixties, Beverley argues, the disavowal of armed struggle in middle age has entailed a retreat into the privileged space of the Lettered City of which Angel Rama spoke.

Finally, Luz Horne and Daniel Noemi Voionmaa trace the evolving representation of marginality in Latin American fiction, from nineteenth-century realism to the modernism of Clarice Lispector. They then concentrate their analysis on the new documentary literature immersed in the problem of urban violence, exemplified by Paulo Lins’s *Cidade de Deus* and Fernando Vallejo’s *La virgen de los sicarios*. In this recent fiction, they observe, violence does not emanate primarily from the state, which is absent or invisible, but from market forces. Moreover, “this new aesthetics of the marginal” is characterized by “spectacularization”; “Latin America has become a stage for the spectacle of violence.” The authors argue that this literature has created “a new language and a new logic to talk about marginality,” as in the novels of César Aira. In those of Nora Fernández and Diamela Eltit, the characters’ “fragmented and corroded” bodies are assimilated into their abject surroundings.

In juxtaposing the views of three generations of cultural critics, from both North and South, and from the Spanish-, Portuguese- and English-language traditions, these essays suggest the diversity of views and approaches, and the vitality of critical debate, in the field of contemporary Latin American literary and cultural studies. I trust they will spark further debates among humanists and social scientists alike. ■

**Against (In)equality
Bad Latin American Literature**

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The central concern of literature is not so much inequality, but difference. And so it should be. Literature enables an exploration of otherness, variety, and singularity. It does so by allowing readers to feel or sense other worlds, different from their own, thereby relativizing their own experience, such that they recognize that they, too, are different. Hence literature differs from film, at least as described by the Frankfurt School theorist Siegfried Kracauer: film often encourages its spectators to see themselves as the same, as part of a mass, but literature tends to emphasize either individualism or a much more diffuse sense of commonality.¹ Film constructs a mass audience of equals; literature posits a common readership characterized by diversity. Even critic Benedict Anderson's famous argument about the role of the novel and novel-reading in the construction of nationalist sentiment stresses the range of sensations to which, for instance, picaresque narratives expose their readers: a "tour d'horizon," in the case of José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi's *El periquillo sarniento*, of "hospitals, prisons, remote villages, monasteries, Indians, Negros," whose exemplary differences combine to constitute the collectivity that will be called Mexico.² In short, literature is more about imagination than calculation, experience than measurement, affect than effect.

Literary *criticism*, by contrast, is all too often preoccupied with issues of equality or inequality. Traditionally, this is registered in a discourse on value, for which some books are better than others in whatever way that "better" is to be defined. Indeed, literature

properly speaking, in this traditional conception, is defined by the fact that it contributes to a cultural sphere defined by the nineteenth-century British critic Matthew Arnold as the "best which has been thought and said."³ More recently, the version of inequality that preoccupies critics has been imported more or less directly from political discourse and concerns the evaluations implicit, it is said, within literature itself. How, for instance, are women or the indigenous represented relative to men, whites, or mestizos? Or how might a literary text advance the cause of equality, more broadly conceived? Still, however, and despite the traditionalists' lament that relativism now rules the roost, in fact notions of inequality or equality, and of better or worse, remain to the fore. It is just that new standards of judgment are in force. Meanwhile, the institutional and economic apparatus of book publishing is always about calculation, measurement, and effect: costs, sales, awards, and so on. Inevitably implicated in that apparatus, literary criticism, too, is complicit in the conversion of the book as locus of literary experience into just another commodity. This is true as much of academic and scholarly commentary as it is of journalistic reviews. Literary criticism tends to side with exchange value rather than use value.

To separate out literature and criticism in this way, however, is of course an artificial exercise. Literature today is almost unimaginable without the apparatus of production, distribution, and reception that enables texts to find readers. It is hard to imagine use without exchange, although ironically that is what literature itself encourages us to do, by erasing (if only temporarily) our awareness of its own material supports. Almost as soon as we look up from the page, we too are engaged in the evaluation and calculation that we had briefly abandoned in the reading

experience. Taken as a whole, then, literature and the critical apparatus that surrounds and enables it helps transform affect into effect, and packages difference as inequality. This is nowhere more visible than in the construct that is Latin American literature, by which I mean literature labeled as belonging to Latin America as a region rather than to Mexico or Peru (or wherever) as individual nations. Perhaps this visibility is because Latin American literature as such only comes into being through the process of translation, both literal and metaphorical, by which Latin American texts enter the world market. And this is a relatively recent phenomenon: for most intents and purposes, Latin American literature was invented as recently as the 1960s, with the region's so-called literary "Boom." In what follows, I retrace a brief history of the Boom, focusing first on how it came to redefine the template of what was "good" literature, and then on how it has subsequently waned in critical appreciation. Indeed, many Latin Americanist critics have practically deserted the field of literary criticism. I suggest that we should return to the study of literature, prepared now self-consciously (and self-reflexively) to embrace the "bad" Latin American literature as much as the "good.

When Latin American fiction burst onto global consciousness in the late 1960s, it was heralded as the savior of world literature. U.S. novelist William Kennedy's review of Gabriel García Márquez was particularly hyperbolic but not especially atypical: "*One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the first piece of literature since the Book of Genesis that should be required reading for the entire human race. [. . . Mr. García Márquez's] success is one of the best things that has happened to literature in a long, long time."⁴ The fact that Kennedy's review was entitled "All of Life, Sense and Nonsense Fills an *Argentine's* Daring Fable" (my emphasis) shows that the specific provenance of this

salvation was immaterial: Argentina, Colombia, it was all the same. What mattered was that something new had come along to fill the gap left by a now waning First World modernism. Indeed, the Boom supplied an apparent efflorescence of vitality and inventiveness “at a moment,” as critic Gerald Martin explains, “when such creativity was in short supply internationally [. . .] and critics repeatedly asked themselves whether the novel, in the age of the mass media, was now moribund.”⁵ In 1967, for instance, novelist John Barth published a much-discussed essay on “The Literature of Exhaustion,” a disquisition on “the used-upness of certain forms or exhaustion of certain possibilities.”⁶ Yet the outlook is very different in Barth’s follow-up essay, “The Literature of Replenishment,” published in 1980. Now the Latin American Boom has saved the day! Here for instance Barth’s praise of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is, critic Johnny Payne observes, “as gushy and unqualified as a back-cover blurb. It is ‘as impressive a novel as has been written so far in the second half of our century [. . .]. Praise be to the Spanish language and imagination!’”⁷ Or rather, presumably, praise be to Spanish *in translation*: Barth effaces the process of translation and promotion through which García Márquez’s novel lands on his desk, and in which he himself participates so enthusiastically. Any hint at the workings of the market in symbolic goods would undermine those very qualities that Barth claims to find in the Latin American text: its “organic originality” that, in Payne’s gloss, could “‘magically’ recover the conventions and artifices of the past, while at the same time cross-fertilizing U.S. writing.”⁸

Latin America and its literary production was soon summarized in the two-word formula “magical realism,” encapsulating both its “magical” inventiveness and the notion that it was intimately intertwined

with some “real” political commitment. For Latin American literature was “good” twice over: because of its aesthetic innovation, and also thanks to a sense that it was somehow rooted in popular struggle.

The seal on the region’s cultural achievement was the Nobel Prize in Literature awarded, first, to Miguel Angel Asturias in 1967 and Pablo Neruda in 1971, and later to García Márquez in 1982. The Prize citation on this latter occasion was framed as though the honor were awarded to the entire region rather than to one distinguished representative. “For a long time,” it proclaims, “Latin American literature has shown a vigour as in few other literary spheres. It has won acclaim in the cultural life of today.”⁹ The citation then delineates the two elements that make Latin American literature so worthy in the popular and critical imagination. First, the region combines “many impulses and traditions” that range from “folk culture, including oral storytelling, reminiscences from old Indian culture, currents from Spanish baroque in different epochs, influences from European surrealism and other modernism” and that collectively “are blended into a spiced and life-giving brew.” Second, however, this heady cocktail, “spiced and live-giving,” is further enhanced by a committed attachment to the cause of social justice. “The violent conflicts of political nature—social and economic—raise the temperature of the intellectual climate,” we are told. The citation continues, again as though proclaiming a collective award: “Like most of the other important writers in the Latin American world, García Márquez is strongly committed politically on the side of the poor and the weak against oppression and economic exploitation.”¹⁰ In short, the 1982 Nobel Prize is awarded less to an individual writer, than to a continent that has given renewed life to world culture; and less to a writer than to the *idea* of the writer as a

politically engaged intellectual who transforms difference into a passionate call for equality.

Even today, for most readers there is no other world literature that enjoys a similar aura of quality and even moral uprightness—except perhaps the modern notion of “world literature” itself, in which (by analogy with, say, “world music”) the virtues of Latin American cultural production are extended to the entire Third World. Common conception has it that the very notion of “bad Latin American literature” is an oxymoron. Moreover, what is most remarkable about this successful branding of a continent’s culture is that it is, nonetheless, a branding: it is a marketing operation, with extraordinary commercial results. As his Nobel Prize citation notes, García Márquez for instance “achieved unusual success,” with *One Hundred Years of Solitude* “translated into a large number of languages and [selling] millions of copies.”¹¹ The Nobel committee has explicitly to mark this success as “unusual” in the context of its award of its highest accolade. For once, literary value and market value here go hand in hand. Or in Martin’s words, “What really confused the issue” of the Boom was that its protagonists “managed both to achieve critical recognition and to become bestsellers.” The Latin American Boom involved “the wholesale conversion of literary production into a commodity process” without, apparently, the loss of its aura of exclusivity predicted by a theorist such as Walter Benjamin.¹²

It did not take long, however, for a backlash to ensue, at least in the more refined circles of cultural criticism. Perhaps most famously, the British novelist Julian Barnes declared a moratorium on magical realism only two years after García Márquez’s Nobel, and at precisely the point at which this style, now

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the signature gesture of the new category of “postcolonial” writing, was sweeping all before it. Barnes’s mocking suggestion is that:

A quota system is to be introduced on fiction set in South America. The intention is to curb the spread of package-tour baroque and heavy irony. Ah, the propinquity of cheap life and expensive principles, of religion and banditry, of surprising honour and random cruelty. Ah, the daiquiri bird which incubates its eggs on the wing; ah, the fredonna tree whose roots grow at the tips of its branches, and whose fibres assist the hunchback to impregnate by telepathy the haughty wife of the hacienda owner; ah, the opera house now overgrown by jungle. Permit me to rap on the table and murmur “Pass!”¹³

How did Latin American fiction become so quickly a matter of ridicule? It is easy to blame its imitators. As critic Theo Tait points out, the 1980s saw “a flood of semi-supernatural sagas [. . .] released all over the world—full of omens, prodigies, legendary feats, hallucinatory exaggerations, fairytale motifs, strange coincidences and overdeveloped sense-organs.”¹⁴ Tait even understates the case when he observes that “with time and overuse, artistic style degenerates into mannerism.” In fact, magical realism was very soon subject to pastiche, and from there it was but a short step to Barnes’s parody. Moreover, as Tait also comments, magical realism was particularly vulnerable to such transmutations. In that “wonder and novelty were always an important part of its appeal, [. . .] the style had a built-in obsolescence: the decline into artificial gesture and cheap exoticism was inevitable.”¹⁵ Meanwhile, in Latin America itself the politics of the Boom had long been under fire, not least from the influential

Uruguayan critic Angel Rama, for such failings as its exclusivity, its cult of the individual author, and for its “enslavement to the mechanisms of publicity.”¹⁶ No wonder then that Latin Americanists should have turned almost wholesale either to more challenging texts by more recondite authors such as Diamela Eltit or Ricardo Piglia, or to non-literary or para-literary genres such as *testimonio* and so (as in the title of one of critic John Beverley’s books) “against literature” altogether.¹⁷

Yet the strange result of this conjunction of circumstances is that those of us who teach Latin American literature for a living in North America and Europe find ourselves in a peculiar double bind. We can put non-canonical works on the syllabus, but so very often dampen the enthusiasm of students attracted to our classes precisely by the prospect that they will be reading what they regard in advance as the inventive and edifying work of the Boom and its sequels. Or we can teach García Márquez et. al., and perhaps even the still more popular avatars such as Isabel Allende or Laura Esquivel, but never quite without the sense that we are, however reluctantly, embracing a “bad” Latin American literature only because the students think it will do them some good.

Let us approach bad Latin American literature a little less abashedly, first by understanding its continued appeal, and second by perhaps reconsidering its (by now) middlebrow utopianism. For it is a prime instance of what we could call liberal, well-intentioned exoticism, a means by which to recognize and negotiate difference. In the context of the rapid globalization of culture and communications technologies of which the rise of Latin American literature was itself a part (with novels written by Colombians in Mexico, published in Barcelona, translated in London, and making bestseller lists in New York), magical

realism offered a way of understanding a whole new set of differences that suddenly impinged upon Western consciousness. What is more, it offered a way of relating to these novelties: it proposed that the act of reading (or, more generally, cultural consumption) could itself be a form of solidarity. Reading (or perhaps merely buying) a work produced elsewhere could be a demonstration of acceptance and open-mindedness in the midst of the postnational confusion that could otherwise overtake traditional middle-class sensibilities. Reading came to seem a political act. Hence the rise of “world” culture, as a particular variant on the global. By the late 1980s, Western consumers could face the heady onrush of globalization by wearing their Thai-style batik t-shirts, listening to Moroccan music as remixed in England, drinking free-trade Tanzanian coffee, and reading Paulo Coelho. Culture always involves position-taking, and Latin American literature, charged as it was with a sense of political engagement (the brand of the real), offered a paradigmatic market choice for those who felt vaguely ill at ease with their own self-consciousness as the economic beneficiaries of unequal trade. It is, in short, an important mode of what political philosopher Jacques Rancière would term the reconfiguration of the sensible (feeling itself) in postmodern times.¹⁸ Or to put this another way: if, as critic Idelber Avelar argues, in Latin America the Boom’s success served as compensation for economic and political underdevelopment; outside of Latin America precisely this same literature (and its successors) functioned according to a similar logic of compensation, but now to make up for *overdevelopment*.¹⁹

Finally, then, Latin American literature—compensation or comfort in the guise of self-improvement—has become the very epitome of middlebrow culture. No wonder it should have been so soon scorned by writers

such as Julian Barnes, and also the object of wary regard by Latin American and Latin Americanist critics themselves. Like the classic middlebrow culture of the 1950s and 1960s as described by cultural critic Janice Radway, Latin American literature provides “a kind of social pedagogy for a growing class fraction of professionals, managers, and information workers,” a “sentimental education” to guide them through, now, not so much modernity and modernization as postmodernity and globalization.²⁰ It mobilizes an “enthusiasm for sentiment,” a way of reading “completely suffused by feeling and affect.”²¹ At the same time, it offers a reconversion of value: if the Boom was striking originally for the way in which it transmuted aesthetic value into commercial value without, for all that, apparently destroying the aura of the work of art, perhaps the post-Boom, or the Boom’s legacy, has been the magical transmutation of market value into political reassurance, the purchase of a sense of engaged solidarity through the exercise of cultural taste. But it is not, in this sense, all that different from *testimonio* as read even by the most anti-literary of proponents of Latin American cultural studies. And rather than partaking in a new round of value judgments in which some texts would always end up better than others, perhaps we can turn around the liberal desire to cast difference as (in)equality; we can examine and teach bad Latin American literature as symptom of unfulfilled desires in the global North as much as the South. At stake is a redistribution of the sensible that precedes any struggle over how what is sensed is to be evaluated or weighed.

Endnotes

¹ Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament*. Guy Debord subsequently develops a similar, albeit much broader, argument in *The Society of the Spectacle*.

- ² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 30.
- ³ Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 6.
- ⁴ Quoted in advertising material, *New York Times*, May 6, 1970, 40; see also Kennedy, “Socialist Realism.”
- ⁵ Martin, “Boom, Yes; ‘New’ Novel, No,” 53.
- ⁶ Barth, “The Literature of Exhaustion,” 310. Not that exhaustion is necessarily negative in Barth’s view: he champions Samuel Beckett and, indeed, Jorge Luis Borges because they “paradoxically turn the felt ultimacies of our time into material and means for [their] work” (317).
- ⁷ Payne, *Conquest of the New Word*, 17.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ Gyllensten, “Presentation Speech.”
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² Martin, “Boom, Yes; ‘New’ Novel, No,” 54. See Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”
- ¹³ Barnes, *Flaubert’s Parrot*, 99.
- ¹⁴ Tait, “Flame-Broiled Whopper.”
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ Rama, “Carta de Angel Rama a Zona Franca,” 15. See also Rama, “Angel Rama tira la piedra . . .”
- ¹⁷ Beverley, *Against Literature*.
- ¹⁸ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*.
- ¹⁹ Avelar, *The Untimely Present*, 30-31.
- ²⁰ Radway, *A Feeling for Books*, 15, 17.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 29, 33.

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Overcoming Colonialism Writing in Indigenous Languages

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The Argentine critic, Josefina Ludmer, recently pointed out that with globalization the parameters of Latin American literature and literary studies have totally changed. Traditional divisions between national and cosmopolitan realism, between realism and avant-garde, between pure literature and social literature have disappeared and even the difference between historical reality and fiction may disappear. The distinctions that placed high culture over popular cultures, literary language over dialect, metropolis over province and thus tacitly affirmed class, gender and racial inequalities have been challenged in many ways, the most striking of which is the continent-wide emergence of literature in indigenous languages that extends from the Mapuche in the south to the Tahahumara in Northern Mexico, from the Tupi-Guaraní to the Nahuas. Languages that were scheduled to disappear with globalization, and that had long been marginalized by imperial Spanish are not only defended by native speakers but are taught in universities and reinvigorated by indigenous writers.

It was in 1992 that representatives of 120 indigenous peoples met in Quito to organize a protest against the quincentennial celebrations of Columbus's discovery of America and called for, among other things, a defense of native languages, recognizing that the subordination of native languages to Spanish ratified the long-standing oppression of the original inhabitants of the continent. Paradoxically this defense of native languages has occurred at a time of dispersal when emigration is creating new identities, such as the binational Mixteca in California

and the urban indigenous in Mexico City and Lima. In Mexico, the colonization of the Lacandon jungle by landless peasants in the 1980s brought together Tzotziles, Tjobales, and other groups, many of whom would join the Zapatista army. In 1994 when the Zapatistas emerged from the Lacandon forest and took over several municipalities, they addressed the inhabitants in the six indigenous languages of the region.

The number of people speaking indigenous languages varies considerably: millions speak Quechua and only a few hundred puapua, a language of Baja California. Moreover, national policies have given rise to very different linguistic environments. In the worst cases, like that of El Salvador following the Matanza of 1931 in which thousands of indigenous were slaughtered in the wake of a rebellion, the native language was suppressed and is only now being relearned. Speakers of indigenous languages were made to feel inferior. In the life story of the Peruvian Gregorio Condori Mamani, transcribed from the Quechua, Condori describes himself as sightless and dumb because he did not have access to writing and did not speak Spanish even after a spell in the army where officers prohibited the speaking of Quechua. During the civil war in Guatemala in the eighties, the army tried to prohibit the speaking of native tongues and the wearing of native dress. At the other extreme is Paraguay, a country officially bilingual in Spanish and Guaraní. In Mexico, where there may be as many as 60 indigenous languages, nahua has now been incorporated into University courses and there has been official support for workshops and conferences in many of the languages. In Chile, the mapuche have a radio program in mapudungun. Peoples who, in the past, were not supposed to have writing much less a literature are now attending writing workshops, reciting poetry

at meetings and publishing in anthologies. When Microsoft recently announced a program in mapudungun, the language of the mapuche, there was a public protest not against the technology as such, but against what was termed the intellectual piracy of a project that had been carried forward without any participation by the mapuche themselves.

One cannot write in an indigenous language without calling up the whole history of colonialism, given the power relations that dictated the first and many subsequent transcriptions of Native American texts into phonic writing. The post-conquest imposition of castellano in the service of the state which controlled official history relegated orally-transmitted cultures to an inferior category outside the lettered city. The first grammars and dictionaries of native languages were instruments in the work of conversion. In the nineteenth century transcription of native languages fell into the hands of foreigners, given the lack of interest among the lettered classes; thus, for instance, Europeans disputed the grammar and transcription of the Quechua alphabet. In the last century, the evangelical work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics imposed ideological preference; it is interesting that the Zapotec dictionary it published was addressed to the needs of three groups: the indigenous needing to learn Spanish; the official who needs to know the language; and thirdly, linguists and anthropologists. There is no mention of any cultural production by the Zapotecs themselves.

Initially writing was encouraged because of the need to preserve culture that was in danger of being eroded or lost because of emigration and dispersal. The tzotzil writer, Pérez Fernández, states that one of the great preoccupations of the elders and leaders of the communities is that most of our customs, traditions and ancestral knowledge are being

lost too rapidly. But there is also a new writing that goes beyond the transmission of traditions to explore the indigenous experience within modernity. In Mexico, thanks to the labor of non-indigenous intellectuals, especially the poets Carlos Montemayor and Jaimes Sabines, careful attention has been paid to the transcription of indigenous languages into phonetic script. Montemayor's anthology *La voz profunda* which has been published in a bilingual edition in Spanish and indigenous languages included essays, poems and stories¹.

Because of the extraordinary variety of indigenous languages, I will focus two of the most prolific: zapotec literature in Mexico and literature in mapudungun in Chile, both of which are rooted in a history of resistance to the state.

The zapotec spoken in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is the only indigenous language of Mexico to have a substantial modern literary tradition, thanks in part to its political history. Juchitlan, its regional capital, is a city with a history of rebellion that goes back to the fight against Aztec domination and it has a modern indigenous intellectual tradition dating back to the twenties and thirties when a group of intellectuals living in Mexico, most notably Andrés Henestrosa, wrote some of their work in zapotec. But the contemporary renaissance surely dates from the political movement of the 1980s. In 1981, the Coalition of Workers, Peasants and Students of the Isthmus (COCEI) put into practice self-government and cultural revival. In its two years in office before being dismissed by the central government in 1983, an action that was met by widespread protest, COCEI supported a literacy campaign, a radio station, publications and a bookstore. The zapotec language became the preferred mode of communication, even among some non-indigenous citizens. Its policy exemplified,

according to Jeffrey Rubin, what postcolonial development might have looked like if indigenous and Western cultures had met on more equal terms, not necessarily a rejection of the Western or the modern nor a reinforcing of geographical and cultural borders between local and outside, but rather a creation of multiple modernities by means of non-Western knowledge and style². Thus even before the Zapatista army emerged from the Lacandon jungle in 1994 and addressed meetings in six indigenous languages, COCEI had already adopted the zapotec language at its meetings, using the customs and adornments of zapotec ritual and drawing on the historical memory of past rebellions. The journal, *Guchach Reza* often illustrated by the painter, Francisco Toledo and his friends, brought together zapotec writing with critical writing by foreign intellectuals, an important consideration when taking into account the often restricted notion of indigenous cultures.

Victor de la Cruz, a zapotec poet and editor of the 1983 anthology, *Flor de la palabra* (Flower of the Word), was well aware of the difficulties of anthologizing a literature that had not yet been recognized as such. In one of his best-known poems, *Tu laanu. Tu lanu* (Who are we? What is our name?), he represents writing as a form of alienation, as an empty house in which there is no listener and therefore no presence. The word on paper cannot reproduce voice. "Why does one write on paper/ Instead of on the earth?" the poet asks. "Whence came this paper that imprison our word/ the word our fathers carved on stones/that they sang in the night when they danced?" Describing writing as a second language which kills the native tongue, he ends the poem by asking again, "Who are we? What is our name?" What Victor de la Cruz underscores is that the community cannot be present in writing as it is in orally transmitted cultures. This

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divided self is, not surprisingly, a feature of much indigenous poetry. The Yucatecan Maya poet, Briceida Cueva Cob in a poem with the title *Yan a bin xook* (You will go to school), while accepting schooling finds her true reflection in the family hearth where the burning fire mirrors her true self. The verse “You will cross the threshold of your imagination/ and go into your own house/ without having to knock on the door” suggests the radical difference between the society which the girl needs a permit to enter and the true self reflected in the native hearth.

Like zapotec writing, the writing of the mapuche poets in Chile has been strongly influenced by the militant resistance to the state which has persistently denied the indigenous component of the nation. In the 1940s when Pablo Neruda tried to found a literary journal using the name *Araucania* (the old name for mapuche territory), he was ordered to change the title. The Pinochet government revoked mapuche land rights and at the present time there is militant resistance to government licensed dam projects which affect the environment. As recently as 1992 when Chile was represented at the World Fair in Seville by a dazzling iceberg, the country emphasizes its whiteness as if the indigenous did not exist. Textbooks mention their subjugation in the nineteenth century but tend to ignore their recent history, as if to assume their absorption into the modern state. Yet over a million people identify themselves as mapuche and half of them live in urban areas. Because they have been under attack and removed from their lands, their identity is constantly being renegotiated so that what constitutes the mapuche self (Mapuchengen) is defined in many different ways and can be quite volatile. In 1993 the state passed an indigenous law which demanded proof of mapuche identity for land claims, thus placing bureaucratic criteria on a people

who identified themselves as belonging to a particular place or as participating in particular rituals but not necessarily according to purely racial criteria.

The mapuches represent a challenge to the state for several reasons—because of their language, their social organization and their land claims. “Mapu” means land and “che” people and they see as their prime mission the defense of the environment. Their language is mapudungun (or mapuchezungun). Their basic political unit is headed by the lonko (the political leader of the community) and the machi, the religious leader, who is often a woman who performs healing rituals and conducts the ceremonial life of the community. But in today’s world the mapuche increasingly use modern means of communication, especially radio which serves as a way of disseminating mapudungun and, of course, the Internet.

Mapuche poetry often addresses the long resistance of the mapuches to the Spaniards and the Chilean state, the loss and recovery of language and memory after the wars of extermination and the sense of mutilation and loss that comes with the transfer of voice into writing. One of the best known mapuche writers, Elicura Chihuailaf, in his *Confidential Message to the Chilean people* which is part memoir, part history and part political tract, writes of Nvtram, the art of speech linked to historical memory. He describes mapudungun poetry as being between dream and memory—dream being an important element of mapuche culture. The machi (male or female) intervenes between the visible and invisible world and along with the lonko or Genpin Alonko, the possessor of speech, is the central figure in the community. Chihuailaf describes himself as an oralitor, underscoring the dual nature of his mission to link oral tradition and written communication and to recognize a brotherhood of world literature while

bearing the responsibility of a marginalized people. The poet and musician Leonel Lienlaf in an interview described writing in mapudungun as a political challenge “...because we cannot forget that thanks to writing they seized our lands and deceived us. For us, for mapuche culture, the writing process is a two-edged sword... My work is an eighty percent turn towards orality. For this reason, my publications have less to do with books than with oral spaces for collective development. The development of my poetry has to do with the collectivity. For this reason too documentaries have been part of my work for they have to do with orality. Poetry only exists inasmuch as words can be shared.” He goes on to underscore that territoriality is not only the land we see and inhabit but the spirit that inhabits it. Mapuche poetry often evokes past struggles as well as the foundation myth that recounts the primordial struggle between the mountain, Tren Tren, and Kai Kai, the hostile oceanic force. One of the great contemporary poems, “i” (Song), transposes this legend into an account of her personal journey from inheriting a broken tradition to her becoming a machi. The poem is not written in mapudungun but code switches between chedungun (a variant of mapudungun spoken in the Huilliche region) and Spanish. The mixture of language, according to one critic, demonstrates the impossibility of speaking a single language...and implies readers who are willing to inhabit this plural space.

If I have stressed zapotec and mapudungun, it is because these languages have been effective in reaching beyond the community while remaining true to their history and preoccupations. Nowadays, thanks to the Internet, even the smallest linguistic community can reach an international public. The inequality that had forced the marginalization of orally transmitted cultures is being erased not only by the

transcription of languages into phonetic script but by technologies that have given a new lease of life to orally transmitted culture.

Endnotes

- ¹ There is a bilingual edition in English and indigenous languages: *Words of the True People*, Carlos Montemayor and Donald Frischmann, eds. (Austin, Texas: 2004)
- ² Jeffrey Rubin, *Decentering the Regime. Ethnicity, Radicalism and Democracy in Juchitlan, Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 1
- ³ Both these poets are included in an anthology in English translation compiled by Cecilia Vicua and translated by John Bierhorst. See *Ul: Four Mapuche Poets* (Pittsburgh: Latin American Literary Review Press, 1998) ■

Inscriptions of Inequality in Latin American Literary and Cultural Studies

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One can speak today—let us see for how long—of inequality as something that has actually been going down in parts of Latin America. The most impressive figure may be the 33 percent of all poor Brazilian families who have risen to the middle class since Lula’s inauguration in 2003. Precarious as all literacy numbers tend to be, Venezuela’s and Bolivia’s nominal reduction of their illiteracy rates to zero deserves to be celebrated. According to Venezuela’s National Institute of Statistics, 50.5 percent of Venezuelans lived below the poverty line in 1999. By 2007, that number was down to 31.5 percent. The relationship established with national patrimony by countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia, and more recently Paraguay has at least stopped the bleeding of decades-long transfers of wealth from the poor to the rich. All of these governments have their problems and some—like Chávez’s—display unmistakably authoritarian features. But the gains are also real.

Recent years have made visible the extent of the devastation left by the processes euphemistically designated as neoliberalism or privatization. What stares the analyst in the face is not the modest gains of recent center-left governments, but the depth of the destruction caused by the defunding of the public sector and the deregulation of private businesses after the 1980s. Education, culture, and literature are measures of how pervasive the onslaught was. When you look at how Brazil’s federal university system was treated by Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s government—no expansion in the student body took place and faculty did not

have any *nominal* raises between 1995 and 2002—you begin to get a sense of how damaging the privatization period was to education. Even in FHC’s more socially conscious version—as opposed to, say, Menem’s wholesale liquidation of Argentina or Fujimori’s ransacking of Peru—privatization included an explicit attack on the concept of education as a common good that a society may choose to provide to all its members.

Privatization also affected cultural policy and Latin American Cultural Studies produced what was perhaps the definitive critical reflection on its consequences, George Yúdice’s *The Expediency of Culture* (2002). Yúdice’s study notes how culture has acquired a ubiquitous role as mediator, one whose “conservative” or “emancipatory” character is determined through complex social interactions. *The Expediency of Culture* is also representative of a phenomenon specific of the past decade: the trilingual publication of scholarship in Spanish America, the United States and Brazil, an editorial trend that has made of “Latin American Cultural and Literary Studies” something quite distinct from what it was a decade ago. It has established a dialogue in terms more horizontal than those viable back when some subfields in the United States were dominated by the anxiety over their own privileged position vis-à-vis the continent they studied. Other instances of this welcome editorial development are Sylvia Molloy’s *At Face Value: Autobiographical Writing in Spanish America* (1991), Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001, Argos, 2004; Doris Sommer’s *Foundational Fictions* (1993), Fondo, 2004, UFMG, 2004; Julio Ramos’s *Desencuentros de la modernidad en América Latina*, 1989 Spanish edition translated at Duke (1999) and UFMG (2008); my own *Untimely Present* (1999), Cuarto Propio, 2000, UFMG, 2003; and

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Josefina Ludmer's *El cuerpo del delito: Un manual* (1999), Pittsburgh, 2004, UFMG, 2002, among others.

Auspiciously, this has not been a one-way road in which only books by U.S.-based scholars get disseminated. Works by Nelly Richard, Beatriz Sarlo, Néstor García Canclini, Gonzalo Aguilar, and other Spanish America-based scholars have also appeared in English and Portuguese, while Brazilians Roberto Schwarz, Silviano Santiago, and Flora Süssekind have seen their work appear in Spanish and English. As visible above, a notable place here belongs to the Federal University of Minas Gerais Press, which has brought much English- and Spanish-language Latin American Cultural Studies scholarship into Portuguese (along with Argos, which has published, in addition to Molloy, other leading essayists such as Graciela Montaldo). These editorial events should not go unrecorded when one assesses the state of the discipline in the United States and discusses, for example, how to “incorporate Brazil into Latin American Studies.” But the fact is that they do. No matter how horizontal certain dialogues may have become, some neocolonial habits die hard.

I believe most colleagues would agree that in the United States the discipline has not been dominated by one set of debates such as those that revolved around *testimonio* vs. literature, *mestizaje* vs. transculturation vs. hybridity, or Subaltern vs. Cultural Studies. This is certainly a good thing, but it makes totalizing evaluative efforts difficult, perhaps futile. At any rate, I tend to disagree with apocalyptic assessments of the field, and among the many works of the past decade that I find deserving of note, most share an interesting feature: they tend not to replicate the ideological gesture of taking a metacritical stance as a priori lens whose validity the object would then confirm,

something that was almost a tic in certain debates of the 1980s and 90s. These studies tend to be meticulously specific, object-driven pieces of scholarship, usually anchored in one or two national traditions (or in a regional one, e.g. Caribbean, Andes) rather than in some fiction of “Latin America.” They are not “anti-theoretical” at all, but their theoretical concepts tend to emerge inductively, during, not before the interpretive act takes place. The ones that have been particularly inspiring to me further share the feature of devoting thought to the relations between “real” (political, economic) and rhetorical (literary, plastic) manifestations of inequality.

Jens Andermann's *The Optic of the State: Visuality and Power in Argentina and Brazil* (2007) moves that debate to an institutional terrain and shows how at the turn of the 20th century those two states constructed a visual field through museums, cartography, and other institutions. The museum's “material theater of sovereignty” (p.22) assembled practices related to the scientific project of the time as well as with state massacres and expeditions, a link also featured in a contemporary classic in the field such as Gabriela Nouzeille's *Ficciones somáticas: Naturalismo, Nacionalismo y políticas médicas del cuerpo (Argentina 1880-1910)* (2000). Andermann's work is also auspicious in exemplifying a kind of cross-national collaboration that has become more common in recent years—in this case, his sustained dialogue with Álvaro Fernández Bravo, whose *Literatura y frontera: Procesos de territorialización en las culturas argentinas y chilena del siglo XIX* (1999) and later articles are key pieces in the conversation. Some novel things have happened in this regard, with the appearance of books by scholars who venture beyond their national boundaries and end up not “making a contribution,” but reshaping an entire subfield in another country. I think of

works such as Argentine Gonzalo Aguilar's *Poesía concreta brasileña: Las vanguardias en la encrucijada modernista* (2003), a monumental synthesis that goes far beyond, I believe, any single study of Concretism done in Brazil in the past 50 years.

Horacio Legrás's *Literature and Subjection* (2008) will be read in years to come, as its detailed engagement with novelists such as Juan José Saer and Roa Bastos demonstrates that the only Subaltern Studies that literature may be able to offer is the mapping of the rhetoric of subalternization; in that sense it makes a nice counterpoint to John Beverley's *Subalternity and Representation* (1999), which synthesized a previous way of thinking about those problems in Latin American Cultural Studies. Legrás's book is also a healthy reminder that the effects of transculturation are never reducible to its uses by economic and political elites (p. 18), a premise that makes possible a less stifling, more open field of inquiry than the one allowed by the tired discussions over which concept (*mestizaje*, transculturation, hybridity, etc.) to privilege in interpreting cultural exchanges.

In Gender Studies, both the documentation of exclusion—be it of women or gay or lesbian or transgendered subjects—and the mapping of transgressive gestures by the excluded coexist with more multifaceted readings, where the normalizing / conservative or emancipatory / liberating components of gender practices are not given in advance. Jean Franco and Sylvia Molloy, especially, have made that qualitative leap possible, by leaving legacies of engagements with the gendering of Latin American lettered culture that are both inspired by social justice and attentive to the intricacies of the literary text. (Molloy's foremost contribution to that legacy in the past decade may well have been her novel *El común olvido*, an implacable staging of a masculine

voice.) At least two generations of Latin American(ist) feminists, from Nelly Richard to Mary Louise Pratt, from Ileana Rodríguez to Kathleen Newman, have continued that work. In the past decade, some of the important landmarks in Gender Studies have been Licia Fiol-Matta's study of Gabriela Mistral, *A Queer Mother for the Nation* (2002), the collective *Chicana Feminisms* (2003), Juana María Rodríguez's powerful *Queer Latinidad* (2003) and Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé's always sophisticated readings, as in his *Queer Latino Testimonio* (2007) or in his volume coedited with Martin Malalansan, *Queer Globalizations* (2002).

To the field delimited by luminaries such as Franco and Molloy, younger scholars such as José Quiroga and Robert Irwin have added indispensable books. Again, it is notable how nationally grounded they have tended to be. In Quiroga's *Cuban Palimpsests* (2005), gender is a realm where highly unique struggles around Cuban identity, culture, and politics take place. Likewise, Irwin's *Mexican Masculinities* (2003) tackles issues around borders, not only the geographical one, but also those separating, for example, homo- from heteroeroticism. They manifest themselves in rather specific forms in Mexico, due not only to its location but also to the singularity of its revolutionary process. Other landmarks in Queer Studies, going back to Jorge Salessi's contemporary classic *Médicos, maleantes y maricas* (1995), include Daniel Balderston's mapping of homosexuality in literature in a host of essays and edited volumes, and in his *Deseo, cicatriz luminosa: Ensayos sobre homosexualidades latinoamericanas* (2004). Important works in masculinity / gay studies have also been done for the Colonial period—see Pete Sigal's edited volume *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America* as the inquiry around gender goes through as interesting a moment now as any it had earlier enjoyed.

Presses such as Argentina's Feminaria and Chile's Cuarto Propio, as well as journals such as Mexico's *Fem*, have attested to the continuous vitality of feminist scholarship in Latin America.

About Early Modern Studies I am less equipped to opine, but in conversations with colleagues such as John Charles, whose own monograph on Andean appropriations of literacy will give a lot of food for thought when it comes out, I sense that the best recent studies have also displayed the same geographical and historical embeddedness, as opposed to more ideological (pan-indigenist, pan-Latin Americanist or Third Worldist) gestures. Colonial Studies can only be "political" if it is, first, rigorous in its historiography and meticulously grounded in its object. Again with the caveat that I am a distant, lay observer when it comes to Early Modern Studies, my sense is that this awareness is now more solidly established in the field than it had been in a recent past.

A few questions have stood out in monographic studies of modern literature. Crime, violence, punishment, and exclusion have represented perhaps the dominant cluster, as evidenced by excellent books such as Juan Dabove's *Nightmares of the Lettered City: Banditry and Literature in Latin America, 1816-1929* and Glen Close's *Contemporary Hispanic Crime Fiction: A Discourse on Urban Violence*, both tributary to a contemporary classic mentioned above, Josefina Ludmer's *El cuerpo del delito: Un manual*. Ludmer's is a definitive study of the historical role that—in Horacio Legrás's words—"the aesthetic representation of crime has come to play in relationship to both the consolidation of the state and the emergence of a 'people'." What sets it apart from much previous scholarship is that crime appears not a theme to be sought and explained in literature, but as something that allows literature to become a *dispositif*, an

operative piece in the real relations between the state and the body politic. Again, that process is—as Ludmer would agree—highly specific to Argentina, due to the role played by lettered culture in the constitution of the country's modern state, unparalleled and unknown, say, in Brazil or Peru. Systematically, then, we find much of the best scholarship on Latin America literature not necessarily thinking in terms of "Latin America" at all. Many Area Studies programs in the United States would do well to reflect on that fact.

Revisiting the 1960s has inspired good work. For its sophistication, Diana Sorensen's *A Turbulent Decade Remembered: Scenes from the Latin American Sixties* (Stanford, 2007) deserves mention, as it produces what appeared impossible a few years ago: an innovative recasting of the Spanish American boom in ways that replicate neither its celebratory self-perception nor later critiques of it. Sorensen accomplishes it with an eye to the boom's duplicitous nature as an experience of decline and inauguration. As with most good literary criticism, her volume thoroughly thinks through the relations between the rhetorical and the social dimensions. Another set of period studies is the postdictatorial scholarship on the Southern Cone nations, the synthesis of which in the past decade was advanced by Sandra Lorenzano's *Escrituras de la sobrevivencia* (2001), *Saudades* (2007), and *Políticas de la memoria* (coedited with Ralph Buchenhorst, 2007), Beatriz Sarlo's *Tiempo pasado* (2005) and *Escritos sobre literatura argentina* (2007), and Miguel Dalmaroni's *La palabra justa. Literatura, crítica y memoria en Argentina (1960-2002)*. If we go back in the period studies to the early 20th century, Rubén Gallo's *Mexican Modernity: The Avant-garde and the Technological Revolution* (2007) certainly deserves a place of distinction, for its skillful, simultaneous

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handling of aesthetic and historical questions.

In Critical Race Studies, much has been written in the past decade, but I would single out two books: Antonio Risério's *A utopia brasileira e os movimentos negros* (2007) and Eleuterio Santiago-Díaz's *Escritura afropuertorriqueña y modernidad* (2007). Risério's is a powerful challenge to the importation of binary U.S. racial paradigms into Brazil, written not from a conservative standpoint but by an essayist of a lifelong engagement with black and *mestiço* Brazilian cultures. Santiago-Díaz's monograph on Afro-Puerto Rican Vieques writer Carmelo Rodríguez Torres, the most sophisticated literary analysis of race, diaspora, modernity, and imperialism I have read in a while, documents how ellipsis has been at the center of the literature produced in Vieques' unique neocolonial conditions.

This is certainly a partial assessment, framed by my own limits, focus, and preferences, but it does suggest that the best works in the field have tended to combine social and rhetorical questions in dynamic, innovative ways. In mapping the relations between real and symbolic dimensions, they have also tended to share a local character, an object-driven embeddedness that makes some earlier—and current—debates on “Latin America” appear a bit byzantine and unfruitful. ■

Perspectivas eco-críticas latinoamericanas Conocimientos transpuestos recuperados

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La eco-crítica se define como el estudio de las relaciones entre la cultura y su medio ambiente natural y social. El desarrollo de tal crítica se predica sobre el conocimiento de que todo está interrelacionado y sobre el reconocimiento de la relevancia de los problemas de la representación y administración de lo natural en relación al todo social, humano. La eco-crítica pone primero en escena los textos que hablan de estos asuntos y luego propone una reflexión teórica sobre los mismos. Mas, si la eco-crítica está hoy por hoy relacionada con los movimientos ambientalistas, las filosofías holísticas sobre la naturaleza y su relación con lo social-cultural son de larga raigambre indígena en la América Latina.

Nadie puede dudar que los estudios críticos de la cultura latinoamericana siempre han puesto en escena las relaciones entre lo humano y lo natural, pero el tenor de los mismos estudios cambia de ángulo de visión según las urgencias de época. Yo me atrevería a decir que los estudios coloniales primero y los estudios postcoloniales recientemente pueden bien entenderse dentro de la rúbrica eco-crítica, como también pueden bien serlo los estudios sobre la modernidad latinoamericana y su tránsito hacia la postmodernidad. Digo esto porque ¿quién no ha oído siquiera hablar del animismo de las culturas indígenas y quien no recuerda el arduo trabajo de los exploradores a principios de los enfrentamientos euro-americanos en su denodado esfuerzo primero por recorrer los paisajes humanos y naturales, y después por clasificar y controlar las especies que hicieran primero veedores y oidores y más tarde

naturalistas y geógrafos? ¿Quién que haya leído los ya clásicos libros de Antonello Gerbi puede dudar del lugar central que la naturaleza ocupa en las relaciones conflictivas entre los europeos y los americanos? ¿Y qué decir del libro de Michel Foucault *El orden de las cosas* que nos habla de las crisis de las nomenclaturas europeas en su contacto con las especies naturales de este continente que vinieron primero a desordenar y luego a reorganizar todo el conocimiento europeo precisamente sobre lo natural? De la misma manera podemos recordar todos los textos sobre la pampa, la selva, la llanura, los campos de caña de azúcar, las bananeras, las tabacaleras, la explotación del caucho, que marcaron toda la literatura social de la modernidad temprana en nuestras incipientes repúblicas. ¿Y quién puede ignorar, hoy por hoy, la importancia de la coca en las literaturas y culturas del presente? El corpus letrado en su totalidad está marcado por esta preocupación no llamada eco-crítica pero que puede bien subsumirse en ella.

Es posible considerar que muchos críticos culturales, sobre todo aquellos afectos a aferrarse a las tradiciones imperantes en la era de las formaciones nacionales, consideren la eco-crítica como una moda más de las academias norteamericanas, a pesar de que los ejemplares trabajos contemporáneos de bolivianos, guatemaltecos, y colombianos demuestran lo contrario. No voy a negar que el sesgo es diferente, que la eco-crítica está más ligada al ambientalismo que a la explotación del trabajo humano, pero eso no quita que el ímpetu sea el mismo, lo político-social. Y en esto, los trabajos de los latinoamericanistas coinciden con los de la eco-crítica en el análisis de los conflictos y tensiones creados por la modernidad a nivel de lo natural-social. Creo que bien podríamos argumentar que la eco-crítica es una posición contra el desarrollismo, contra los aspectos negativos

de la modernidad, contra la destrucción de medio-ambientes naturales para favorecer las industrias extractivas, contra el uso y abuso de las plantas para producir estupefacientes. El trabajo de Arturo Escobar, para mencionar sólo uno, es ejemplar en este aspecto. Mi propio trabajo es de este tenor puesto que ciertamente pone en escena la relación entre naturaleza y sociedad, naturaleza y conocimiento, naturaleza y política y mis estudios se apoyan en enormes genealogías conformadoras de grandes campos disciplinarios.

La eco-crítica nos permite re-evaluar los diferentes proyectos transcontinentales, valorar los recursos naturales como recursos sociales, y evaluar epistemologías alternas, tal las indígenas y sus contratos culturales con lo natural. Estas constituyen paradigmas contrarios a la explotación irrespetuosa de los recursos naturales. Si se quiere, con la eco-crítica hay un retorno a formas animistas del pasado, a tradiciones pastoriles, virgilianas, que, no obstante, responden a necesidades humana inherentes, a mecanismos de admonición y de supervivencia. Idealizar las comunidades orgánicas del pasado, relevar lo prístino, natural, impoluto, responde a imaginarios sociales inexistentes en lo real pero posibles a nivel simbólico; son propuestas proféticas, si se quiere, entendiendo lo profético en el sentido de Richard Rorty, esto es, un universo de convicciones fluidas, herramienta de persuasión, imaginación, poesía y valor. Lo profético significa predecir lo que todavía no es y por eso las nuevas ideas, aunque parezcan irrealizables, tienen que entrar a formar parte del debate público y persuadir. Los movimientos liberadores son atractivos no precisamente por sus exactitudes de diagnóstico sino por su imaginación, el valor de sus propuestas, y el asumir que el espacio público es flexible. Ideas opuestas al sentido común constituyen el locus de lo profético, esto es, el lugar de

posibilidades no realizadas cuya fuerza radica en crear nuevos lenguajes, lógicas, tradiciones—utópicas por el momento en la medida que sólo existen en la imaginación. El envés de estos imaginarios es apocalíptico y profetiza el fin del planeta—holocaustos nucleares, calentamientos globales, contaminaciones sin retroceso, destrucción de capas de ozono, lluvias ácidas, tierras yermas, aguas contaminadas, especies en extinción, uso de alimentos como combustible. Por eso las diferentes disciplinas vuelven a la idea del respeto a la tierra, a la madre naturaleza, y proponen un desarrollo respetuoso. Así lo vemos en las escuelas que hablan de desarrollos alternativos, de modernidades periféricas, de las tensiones de la modernidad.

Mi trabajo ciertamente bordea los marcos de tal crítica. En mi libro, *Transatlantic Topographies*, la naturaleza es la protagonista principal en la medida que es su apreciación, la interrelación que los procesos culturales tienen con ella, lo que va moldeando las formaciones sociales. La tierra, la naturaleza, los recursos naturales, ciertamente constituyen el trasfondo que apoya las formaciones sociales coloniales y modernas. Cuando yo emprendí esta investigación, mi propósito era justamente replantearme no sólo una visión y una representación sobre la naturaleza sino una manera de articular las visiones y las representaciones específicamente culturales a los proyectos de investigación y desarrollo que habían empezado desde los primeros conflictos globales que se suscitaron a partir de la llegada de los españoles primero y después de los europeos al continente americano. Propuse ahí que la idea moderna de la naturaleza siempre significó un movimiento que se alejaba de la noción 'de lo natural' hacia significados económicos— explotación, extracción, acumulación primaria de capital, desarrollo. Desde el principio de las confrontaciones euro-

americanas, la naturaleza deviene empresa, frontera, en el sentido inglés de la palabra, esto es, tierra virgen, tierra de nadie, libre de explorar. Por eso propongo que los documentos primarios y secundarios de la colonización constituyen genealogías de los proyectos de investigación para el desarrollo que podemos leer en las universidades y agencias que propician tales empeños.

Este proyecto me enseñó a ver la naturaleza desde una multitud de articulaciones. Pude constatar la importancia que la tierra/lo natural tenía para la cultura en general. Aprendí cómo la guerra obstruye la producción de alimentos y cómo la destrucción de la tierra y la alteración de los ciclos de producción y el cambio en el tipo de cosechas es central al proyecto de subyugación colonial. El hambre es pues una manera de subyugar. Imposible no ligar esta idea con la producción de etanol en el presente y el uso del maíz con propósitos energéticos. Cómo no ver la producción de distopías culturales, ciencia ficción en la que alimentar máquinas es primario y antecede la alimentación de las personas. Y cómo no articular estas ideas distópicas a las de Miguel Ángel Asturias y su personaje Machojón, quien, en un arranque de desesperación quema sus campos de maíz.

Y en mi nuevo libro, *The Limits of Liberalism*, uno de los momentos cruciales del debate sobre estas filosofías ecológicas es la discusión sobre 'culturas milenarias' y 'creencias' que emprende Rigoberta Menchú y ante las cuales uno entra de lleno en esos diálogos postergados y conocimientos despreciados, como bien viene argumentando desde hace tiempo Walter Mignolo. Y ¿no es acaso Menchú quien informa que los ambientalistas les han robado sus ideas sin darles crédito? ¿No es ella acaso la que pone en escena la exclusión indígena de los movimientos mundiales en aras de la salvación del planeta? Hay

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segmentos de su texto, *Rigoberta, la nieta de los Mayas*, que son directamente útiles a la eco-crítica. Por ejemplo cuando habla de su madre. El signo madre, en ella, significa entidades biológicas y culturales, vehículo que acarrea el sentido de la cultura milenaria. La madre de Rigoberta es partera, curandera, vidente. Conocía el *xew'xew* que curaba dolores, los tiernos tallos de las hojas del chilacayote que curaban las heridas de los pies causadas por el lodo, el *k'a q' eyes* que curaba los resfríos, el *saq ixoqto* para los dolores de estómago causados por el hambre. La naturaleza era para ella un texto donde leía signos tales como la fortaleza de los vientos, el sonido de los animales, su presencia en lugares inesperados, el movimiento del tiempo, la luz y la oscuridad. Entendía el canto de los pájaros, y por eso supo predecir la muerte de su hijo Patrocinio. Ella vivía en Chimel, lugar mágico, encantado, tierra rica en toda variedad de árboles, pájaros, flores, un bosque de nubes, los pulmones del planeta. Cuando leo a Rigoberta, pongo en perspectiva las habilidades del rastreador en Sarmiento, que siempre me fascinó con su magia detectivesca que ahora encuentro estaba relacionada a la lectura de lo natural, al rastro dejado en los caminos, de ahí su nombre de rastreador. Ya no digamos el relato de Don Segundo Sombra, conocimiento de lo natural en el momento de su desvanecimiento en lo lírico al ser absorbido por lo industrial.

El trabajo de naturalistas y geógrafos que recorren a pie las llanuras con sus instrumentos de medir inmensidades, de contar, de almacenar, de clasificar, de interceptar y tratar de domeñar lo natural encanta. La lectura de *Rápido Tránsito* de José Coronel Urtecho nos pone al tanto de todos estos viajeros que recorrían el río San Juan en busca de la manera más expedita de atravesar el continente lado a lado y cómo, en su travesía, se iban maravillando ante el

silencio cautivo de lo natural. El verdor convertía de nuevo el proyecto de desarrollo en paisaje, en literatura, al desembocar en el gran lago, lago de tiburones de agua dulce, a poca distancia del océano, casi estrangulando la cintura de América y convirtiéndola en pasaje natural—ahora totalmente poluto. Los niños de Nicaragua aprenden que su geografía es su historia y la historia natural, su historia social.

De la misma manera podríamos hablar, con escritores, poetas, ensayistas y desarrollistas sobre las otras regiones de América. Por ejemplo, podríamos hablar con los agrimensores y poetas Euclides de Cuna y Wilson Harris sobre la inmensidad pasmosa de la amazonía. Sitio archi-explorado, lugar de tránsito de todo investigador, de todo desarrollista. Libros como *The Fate of the Forest* nos hablan de los desarrollos fallidos. Y toda la literatura de fronteras termina en sus orillas, José Eustacio Rivera y Rómulo Gallegos en Venezuela, Vargas Llosa en el Perú, Wilson Harris en Guyana. La selva es un gran tropo literario, desarrollista y medioambientalista. En sus bordes termina la sabana, la civilización, y empieza lo desconocido, primero y último día de la creación según el novelista cubano Alejo Carpentier, punto de cambio y lugar de límite de las ambiciones de la familia Rockefeller.

Y así podríamos hablar no sólo de lo que se ve y se mide sino de lo que se come, el banano, la fruta más limpia puesto que la envuelve su propia cáscara, el azúcar, para Sidney Mintz, la gran contribución de América a Europa—energía para trabajadores y soldados. Para ya no hablar de la coca, la hoja milagrosa, que cura, calma, embriaga, enloquece, produce gran acumulación de capital y grandes cambios en la articulación de los grupos de poder. Con ella rigiendo al centro de las narrativas de acumulación de capital y criminalidad hoy,

cerramos este artículo. Para la perspicaz analista cultural, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, la hoja de coca no es droga, no es cocaína—los indígenas de Arguedas y Alegría la mascan sin cesar para descansar y calmarse. Para los testimonialistas y novelistas colombianos, como Alfredo Molano y Fernando Vallejos, la cocaína envenena los cuerpos—de las mulas que las cargan en sus estómagos, de los que la absorben por la nariz. La coca corrompe gobiernos, transforma a los niños en sicarios matones, traspasa fronteras y produce toneladas de documentación.

Digamos, para terminar, que si la eco-crítica está íntimamente asociada a los movimientos ambientalistas en los países ricos, en América Latina está asociada a la colonización y a la modernización, a la explotación y a la opresión. En América Latina, los recursos naturales, sean tierra, paisaje, cultivo, o explotación y opresión han sido tropo fundamental de lo cultural pero su énfasis no ha recaído en la protección de la naturaleza solamente sino también y muy particularmente en la protección de lo humano.

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¿Existe un giro neoconservador en Latinoamérica hoy?

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Se habla mucho estos días del retorno de lo político. Conjuntamente de la necesidad de un cambio de paradigma que pone nuevamente el énfasis en el estado en vez de la sociedad civil y los movimientos sociales. Esto es en parte porque, en casos como Bolivia o Venezuela, los movimientos sociales se han vuelto el estado (para pedir prestada una frase de Ernesto Laclau), o se están prestando activamente a proyectos políticos para ganar el poder de estado. Pero este retorno de lo político también trae en su secuela una serie de nuevas preguntas e incertidumbres. En particular, quiero sugerir aquí que en la actualidad se está produciendo un giro neoconservador en el pensamiento socio-cultural latinoamericano que busca intervenir en esta nueva coyuntura. Este giro es doblemente paradójico: primero, porque ocurre en el contexto del resurgimiento de la izquierda latinoamericana en los últimos años; segundo, porque se manifiesta principalmente desde la izquierda.

La idea de un giro neoconservador, y el concepto en sí, se refieren a historia conocida en los Estados Unidos que lleva a un grupo de intelectuales desde la izquierda eventualmente a una posición de apoyo para Reagan y sus seguidores en el partido Republicano. Ser “neo”conservador entonces implica que no eran conservadores inicialmente—eran liberales, social demócratas, trotskistas, aun en algunos casos estalinistas. Son “nuevos” conservadores como los “nuevos cristianos” del siglo XVI en España, sin el elemento de coerción.

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El giro neoconservador en Estados Unidos aparece inicialmente sobre todo como una crítica generalizada de la Nueva Izquierda y la contra-cultura de los sesenta, y de las nuevas formas de “identity politics” como el feminismo o los movimientos de afirmación étnica. Similarmente, implícita en el giro neoconservador latinoamericano hay una variante de la distinción ya bastante difundida entre izquierda respetable e izquierda “retrograda”, para usar la caracterización de Jorge Castañeda (“Morning in Latin America,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2008). En Chile o Brasil, la izquierda respetable está en el poder. Pero en Argentina, Bolivia, o Venezuela la izquierda “respetable” forma a veces parte de la oposición política a los gobiernos de la izquierda “retrograda” en el poder.

La pregunta subyacente es por lo tanto sobre la naturaleza de lo que se ha entendido convencionalmente como “izquierda”. En otras palabras, la “izquierda” intelectual tradicional en América Latina hoy, o una parte significativa de ella, ¿sigue siendo de izquierda? ¿O se está volviendo como en el caso norteamericano una especie nueva derecha?

Para comenzar una respuesta, sería útil hacer una distinción entre neoconservadurismo y neoliberalismo, una distinción banal pero quizás necesaria, ya que estas posiciones a menudo se desdibujan entre sí. Los neoliberales creen en la eficacia del mercado libre y en un modelo utilitario de agencia humana, basado en la maximización de la ganancia y la minimización de la pérdida. Como se sabe, el neoliberalismo en principio no propone otra jerarquía de valor a más que el deseo del consumidor en sí y la efectividad del mercado libre y la democracia formal como mecanismos para ejercitar la libertad de elección. Esta desjerarquización implícita en la teoría neoliberal entraña por

lo tanto un fuerte desafío a la autoridad de las élites intelectuales tradicionales para determinar los estándares de valor cultural.

Por contraste, los neoconservadores sí creen que hay una jerarquía de valores epistemológicos, estéticos y morales imbuida en la formas de la alta cultura y las disciplinas académicas—una jerarquía vinculada esencialmente al paradigma de la Ilustración. Piensan que es importante defender e impartir esos valores pedagógica y críticamente contra la fuerza desterritorializadora de la sociedad de mercado y la globalización. Este papel requiere de la autoridad del intelectual tradicional, en el sentido que Gramsci le da al concepto—es decir, el intelectual que habla en nombre de lo universal y que opera en la universidad y el mundo del arte y la cultura, y en el debate de las ideas en la esfera pública.

Con afán ilustrativo podríamos decir en un contexto latinoamericano que los Vargas Llosa (padre e hijo) o los así llamados escritores “McOndo” o Manifiesto Crack, o la tendencia en los estudios culturales que pone primordialmente el énfasis en las operaciones del mercado de bienes culturales, o la mencionada celebración de la “sociedad civil” en sectores de las ciencias sociales (incluyendo a veces los estudios subalternos), constituyen una aceptación, implícita o explícita, de una posición neoliberal. Pero esas tendencias—y otras que se relacionan con ellas—son algo diferente del giro neoconservador. En cierto sentido el giro neoconservador está dirigido *contra* estas tendencias de la teoría social y cultural, que tendían a dominar la escena en el período anterior. Usando una conocida distinción de Raymond Williams, podríamos decir que el neoliberalismo es la tendencia *residual* y que el neoconservadurismo es, o está tratando de ser, la tendencia *emergente* en el pensamiento socio-cultural en

Latinoamérica. Surge precisamente en el momento en que el neoliberalismo ha perdido su hegemonía como ideología.

Se pueden vislumbrar elementos de una posición neoconservadora en, por ejemplo, las posiciones actuales de Beatriz Sarlo, uno de los intelectuales públicos más importantes de Argentina. He hecho referencia antes a Jorge Castañeda. También podría sugerir los casos de Sergio Ramírez en Nicaragua, Elizabeth Burgos y Teodoro Petkoff en Venezuela, o (en ciertas formulaciones) Héctor Aguilar Camín en México. (El modelo del intelectual neoconservador en América Latina de otra generación es Octavio Paz). Pero no hay espacio aquí para considerar casos particulares. Y, por supuesto, existen variantes de lo que denomino aquí el giro neoconservador en cada país de América Latina. Generalmente, esas variantes expresan una especie de pliegue o escisión dentro del campo intelectual de la izquierda. Consciente del peligro de generalizar demasiado, porque es evidente que hay marcadas diferencias de situación y posiciones involucradas, me atrevo a sugerir seis temas entrecruzados que caracterizan el giro neoconservador:

- 1) Un rechazo generalizado a la autoridad—la “razón subjetiva”, según la fórmula de Sarlo—de una “voz” y experiencia subalterna o popular. Relacionado con esto, un escepticismo frente no sólo a las políticas identitarias multiculturales sino también ante las nuevas formas y sujetos de protagonismo popular informal, como las turbas chavistas, o los cocaleros de Evo Morales, o los piqueteros, o los comuneros mapuches en Chile. La idea subyacente es que los nuevos gobiernos neo-populistas de la izquierda “retrograda” movilizan esta “razón subjetiva” de una forma demagógica y aventurista.

2) Una defensa del académico, el artista profesional, o el escritor-crítico y de sus procedimientos metodológicos y su función cívica-pedagógica. Involucrado en esta defensa hay el auto-reconocimiento de una generación de intelectuales y profesionales de izquierda que asumieron riesgos considerables durante tiempos difíciles en sus respectivos países, pero que ahora están en proceso de ser desplazados por nuevas fuerzas políticas y actores más jóvenes. En lugar de identificarse con estos nuevos actores, que muchas veces no provienen de la clase intelectual (o, como en el caso de Álvaro García Liñera en Bolivia o Marcos en México, se salen de esa clase), el giro neoconservador los ve sin simpatía, como si les faltara legitimidad, o como si de algún modo fueran demasiado ingenuos.

3) A pesar del rechazo explícito o implícito de las políticas identitarias, se reafirma paradójicamente una posicionalidad “criolla” latinoamericana contrapuesta a lo que es percibido como el carácter “anglo” de las nuevas modalidades de la teoría postmoderna. Este énfasis en “lo nuestro” o lo “local” hace del giro neoconservador una variante del Arielismo: el supuesto de que los valores y la identidad cultural de Latinoamérica están vinculados de una manera especialmente significativa a su expresión literaria y artística.

4) Una resistencia notable a reconocer las demandas de autonomía y las nuevas formas de agencia desarrolladas por los movimientos identitarios indígenas o afro-latinos, o de las mujeres y las minorías sexuales—movimientos que de una forma u otra involucran aspectos de lo que Aníbal Quijano ha llamado la “colonialidad del poder” en América Latina. Se trata en cierto sentido de un

enfrentamiento de intelectuales y artistas tradicionales e intelectuales orgánicos de los movimientos sociales.

5) Un rechazo general del proyecto de la izquierda latinoamericana de los años 60 y 70, y en especial (pero no sólo) de la lucha armada, a favor de una posición política más cautelosa, con la advertencia de que una equivocación “voluntarista” similar acecha en el corazón de las nuevas políticas identitarias y nacionalistas de los gobiernos neo-populistas. Este rechazo conlleva un paradigma implícito de desilusión personal, similar al modelo autobiográfico de la picaresca barroca, en que se asocia la juventud con las ilusiones del período revolucionario de los 60 y 70, y la madurez con una posición más desengañada y sensata.

6) Una reterritorialización y defensa de las disciplinas académicas, contra los disturbios de lo que Néstor García Canclini solía llamar en el *heyday* de los estudios culturales “ciencias sociales nómadas”. En el caso de la literatura en particular, esto involucra una afirmación del llamado “valor estético” y del canon, un canon moderno-vanguardista, pero también normativo, disciplinador, jerarquizador. En este sentido, aunque es sobre todo un fenómeno de la esfera pública latinoamericana, el giro neoconservador atraviesa también el campo académico de los *Latin American Studies*.

¿De donde surge el impulso detrás del giro neoconservador? Creo que representa un efecto superestructural de la integración de Latinoamérica a los procesos actuales de globalización. Registra por un lado la crisis de sectores de las clases media y alta afectadas de manera negativa por las políticas neoliberales de ajuste estructural, la reducción del apoyo estatal a la educación

superior (y a la educación en general), y la proliferación de la cultura de masas comercializada. Por otro lado, surge del debilitamiento de la hegemonía ideológica del neoliberalismo. La “marea”, al igual que la elección de Obama en Estados Unidos, muestran que cada vez más la ideología neoliberal es percibida por todos lados como insuficiente para garantizar la gobernabilidad. Las consecuencias de las políticas económicas neoliberales produjeron una crisis de legitimación tanto del estado como de los aparatos ideológicos, incluyendo la escuela, los museos, la familia, las instituciones religiosas, el mundo del arte y la cultura, y el sistema tradicional de partidos políticos. La tendencia libertaria implícita en el modelo de “elección racional” a través del mercado no puede servir como plataforma para la imposición de una estructura normativa de valores y expectativas sobre poblaciones. La combinación de privatización y proliferación de cultura de masas desestabilizó la autoridad cultural de un sistema previo de normas, valores, y jerarquías representado por los intelectuales. Al mismo tiempo, la fuerza innovadora de las medidas económicas neoliberales empieza a decrecer y/o producir efectos perversos. En esta nueva coyuntura, el giro neoconservador se ofrece como una ideología de profesionalismo y disciplinaridad centrada en la esfera de las humanidades, que fueron especialmente desprestigiadas y perjudicadas por las reformas neoliberales en la educación, una ideología implementada por y a través del estado y los aparatos ideológicos para contrarrestar la crisis de legitimidad provocada por el neoliberalismo.

Si esta hipótesis es correcta, el giro neoconservador puede ser visto como un intento por parte de una intelectualidad criolla, progresista, profesionalizada, en su mayoría blanca o blanca-mestiza, de clase media o clase media-alta, de capturar, o

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recapturar, el espacio de autoridad cultural y hermenéutica en Latinoamérica de, por un lado, el neoliberalismo, y, por otro, de las nuevas formas heterogéneas de gestión política de los movimientos sociales, representado sobre todo por los nuevos gobiernos de la “marea populista”. Despliega para ese fin una doble estrategia de interpelación: hace un llamado a crear una nueva forma de hegemonía cultural, entendida en el sentido de lo que Gramsci llama “el liderazgo moral intelectual de la nación”, que incorpore sus propios criterios disciplinarios de autoridad, profesionalismo y especialización; al mismo tiempo, hace un intento de redefinir (o limitar) los proyectos emergentes de la izquierda latinoamericana dentro de lo que continúan siendo parámetros dominados por esos criterios.

Se podría argumentar que la operación crítica y política representada por figuras como Beatriz Sarlo es algo completamente distinto del tipo de neoconservadurismo propugnado en las “guerras culturales” en los Estados Unidos. Más bien, se podría decir de esa operación, o dice de sí misma, que no sólo viene desde la izquierda, sino que es también en cierto sentido una *defensa* de la izquierda contra lo que se percibe como un relativismo postmodernista cómplice con el neoliberalismo y un neopopulismo demagógico post-neoliberal. Sin embargo, si bien mi propia posición no es completamente desinteresada, no creo estar exagerando el caso. Estoy tratando de captar una tendencia emergente que todavía no ha tomado total conciencia de sí misma y que, como tal, podría desplazarse en distintas direcciones. Creo que el giro neoconservador continuará siendo una tendencia dentro de la izquierda y la intelectualidad progresista en América Latina, y en el campo de los Latin American Studies. Pero también es posible que si, en contextos concretos, la situación política se polariza más, esta tendencia se alinee

políticamente con posiciones más explícitamente conservadoras o de centro derecha, como sucedió en los casos de los *New York Intellectuals* en los Estados Unidos (muchos de los cuales terminaron en el Partido Republicano de Reagan) o los llamados Nuevos Filósofos o el historiador Francois Furet en Francia. Los ejemplos de Jorge Castañeda en México o Elizabeth Burgos en Venezuela hacen alusión a esta posible consecuencia en un contexto actual latinoamericano.

El giro neoconservador de los 70 y 80 en los Estados Unidos comienza en el campo de la crítica cultural, pero pasa rápidamente a la órbita de la política. Esa crítica dividió tanto a la izquierda como al Partido Demócrata, muchas veces sobre líneas raciales y generacionales, inhibiendo así la gran promesa de los sesenta en los Estados Unidos: la formación de un nuevo bloque histórico popular-democrático pluri-racial y potencialmente mayoritario en el corazón de la sociedad norteamericana. En este sentido allanó el camino para la restauración conservadora de los 80, un período de “larga duración”, como dicen los historiadores económicos, del cual solo comenzamos a salir con Obama. Si mi diagnóstico de un giro neoconservador en Latinoamérica es correcto, y enfatizo su carácter tentativo, mi temor es que actúe también como inhibidor o límite a los objetivos y posibilidades de la izquierda y el pensamiento progresista latinoamericano en el período venidero. ■

Notes Toward an Aesthetics of Marginality in Contemporary Latin American Literature

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In the first pages of *Berkeley em Bellagio* (2002), by Brazilian writer João Gilberto Noll, the narrator—an invited writer at Berkeley University very similar to the actual author—reflects about the contradictions of studying third world misery from the comfortable position that the first world provides:

eu me perguntava quem estava ali de fato interessado por esses quadros de miséria afastados de seus cotidianos quase principescos. O que fariam com essas imagens que para eles deveriam reverberar como *campos de refugiados* de todo o azar do planeta? —azar que eles nunca iriam constatar fora de suas embaixadas, de seus hotéis de segurança eletrônica ou desarmados de suas fantasias de ajuda às populações de onde eu viera (para lhes ensinar em vão) (18, our emphasis).

In spite of the narrator’s cynicism about his students’ interest and about the impossibility for them to establish a direct contact with third world poverty, following this quote the narrator clarifies that his own position is not better: his images of misery don’t come from “reality” either, but mainly from cinema. He is also distanced from the “reality” he is supposed to talk about and explain. Thus, through this reflection, one of the main problems involved in the representation of marginality comes to light: the problem of mediation. This is a problem with several

sides. On one hand, it relates to the subject and his/her class position: to talk about the marginal from a certain economic and social well being may derive in or create exoticism, paternalism or a didactical perspective (the one who feels entitled to teach the other). On the other, mediation appears unavoidably in cultural representation: in film or in literature, as in art and politics, representation—the attempt of ‘bringing back’ something that is not there—implies a distance from/to the subject or object being represented. This distance—and mediation can be understood as the effort to traverse that trajectory—will always remain. No matter what we do we will always require mediation if there is anything we want to represent.

In fact, as we know, the problems involved in the representation of marginality are multiple and have always been a matter of controversy. However, the old question, implicit in Noll’s novel: “How must professors, researchers, writers or artists in general, ‘depict’ the reality of social marginality?” is still pertinent and relevant today. In order to understand some of the main forms and versions this question takes in Latin American literature today, we need to make a brief (and necessarily partial) review of the ways in which the answers (as well as the questions themselves) have changed through time.

During the second half of the 19th century, the narrative that prevailed had a romantic-realist approach. The marginal characters, i.e. belonging to lower social classes but rarely to its very extremes, tend to be comical and dumb; they speak ‘funny’ and are tricksters without being evil, as we can see in *Martín Rivas* (1863). Hardly is the social structure put into question; on the contrary, most of the time it is reproduced or

reinforced. A few decades later, as we can see through many of the naturalist novels written during the turn of the century, even though this aesthetic broadens the artistic field and directs the reader’s gaze towards the marginal aspects of society (Cambaceres’ novels or D’Halmar’s *Juana Lucero* [1902] are interesting examples), it tends to reproduce the exclusion through a representational system of classification and normalization. Then, in the first decades of the past century, we witness the emergence of a literature that tries to engage with Latin American *reality*, and particular, its *nature*, *su tierra*, in a different way.

Mundonovismo, as its name implies, creates a vision of Latin America as something new and different (to/from Europe). In some of Horacio Quiroga’s short stories, in *La vorágine* (1924) by Colombian writer José Eustasio Rivera or in *Doña Bárbara* (1929) by Venezuela’s future president Rómulo Gallegos, marginality acquires the meaning of brutality, anti-civilization, and madness. Nature, which symbolizes everything outside *orden e progreso*, must be tamed. But that perspective was not enough for many young writers and intellectuals who saw in the events of 1917 a real possibility of change, and believed that literature had a more concrete (social and political) function in society. So, the late 1920s and 1930s see the appearance of the most significant movement, until then, that attempts to represent the reality of the marginal. Social Realism, with its shocking language and sometimes pedagogical plots and monotonous rhetoric, brings marginal characters into the ‘center’ of literary creation. They are now the protagonists; they use their own expressions and are far from being turned into comical figures. The collection of short stories, *Los que se van*, published in 1930 by the Ecuadorian writers Joaquín Gallegos Lara, Demetrio Aguilera Malta and Enrique Gil Gilbert, is an

excellent example of this and of all the contradictions that Social Realism entails.

However, Social Realism was rapidly dismissed as second rate literature. Other more “elaborated” literary forms took stage. *Vidas Secas* (*Barren Lives*) (1938) by Brazilian writer Graciliano Ramos and *El llano en llamas* (1953) by Mexican Juan Rulfo are part of this change. Even though these texts have elements from Social Realism, the straightforward political rhetoric that characterized this aesthetics disappears. Also, the new urban reality of the continent was one of the main problems that affected the representation of marginality at this time. Migration from the countryside had created a new reality of poverty and marginality. An urban Critical Realism tries to acknowledge and represent this new situation and the system that produces it, but always keeping in mind that what is being written is literature.

So, as it aims also to artistically express the structural causes of social injustice, the representation of marginality becomes more and more complex. The position, the locus of enunciation, from where the writer “speaks,” becomes a key issue for which we find different kinds of answers. Magical Realism seems to constitute an escape from this: it produces an allegory of marginality that appears to exclude the voice of the marginal. On the other side of the spectrum, *A hora da estrela* (1977), by Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector, makes the problem of how to speak on behalf of the *other* the central aspect of the novel. During the 1970s and 80s, *Testimonio* constitutes a serious—and controversial—attempt to end with the privileged position of the writer. In fact, mediation persists as an unresolved problem.

Certainly, the marginal can be understood in different ways and perspectives. Racial, gender and economic inequalities produce

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different definitions of the marginal and different ways of thinking about it. Nevertheless, given that Latin America is the most unequal region of the world in terms of income, when thinking about “marginality,” the economic factor continues to be the most important and determinant one and this is certainly reflected in the themes addressed by literature. (See Centeno and Hoffman 2003.)

Therefore, in order to understand the literary representation of marginality in the present, we must link it to the social and economic conditions where that marginality is happening. In the case of today’s literature, the crucial moment in which the theme of social marginality seems to reemerge as a recurrent topic is related to the establishment of neoliberalism in Latin America in the late 1980s and 1990s. In this sense, the question “How does literature represent marginality today?” could be rephrased as “How do literature and neoliberalism dialogue?”

So, in the midst of this complex and plural scenery, we would like to propose a series of characteristics, problems or themes that we believe are frequent in the current literature and in its treating of marginality. Obviously, we have no pretension of being exhaustive. This is just a (very) preliminary attempt to understand how marginality manifests itself in the representation of situations, spaces, and subjects, and to propose a set of questions that we believe are crucial to think this topic today.

I. Realism and the Marginal

Clearly, one of the privileged concepts used to refer to the various attempts of representing marginality has been *realism*. Although not exclusively, the last decades offer us a plethora of texts that choose a clear, incisive, objective, and legible prose and a preoccupation for the creation of

verisimilar worlds in the representation of marginality. Reified human relations, lack of solidarity, and an increasing feeling of loneliness appear to be recurrent topics that result from the new conditions imposed, mainly, by neoliberalism’s laws. Closely related to this, there is a type of literature that could be said to take a documentary form. As we can see in Paulo Lins’s *Cidade de Deus*, Luiz Ruffato’s *Eles eram muitos cavalos*, Rafael Courtoisie’s *Tajos* and several of the Colombian sicario’s novels—just to name a few examples—the lines demarcating fiction and reality, and literature and document, are distorted or, on occasion, almost fully erased. This, of course, has certain consequences and problems. For instance, the reception (and the selling and buying) of these fictions as if they were depicting the “real” Latin America, the “only” reality, thus creating a turmoil of new stereotypes and reinforcing older ones. Remarkably, this phenomenon repeats what happened before with Magical Realism, although now the reality depicted is far from magical.

II. Marginality and Violence

One of the main marks of the current literature dealing with the representation of marginality is the exacerbation of violence. A type of violence that is also, as it occurs with the situations mentioned above, described with a very incisive and graphic language. We are confronted with violence of all kinds—violence that produces marginality, violence that is produced by marginality: we face a never ending vicious cycle of violence. Yes, violence has become a trademark of Latin American literature. Instead of women flying to the skies wrapped up in white sheets, they are now being raped and gunned down.

De Castro Rocha, in his study of Brazilian contemporary culture, provides us with a general view of our problematic. He argues that there has been a shift from a “dialectic of malandroism” towards a “dialectic of marginality which is mainly based in the overcoming of social inequalities through confrontation instead of reconciliation, and through the exposition of violence instead of its concealment” (2). Now it is not about neglecting differences, but rather bringing them “to the fore, refusing the uncertain promise of social reconciliation” (15). Violence, he emphasizes several times, is at the core of what is a “new form of relationship between social classes” (15) and, the ways in which it is approached and its representation, determines the “symbolic [and aesthetic] battle” (16), that the new productions are fighting.

Violence, in many cases, does not come from ominous totalitarian states (hence a difference from *testimonio* or the literature *de denuncia* from the 70s or 80s). Now that the state is (supposedly) almost invisible, or has been transformed into a system that, like god, is everywhere but nowhere to be seen; now, under these circumstances, state violence is not only reproduced through its presence but also, and perhaps more so, through its absence and abandonment towards its subjects.¹ The marginalized, the “refugees,” as Noll calls them, the people “without a state” have become what they are not only for the lack of citizenship (as Arendt used to think) but mostly because the state does not get to them (they are left out, they become leftovers). The “Market,” of course, terrible and appealing, becomes the expression of this non visible force. The market, unbeatable and autotelic since it (tries to) explain itself, is the “cause” of inequality and marginality and the source of the violence that is fought with more violence. Literature—not only the texts but

also itself as an institution—has entered a new phase in its relation to the market.

In fact, it is very interesting to notice that most of the criticism that a work like *McOndo*² received, remarked the *absence* of marginality (the short stories depict a middle or upper middle class way of living). This can be read, at least, from two perspectives: the dangerous insistence that the “marginal” belongs to Latin American culture and therefore must be present in every cultural production (to some extent this recalls the controversy between the Florida and Boedo groups in the 1920s). But another reading is possible. Without suggesting that all literature has to address the issue of marginality, the absence of it and the insistence in the social class of the protagonists (as said, middle or upper middle) can be interpreted as another way in which it—marginality—is present. In fact, invisibility constitutes a powerful way of exerting and showing violence.

III. Marginality as Spectacle

Parallel to this absence of the marginal, we have what seems to be the opposite: the overly explicit, almost naturalistic description of marginal people and their lives. However, in contrast with classic naturalism, now, in this new aesthetics of the marginal, we ought to consider *spectacularization*. In general terms we can affirm that Latin America has become a stage for the spectacle of violence. Violence, poverty, marginality at large, becomes a commodity to be written about, and, naturally, to be sold. Recent Colombian literature is perhaps the foremost example of it: the literature of the *sicario*, the epitome of violence and marginality, has had a tremendous commercial success, and expands much beyond the mere literary realm. Let us just mention *Rosario Tijeras*,

by Jorge Franco; *La virgen de los sicarios* (*Our Lady of the Assassins*) by Fernando Vallejo; *Satanás* by Mario Mendoza (not a *sicario*'s novel but one that has violence at its core); or, again, *Cidade de Deus* (City of God), by Paulo Lins. The problems that arise from this “success” are various and not to a lesser extent determine the ways in which marginality is conceived. Simultaneously, the role of literature, and our role as critics, is at stake. The problem is not one-sided. On one hand, marginality has become a commodity, but as such it sparks discomfort, especially among the most progressive sectors. On another, it has also turned into an intellectual and theoretical token, scorned by many who see in that the repetition of what is being criticized (the commodification of marginality). Following the steps Clarice Lispector took in *A hora da estrela*, some of today's literature decides to include this problem within itself and express its contradictory position.

IV. The New World of Marginality

As we can appreciate in the literary production that engages with marginality, the exclusion that characterizes it—which should be understood in dialectical terms since exclusion implies a way of belonging as well—contributes to the formation of a particular world. In fact, it would be possible to talk about the creation of a *new world*, a *world of marginality* with its own rules and characteristics; one that provides a distinctive *Weltanschauung*.

There is an exclusion from the symbolic realm that generates a new kind of language and a new logic to talk about marginality (as seen in many of César Aira's novels, or in the works of João Gilberto Noll, Sergio Chejfec, Diamela Eltit, Nona Fernández, or Caio Fernando Abreu). There is an

exclusion from law that creates a new set of rules and even a particular Law (as it is the case in César Aira's *La villa* or in Eltit's *Mano de obra*); there is also a spatial exclusion that allows the establishment of a different space (*topos*) for marginality (Rodolfo Fogwill's *Vivir Afuera* or Nona Fernández's *Av. Diez de Julio Huamachuco* could be thought as reflections about marginality's space), and a different time in which marginality occurs that is the base for a different time (*chronos*) to address the marginal (Sergio Chejfec's *Boca de lobo* constitutes a remarkable example).

V. Marginal Subjects and Bodies

The excluded and marginal subject is repeatedly represented as a fragmented and corroded body. There is almost always a connection to monstrosity (teratology, as seen in *Fetich y fanteche* by Ecuadorian writer Huilo Ruales); and sickness and madness (Diamela Eltit and Paz Errázuriz's *El infarto del alma*). The marginal subject is therefore presented as completely desubjectivized; s/he has lost all humanity except for his/her (fragmented and/or mutilated) body. There is a process of assimilation between this “destroyed” subject and the abject surroundings. So it occurs in *Onde andará Dulce Veiga* (1991), by Caio Fernando Abreu, in *El aire* (1992), by Sergio Chejfec or in *Los años inútiles* (2002), by Peruvian writer Jorge Benavides. In these texts, the subjects and the spaces of misery get confused: the subjects *become* trash, rubbish, literal and literary leftovers. However, this confusion doesn't occur only between subjects and spaces. In its recurrence, the “garbage scenes” show the similarity of marginality and its traces in different parts of the world.

As mentioned, Noll uses the term “refugee” to refer to the marginal. This becomes

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highly significant if we think about the delocalization that, notwithstanding their referentiality, these narratives seem to project when dealing with marginality. In fact, although in several occasions the texts do refer to concrete spaces or historical moments which allows us to establish with precision the when and where of the narration, the repetition of the topics, problems and situations presented make us think that there is no great difference between what happens in a *Favela* in Rio or in a *Comuna* in Medellín, or to the subjects who live there. As Silviano Santiago suggests in *O Cosmopolitanismo do pobre*, marginality acquires a singular and quite frightening cosmopolitanism. In *Retrato de una infancia havanaviejera*, Zoe Valdés's young narrator connects the Brazilian favelas, the shantytowns in Caracas, and the poor neighborhoods in Havana, creating a Latin American map of marginality and a transnational dialogue. (This mirrors and mimics a not so imaginary map of richness and the transnational circulation of capital.) Marginality crosses borders and becomes a new marker in our global times. The marginalized subject is the subject that migrates in order to follow the flow of capital: the marginalized subject becomes the new nomad.

Final Remarks

At its best, one of the fundamental aspects in the literary representation of the marginal is its ability to suspend and defer some conventions that the reader is expecting to find. There may be a dislocation of the perspective, a viewing from an unexpected standing point: the reader, then, will be able to 'discover' what has always been already there.

We should expect—if we dare to ask—that the exhibition of individual bodies that have

been transformed into leftovers and rubbish, instead of provoking a feeling of guilt and/or condescendence, would show how the individual (considered only as a living body) becomes an object of power, becomes what Foucault calls "docile bodies." Therefore, it is about trying to maintain the power existing in the marginal: to recuperate marginality's rebelliousness. Thus, getting rid of condescendence, we would be capable of showing dehumanization in a way that gives humanism back its political dimension—a humanism that is not longer exotic, picturesque, or charitable.

Marginality and its representative attempt allow us, precisely, to imagine a new politics: a politics of openness and inclusion where there are no prophecies to be fulfilled or sentences to be carried out. Thinking about marginality and its representation emerges today as an alternative to think a different future.

Endnotes

¹ The presence of the state, its participation and relevance, has never been actually completely erased. In other words, its invisibility or plain disappearance is a neoliberal ideal that has not occurred. Given the current circumstances of the world crisis, and specially if we see the cases of the governments in Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador—where the state participation has increased in the last years—this notion of an invisible state is, certainly, more than dubious.

² An anthology of short stories by "young writers," published in Spain in 1996, and edited by the Chileans Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gómez.

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Report from the Program Chairs

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- Fuguet, Alberto and Gómez, Sergio. Eds. *McOndo*. Barcelona: Mondadori, 1996.
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In the months since our last report, LASA sent out acceptance notices to some 7,000 individuals. Many of the proposals consisted of entire panels, but many proposals were for individual papers. The individual paper proposals were handled in a two-stage process: The track chairs made decisions about acceptance and grouped the papers into panels with the greatest possible thematic coherence. Proposals that were accepted but could not be placed in this way were forwarded to us, with the charge to look across tracks to combine paper proposals into panels or accommodate them in already existing panels. In order to accommodate as many proposals as possible, we had to make frequent use of established LASA practice and ask many panel chairs to accept additional papers to their panels. The great majority of panel chairs graciously granted these requests, and we trust that these new papers will make excellent panels even better by offering additional perspectives.

The LASA Secretariat added Melissa Raslevich to its staff in order to deal with the extraordinary workload generated by the Congress. Despite great efforts of the highly efficient and committed staff, response time to emails sometimes remained longer than potential Congress participants would have hoped. We thank everybody for their hard work and their patience.

The planning of special panels and sessions has made much progress: The latest high-profile acceptances have come from ex-President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz. There will be special panels on Rethinking Welfare States and Inequalities; on What Constitutes “Good Research”? Perspectives on Research Practice, Research Ethics, and Research Standards of “Truth” from the North and South; on Publishing Your Research in Academic Journals; on Inequalities in New

Latin American Cinema; and on Literature and the Left Turn in Latin America. After much negotiating, the receptions will be held at the university after the last panels of the day in order to make it as easy as possible for Congress participants to join them.

The Preliminary Program is on line at the LASA website <<http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/>>. Preregistration is required for all participants. Names of participants who fail to preregister will not appear in the Program book. Thus, this is a preliminary program in the true sense of the word. It happens before every Congress that some accepted participants fail to preregister and consequently some sessions are left with only a couple of papers. In those cases, we shall do our best to find panels for these remaining papers where they can be presented to an interested audience and stimulate dialogue with the other scholars on those panels.

The hotel information is available at the LASA website as well. We would encourage all participants to make their hotel reservations soon, to ensure that you get space in the hotel of your choice. All U.S. participants also need to keep in mind that Brazil has visa requirements, so it would be a good idea to get started on those *trâmites*.

The next report from the Program Chairs will appear immediately after the Congress. We hope that all planned events will occur with all preregistered participants, regardless of the dark economic clouds upon us. And we trust the intellectual excitement generated by the Congress will do justice to the preparatory work and the collective efforts of all the participants and the LASA staff. We are greatly looking forward to seeing you all in Rio. ■

Rio de Janeiro

por KARL ERIK SCHÖLLHAMMER

Rio 40 graus?
Cidade maravilhosa?
Purgatório da beleza?
E do caos...

Capital do sangue quente?
Do Brasil?
Capital do sangue quente?
Do melhor e do pior?
Do Brasil...
Cidade sangue quente?
Maravilha mutante...

*(Rio 40 graus, música de Fernanda Abreu,
Fausto Fawcett e Carlos Laufer)*

Rio de Janeiro—*Cidade Maravilhosa* ou *Maravilha mutante*, em sua versão mais contemporânea—é o emblema e cartão postal do Brasil, cidade de muitas faces que se confunde com a própria imagem do país, abrangendo sua diversidade e seus intensos contrastes.

Com a vinda da família real portuguesa no Brasil em 1808, o Rio de Janeiro, que já era capital da colônia desde 1765, tornou-se capital do império português e logo do império independente e, depois, da república federativa. Nesse período, a cidade sofreu notáveis modificações, com grande crescimento de sua população, mudanças em sua topografia—devidas ao desmonte de diversos morros, aterros—, abertura de grandes avenidas e túneis, além da criação de diversos marcos arquitetônicos de vários estilos. Em 1960, a capital administrativa foi transferida para Brasília, e o Rio de Janeiro entrou em declínio econômico e político, perdendo importância como centro de poder, mas nunca sua vocação de centro cultural e amálgama criativo. Quem mora no Rio ama a cidade e lamenta seus infortúnios. Ser carioca não é tanto um atestado de nascimento mas um estado de espírito. É uma maneira de ser e de viver que implica gentileza, malícia, orgulho, garra, alegria e uma boa dose de *tropical melancholia* regada a música e boemia, como diria o poeta Torquato Neto.

Encravada entre as praias e as montanhas, a cidade oferece uma paisagem natural exuberante, um prazer visual que foi descrito e homenageado inúmeras vezes em imagem, música e literatura e que ainda resiste apesar da ocupação urbana caótica e da precária preservação do patrimônio natural da floresta e da mata tropicais. No imaginário coletivo mundial, o Rio de Janeiro se impõe como capital da alegria, do carnaval e da exuberância dos corpos expostos, ao mesmo tempo em que horroriza com seus altos

índices de violência e do crime. Contudo é o lugar de encontro e de contraste, entre natureza e cidade, riqueza e miséria e entre história e modernidade. A maioria dos turistas que visita o Brasil passa um tempo no Rio, e a visita às praias da zona sul é obrigatória. Poucos, entretanto, chegam a conhecer a cidade que pulsa do outro lado do túnel Rebouças—a zona oeste e a baixada fluminense com seus gigantescos complexos de favelas—, apenas enxergada à distância pela elite da zona sul, quando atravessa a Avenida Brasil e a Linha Vermelha. Infelizmente, a realidade demográfica carioca está marcada pela segregação social facilmente percebida na geografia da cidade. A fronteira entre zona sul e zona norte dificilmente é transgredida, e o privilégio de morar na zona sul pertence apenas a uma minoria. O Rio continua sendo uma *cidade partida*.

Hoje, o visitante logo vai se sentir em casa nos bairros de Ipanema e Leblon, onde encontrará uma rica variedade de bares e restaurantes, seja na Rua Garcia D'Ávila e arredores da nas praças Nossa Senhora da Paz ou nas ruas Dias Ferreira, Ataulfo da Paiva e Conde de Bernadotte, entre muitos outros do Leblon. No Baixo Gávea, perto da PUC-Rio, há pontos tradicionais, oferecendo opções variadas entre os cardápios de comida brasileira típica no *Hipódromo* e *Braseiro* e o refinamento da cozinha do *Guimas*. Em Copacabana, a área mais densa e variada da zona sul, a dica é confiar na tradição popular e investir nos locais considerados clássicos, como a *Adega Pérola* na Siqueira Campos, ou um chá à beira da piscina no *Hotel Copacabana Palace*.

Nos últimos anos, o centro da cidade vem sendo revitalizado, oferecendo excelentes opções de lazer e cultura, além de livrarias, sebos e restaurantes. Lá, o visitante também poderá apreciar o inestimável patrimônio histórico e arquitetônico da cidade, não

apenas de sua fase colonial e neo-clássica, mas também do período moderno (*Museu de Arte Moderna, Edifício Gustavo Capanema, Aeroporto Santos Dumont, Edifício da Associação Brasileira de Imprensa*). O visitante pode começar o passeio pelo Corredor Cultural no *Paço Imperial*, atravessar o *Arco do Telles*, pegar a Rua do Ouvidor em direção à *Igreja da Candelária*, passando por um leque variado de monumentos, igrejas e construções históricos assim como centros de cultura (*Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Centro Cultural dos Correios e Casa França-Brasil*). Cruzando a Avenida Presidente Vargas em direção à Praça Mauá poderá visitar o *Mosteiro* e a *Igreja de São Bento*, um belíssimo monumento barroco e uma verdadeiro oásis de paz, cuja entrada discretíssima se faz pela Rua Dom Gerardo. Outra boa pedida é o almoço no restaurante *Albamar* na torre do velho mercado municipal na Praça Marechal Âncora, com vista para a *Ilha Fiscal*, o que dá a dimensão da antiga cidade e faz imaginar como era a chegada por mar ao Rio de Janeiro antes da era da aviação.

Pode-se também adentrar o Centro pela Cinelândia e seguir pela Avenida Rio Branco, onde estão localizadas obras primas da *belle époque*, o *Teatro Municipal*, a *Biblioteca Nacional* e o *Museu Nacional de Belas Artes*, construídos em estilo eclético na primeira década do século XX. No Largo da Carioca estão situados a *Igreja* e o *Convento de Santo Antônio*, construídos em 1592 e que hoje geram um contraste dramático com a modernidade arquitetônica do prédio da Avenida Chile. Na rua da Carioca há uma rica opção de lojas e prédios charmosos, muitos em estilo neo-clássico; seguindo em direção à Praça Tiradentes, há teatros e opções culturais interessantes, como uma visita ao *Centro de Arte Hélio Oiticica* ou uma noite de gafieira e samba de raiz no salão de dança tradicional *Estudantina*.

Daqui, muitas opções se abrem. Durante o dia uma visita ao comércio popular do Saara, nas proximidades da Rua Alfândega, é uma forte atração para qualquer olhar curioso e, ao mesmo tempo, um encontro com os emigrantes árabes e judeus e, mais recentemente, nordestinos e coreanos que aqui convivem pacificamente. Depois, vale a pena entrar pela Rua do Lavradio, passar por detrás da *Catedral Metropolitana* e conhecer o bairro boêmio da Lapa, antigo reduto de malandros e sambistas, hoje revitalizado pela nova cena musical carioca. A noite na Lapa é conhecida por suas múltiplas opções de casas de shows, com ritmos brasileiros, como chorinho, samba, forró, que certamente vale a pena conferir. A outra opção é retornar em direção ao Largo de São Francisco com uma parada obrigatória no magnífico *Real Gabinete Português de Leitura* na Rua Luis de Camões, e eventualmente visitar a galeria recém-aberta *Largo das Artes* num belo sobrado colonial. No centro da praça está a *Igreja de São Francisco da Paula*, construída entre os séculos XVIII e XIX; mas também vale a pena conhecer o belo prédio neo-clássico do *Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Sociais (IFCS)* da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro antes de seguir pela Rua Gonçalves Dias e procurar um descanso na tradicional confeitaria *Colombo*.

Para o visitante estrangeiro, a experiência da cidade normalmente se limita à zona sul, mas no centro da cidade convergem as muitas facetas da cidade e um passeio por essa zona torna-se chave para compreender melhor de onde vem e para onde vai o Rio de Janeiro. É no centro que a diversidade do Rio fica mais evidente e onde uma caminhada de algumas horas é uma verdadeira viagem no tempo, passando por uma multiplicidade de gostos e sabores do rigor português à extravagância francesa, da ginga africana ao otimismo do modernismo brasileiro. Há um certo caos sedutor no centro que convida o visitante a explorar e descobrir uma cidade

cheia de meandros e mesclas singulares. A partir do centro é fácil visitar outros bairros históricos bem típicos como Saúde e Gambôa, que ficam atrás da Praça Mauá, ou ir em direção à zona oeste no outro lado do canal do Mangue, ou Vila Isabel e Tijuca—o primeiro imortalizado nas canções de Noel Rosa e o segundo nas crônicas de Nelson Rodrigues—, cada um com seus encantos, segredos e desafios. Uma visita ao bairro boêmio de Santa Teresa entretanto é quase uma obrigação para quem quer conhecer a história da cidade e o charme dessa zona da cidade. Há muitas maneiras de se chegar ao alto de Santa Teresa, uma delas é pegar o bondinho que atravessa os arcos da Lapa; a estação fica próximo ao Largo da Carioca. Alcançando o topo da montanha, o bondinho segue pelas ruas pavimentadas de paralelepípedo passando em frente de casas e palacetes do início do século XX, várias delas em refinado estilo *art-nouveau* ou *Jugendstil*, hoje meras lembranças da riqueza e prosperidade dos primeiros moradores desse bairro. Hoje, Santa Teresa preserva sua independência e, apesar de estar cercada por favelas, é um bairro de convivência social tranqüila onde se prolifera grande energia libertária que se expressa na proliferação de ateliês artísticos e eventos de cultura e arte ao longo do ano. No Largo dos Guimarães há excelentes opções de restaurantes como o *Sobrenatural*, o *Bar do Mineiro* e o melhor almoço de comida nordestina da cidade no *Bar do Arnaudo*, mas vale a pena estender a visita para o Largo das Neves, eventualmente com uma paradinha no *Goiabeira* para uma cerveja. Santa Teresa parece um bairro parado no tempo, e só recentemente começou-se a aproveitar a variedade de casas e prédios ignorados pelo mercado imobiliário local para criar pousadas e restaurantes para o visitante e o turista que espera encontrar mais no Rio de Janeiro de que a beleza da praia de Copacabana.

SCHØLLHAMMER continued...

O primeiro encontro com Rio de Janeiro pode ser um descobrimento desafiante. Além de ser uma aula de história do Brasil, é uma exposição aos problemas sociais contemporâneos enfrentados nas grandes metrópoles brasileiras. Quem quer se aproximar mais da realidade da população mais pobre encontra hoje opções de pousadas, hospedagem e programas culturais em várias favelas da zona sul como o Morro do Pereirão, da Conceição, do Cantagalo, da Rocinha, do Vidigal, entre outras. Cada bairro tem sua característica própria e, principalmente na visita aos bairros como Gloria, Catete, Flamengo e Botafogo, é possível notar como a cidade se lançou sobre o mar para poder se expandir em direção ao sul, ímpeto modernizador que culminou com a urbanização de São Conrado e da Barra da Tijuca na década de 60 e, mais tarde, do Recreio dos Bandeirantes. Para quem tiver tempo e interesse na arte popular brasileira, é indispensável uma visita ao museu *Casa do Pontal* no Recreio dos Bandeirantes, que abriga a belíssima coleção de Jacques Van de Beuque, o maior e mais significativo acervo de arte popular do país. Os bairros de dentro, como Laranjeiras, Cosme Velho e Jardim Botânico, Lagoa e Gávea, conseguiram manter-se melhor preservados do processo de crescimento urbano acelerado, embora também neles haja exemplos crassos da urbanização informal e da chamada verticalização das favelas. Um dos principais desafios para o novo governo do estado e, em particular para o novo prefeito da cidade, será a regularização democrática do crescimento espontâneo e descontrolado na zona oeste e zona norte. Rio de Janeiro é uma cidade que se vive como muitas cidades, cada uma com seu perfil particular e o prazer do encontro colabora com a capacidade do visitante de viver sua multiplicidade.

Rio de Janeiro, Cidade Maravilhosa (or *Maravilha Mutante* in a more contemporary version), is both the emblem of Brazil and its postcard—a city of many faces that is often perceived as the very image of the country, its diversity and intense contrasts.

With the arrival of the Portuguese royal family in Brazil in 1808, Rio de Janeiro, which had been the capital of the colony since 1765, became the capital of the Portuguese empire, of the independent empire afterwards, and then the capital of the Federal Republic. Over these periods the city has undergone remarkable changes, including great population growth, major changes in topography due to the leveling of hills and embankments, the construction of major avenues and tunnels as well as the creation of landmark architectural projects of different styles. In 1960 the national administrative capital was moved to Brasília and Rio de Janeiro entered into a period of economic and political decline, losing importance as a center of power—but not its place as a center of cultural and artistic expression. Those who reside in Rio love the city and lament its misfortunes. Being *carioca* is not so much a testament of place as it is a state of mind and spirit. It is a way of being and living that conveys at once a sense of kindness, malice, pride, defiance, joy—and a strong dose of tropical melancholy merged to music and to the bohemian, as the poet Torquato Neto would say.

Nestled between beaches and mountains, the city offers an exuberant landscape, a visual pleasure that has been described and praised countless times in the visual arts, music and literature—and a city which still stands tall despite urban chaos and slim successes in preserving a precious natural ecology. The world imagines Rio as a joyous capital, a place for *carnival* and exuberant near-nakedness, but also as a place that strikes

fear because of high rates of crime and violence. It is, then, a place of encounters and contrasts between nature and city, between wealth and poverty, between the historic past and modernity.

Most tourists who visit Brazil spend time in Rio—and going to the beaches of the *zona sul* is mandatory. But few get to know the city that pulsates on the other side of the Rebouças tunnel, the *zona oeste* and the *baixada fluminense* with its huge complex of slums; the slums are viewed only at a distance by the elites of the *zona sul* as they cross Avenida do Brasil and the Linha Vermelha. Unfortunately, *carioca* demographic reality is marked by highly visible socioeconomic segregation. Borders between the southern and northern zones are crossed only with difficulty and the privilege of living in the *zona sul* belongs to just a minority. Rio remains a *divided city*.

Visitors, then, will immediately feel at home in the neighborhoods of Ipanema and Leblon, where they will find a wide variety of bars and restaurants in Rua Garcia D'Ávila and in the outskirts of Our Lady of Peace Plaza, and on the Dias Ferreira, Ataulfo de Paiva and Conde de Bernadotte Leblon streets—among many others in Leblon. In Baixo Gávea near PUC-Rio there are multiple points of gastronomic interest, offering choices that vary from typical Brazilian food in the *Hipódromo* and *Braseiro* to the refined cuisine of *Guimas*. In Copacabana, the densest and most diverse area of the southern zone, the trick is to trust the popular tradition and stop in places considered classics, like *Adega Pérola* in Siqueira Campos or have tea by the pool at the *Hotel Copacabana Palace*.

A revitalized city center offers excellent options for recreation and culture, as well as bookstores, snack bars, and restaurants. Here the visitor can view aspects of the

priceless historical and architectural heritage of the city—not just of the colonial and neo-classical period but also of the modern era, in the Museum of Modern Art, the Gustavo Capanema building, Santos Dumont airport and the Brazilian Press Association building. Visitors can begin touring at the Cultural Corridor in the Imperial Palace, continue to the *Arco do Telles*, take Rua do Ouvidor toward *Igreja da Candelária* to see a variety of monuments, churches and historical buildings as well as centers of culture (*Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil*, *Centro Cultural dos Correios* and *Casa França-Brasil*). Crossing President Vargas Avenue toward Plaza Mauá you can visit the Monastery and Church of St. Benedict, a beautiful Baroque monument and a real oasis of peace with its discreet entrance on Rua Dom Gerardo. Next try lunch in the *Albamar* restaurant in the tower of the old municipal market in Marechal Âncora Plaza; it overlooks the *Ibla Fiscal* and conveys an idea of the size of the old city as well as a sense of how it might have been to arrive in Rio by sea, before the aviation era.

You can also enter the heart of Rio through *Cinelandia* and follow Avenida Rio Branco to see masterpieces of the *Belle Époque*, the *Teatro Municipal*, *Biblioteca Nacional*, and the *Museu Nacional de Belas Artes*—all built in the eclectic style of the first decade of the twentieth century. In Largo da Carioca see the *Igreja* and *o Convento de Santo Antônio*, built in 1592; it generates a dramatic contrast with the modern architecture of the buildings on Avenida Chile. You will find Largo da Carioca to have a rich choice of shops and charming buildings, many neo-classical in style, and going towards Praça Tiradentes you will discover interesting theaters and cultural sites such as the *Centro de Arte Hélio Oiticica*, or a night of dancing *gafieira* and *samba de raiz* in the traditional *Estudantina* hall.

From here, many options. During the day in the area around Rua Alfândega you may wish to visit the popular Sahara market. Here you will be among immigrants of many ethnic backgrounds and nationalities who live and work together in harmony. After this you can proceed to Lavradio Street, go behind the Metropolitan Cathedral and visit the bohemian neighborhood of Lapa, a former hangout for *malandros* and *sambistas* that has been revitalized by the new *carioca* musical scene. A night in Lapa offers many choices of shows that feature Brazilian rhythms such as chorinho, samba, forró, certainly worth experiencing. An alternative is to return toward Largo San Francisco with a compulsory stop at the magnificent *Real Gabinete Português de Leitura* in Rua Luis de Camões and possibly visit the newly opened *Largo das Artes* gallery, situated in a lovely colonial loft. At the center of the square is *Igreja de São Francisco da Paula*, built between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; also worth seeing is the beautiful neoclassical building of the Institute of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Federal University (IFCS) before proceeding along the Rua Gonçalves Dias and looking to relax at *Colombo*, the traditional pastry shop.

Visitors limiting their explorations to the south zone miss discovering that the city center is key to a better understanding of where this multifaceted city came from and where it is going. It is in the center that the diversity of Rio de Janeiro is most evident and where a walk of several hours is a real journey in time through a variety of authentic tastes and flavors from the elemental Portuguese to the French extravagance, from the swing of Africa to the optimism of modern Brazil. There is a certain seductive chaos in the center that invites the visitor to explore and discover a city full of meanderings and singular blendings. From the center is easy to visit other historical districts like *Saúde* and

Gambôa behind Mauá Square, or to go west to the other side of the Mangue channel, or to Vila Isabel and Tijuca—the former immortalized in the songs of Noel Rosa and the latter in the chronicles of Nelson Rodrigues—each with its charms, secrets and challenges. A visit to the bohemian neighborhood of Santa Teresa is almost a must for anyone wishing to know the history of the city and the charm of this zone. There are many ways to reach the top of Santa Teresa; one of them is to take the cable car that crosses the Lapa arches. The station is next to the Largo da Carioca. Reaching the top of the mountain, the cable car follows streets of *paralelepípedo*, passing in front of early twentieth century houses and palaces, many of which are in fine *Art Nouveau* or *Jugendstil* style—now mere memories of the wealth and prosperity of the early residents of that neighborhood. Today, Santa Teresa preserves its identity, and is, despite being surrounded by slums, a quiet neighborhood that expresses its libertarian energy in the proliferation of workshops and artistic and cultural events throughout the year. In Largo dos Guimarães one has excellent choices of restaurants like *Sobrenatural*, and *Bar do Mineiro*. The best Northeastern lunch can be savored at *Bar Arnaud*, but it is worth extending the trip to Largo das Neves for a short stop for a beer at *Goiabeira*. Santa Teresa neighborhood looks like a place frozen in time but recently there has appeared a variety of homes and buildings with inns and restaurants for the visitor who hopes to find more in Rio de Janeiro than just the beauty of Copacabana beach.

The first encounter with Rio de Janeiro may be challenging: besides being a history class of sorts, it also is an exposure to social problems currently facing large cities in Brazil. The person who wishes to be closer to the reality of life for the poorest people can find living accommodations and cultural

SCHÖLLHAMMER continued...

programs in various *favelas* of *zona sul*, like Morro do Pereirão, Conceição, Cantagalo, Rocinha, and Vidigal, among others. Each neighborhood is unique and in visits to districts such as Gloria, Catete, Flamengo and Botafogo one can see how an expanding city has pushed southward toward the sea, producing a modernizing impetus that created the suburbs of São Conrado and Barra da Tijuca in the 60s, and later, Recreio dos Bandeirantes.

For those with interests in Brazilian folk art, a visit to the museum in the *Casa do Pontal* in Recreio dos Bandeirantes is essential: it has the largest and most significant collection of folk art in the country, with a marvelous grouping of the works of Jacques Van de Beuque.

Interior neighborhoods like Laranjeiras, Cosme Velho and Jardim Botânico, Lagoa and Gávea have managed for the most part to shield themselves from accelerated urban growth—although within some of them there are gross instances of “informal” urbanization and the so-called verticalization of slums. One of the major challenges for the new government of the state, and particularly for the new mayor of the city, is the democratization of the spontaneous and uncontrolled growth in the west and north zones. Rio de Janeiro has a unique profile, and a full appreciation of the city is enhanced by the opportunity of the visitor to have an intimate and pleasurable experience with its great diversity. ■

The Latin American, Caribbean & Iberian Studies Program (LACIS) at the University of Wisconsin-Institute Summer Intensive Portuguese 2009



This special eight-week course is designed for people wishing to study intensively beginning Brazilian Portuguese. Graduate students, faculty and other researchers, and advanced undergraduates who need to develop communication skills and reading knowledge for research will find this special Institute particularly useful. The Institute will take place during the eight-week summer school session at UW-Madison, June 15-August 7, 2009. Instruction is five days a week, four hours a day, and the course (listed as Portuguese 301-302) carries eight (8) semester hours of credit.

The institute will be directed and taught by Professor Severino Albuquerque who will be assisted by a lecturer or teaching assistant. Knowledge of Spanish is required (2-3 years equivalency). The application deadline is May 8, 2009. Forms and details are available from the UW-Madison Department of Spanish and Portuguese, 1018 Van Hise, 1220 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706, (608) 262-2093, <http://spanport.lss.wisc.edu>. A limited number of Title VI FLAS Fellowships are available to graduate students in conjunction with the Institute. Please contact LACIS, 1155 Observatory Drive, 209 Ingraham Hall, Madison, WI 53706-1319, (608)-262-2811, lacis@intl-institute.wisc.edu, or <http://www.lacis.wisc.edu/>.

LASA Voluntary Support

by SANDY KLINZING

Muchísimas gracias, muito obrigados, thank you! In a year when difficult economic conditions have taken their toll on contributions to non-profit organizations, LASA members and friends have continued to dig deeply into their pockets to support the Association. Over \$43,661 in contributions were received during 2008, including \$25,000 to establish the new Diskin Dissertation Award, which will be presented for the first time at LASA2009 in Rio de Janeiro.

LASA was additionally honored to welcome three new **Life Members** since our last report, bringing to 68 the number of individuals who have made this significant commitment. We are highly indebted to **Eduardo Silva**, **Gabriela Soto Laveaga** and **Anthony Bebbington** for choosing a LASA Life Membership!

We send our most sincere thank you to these individual donors to all LASA funds during 2008. Many people selected multiple funds and made repeated gifts during the year. Their contributions will support travel to the Rio meeting and help LASA see to it that Congress participation is made available to colleagues everywhere who wish to take part. We look forward to seeing you in Rio and to introducing you to the grantees that will benefit from your thoughtfulness. (*For additional information on Life Memberships or any of the LASA Funds please contact the Secretariat at 412-648-1907 or at lasa@pitt.edu.*)

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Thanks to the support of the donors listed below, the first Diskin Dissertation Fellowship will be awarded at the 2009 LASA Congress in Rio. With your help, and the generous donations from Oxfam and from LASA, we met our goal of raising 25 thousand dollars, which will endow the fellowship in perpetuity. Your commitment to and participation in initiatives like this one are what helps make LASA a vibrant organization, deeply engaged with the issues of the day. The text of the call for nominations follows:

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Note: The endowed fellowship fund will gladly accept additional donations, which would allow us to increase the value of the dissertation fellowship over time. ■

Section News

The Colombia Section of LASA is pleased to announce the competition for the **Monserrat Ordóñez Prize** and the **Michael Jiménez Prize**. Montserrat Ordóñez (d. 2001, Bogotá), dedicated her life to the study and promotion of Latin American women's literature and the search for new forms of literary expression and language. The \$500 Ordóñez Prize will be awarded to an outstanding book that continues this project. The work should be pathbreaking and should embody a fresh and creative approach to the study of language and strengthens an innovative vision of the Colombian humanities. Submissions may take the form of narratives, ethnographies, biographies, historical accounts, memoirs, or essay collections. The **Michael Jiménez Prize** honors Michael Jiménez (d. 2001, Pittsburgh, USA) and his inspiring work on different aspects of 19th and 20th century Colombian History. This \$500 prize will be awarded to

an outstanding work in the disciplines of History, Anthropology, Political Science or Sociology that significantly advances an understanding of Colombian social transformations and society. The prize will recognize an essay collection or monograph based on original research that employs innovative theoretical, methodological, or conceptual approaches and demonstrates clear excellence and promise in shaping contemporary debates in the field of Colombian studies.

For further information about eligibility and submission requirements for books published in 2006-08), please consult: <http://www.inmarcesibles.org/inmarcesibles/About.cfm>. ■

In Memoriam

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of longtime LASA member **Donna Lee Van Cott**. We have lost a prolific writer, tireless field researcher, and generous colleague. Dr. Van Cott was known widely to students of Andean politics, indigenous rights movements and political institutions. She was an esteemed friend and colleague to many in LASA, and was one of the most promising—and successful—scholars of her generation.

Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Connecticut when she died, Dr. Van Cott was perhaps best known to LASA members as the founder of the Section on Ethnicity, Race, and Indigenous Peoples, which she headed from 2003-2005, and which now has several hundred members. Her academic career, launched with a Ph.D. from Georgetown University's Department of Government in 1998, was capped by three critically acclaimed monographs: *The Friendly Liquidation of the Past: The Politics of Diversity in Latin America* (2000, University of Pittsburgh Press), *From Movements to Parties in Latin America: The Evolution of Ethnic Politics* (2005, Cambridge University Press), and *Radical Democracy in the Andes* (2008, Cambridge University Press).

David Samuels of the University of Minnesota characterized Van Cott as “among the very best and most influential political scientists who studied indigenous politics in Latin America,” but also lauded her dynamic style and sharp humor. “She had stage presence, a sense of humor, and an engaging, even entertaining presentation style, while remaining serious and professional. This is a rare combination, and was impressive to see.”

A careful balancer of institutional and societal considerations, the first of Van Cott's major works, *The Friendly Liquidation of the Past*, covered the constitutional reforms of the 1990s fostering greater ethnic group participation (especially in Bolivia and Colombia). Her next book, *From Movements to Parties in Latin America*, which won the 2006 Best Book on Comparative Politics Award from the

Organized Section on Race, Ethnicity and Politics, addressed the propagation of ethnic political parties in four Latin American countries (including Colombia and Bolivia), and their concomitant failure in two others (Argentina and Peru). Finally, her last book, *Radical Democracy in the Andes*, published just last year, assessed the record of indigenous parties in power at the local levels, principally in Bolivia and Ecuador.

Taken together, Dr. Van Cott's books narrate the institutionalization of passionate and professional indigenous movements that evolved from social movements to political parties, to mayors and city councils, and the vitality of these transitions. Her work was vital in chronicling the conversion of these movements to governments as a demonstration of their capability and determination. Always adhering to the highest standards in field research and writing, Van Cott's objective and critical depictions of the struggles of movement leaders trying to retain their original policies and yet appeal to constantly wider groups of constituencies, have had an enduring impact on the study of Latin America's indigenous peoples, on ethnic politics, movements, and parties, on constitutional change, multicultural rights, and on local governance.

A Fulbright Fellow, former associate at the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington and former fellow at the Helen Kellogg Institute for International Peace at the University of Notre Dame, Van Cott received numerous awards and was a coveted speaker. Van Cott testified before the U.S. Congress, and presented work regularly in forums from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Quito, Ecuador, including many policy venues and international institutions like the United Nations, the U.S. State Department, and the United States Institute for Peace.

In addition to her extensive publication record and her active participation in professional associations like LASA, Van Cott was a passionate teacher and mentor. According to Mala Htun of the New School for Social Research, “Donna was always willing to

share her data and she even gave me transcripts of dozens of her interviews to use in my own research. Thanks to Donna, indigenous politics is a mainstream topic of scholarship and an essential component of coursework on Latin America. I can't think of anyone more passionate and knowledgeable about indigenous politics in Latin America.”

Van Cott's energy in the lecture hall was perhaps no surprise given her musical background. A talented guitarist and singer, Van Cott released *Eclipse*, an album of her music, in 2000. Her artistic energies also produced poems which were published in *The New Formalist* in 2008. She ends a poem titled “Advice” with the following lines:

*No one ever gets to ever do all
they were meant to do. Bite into what
is true. Remember, nothing is too big to lose
or too small.*

Donna Lee Van Cott perhaps did not get to do all she was meant to do, but she will be remembered for her impressive scholarship, wicked sense of humor, and the encouragement she gave to so many of us. In memory of her tireless work to try to diminish the resource gap between U.S. and Latin American colleagues, donations are being accepted by the LASA Secretariat in Dr. Van Cott's name to the LASA Travel Fund for Latin American Scholars.

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