

desire is also directed against the mother figure. In her introduction, Magnarelli notes that she has avoided forcing these plays into a theory (24). This may well be true in some cases, but in her analysis of Rovner's *Volvió una noche*, particularly, (postcolonial) theory nearly smothers the play and indeed, seems very much imposed on it; all of the play's humor and cleverness is lost in the theoretical translation, which is a real pity, given how delightful the text is. The reading of *Volvió una noche* is also weakened by Magnarelli's confusing and sometimes contradictory, use of concepts such as trans-culturalization, assimilation, acculturation and transculture.

While reading the essays in *Home Is Where The (He)art Is...* one can trace a kind of development in literary theory over the past twenty-five or so years, from semiotics to postcolonial theory, with important and often illuminating stops at post-structuralism, deconstruction and feminism. Magnarelli has been an agile reader of this theoretical progression, and very adept at applying the lessons learned to important Latin American play texts. Her argument in these essays is that theatre is complicit in the formation, familiarization and often, the de-familiarization of the family romance scripted in these plays. She also sees theatre as having a direct impact on how that romance is written, read and lived, on and off stage. With this in mind, it would have been good in these essays to have added yet one more pivotal stop on the theoretical road: at reception theory, so as to better assess the performance history of these plays, their real and lasting impact on real audiences in Mexico and Argentina. This notwithstanding, Magnarelli has done a very fine job of convincing this reader of the significance of these plays in the history of mid- to late-twentieth century Latin American dramaturgy and theatre.

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Martín-Estudillo, Luis, and Roberto Ampuero. *Post-Authoritarian Cultures. Spain and Latin's America's Southern Cone.* Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2008. 276 pp.

For many centuries Spain and Latin American shared a language and cultural traditions derived from the prominence of Castilian Spanish, Catholicism and certain customs. While those shared features still remain visible today between these geographical areas, there are other less noticeable characteristics that also pertain to both areas. I am referring to the legacy of dictatorial governments that have left an indelible mark in Hispanic societies in both sides of the Atlantic, such as the Francisco Franco's government and the military dictatorships of Latin America. The fact that both Spain and many Latin Americans countries have been impacted by similar regimes has captured the attention of scholars in recent years. Two books that come to mind are Sebastiaan's Faber's *Exile and Cultural Hegemony: Spanish Intellectuals in Mexico (1939–1975)* (Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2002) and Sophia McClennen's *The Dialectics of Exile: Nation, Time, Language and Space in Hispanic Literatures* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue UP, 2004). Moving away from the topic of exile, the collection edited by Luis Martín-Estudillo and Roberto Ampuero focuses on the legacy

of authoritarian regimes and its effect on Spanish, Chilean, Argentine and Uruguayan cultural production.

In the introduction, the editors correctly note that Spain reclaimed its democratic status in the mid 1970s, while Argentine and Uruguay followed suit in the mid 1980s and Chile in the early 1990s. Hence, while it would seem that this transition to democracy has already been completed in all four countries, the essays gathered in this collection attempt to trace the implications for these societies of regaining freedom after several decades—in Spain's case—and years—in Latin America's Southern Cone—of censorship and civic oppression. Given the range of responses and variety of cultural forms, the collection is symmetrically divided into three parts each comprising four essays.

Part One is titled *Contesting Power, Forging Commitments*. The four essays in this section deal with literary responses to the dictatorships. The first one by Jorge Edwards provides a fascinating glimpse into Chile's exceptional character as the longest-standing democracy in Latin America before the coup of 1973. It also details the process of polarization during the years of the Popular Unity government, presenting examples of institutional censorship that were challenged by the arrival of Edwards' novel, *Persona non grata*, and by the support of intellectuals like Enrique Lihn and Nicanor Parra who requested the dissemination of Edwards' novel. In the second article dedicated to Chilean literature, Juliet Lynd's contribution discusses Diamela Eltit's *Lumpérica* (1983) and her more recent novel *Mano de obra* (2002). While admitting that Eltit's avant-garde style and experimental writing and performance in *Lumpérica* may render the novel inaccessible to a large audience, Lynd traces Eltit's concern with the devaluation of humanity both during dictatorship and neo-liberal times. By emphasizing Eltit's preoccupation with the situation of women and the poor in both periods, Lynd successfully illustrates how Eltit's fiction not only represents the margins of Chilean society, but also and more importantly, provides a discordant note that challenges the myth of "the Chilean miracle." Also concentrating on the literary production of the Southern Cone, Hans-Otto Dill focuses on David Viñas's attention to the Argentine military in his novels, particularly *Los dueños de la tierra* (1959), *Jauría* (1974) and *Cuerpo a Cuerpo* (1979). Dill contends that Viñas has a particular vantage point as he himself studied at a military academy, and thus, can provide an insider's view of the authoritarian culture within this institution, noticeable even in democratic periods. For Dill, Viñas rewrites Argentine history highlighting the participation of the army in public life. This aspect is related to this institution's long-standing class alliance with local landowners that dates back from the nineteenth century. The final chapter of this section studies Spanish poetry since the mid 1970s. Luis Quílez Baguez organizes his essays in a chronological manner, dividing the transition to democracy into different periods delimited by philosophical and political ideas in vogue that are deployed as a framework to analyze Spanish poetry as a reaction and response to these phenomena.

The second part, *Interrogating Memories*, opens with Ana Forcinito's essay about the autobiographical fiction of two female writers, Alicia Kozameh and Nora Stejilevich, who were abducted during the military regime. The novels, *Steps under Water* (1987) and *A single, Numberless Death* (1997) not only deal with memories of

the repression, but also with the absences and silences of memory. The originality of this essay lies in the problematic status of the survivors of concentration camps and their complex reinsertion in public life after their experience of being denied the rights that accompanied citizenship, that is to say, freedom of speech and respect for human life. Gustavo Remedi's essay focuses on contemporary theater practices in La Teja, a working-class neighborhood of Montevideo. Remedi describes the consciousness raising efforts of the group, Los Tejanos (belonging to La Teja) that examine Uruguayan political history as experienced by the residents of this neighborhood. The performances also attempt to link current sociopolitical phenomena, such as the migration of Uruguayans and the impact of neo-liberalism, to policies that can be traced back to the years of the military repression. The next two essays are dedicated to Spanish cultural production. Antonio Méndez Rubio explores the deployment of musicals in two recent Spanish films, *El Calentito* by Chus Gutiérrez and *Los dos lados de la cama* by Emilio Martínez Lázaro. Méndez Rubio holds that the inclusion of dancing in these films implies both the failure to provide a linear narrative and a crisis of male characters as their strong female counterparts contribute to the progression of the narrative. The second part of his essay where he focuses on the history of popular music seems to be an unwelcome distraction to his analysis of dance in the two films selected. This section concludes with Germán Labrador Méndez' essay about popular cinematographic traditions since the 1970s. Labrador Méndez' examines a very complete list of Spanish films but his article lacks a clear thesis. More surprisingly, it does not make reference to work about the same period carried out by British scholars such as Jo Labanyi, Barry Jordan and Santiago Fouz-Hernández, to list a few.

In part three, *Looking In/Looking Out: Negotiating Identities*, the first two essays examine Spanish cultural production. Estrella de Diego begins by examining the Azúcar Moreno's videoclip *Bandido* that was chosen to represent Spain in the Eurofilm festival in 1990. De Diego looks at the exotic stereotypes that are presented in that clip and contrasts them with the *zeitgeist* of a decade in which Spain ardently strove to be perceived as modern. Her contribution also analyzes the conflictive visual representations of Spain during the commemorative official events of 1992. Carsten Humbalæk presents an analysis of the problematic nature of crafting a cohesive national discourse, particularly after a polarizing political regime, such as Franco's government. Humbalæk chronicles the events leading to the writing of the Spanish constitution and explains the ways in which this political experience was narrated in the local press. For his part, David William Foster provides an overview of some of the groups that were particularly target as victims of the Argentine repression: Jews, homosexuals and women. Within this context, Foster surveys three Argentine intellectuals who were concerned with the restoration of a public space to members of the gay community in Argentina. By analyzing the contributions of José Luis Sebrelí, Néstor Perlongher and Viviana Gorbatto, Foster sheds light on how the restoration of freedom sexual identity and preference constituted a fundamental step in Argentina's re-democratization period. Finally, Heinrich Sassenfeld considers the role played by international political parties and NGOs in encouraging the political transition in the Southern Cone. He summarizes the opposing contentions that maintain that the return to democracy was due to either domestic factors or international pressure as a

way to situate his argument in a middle ground. Sassenfeld proposes that for international actors to have an effective impact during transitional periods, local values, cultures should be carefully taken into account.

The collection closes with a reflection by David William Foster in which the common experience of fascism and neofascism between Spain and the countries of Latin America's Southern Cone is highlighted. There is a factual mistake in note two, regarding the leaders and dates of Revolución Argentina, and the Proceso de Reorganización Nacional. However, this edition, which is comparative in scope and ambitious in its international approach, constitutes a valuable resource given the transatlantic examination of the cultural legacy of dictatorial regimes.

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Mattalia, Sonia. *La ley y el crimen. Usos del relato policial en la narrativa argentina (1880–2000)*. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2008. 237 pp.

Sonia Mattalia promises not a history of the detective genre in Argentina, but something rather more subtle: an examination of exclusively “literary” and “tangential” uses of detective elements in texts by canonical authors. Mattalia identifies “las representaciones de la ley y el crimen” (14) as the thread binding her corpus, and she announces her argument as follows: “Mi hipótesis es que el policial provee a la narrativa argentina una serie de figuras—la del criminal y del investigador, el enigma y su revelación, el crimen y la ley—con las cuales las ficciones literarias polemizan con la ficciones estatales” (13–14). The first problem evident here is that Mattalia’s hypothesis closely echoes assertions by various well known commentators of Argentine crime fiction such as José Pablo Feinmann (“Estado policial y novela negra argentina” 1991). The observation that a host of Argentine writers have employed the crime genre to contest the fictions of a sometimes corrupt and violent state is more a critical commonplace than an arguable thesis.

La ley y el crimen also stumbles from the outset by making frequent recourse to an unexamined and uncritical opposition between literature and detective writing, in formulations such as “una operación cultural que permite hacer uso de esta forma innovadora del policial por la literatura” (164). While the high-canonical status of the narrators Mattalia selects is generally not in question, the feasibility of a hygienic incision between “[el] campo literario y la literatura de masas” (16) seems dubious given not only the numerous “low” or “mass” (commercial) literary activities of Argentina’s “highest” cultivators of the detective genre, but also the innumerable challenges to neat high/low distinctions in contemporary criticism on popular genres. Mattalia’s capricious application of this literary/non-literary distinction allows her to include in her corpus a story such as Roberto Arlt’s “Un crimen casi perfecto,” initially published in *Mundo argentino* and then forgotten for decades, while excluding Borges’s “La muerte y la brújula,” which became the most celebrated of Latin American detective stories following its publication in *Sur* two years later.