REVIEWS

Reviews are published in alphabetical order according to the name of the author reviewed.

Fredo Arias de la Canal. ***El Quijote liberal y otros papeles cervantinos.*** Segunda edición. México: Frente de Afirmación Hispanista, 2013. 184 p.

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Con introducción de Antonio Rey Hazas y prólogo de Fredo Arias de la Canal, *El Quijote liberal y otros papeles cervantinos* enriquece los estudios críticos sobre la obra maestra de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. Desde la perspectiva psicológica, profundizando en el psicoanálisis hasta la filosofía del existencialismo y la historicidad de don Quijote, se hace una mención de un sinnúmero de críticos y literatos que se han ocupado de estudiar la escritura de Cervantes. En el prólogo se alude a Lord Byron como uno de los primeros en criticar a Cervantes que ridiculiza la caballería española. Federico Nietzche siguió a Byron en su crítica. Sin embargo, se indica que José Ortega y Gasset refutó lo dicho por los dos anteriores. Se continúa en el prólogo analizando aseveraciones relacionadas a la escritura cervantina y la cultura española. Se mencionan escritos de Benito Jerónimo Feijóo, Mariano José de Larra, y Emilio Castelar entre otros. Esta publicación comprende dos grandes divisiones. La primera es "El Quijote liberal" y la segunda "Otros papeles cervantinos."

Primeramente la sección de "El Quijote liberal" consta de la inserción de pasajes de 29 capítulos del *Ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha*, todos ellos presentados por separado. En el capítulo I se menciona el espíritu aventurero de don Quijote que se hace caballero andante y lo relaciona con el carácter del español que a través de su historia ha salido en busca de aventuras. En cada capítulo se lleva a cabo un análisis y una reflexión personal del autor de este libro hasta llegar al capítulo LII con el que termina esta sección. Concluye Arias de la Canal que Cervantes dotó a Don Quijote de un carácter demente para poder, a través de él, criticar la indiscutible situación de la España de su tiempo. Esta primera parte del libro termina con la inclusión de un epílogo.

La segunda división de este volumen titulada "Otros papeles cervantinos" se constituye de una recopilación de nueve artículos del mismo Fredo Arias publicados con anterioridad desde 1969 hasta el año 2004. En ellos cubre temas muy variados, pero siempre teniendo la escritura de Cervantes como

hilo conector. Por mencionar algunos de ellos, al escribir sobre Shakespeare y Cervantes, el autor expresa que aunque la obra de ambos literatos se ha tratado de confrontar muy a menudo, lo considera imposible de realizar porque son disimiles en cuanto a la estética. También presenta a Cervantes como el precursor de la filosofía vitalista desarrollando la dinámica vital en forma de novela, con un protagonista que es el hombre ante una circunstancia que es el destino. Cervantes en su escritura se planteó el objetivo histórico de la vida y la filosofía existencialista del pueblo hispano que sobrevivirá a través de los siglos. Por otra parte, en el artículo titulado "Intento de psicoanálisis de Cervantes," se menciona su regresión oral, sus fantasías de rescate, su masoquismo, su ironía, su pseudoagresión, su autodaño y sus amores. De estos últimos se menciona cuando pretendió a doña Catalina, su matrimonio con otra Catalina, sus amores vulgares con Ana Franca de Rojas y el amor platónico con una monja cantora. Arias de la Canal supone que estas vivencias son proyectadas a través de la obra de Cervantes. El cuadro psicológico masoquista parece reflejarse en su deseo de crearse problemas y rechazos en su vida amorosa. Cervantes transfiere su masoquismo a don Quijote y a otros de sus personajes. Entre sus biógrafos, Nicolás Díaz de Benjumea percibió el masoquismo psíquico de Cervantes y lo resume como "la filosofía de la adversidad."

Además de este biógrafo, el autor menciona un gran número de críticos de la obra de Cervantes. Por citar a algunos se tiene a Miguel de Unamuno, Giovanni Papini, José Ortega y Gasset, Américo Castro, Ramón Menéndez Pidal y Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo entre otros. Al interpretar el tema de la locura expuesta en los escritos de Cervantes, el autor de este libro relaciona la escritura de Cervantes con el pensamiento de Erasmo con su *Elogio de la locura* y además los explora más profundamente teniendo como base algunos estudios científicos de Freud. Se menciona el delirio de grandeza y de rescate que quedan incluidos en la primera salida de Alonso Quijano de su tierra y sus deseos de redimir al mundo. En El Quijote se advierten todos los factores principales de la paranoia masculina: los delirios de grandeza y persecuciones de sus estados extáticos y alucinantes. En otro de los papeles cervantinos, el autor compara los rasgos paranoicos del famoso caso Schreber, con los de don Quijote de la Mancha. Encuentra la sorprendente analogía entre los delirios de grandeza y persecución, la compulsión suicida y el exhibicionismo. Evidencia un contraste entre ellos. La divergencia estriba en que Don Quijote se defendió contra los espectros de la pasividad, mientras que Schreber, se

dejó llevar por los estados esquizofrénicos.

En la sección titulada "Cervantes visto por Schopenhauer," Arias de la Canal comenta que ese escritor alemán ha sido el que más refranes españoles ha citado en sus obras. Además plasmó la esencia del existencialismo cervantista y llegó a la conclusión que Ortega y Gasset consiguió comprender mejor a Cervantes a través de la filosofía de Schopenhauer. En las últimas dos secciones de "Otros papeles cervantinos" se puede aprender más sobre las fuentes latinas y griegas en las que se apoyó Cervantes para la escritura de su obra cumbre *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. Se documentan numerosos casos de la correspondencia entre obras antiguas y su similitud en la escritura cervantina. Al final se incluye un índice onomástico muy detallado, la bibliografía y el índice general de la obra. Han pasado ya cuatro siglos desde el fallecimiento de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra y se sigue estudiando su obra dando origen a nuevas investigaciones críticas. *El Quijote Liberal y otros papeles cervantinos* es un valioso análisis sobre la obra de este laureado escritor español.

Lewis Bagby. ***First Words. On Dostoevsky's Introductions***. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016. 198p.

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Students, teachers, and admirers of Dostoevsky's novels, of whom there are many, will want to have Lewis Bagby's book at hand or nearby. In this engaging and provocative study, Bagby offers the most extensive analysis to date of what he calls Dostoevsky's "first words," the introductions that appear in many of Dostoevsky's texts.

Bagby explores his subject in impressive depth and detail. He establishes his case by first explaining the importance of authorial initial utterances that introduce readers into the world of the text, arguing that introductions are "complex, multifunctional, variegated rhetorical phenomena… a literary artifact we should not take for granted, least of all in Dostoevsky's neglected case" (xiv). He begins his study with a discussion of the diverse names Dostoevsky used to label his introductions and claims that a study of Dostoevsky's experimentation with first words contributes to our understanding of his novels as a whole—an intriguing proposition. The task of the critic trying to analyze the variety of forms Dostoevsky's introductions take and

the reason for this variety would be, first, to provide evidence of their significance, and second, to explain Dostoevsky's practices of embedding his introductions in the narratives—both of which Bagby does superbly.

Drawing from the work of theorist Gérard Genett, Bagby applies his typology of prefaces to Dostoevsky's art, suggesting that Dostoevsky invented and utilized its hybrid forms. This distinction is important because it provides a necessary perspective on Dostoevsky's unique structuring devices and invariant features of his introductions. An important gesture of Bagby's study is his linking of Dostoevsky to his literary precursors, among them Pushkin, Lermontov, and Gogol. Noting that "Dostoevsky did not operate in a preface vacuum" (xvii), Bagby examines diverse models Dostoevsky was familiar with when he began using introductions with some regularity. Bagby demonstrates a commanding grasp of the early nineteenth century literary tradition; in his thoughtful exploration of a variety of writers and introductions in connection with Genette's typology, he shows persuasively how Dostoevsky's introductions figure in that canon.

He turns to more detailed characteristics in the next chapters dedicated individually to Dostoevsky's writings. Working through his fiction from the last years of his exile and the first post-Siberian years, the period of Dostoevsky's first narratives to contain introductions, Bagby finds that they "announce immediately that someone other than Dostoevsky's alter ego speaks to us directly" (29). He traces Dostoevsky's experiments with unreliable and limited narrators to demonstrate how Dostoevsky, through these characters, expresses his own insecurities about returning to the literary scene. Continuing with an insightful treatment of *Notes from the House of the Dead*, Bagby describes the emergence of an entirely new form of introduction—a frame closed off from the text—and finds a significant interplay between the implied author's discourse and the voice of the preface's narrator. Reshaped in the direction of multiple voicing, Dostoevsky's preface introduces the book's overarching thesis: "the unified image of humanity" (58). Bagby constructively demonstrates how Dostoevsky's method of relating his first words to his narrative enriches our understanding of the novel's essential questions.

Moving on to Dostoevsky's introductions of the 1860s, a period when he won and preserved prominence as a successful novelist, Bagby focuses on *Notes from the Underground*, with specific attention to its footnoted introduction signed by Dostoevsky. Challenging the traditional viewpoint of its unified authorial voice, Bagby finds instead four distinct destabilizing voices

operating in the prologue, modeling the polyphony of the larger text. Bagby's reconsideration of the book's prologue in this light is new and valuable in itself, and his persuasiveness in describing how the prologue participates in the larger narrative's parodic strategies is enhanced by his impressively broad gathering of critical viewpoints on this novel. He then observes that the prologue "prepares readers to read the following inset tale with a questioning mind and an ear, sensitive to shifts in tone and voice" (86). I find especially interesting his conclusion that, given the book's criticism of the rationalist philosophies of Dostoevsky's own day, he "reexamines both national and personal pasts," willing "to fragment the voice in the introduction and speak with a backward glance about his complex position on the most pressing issues of the day" (90).

The latter part of the study takes up Dostoevsky's fiction of the 1870s, beginning with a consideration of "Demons," and interrogates its unusual frame narrative, with the front and back of the narrative framing the text. Specifically, Bagby accepts Charles Isenberg's contention that in Dostoevsky's frame narrative we encounter the "third story," resulting from the synthesis of the tale's frame and the insert novel; he then asserts that this third story is "the novel's secret heart" (106). In the following discussion, he focuses on the function of Dostoevky's chronicler of the events to expose the secret agenda behind his deceptive discourse. Bagby's central argument is that Dostoevsky's untruthful guide is "at the heart of the novel's darkness of conspiracy" and hence the genre of "Demons" might be considered as the confession (114). The book's frame structure, therefore, presents the narrator's tale as an act of atonement, a conclusion revealing the critic's skill in gleaning the work's larger patterns of meaning.

The concluding chapter focuses on *Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky's last work of fiction. Pointing out that its foreword has so far escaped serious critical attention, Bagby—in an original and compelling move—divides its discourse and lays it out as a dramatic dialogue between the narrator and the implied author, supplied with his own critical directions. Bagby's creative instincts and his mastery of the material are a potent combination as he gives a sensitive and insightful interpretation of the foreword's dual voicing. A solid conclusion stands on its own as a sharp general overview of his findings.

The depth of scholarship and the original conception of *First Words: On Dostoevsky's Introductions* broaden our understanding of Dostoevsky's writing, expand our knowledge of his innovative techniques, and reveal the complex-

ity of the writer that makes Dostoevsky unique among Russian nineteenth century novelists. With its hard look at a new, little understood, but absolutely crucial, area of Dostoevsky's work, Bagby's study is a useful guide to a significant body of Dostoevsky's fiction, and is especially well written. Full of sure-handed, solid, refreshing critical analysis, this volume belongs in the top echelon of scholarship about Dostoevsky.

Will Bashor. ***Marie Antoinette's Head: The Royal Hairdresser, the Queen, and the Revolution.*** Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2013. 299 p.

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With *Marie Antoinette's Head: The Royal Hairdresser, the Queen, and the Revolution,* Will Bashor presents the tumultuous period leading up to and following the French Revolution through the eyes of the author of the last queen of France's extravagant hair styles. It is a rags to riches to rags story of a Gascon born in Pamiers in the very south Midi-Pyrenees region of France. Thanks to extensive historical research, correspondence and the memoirs of the royal hairdresser himself, Léonard Alexis Autié (1746-1820) comes to life in Bashor's biography and historical re-telling of the final days of the French monarchy.

Autié's creative genius is the focus of the first part of Bashor's account of the pre-revolutionary period. This is perhaps the most revealing aspect of the research, opening a window on the very private and intimate relationship between the hairdresser and Marie Antoinette. Autié comes to Paris from Bordeaux to make his fortune and amazingly networks his way and hairdresses his way via the theater into the employ of several noble women such as the Marquise de Langeac and Madame du Barry, the king's new mistress. Because of his innovative and attention-catching hairstyles he relatively quickly reaches the inner circle of domestics that care on a daily basis for the young dauphine.

True to the stereotype of the hairdresser/confidant, Léonard Autié develops a close bond with Marie Antoinette that he chronicles in his memoirs according to Bashor: "Léonard's wittiness and his own irreverence brought him favor with the queen" (86). Bashor focuses most of his attention on this

relationship via the translation of dialog recorded by Léonard in his memoirs. Perhaps fortunately for Léonard Autié, his close rapport with the queen and the royal family in general, including the king, makes him a good choice to serve as messenger between the royals and the princes living in exile. He becomes, says Bashor, "an inept secret agent" in the service of the royal family during their seclusion in the Tuilleries and in the preparation of the horribly failed escape plan.

Bashor acknowledges that Autié's memoirs are more-than-likely exaggerated, self-aggrandizing and typically "Gascon." One of the most valuable contributions that Bashor's work makes is perhaps the observations of daily life, not of the queen, but of the hairdresser himself. From this account, we are to learn that a hairdresser developed fierce loyalty to his queen and was willing to sacrifice his own financial stability in the interests of the royalty in exile. Furthermore, some of the stories of survival, not of the royals but of working people, give insight into the complexity of life at the time. Ironically, the relationship that made Autié's fortune also brings him to financial ruin in the end. Whether or not Bashor's reliance upon Autié's memoirs gives a true account of the role Autié played in the historical events of the period, it does provide a refreshing look at the man behind the hairstyles that have become so symbolic of the decadence and extravagance of the last queen of France.

John Burns. ***Contemporary Hispanic Poets: Cultural Production in the Global and Digital Age.*** Amherst, NY: Cambria, 2015. 195p.

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True to the subtitle, "cultural production" is the defining criteria for the selection of contemporary Hispanic poets discussed in the most recent volume of Cambria's Latin American Literatures and Cultures Series. By contextualizing the poet in the global marketplace, John Burns examines how the digital "information" age and the cultural landscape shift the role of the poet in contemporary society. Three forces emerge that mold poetic production: the neoliberal political context, the multinational globalization of the marketplace, and the control of information. For Burns, poetry is a cultural object, so it not only requires a cultural studies approach, it creates

culture. Far from an innocent cultural trifle, poetry contributes to the fundamental cultural debates of our time. With this volume, Burns likewise contributes to the fundamental cultural debate of our time, situating and imagining the poet at the center of the debate, rather than at the periphery.

Foremost in these debates is the impact of five 5 "-scapes," identified by Burns, from which our generation cannot escape: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes.

Owing to its multifaceted nature and its potential for revenue generation at the dawn of the twenty first century, media exploded into a multimedia blitz of genre-bending techniques that break the moldy old molds of poetry. No longer counting syllables and matching rhyming consonants and vowels, poetry is not limited to words on a piece of paper. Now it can be virtual on a computer screen, written in the air with airplane contrails, or carved onto the floor of the Atacama Desert. Poetry, one of the oldest performance arts by roving troubadors who recited heroic ballads, has taken its place among mediascapes as a new form of installation art. Performances enhanced and emboldened by media have taken on new parameters, breaking the physical bounds of the page and the stage. Literally, now all the world is a stage where airplanes trace verses across the sky that float off into vapor in minutes, or earthmovers carve three-kilometer-long trenches into the Atacama Desert floor that will retain the message, "ni pena, ni miedo" ("neither shame, nor fear") for centuries. Media access and attention appropriate the figure of the poet, turning him into a media figure, culture figure, cult figure, or making the figure of the bad boy *poeta maldito* appropriate.

Among the carefully drawn portraits of contemporary cultural poets, Raúl Zurita has pride of place. In the ethnoscape of Chilean culture, he was anointed Neruda's poetic heir by *El Mercurio* newspaper and Chile's unofficial literary critic, José Miguel Ibánez Langlois, also known as Ignacio Valente, a direct proof of how the mediascape sculpts the profile of culture. Both Leopoldo María Panero (Spain's blog cult figure) and Raúl Zurita are painted as "Mad Precursors" since they were both "traumatized to madness" during oppressive authoritarian regimes, Panero by Franco, and Zurita by Pinochet. Both now have similar cultural functions as the voice of conscience in today's ideoscape of cultural expression. By integrating art and life, Zurita's 1978 group of writers and artists known as Colectivo Acciones de Arte (CADA) blurred the line between art and politics to transform Chile's social foundations by creating what Nelly Richard called

"Arte Refractario, fragmented and fragmentary art that cannot be distributed for easy consumption." Their ideoscapes offered an antidote to the intense consumerism and personal isolation by orchestrating collective "happenings" and experiences that involved large groups of people from all classes. Zurita attained both fame and a poeta maldito reputation when he tried to blind himself with lye in imitation of the blind seer. Then, he scarred his own face by burning his cheek in attempt to show solidarity with the wounded body of the Chilean nation under Pinochet. These performance acts drew attention, and branded him as a mystical figure. Zunita literally embodies poetry, to the point that his electroencephalogram (EEG) is included in his first book *Purgatorio*, representing the maximum objectification of the poet and reducing his epilectic brain waves to electric impulses. References to Dante's *Inferno* in the titles of his three Works--*Purgatorio*, *Paradiso*, and *Inferno*—juxtapose sacred and profane throughout Zurita's poetic production.

A more recent pair of poets profiled in chapter 4 epitomize the appropriation of new media. Juan Felipe Herrera and Guillermo Gómez Peña hybridize their texts by incorporating mass culture, including multilingual, multigeneric, and multinational phenomena often associated with globalization. By crossing language and border themes, they enliven discourses of identity and the notion of the authority of the artist. Gómez Peña, probably the volume's best known poet to U.S. audiences, insists on visibility, and promotes an aggressive notion of identity, bolstered by multimedia performances such as segregating the audience as they enter the theater based on language and privilege stereotypes. Described as "not *sensustricto Chicano,*" he takes advantage of media to magnify his own process of *Chicanofication*. More than creating poetry, we can almost see each step of cultural production and moral force unfolding as the poet imagines himself in the global, digital age, and on the global, digital stage.

Juan Felipe Herrera "writes some of the best Chicano poetry today," according to critic Alfred Arteaga, as Burns validates and concurs, differentiating him from Gómez Peña by noting that Herrera's "poetic practice could be reduced to the act of holding hands or embracing. Identity is not a mask to be aggressively thrust at the readers." It is intimacy of the experience of justice that distinguishes Herrera's work. By carefully evaluating each poet's cultural place and applying his special talent for accurate translation of Spanish texts, John Burns presents a clear and detailed picture of the most influential contemporary Hispanic poets of the current global and digital age.

Globalization and neoliberalism go hand in hand, and hand in pocket, with money, creating financescapes that are hard to resist, even for poets. Thanks to swift diffusion by mediascapes and technoscapes, the ideoscapes and ethnoscapes that these poets create give them literal and literary capital, and—perhaps the most spendable and spreadable of all--figurative cultural capital.

Craig Johnson. ***The Highwayman.*** New York: Viking, 2016. 190p. and ***An Obvious Fact.*** New York: Viking, 2016. 317p.

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Wyoming is the tenth largest state in the Union and, at the same time, the least populous of the fifty that constitute our Republic. Its roughly half million inhabitants get to roam almost ninety-eight thousand square miles without many obstacles, save for the winters and the mountains. When the natives long for big city lights, they head for the state capital of Cheyenne where sixty thousand souls work and play. That's as big as it gets in this western landscape, and yet it's here where Craig Johnson not only unfolds his fictional microcosm but also where he himself has chosen to make his home, in the tiny hamlet of "Ucross, population twenty-five," as all of his books' dust jackets make known, proudly and tongue in cheek and, no doubt, at his request.

How and why this West Virginia native (Huntington, 1961) came to the great state of Wyoming would probably be of interest to many of his readers but what truly matters is how well he has adapted to his adopted habitat as a dozen full length novels, as many short stories and two novellas set primarily in Absaroka County—not one of the 23 real entities—attest. Its seven thousand square miles ("about the size of Vermont or New Hampshire") have been in the care of sheriff Walter Longmire for twenty four years, along with a seasoned dispatcher and a small band of deputies, among them a Basque greenhorn and a transplanted Italo-American lovely who happens to share the lawman's bed on occasion. Their headquarters, previously the Absaroka County Library, can be found in the center of Durant, a town that

may remind some of the city of Buffalo given its similar size (pop. 4,615), location (20 mi from Ucross), and distinctly sounding weekly newspapers (*Durant Courant* vs. *Buffalo Bulletin*). After almost a dozen years (*The Cold Dish* [2004] inaugural Longmire book), Craig Johnson's fans are well acquainted with the comings and goings of the usual coterie of characters that make the Longmire series so thoroughly enjoyable. Walt's predecessor, former boss and mentor, Lucian Connally, now a resident of the Durant House for Assisted Living, endures old age with daily doses of Pappy Van Winkle, but still manages to lend a hand when duty, or Walt, calls. The lawyer Cady, Martha and Walt's daughter, "the greatest legal mind alive," and the apple of her widowed father's eye, returns to Wyoming when she herself is widowed. Henry Standing Bear, member of the Cheyenne Nation, owner of the Red Pony and Walt's oldest and best friend, reveals himself often times as the indispensable member of a tag team that always comes out on top. Dorothy Caldwell, proprietor of the Busy Bee Café, doubles as its chief cook and serves our sheriff not only his requested "the usual," but also heaping clues regarding the case at hand. There are many identifiable others in the loveable cast who help the protagonist deal with the malfeasant antagonists that move the plots of each individual work, be they short stories, novellas or full length novels.

The Highwayman is the second of Johnson's published Longmire novellas (*Spirit of Steamboat* was the first, published in 2013). The author labels them both "Stories," but they are much more than that given their length--146 pages in the first instance and 190 in the second--and their complexity, making them a near perfect fit for Henry James' definition of the rarely practiced mid-length narrative genre which is the *novella*. Like *Spirit of Steamboat*, *The Highwayman* is set in winter when days are short, the roadways icy, and the cold and the interminable darkness engender incidents that imperil members of the Wyoming Highway Patrol in troubling and mystifying situations. Not quite a ghost story in the sense that Dickens would have understood, though Johnson pays ample tribute to his "The Signal-Man" ("which I consider to be one of the world's finest written ghost stories"), *The Highwayman* combines American Indian lore, western legend, law enforcement's *esprit-des-corps* and current day gender issues to produce a tale that is satisfying even to the most skeptical reader among us. Here prevails a legendary, almost mystical aura that dispenses with the notion of past and present time and substitutes a linear continuum which seamlessly links the lives of a retired highway patrolman

and his young female successor as both deal with life and death situations on the state highways. Set in the ageless ("Precambrian") landscape of the narrow Wind River Canyon carved over centuries by the Big Horn River, the story presents an enigma that sheriff Longmire must solve if he is to save the novice patrol officer Rosey Wayman's (an appellative not to be overlooked) career and possibly her life. The death and drama that take place in the three granite tunnels of the thirty-mile long Scenic Byway (Route 20), first patrolled by Trooper Mike Harlow a generation earlier and now by Rosey, who is haunted by a midnight caller, are real enough to transform what could have been a simple ghost story into a multilayered tale that appeals as much to the reader's sense of curiosity as to our sense of wonder.

An Obvious Fact begins and ends not in Durant but at the foot of Devil's Tower in the northeast corner of the state and on the outskirts of the town of Hulett. The main action transpires in the Black Hills territory, an area that spills over from Wyoming into neighboring South Dakota. Here, every August, the city of Sturgis is descended upon by thousands of motorcycle riders in a raucous week-long celebration of Harley-Davidson noise and honky-tonk. Euphemistically labelled "The Sturgis Motorcycle Rally" is anything but what its banner suggests. Sheriff Longmire and the Bear enter a nether world of round-the-clock lawlessness where drinking, drag racing, brawling and worse prevail for the better part of seven days and nights. Ostensibly in Sturgis for Henry to participate one last time in the famous Jackpine Gypsies Hill Climb contest that he'd won long ago (1974) before retiring from such motorcycle insanity, Longmire has been called on to help the local police investigate criminal activity that the reader suspects is beyond their capabilities. The plot not unexpectedly thickens as old acquaintances turn up (eg., Lola, Henry's ex and possible mother of their son and his probable killer) and new ones are introduced to create a parallel scenario, but much deadlier and infinitely more threatening than the redneck world of tattoed bikers and their leather clad women. The sinister figure here is Robert Nance, the wealthiest, most powerful and feared character in the area, bent—naturally—on getting richer and more powerful by any means at hand. So great is his threat to national security that a host of undercover federal agents have been on his trail even before the Sheriff shows up. The MacGuffin is a polymer composite, undetectable by any scanner in current use, yet so incredibly strong as to be practical for the manufacture of firearms—think back on the Clint Eastwood film "In the Line of Duty," where bad guy John

Malkovich means to assassinate the president of the United States with a small hand gun fabricated from a similar substance. Nance has the chemical formula, its secret manufacturing process and the means to produce it, and intends to sell it to the highest worldwide bidder. Naturally, in the end, he is outwitted and—together with his accomplices—apprehended by Walt, who gladly turns him over to the feds in exchange for the anonymity that affords him the freedom to drive Henry's T-Bird back to his natural habitat of Absaroka county while the Bear, mounted on his vintage Indian Four sidecar, rides point with the hill climb winner's trophy "tied to the headlight à la Marlon Brando in 'The Wild One'."

How a small Wyoming town sheriff gets to be the hero of such a large scale operation and yet subsequently remains content with just his pooch named "Dog," his small circle of friends (Henry Standing Bear and Lucius), his undersheriff and lover (Vic Moretti), and his job back in Durant is a testament to the narrative skills of Craig Johnson as he creates a world so appealing in Absaroka county that no one ever wants to leave it—not his characters and certainly not his readers.

Christopher Lupke. ***The Sinophone Cinema of Hou Hsiao-hsien: Culture, Style, Voice and Motion.*** Amherst, NY: Cambria, 2016. 376 p.

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Pacific Lutheran University

Christopher Lupke's lucid book on the often challenging cinema of Hou Hsiao-hsien (Hou Xiaoxian) is divided into seven chapters, the first of which is so substantial that it could serve as a mini treatise on the director's work in and of itself, particularly in its deft treatment of Hou's transition from commercial film and television early in his career to a leading and highly distinctive auteur of avant-garde cinema since roughly the middle 1980s. This first chapter is followed by an in-depth reading of Hou's relationship with his main script-writer, the author Zhu Tianwen, wherein Lupke teases out Zhu's subtle but nonetheless significant contribution to Hou's oeuvre. From there he tackles the equally subtle relationship between Hou and Ozu Yasujiro, the Japanese filmmaker to whom Hou is most indebted even if--as Hou maintains in an interview fully translated and included with others in the

Lupke's ample appendix—he had not even seen an Ozu film until well after his own style had coalesced (238). The remaining chapters include in-depth readings of *City of Sadness* (1989), *Flowers of Shanghai* (1998), and his most recent work, the *Assassin* (2015). With the addition of the interviews, as well as filmography and bibliographic material, this is without a doubt a complete treatment of Hou's work.

The primary target of English-language analysis of Hou's work has been on the rather extraordinary stylistic features of his filmmaking, his favoring of long-takes, for instance, or refusal to use pans and other guiding cinematographic strategies to lead viewers' experience of his work. Hou's style is particularly distinctive in terms of its treatment of time, with slow, real-time sequences unfolding in "non-Hollywood" fashion even while major historical events pass elliptically in the background. The treatment of space, though, is also critical to the experience, as the absence of close-ups and other standard features of classical filmmaking leaves the viewer to meditate on "denaturalized" frames (115), spaces which themselves can form objects of contemplation. Hou very often withdraws any privileged subjectivity, allowing the entire diegetic scene to become the mere physical structures through which characters of his films pass, pause, interact. Lupke addresses all of these stylistic features, and at times provides intriguing explanations of them, as for instance the fact that remote cameras are better for allowing non-professional actors, the like of which Hou prefers, to develop more natural performances without the unnerving intrusion of cameras. He also fully examines the arch of Hou's stylistic development, from his early work as a commercial filmmaker to his rise as a highly idiosyncratic artist. But Lupke has delved more deeply into the content of Hou Hisao-hsien's work than most other critics who have written about him before, and it is this content focus that distinguishes his book.

Though some of the more obvious themes are well explored in Lupke's work, such as urban-rural rifts and class struggles, the real distinction for his content-based analysis is his examination of filiality, a key feature of Hou's work even when not explicitly explored. Filiality, or behavioral codes demonstrating reverence for one's elders both living and, notably, already passed, is explained by Lupke to be much more than one among many Confucian values. Filiality is in fact at root of subjectivity and identity formation in China, and in many cases more broadly in all of East Asia, a process towards personhood that corresponds to but is also fundamentally

different from the individual-based-self developed in the West. The intellectual territory here explored is vast, of course, and though Lupke's description is certainly persuasive, it is necessarily truncated (eg. 83-85). Nonetheless, this subject is the essential drama of Hou's work, and part of the reason Hou rises above internecine struggles of mainland China versus Taiwan power dynamics, rises to the level of prominent spokesperson for the human condition precisely because of these overarching themes quietly reverberating throughout his work. By taking examination of filiality as a main method of analysis, Lupke is able to also cogently situate Hou's art vis a vis that of Japanese filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu, whose "mono no aware" aesthetic aligns in many respects with Hou's work, but whose cultural and historical moment, namely post-war Japan, are fundamentally different from Hou's experience.

Most of all, and viewed from the point of view of filiality, the question of Taiwanese identity comes to the fore in all its magnificent poignancy. The main characters in Hou's work are often restive, moving constantly but never arriving at any significant destination. This, as Lupke explains, is a direct result of a major breakdown in basic social-psychological structures based on filial relationships, leading in turn to "a falling out with the mediocre, illegitimate status quo" (154). For instance, in A-hao, leading character in Hou's 1985 *A Time to Live, A Time to Die,* we find

> . . . illustration of larger historical and ethnic predicament in which A-hao, his siblings, and their peers find themselves. With their grandmother living in the past, which is synonymous with mainland China, their parents trapped between worlds, and with them facing the new reality of permanent life in Taiwan but with no support network on which to rely. (53)

Such a multi-generational view of A-hao's situation clearly supersedes the simplistic choice of either supporting the Taiwan governmental regime or opposing it. What critics take to be ineffectual "murmurings of political critique" are actually Hou's unflinchingly and necessarily ambiguous statements about life in Taiwan.

The critical focal point for the discussion of Taiwan identity is undoubtedly Hou's major film *City of Sadness*, to which Lupke appropriately devotes an entire chapter. The charge by Hou's critics was that his depiction of the 1947 February 28 incident, where newly installed Guomindang (KMT) government brutally silenced opposition to their rule, was not

sufficiently realistic, or explicit, or in any case failed to adequately indict the government for execution of innocent civilians, among other crimes. Lupke demonstrates, instead, how Hou's depiction is actually "willfully mutilated" (114), fully tackling the impasse of Taiwan's political culture, where it is not in fact possible to assert either that Taiwan is simply a part of mainland China, or entirely separate, for just as there is no denying a cultural link between the two, there is also no denying a vast difference both culturally and of course politically speaking. The triumph of Hou's work can be found in the completeness of his picture of Taiwan multiculturalism, with a rich linguistic spectrum comprising Japanese, Taiwanese, Hakka, Hoklo, and of course Mandarin Chinese, articulating the intertwined subethnicities that constitute in East Asian transnationalism at its most complex (89). Hou presents this picture, moreover, with full awareness of the problem that such representation poses in the first place, so that his unconventional filmmaking stylistically speaking melds to his content, one resounding to the other in a mutual reinforcement. To reduce that picture to a binary case for or against whichever Taiwan political authority is to miss the better part of what Hou Hsiao-hsien has accomplished as an artist and filmmaker.

A similar tendency to expansive intellectual territory is evidenced in Lupke's discussion of "gendered voice" as he illuminates, in "Zhu Tianwen and the Sotto Voce of Gendered Expression" (Chapter 2), the alliance between Hou and his script-writing partner author Zhu Tianwen. At the outset of the chapter the broader issue of female voice in Hou's film is broached, and the observation that through Zhu's influence a "sotto voce" phenomenon, wherein a powerful female perspective emerges more dramatically precisely for its muted quality, is promising. However, this broad discussion is not pursued at length, and the chapter moves on to more textually-based discussion of Zhu and Hou's connection in literary terms. The literary discussion continues the gendered perspective to a degree, as one of the major authors of Zhu and Hou's connection is the somewhat feminized Shen Congwen. Yet it is also here that some of Lupke's sentences become a bit too attenuated, as in "This female voice may in fact be emblematic of a tenacious power that [Zhu Tianwen] subtly exercises in many of Hou's films..." (49); and "His newly discovered ability to plumb the psychological depths of his protagonists was likely something that he inherited from the literary style of Zhu Tianwen" (53) [emphasis mine]. As a shortcoming, these occasional lapses in expository force are certainly forgivable given, once

again, the otherwise rigorous academic standard and ambition of Lupke's treatment of Hou's work as a whole.

In essence, this is a thorough discussion one of the most eloquent and refined spokespersons for Taiwanese experience ever to produce film. It is also a book about an auteur whose multiplicity of voices, languages and cultures all interwoven and truly situated within their precisely local milieus emerges effortlessly in the pantheon of truly great filmmakers.

José Antonio Marina. ***Despertad al diplodocus.*** Barcelona: Fundación Educativa Universidad de Padres, 2015. 219p.

Elia Romera Figueroa
University of Wyoming

Despertad al diplodocus, más que un manual sobre educación, ambiciona ser una conspiración educativa. José Antonio Marina, conocido filósofo, pedagogo y escritor toledano, abre su libro acotando la definición del verbo conspirar. Liga esta idea con el deseo de "respirar juntos," estar de acuerdo, convocar, unirse varias personas para conseguir algo (5). Y subraya está última acepción con el fin de convertir al pasivo lector en uno activo, que tome conciencia de que este libro llama a la curiosidad dormida, a estimular a sus perezosos lectores para que dejen de ser observadores y pasen a ser conspiradores del cambio educativo.

De lector a conspirador, este es uno de los objetivos explícitos que persigue el libro, llamar a la acción. Marina intercala en su narrativa cuadros informativos donde amplía explicaciones, incluye ejemplos o menciona alguna fuente bibliográfica externa para profundizar sobre su estudio. Recomiendo no dejar de leerlos y de hecho repasarlos, porque sin duda son uno de los despertadores que enciende Marina para cautivar al lector. Otra ruidosa alarma es la cantidad, casi abrumadora, de celebres expertos a los que recurre, desde Michael Fullan, John Hattie, Daniel Kahneman, Joseph Renzulli, Eric Hanushek, Thomas Kane, Urie Bronfenbrenner, David Shenk, Robert D. Putnam, Francis Fukuyama, Daniel Innerarity, Peter M. Senge, Ken Robinson, Joaquín Fuster… La lista de reconocidos investigadores elegidos por el autor, donde sorprende la escasa presencia femenina, consigue que el lector acuda frecuentemente a buscadores donde saciar su curiosidad y

expandir su conocimiento sobre quiénes son estos referentes. Marina se adelanta al interés que puedan despertar y nos invita, en el último párrafo de su introducción, a que nos adentremos en la página web que acompaña a este libro (www.movilizacioneducativa.org), donde recopila todas sus referencias bibliográficas y desarrolla su documentación.

Mediante este amplio despliegue de nombres propios y recursos, Marina intenta impulsar, a unos ya interesados lectores, al cambio educativo. Pero, ¿y todos aquellos que no tienen la curiosidad por abrir este libro? A ellos es a los que realmente Marina quiere despertar. Por ello articula su libro entorno a cinco motores del cambio—a cada cual otorga un capítulo--la escuela, la familia, la ciudad, la empresa y el estado. Marina señala que todo proceso de transformación necesita tres pilares imprescindibles: creer que es necesario cambiar, querer hacerlo y saber cómo hacerlo. Y esta parece ser la finalidad del libro: concienciar de la necesidad de transformar la educación, alentar a la conspiración y proponer una hoja de ruta.

Entre sus propuestas destaca la creación de una ciencia de la evolución cultural y del proceso educativo. Esta superciencia ayudaría por ejemplo a determinar qué contenidos deberían transmitirse en las escuelas. Otra de sus iniciativas más esperanzadoras es impulsar la sociedad del aprendizaje, donde los cinco motores estén en continua búsqueda de nuevos retos e iniciativas. Además, apela a la complicidad, a la colaboración entre los cinco motores. La escuela necesita a la familia, la familia a la ciudad, la ciudad a la empresa y la empresa al estado y viceversa. Añade que la movilización de todas las partes requiere metas concretas. De tal modo que fija cinco objetivos a cumplir en un plazo de cinco años. Resumidamente estos son: reducir el abandono escolar al diez por ciento, subir treinta y cinco puntos en la clasificación PISA, aumentar el número de alumnos excelentes y acortar la distancia entre los mejores y los peores, favorecer al máximo desarrollo personal de todos los alumnos y fomentar la adquisición de las habilidades del siglo XXI (33-34). En las páginas del libro desarrollará de forma más detallada estos cinco objetivos, al mismo tiempo que enfatizará en la importancia de los cinco motores de la transformación. Marina resalta que su gran esfuerzo ha consistido en localizar estos cinco agentes del cambio y destacar la necesidad imperiosa de que la sociedad, en todo su conjunto, forme parte del aprendizaje. Asume que ha dejado a un lado temas de extraordinaria importancia, y ruega calma, pues asegura que lo demás se atajará más adelante.

La corta historia de la democracia española cuenta con un sinfín de

reformas educativas, cada cuatro años prácticamente un nuevo terremoto que la pone patas arriba, destruyendo y creando de nuevo por completo. La poderosa máquina de la educación se ha ido atontando y adormilando ante los tremendos despropósitos a los que ha tenido que hacer frente. Marina manifiesta que no son más leyes contradictorias lo que necesita nuestro sistema educativo, sino que urge recuperar su vitalidad, su confianza, su poder. Él apuesta por despertar al diplodocus, conspirando entre todos para que escuche la necesidad y la voluntad de que vuelva a funcionar, y juntos colaboremos para su transformación.

Carine McCandless. ***The Wild Truth.*** New York: HarperOne, 2014. 277p.

Cassandra (Bishop) Stephens
University of Nevada Reno

In her 2014 memoir, *The Wild Truth*, Carine McCandless addresses many of the questions that the audience is left with after reading John Krakauer's 1996 *Into the Wild*. Nearly two decades later, Carine reveals that she asked Krakauer to leave out some of the most startling circumstances, many revealed by letters that Chris had written to her, explaining Chris's decision to remove himself from society. Carine's account follows Sean Penn's 2007 award-winning film adaptation of Krakauer's book. Penn's visual depiction of Chris's story captivated viewers with a solid casting of characters, breathtaking cinematography, and an original soundtrack by Eddie Vedder. Krakauer's book, Penn's film, and Carine's memoir, when analyzed together as a three-part account of Chris's quest, represent three different perspectives on his story, yet each perspective originates, in some sense, with Carine. This first-hand perspective renders her memoir as a credible account of previously unknown or unconfirmed details surrounding Chris's disappearance and the abuse that she and Chris had sought to leave behind.

Carine portrays herself as having a close bond with her brother Chris, one in which only the two could truly understand each other. Since they had witnessed their parents' violent outbursts that were often directed at them, the two siblings were compelled to withhold information that they felt could not be disclosed to others, convinced that no one would believe them. In *The*

Wild Truth, Carine admits that she knew of her brother's plans to "divorce" himself from their parents through the letters that he wrote her, although she was not quite sure at the time how he would do so. Carine also discusses her brother's disillusionment when he visited family friends, who revealed the truth about his father's first wife, Marcia McCandless, a woman who did manage to remove herself and Chris's and Carine's half siblings from the abusive grip of their father. Walt McCandless had been living a double-life, maintaining two separate households before Marcia left the immediate picture and Billie McCandless donned the role of Walt's sole partner. After this change in the family dynamic, readers of Carine's memoir learn that Billie regularly put Chris and Carine in the car to go look for a new house where they could start over without Walt; however, Billie never followed through with these promises of a more stable life for her children. She simply could not break out of the cycle of abuse.

The domestic abuse Carine's reveals in *The Wild Truth* not only sheds light on more of Chris's story, but it also details Carine's struggles and determination not to follow in the footsteps of her parents, specifically her mother. Ultimately, Carine's narrative primarily focuses on her life and how her family influenced and later tangentially interacted in it. This striking account of abuse, heartbreak, and triumph follows Carine through failed relationships, marriages, bonding with her half siblings, and her plunge into parenthood. The book is at times difficult to follow, often replicating the fractured feel of Krakauer's and Penn's presentations of Chris's story, sometimes with characters who appear quickly to be explained and developed later after the narrative has moved on to a different topic. However, what some might find distracting in the narration is quickly recovered by Carine's vivid and engaging descriptions, which are further elaborated by her inclusion of many color photographs of family and friends throughout the book. For anyone who has followed the Chris McCandless story throughout the last two decades, *The Wild Truth* is an essential read. It fills in the gaps that Krakauer's and Penn's representations leave behind, occasionally correcting minor details that occur with the dramatization of most adaptations to film. Most importantly, Carine McCandless provides a perspective that is no longer filtered through that of another person, and, in that sense, one may find a definitive perspective on Chris McCandless's story in *The Wild Truth.*

Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado. ***Screening Neoliberalism: Transforming Mexican Cinema*** 1988-2012. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2014. 291p.

Jennie I. Daniels
The College of Idaho

Sticky floors, the smell of stale popcorn, and a sense of nostalgia pervade the opening anecdote of Ignacio Sánchez Prado's *Screening Neoliberalism.* An excellent analysis of how Mexican cinema mirrors neoliberal socio-cultural transformations, the book provides a critical discussion of the shift away from state-imposed ideologies toward the diversification of genre and theme and expanding international spectatorship. With the ambitious, overarching goal of providing "the most wide-ranging study of contemporary Mexican film to date" (10), Sánchez Prado delves into close readings of dozens of both high-grossing box office hits and less popular or niche films. *Screening Neoliberalism* is an accessible text that merges multidisciplinary theory with close readings, appropriate not only for scholars in the field, but also for instructors who teach Mexican cinema.

Sánchez Prado centers his argument on the two-part claim that privatization "led to major changes in the communities of spectatorship and in the social function of film" (6), which "makes cinema a uniquely apt site for studying the social and cultural impact of neoliberalism in Mexico" (7). Instead of addressing this claim chronologically, Sánchez Prado organizes his analysis conceptually. The first three chapters address the decline of Mexican nationalism in cinema, the rise of the romantic comedy genre, and political and ideological shifts in Mexican cinema dating from 1988 (the year President Salinas de Gortari took office) through the late nineties and beginning of the 2000s, when films that embody the zenith of these trends were released. Though this strategy occasionally requires the reader to cross-reference production years, nonetheless the conceptual organization is highly effective since it lays the groundwork for the fourth chapter's examination of these processes on four internationally-acclaimed Mexican directors. Sánchez Prado mitigates potential confusion through frequent references to films discussed in earlier chapters, which highlight salient characteristics pertinent to newly presented information. In his conclusion, Sánchez Prado takes the reader into the present "after neoliberalism" (209; roughly 2007 forward), questionably labeled given neoliberalism continued expansion and pressures. Still, the numerous films presented in the conclusion indicate increased

departure from earlier narrative and aesthetic languages.

Apart from the text's organization, *Screening Neoliberalism* employs a unique methodology that builds on the theoretical framework of Cultural Studies scholars such as Néstor García Canclini and Carlos Monsiváis, and social scientist David Harvey's socio-cultural definition of neoliberalism. Sánchez Prado's three-pronged approach utilizes Mexican social science literature, responses from Mexican film critics, and analyses from the English-language academy. This framework places close readings in juxtaposition with critical film analyses, while taking into account audience demographics and turnout, censorship and controversy, and production costs, distribution, and investing agencies. Including the latter without short-changing the former strengthens the author's argument that Mexican cinema draws attention to cultural shifts introduced through neoliberal economic policy.

However, this methodology sometimes elides the negative impact that neoliberalism has had on the poorest social sectors. Though neoliberalism's effects are adequately acknowledged in the text, its focus on the shift toward middle class concerns and the celebration of Mexican cinema's diversification, international audiences, and political potential align with the very processes of neoliberal eschewal of the lower classes that the text describes. A progressive intellectual himself, Sánchez Prado acknowledges that, often, critics privilege popular culture and films with artistic or progressive agendas. This, he argues, may lead to "dismissing the culture of the middle and upper classes" (226) and that in contrast, his "study suggests [that] the processes underwent by Mexican cinema during the last twenty-five years have much to tell us: about cinema, about neoliberalism, and about what Mexican society… has to say about itself" (226). This argument suggests that the middle and upper classes speak for Mexican society writ large, and merits further nuance regarding the role of neoliberalism in that process.

Notwithstanding, *Screening Neoliberalism* successfully employs an innovative methodology to explain the impact of declining state influence and increasing privatization on film production. The first chapter uses films like *Como agua para chocolate, Danzón, Cabeza de Vaca,* and *El crimen del Padre Amaro* to explore Mexican nationalism during the neoliberal transition. As state financial support for cinema decreased through privatization, cinematic representations of the nation underwent significant transformations that, while increasingly privileging American and neoliberal cultural codes, did not wholly relinquish traditional representations of *Mexicanidad*. Sánchez

Prado argues that a spiral most adequately describes this process, as films break from and return to traditional languages of national identity. The next chapter examines the way privatization led to the rise of middle and upper class audiences and a decline in working class spectatorship, though Mexican cinema had previously targeted the latter. Higher entrance tickets priced out the lower classes, and the rise of the romantic comedy illustrates a growing orientation toward and preference for this U.S. American genre. Close readings of movies like *La tarea, Sólo con tu pareja, Sexo, pudor y lágrimas*, and *Vivir mata* demonstrate the often conflicted relationship between the middle classes and the economic constraints of neoliberal processes. The third chapter analyzes political engagement during this period through films such as *Rojo amanecer, El bulto, Entre Pancho Villa y una mujer desnuda, Todo el poder,* and *Ley de Herodes*. In a rare departure from Mexican and United States contexts, Sánchez Prado places neoliberal Mexican cinema within a wider historical framework of Latin American cinema; in particular, Argentine and Brazilian film, *cinéma engagé*, and Third Cinema. This discussion helps to explain the exceptional elements of Mexican cinema, and distinguishes it from other national cinemas responding to post-dictatorship democratic transitions. In his readings, state agendas decrease, while middle class concerns about violence and economic well-being assume center stage on the neoliberal Mexican screen.

In the last chapter, Sánchez Prado argues that the international stardom of Mexican directors Guillermo del Toro, Alejandro González Iñarritu, Alfonso Cuarón, and Carlos Reygadas is the direct result of the processes described in the first three chapters. Their films' displacement of Mexican nationalism, aesthetic and narrative appeal to international audiences accustomed to Hollywood and U.S. independent film, and their "adaptability to a politics of representation fully compatible with neoliberalism" (p. 179) respond to market pressures of film as commodity and the growth of global art cinema.

Overall, Screening *Neoliberalism* provides a synthesis of information and analyses about Mexican cinema during the neoliberal transition of the nineties and into the 2000s, and demonstrates that through these films, greater cultural sea changes are laid bare. Useful to scholars and students alike, this text has achieved its goal of being the most comprehensive study of Mexican cinema to date.

Ricardo F. Vivancos Pérez, ***Radical Chicana Poetics.*** New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. 248p.

Rachel Spaulding
Sarah Spoon
Emporia State University

Ricardo F. Vivancos Pérez poses a seminal question in his text, *Radical Chicana Poetics* (2013), and implicitly challenges his readers to find the answer: Can (or should) a non-Chicano man *really* author a book that (re)presents the Chicana feminist voice? By the end of his "Disclaimer," the reader can confidently respond with a resounding "¡Si se puede!" In a witty play with words, Vivancos Pérez inverts an expected formula and tactic of religious women writers, *captatio benevolentiae*, and draws the reader's attention to the "Malevolentiae" that persists in academic discourse about valid authorial subject positions. Fueled by his own subject position and his outside-insider tension, Vivancos Pérez writes a text that maps what he terms "dangerous beast poetics." He explains this term as the poetics developed and wielded by the in-process Chicana writing subjects whose "complex approach to commonality" (106) is "not only about creativity and raising consciousness, but also about appreciating the pedagogical responsibilities involved in creating a poetics, as well as the role of the reader-viewer" (85).

Exploring the works of influential feminist Chicana writers, Vivancos Pérez contextualizes their writings and connects their roles within their literatures diachronically: Chicana writing in the 80's and 90's is directly informed by the Chican@ movement of the 1960s. Radical Chicana Poetics is broken up into three parts, each part made up of two chapters and two junctures, which serve as connective tissue that he deems "peripheral," but importantly suture together the body of work of dangerous beast poetics.

In part one, he analyzes the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga, specifically, their appeal to the mythopoetic and mythohistorical figurations of embodiment and dismemberment. In part two, he comparatively analyzes the textual productions of Ana Castillo, Emma Pérez, Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Sandra Cisneros, whose texts, according to Vivancos Pérez, expand dangerous beast poetics, encompassing Latin American literary tradition, historicism and feminist psychoanalysis. His structure succeeds in recreating the trope of Coyolxauhqui as a dismembered figure.

Chapter one engages Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) with the aim of plotting the author's non-linear developmental and reflective writing process as it relates to Chicana identity formation. Significantly, Vivancos Pérez writes, in detail, about Anzaldúa personal notes written in the margins of her original, rough drafts. This seems to betray Anzaldúa's voice rather than reveal it and perhaps raises an ethical concern.

In chapter two, the author's focus shifts to the analysis of Cherrie Moraga's body of work. In contrast to Anzaldua's paths to amassing Chicana bodies of knowledge, Vivancos Pérez contends that Moraga's concern is specifically with the lesbian bodily experience. That is, for Moraga, the embodiment of memory becomes the point of enunciation and the impetus for social action and reform. Vivancos Pérez profiles Moraga's writings, painting her as a straightforward intellectual who redefined Teatro Campesino about what it means to be a Chican@ with a border experience. Alternately, the third chapter focuses on redefining Chica@ poetry within feminist ideology using Castillo's and Pérez's works to engage Berdotti's nomadic subject. This chapter reiterates the imperative to read for the polycentricity of the writing subject through the analyses of her narrative figurations.

Chapter four traverses *Gaspar de Alba's Sor Juana's Second Dream* (1999) and becomes the ground for Vivancos Pérez's quest to chart dangerous beast poetics. Gaspar de Alba's reinvention of Sor Juana validates the body/text metaphor implicit in these poetics while simultaneously exploring the Chicana poet as a nomadic and desiring subject through her focus on language and sexuality (115). In chapter five, the author examines Cisneros's *Caramelo* arguing her female narrating "I", or the Chicana/girl protagonist, represents the dangerous beast, contentious subject-in-process, and controlling agent of the narrative (148). Vivancos Pérez analyzes the importance and the role of the rebozo (shawl) and argues that the shawl then becomes a metaphor for Chican@ life, culture, and literature, as they all involve a "weaving," whether it be a weaving of words or a weaving of lives. He discusses the themes of interconnectedness and interconnectivity that stitch Radical Chicana poetics together conceptually. In chapter six, Vivancos Pérez examines gender violence in the US-Mexico borderlands and the role of aesthetics to develop an ethics and method for engagement with human rights violations. He contends that texts, like Alba's "Desert Blood" and Portillo's "Senorita Extraviada" ground debates concerning violence against women and speak to a larger global problem of femicide.

This scholar's book plots a course that connects the development of Chican@ thought and its permutations and musings about who writes about the Chican@ lived experience. It provides excellent structure and methodology to guide even the most novice reader of Chican@ literature to grapple with the themes that confront Chicana writing subjects and marks them as dangerous beasts.

Helen Young. ***The Middle Ages in Popular Culture: Medievalism and Genre***. Amherst, NY: Cambria, 2015. 231p.

Albrecht Classen
The University of Arizona

The contributors explore a wide range of contemporary literary and cinematographic works that faintly mirror the Middle Ages. Medievalism is very much 'in' today, and the exponential growth of creative interactions with the pre-modern world through fantasy products certainly justifies and even requires that scholars turn their attention to this popular culture. While medievalists will not find much of interest here, those working in contemporary literature and film are well served by the individual studies. Helen Young introduces the general topic and briefly summarizes each article's main points, but does not investigate the particular character of this new form of medievalism in theoretical terms and does not provide specific reflections on the nature of and reasons for this new wave.

We are obviously in a new phase of Medievalism, well beyond the time of *The Lord of Rings, The Name of the Rose*, or *The Mists of Avalon*, so it would have been helpful if Young had explained this collection's motivation and objectives. Dealing with popular culture through literary and cinematographic works proves to be quite valid, but medievalism finds expression in many other media as well, including card games, video games, and in practical performances (Society of Creative Anachronism), not many of which are considered here, with the exception of *Assassin's Creed*.

Clare Bradford and Rebecca Hutton examine female protagonists in Arthurian television series such as *The Legend of Prince Valiant*, highlighting the clearly noticeable comedy behind it, ridiculing, especially, Arthurian knights. Judy Ann Ford continues to evaluate the image of women in the two films

Red Riding Hood (2011) and Brave (2012). From here Geneva Diamond turns to Julie Gardwood's popular romance novels (no dates or titles are supplied) in which courtship and the subsequent efforts to establish marriage assume the central role, again strangely idealizing patriarchal power structures.

Robin Anne Reid emphasizes that in current medievalist literature, as in Nicola Griffith's *Hild* (2013), the question of authenticity has been abandoned in favor of fantasy and imagination, which also applies to contemporary political activism in defense of women's causes. Alana Bennett discusses the emergence of what she calls 'neo-medieval' music in the contemporary scene that pursues its own agenda and no longer tries to imitate medieval models. Most medieval musicologists, however, would not agree with this assessment, though it would not diminish the aesthetic appeal of neo-medieval music.

Subsequently Elisabeth Herbst Buzay and Emmanuel Buzay focus on the video-game *Assasin's Creed* (2007) where the world of contemporary Rome and the twelfth century are interlaced, all of which then interrogates historical authenticity—unfortunately a euphemism for the disregard of accuracy and factuality. But why would we even look for historical facts in fantasy products?

Carol L. Robinson analyzes gender and sexuality in William Gibson's science fiction novels and Lana and Andy Wachowski's films, which she intriguingly compares with Tolkien's trilogy, thus outlining remarkable connections in the realm of medievalism where the quest for archetypal goals continues. Similarly, the detective genre that draws upon medieval themes attracts abiding interest among modern readers, as Anne McKendry illustrates in her study of novels by Ellis Peters, Peter Tremayne, and Bernard Knight (again, no dates or titles are provided).

Finally, Molly Brown revisits such historicizing novels as those by Kevin Crossley-Holland (*Arthur*) and Catherine Fisher (*Corbenic*) where the notion is ultimately dismissed that there is anything like 'true history' or 'true fact.' Such literature "resist[s] the illusion that fiction can in any way function as a mirror reflecting a 'real' past" (195). This seems, however, like throwing the proverbial baby out with the bath water, assuming that there would be a consensus about what is close to historical truth. Overall, neither the theoretical premises are well developed nor does the reader gain a clear idea about these novels, which address primarily young readers. Brown does not provide publication dates or authors' first names, jumping *in media res* without supplying the necessary background for young readers looking for fantasy material.

This is, unfortunately, the case throughout this book, since the contributors tend to assume that everyone is entirely familiar with their study objects, although we are often facing texts or video games for younger people, while scholars, whom this book targets above all, might not know anything about them. Moreover, we are dealing with a wide range of media and print material, so it would be helpful to have more introductions and basic explanations to contextualize each individual text, game, or film.

The Middle Ages in Popular Culture concludes with a cumbersome collective bibliography, a welcome index, and blurbs about the editor and the contributors. I cannot help but notice the use of rather large margins on all sides; other publishers would have typically produced this book with twenty pages less. Many different genres are represented, but it remains unclear what the sub-title "*Medievalism and Genre*" entails.