Adrian Taylor Kane. ***Central American Avant-Garde Narrative: Literary Innovation and Cultural Change (1926-1936).*** Amherst, New York: Cambria, 2014. 159p.

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Central-American avant-garde studies have primarily focused on poetry and manifestos (1), while narrative has been mainly ignored. Although several avant-garde works of fiction were published during the 1920s and 1930s, no Central American country other than Nicaragua had a coordinated avant-garde movement (2), which helps to explain why they have fallen through the cracks of literary history. In *Central American Avant-Garde Narrative,* Adrian Taylor Kane studies forgotten narratives by renowned Central American authors to demonstrate that this art movement was not only alive and well during those decades, but also incredibly important and influential.

The book has six chapters, an introduction that underlines the definition and history of Latin American vanguardism, four chapters with examples of avant-garde narratives from various Central American countries, and a brief conclusion that localizes these texts in a larger literary context.

In his introduction, Kane argues that while vanguardist Latin American authors were clearly influenced by their European peers, the movement was developed within unique cultures and situations and with its own objectives (13). Positivism, which in America gave place to dictatorships and racism, was confronted by artists who created their own versions of truth, undermining positivism's "mimetic function of reality" and its predilection for logic and reason (20).

*Maelstrom: Films Telescopiados,* a novel by Guatemalan author Luis Cartoza y Aragón, used surrealism's ludic elements to confront the mimetic aspects of positivism and traditional literature, since play, according to Phillip Lewis, possesses "destructive, corrective, or emancipatory" qualities (32). In *Maelstrom*, reality imitates art, which is the complete opposite of what realists and naturalists propose, and its surrealistic elements of play, dreams, the absurd, humor, and so on, challenged the reigning positivism (48).

Max Jiménez departed from his country's traditional *costumbrismo*, which supported the ideologies of Costa Rica's bourgeois ruling classes. Instead, he championed vanguardism with works such as his antinovel *Unos fantoches* (*Some Puppets*), with its unconventional and provocative form and plot, and *El domador de pulgas* (*The Flees' Tamer*), a novel that is not as radical in its structure—and that, in fact, mimics the form of the traditional costumbrismo—but whose themes and content are as radical and critical of the literary, cultural, and political status quo as they can possibly be (64).

The influence of European vanguardism in America is explored in Guatemalan writer Flavio Herrera's novel *El tigre,* which follows the typical structure of a *criollista* narrative, but the elements of vanguardism are not hard to find: surrealism, cubism and simultanism. The theme of barbarism versus civilization ends in a loss for the latter, an obvious attack on social positivism. Like Herrera, Panamanian author Rogelio Sinán's two short stories also employ cubism, but while the Guatemalan novelist applies it to *El tigre*'s broken structure, Sinán depicts geometrical and fragmented images; this story as well as "El sueño de Serafín del Carmen" rely heavily upon surrealism. Kane argues that the three works analyzed are particularly

important, since they would become standards and "vital contributors" to the continents' vanguardism (96).

"La barba provisional" ("The Provisional Beard"), a short story by Guatemalan Miguel Ángel Asturias, although unknown, is the first attempt at experimentation and surrealism that would later become key elements in his work. *Leyendas de Guatemala* and *El Señor Presidente* show the evolution of his surrealism, which serves as a means to modernize his national culture "artistically, socially, and politically" (125) in order to undermine the damaging effects of positivism.

Adrian Taylor Kane's thesis demonstrates that these vanguardist narratives might be rare, but are in fact immensely influential in the future modernist and postmodernist art of their respective nations. Their shock value strove to make readers doubt the absolute truth claims of positivism and to allow the possibility that the status quo wasn't the only or the best way to accept reality. This volume adds a conversation on Central American vanguardism that needs to be continued, since, as the author admits, this and previous attempts by other scholars are only "step[s] forward in addressing the gap" in such studies (2). Not only unknown, some of the pieces are virtually inaccessible in public or university libraries. Hopefully, further work on this topic will allow these literary gems to resurface and become available once again.

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Julie Thompson Klein. ***Interdisciplining Digital Humanities: Boundary Work in an Emerging Field.*** Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2015. 201p.

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As one who works at the periphery of Digital Humanities, I was immediately attracted to Julie Thompson Klein's timely book on the current status of Digital Humanities in the academy. *Interdisciplining Digital Humanities* presents in fewer than 200 pages a genealogy of the field as it simultaneously addresses the broad spectrum of disciplines and theoretical considerations that have grown into the still emerging field. After presenting its argument in clear thematic progression of its six chapters, the book concludes with a helpful section that includes online resources, networks of Digital Humanities practitioners, and professional organizations.

Klein's central argument is that interdisciplinarity is key to understanding Digital Humanities because—by its very design—it is a set of interdisciplinary practices. Her book should be considered essential reading for all "scholars, teachers, and students of interdisciplinarity" (6) interested in the theoretical and practical origins of the field, for those in search of an in-depth understanding of how Digital Humanities is changing the landscape of research disciplines, and for those engaged in digital endeavors.

In the context of a brief review, the best approach to this book may a quick look at what each chapter has to offer each reader—depending on where that reader finds him/herself on the spectrum ranging from novice to expert in Digital Humanities. Chapter 1, "Interdisciplining," and Chapter 2, "Defining," are perhaps the most complex as they outline the theoretical underpinnings and historical development of Digital Humanities from their origins in computational linguistics and text analysis.