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*Latin American Women and the Literature of Madness:
Narratives at the Crossroads of Gender, Politics and the
Mind* by Elvira Sánchez-Blake and Laura Kanost (review)

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a different yet important representation of violence: magnicide. Pérez-Anzaldo, in her chapter, establishes metatextual connections between Hollywood films, such as *The Count of Montecristo* (Dir. Kevin Reynolds, USA, 2002) and *Enemy of the State* (dir. Tony Scott, USA, 1998), and this Mexican film. Ramírez Suárez's film is masterful because it submerges the viewer into a world where the plot covers ideas like political assassination and familiar contemporary Mexican crisis, yet offer an intriguing and fascinating "fresh" take on them.

Issa López's *Casi divas* is the focus of chapter 5. Distinct from *Conejo en la luna*, *Casi divas* offers examples of violencia de género. In fact, it is the only film of the three studied in the book that discusses this most pressing contemporary problem in Mexico. Considered a comedy mingled with romance, *Casi divas* never presents offensive images of gender violence (rape, murder, etc.), such as those shown in Maryse Systach's films, including *Los pasos de Ana* (1989), *Perfume de violetas: Nadie the oye* (2000), and *La niña de piedra: Nadie te ve* (2005). Instead, López's film offers a strong call for female unity and mutual understanding of the major factors contributing to their societal oppression.

Pérez-Anzaldo dedicates the concluding chapter to *El infierno*, offering a pointed critique of the confluence of narcotics and politics. The film shows a *patrón* hiring Zeta gang members to keep his townspeople under control. Pérez-Anzaldo describes *El infierno* as a "sátira política con la que se denuncia la situación socio-política del México actual de cuyo universo simbólico emana una vorágine de sangre, horror y muerte donde no hay escape ni se avizora solución alguna de este conflicto armado patrocinado desde Estados Unidos" (216–17). What is perhaps most troubling about Estrada's film for the author—and myself—is the "normalcy" of the violence shown and the disturbing symbolism used, such as when the character José Reyes is murdered after becoming *Presidente Municipal* of his town and his blood drips across the flag-embazoned podium. This powerful image begs an interpretation of its meaning. Pérez-Anzaldo hints at answers in this chapter, making allusions to what caused Reyes's murder and what the image conveys.

In conclusion, Pérez-Anzaldo has crafted a well-researched study, comfortably citing Lacan, Foucault, etc. The critic's growing influence in academia is, perhaps, an effective way of positioning the importance of her work. After reading *El espectáculo de la violencia en el cine mexicano del siglo XXI*, I have no problem mentioning Guadalupe Pérez-Anzaldo in the same breath with other Mexican cinema experts, such as Emilio García Riera, Aurelio de los Reyes, Tomás Pérez Turrent, and Francisco Sánchez. Indeed, Pérez-Anzaldo demonstrates a keen insight for Mexican cinema and a consummate academic writing style that makes me look forward to her next foray into any cinematic territory.

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Sánchez-Blake, Elvira, and Laura Kanost. *Latin American Women and the Literature of Madness: Narratives at the Crossroads of Gender, Politics and the Mind*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2015. Pp. 176. ISBN 978-0-78647-485-1.

Latin American Women and the Literature of Madness: Narratives at the Crossroads of Gender, Politics and the Mind by Elvira Sánchez-Blake and Laura Kanost takes readers into an exploration of different representations of madness in the narrative of contemporary Latin American women authors. These narratives are represented within contexts of sociopolitical strife and gender inequality within Latin American realities, revealing a "poetics of madness" or literary techniques that defy language, make sociopolitical crises tangible and register cultural perceptions of mental illness.

This book is original in establishing a dialogue between theories on madness, such as Foucault's, from the Anglo-European tradition, and Latin American perspectives on the region's own reality. Furthermore, the book's introduction and conclusion present a practical comprehensive

summation of this theoretical trajectory and study of canonical Western literary works and their relation to the Latin American realities represented by prominent authors, both male and female. Thus, this book is valuable for studies of Latin-American women literature in a global context as well.

The introduction presents an essential bibliographical background on the recurrent trope of madness in master narratives of twentieth-century Latin America. The six analytical chapters explore postmodern narratives by women authors of the last decades of the twentieth century who raise critical awareness about sociopolitical issues affecting their countries: Eltit, Errázuriz, Luft, Peri Rossi, Restrepo, Rivera Garza, and Vilar.

Specifically, Sánchez-Blake and Kanost analyze how insanity as a trope is used to denounce women marginalization, individually due to unequal cultural and sociopolitical stressors, or collectively as part of the protagonists' activism in social and political movements. This analytical approach cleverly focuses on juxtaposing multiple discourses that clash to destabilize marginalizing clichés and open up a new space for dialogue about the intersections of experience, culture, and politics in this blooming narratives, all including historical events affecting Latin American countries in the late twentieth century and turn of the millennium. Luft's depressed protagonist, for example, embodies contemporary Brazilian women whose mental health is stressed by many societal expectations. Peri Rossi represents madness through characters traveling on a ship of fools to criticize exclusion and marginalization by military regimes in South America. Eltit and Errázuriz portray the utter marginalization of psychiatric hospital female residents to allude to Chile's military dictatorship oppression. Restrepo's delirious protagonist depicts a Colombia under siege by violence, political corruption and social decay. Rivera Garza portrayal of madness reflects Mexico's gender, class and national struggles. Lastly, Vilar's family construct of mental illness is intricately linked to Puerto Rico's neocolonial status. Clearly, this book addresses at its core the relationship between madness (marginalization) and intellectual discourse (power) to show power relations, gender exclusions and social marginality as cultural constructs and reflections of politics over the body and the self.

This focus makes this book a useful resource in academic studies. Its chronological order by novel publication dates gives a sense of historical continuity that helps understand Latin America's present and, most importantly, the position and writing of Latin American women at the turn of the millennium. Each chapter presents background information about the novel, the author, and the chapter's analytical focus, before diving into the in-depth analysis. This structure is a great resource for multimodal studies of one or all novels analyzed, based on the explicatory abstract, thesis, author biography, use of "madness," literary techniques, stylistics, theoretical concepts, and Sánchez-Blake and Kanost's or the reader's own analytical approach. Each chapter's referential diversity, including personal interviews, theoretical, bibliographical, and many others, not only proves *Latin American Women and the Literature of Madness* to be an essential academic resource, but it also opens it to a wide readership including those from fields such as medicine, psychology, literature, journalism, gender studies, politics, linguistics, social studies, feminism, cultural, and global studies.

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Sperber, Richard. *The Discourse of Flânerie in Antonio Muñoz Molina's Texts*. Maryland: Bucknell UP, 2015. Pp. 274. ISBN 978-1-61148-699-5.

Richard Sperber, in *The Discourse of Flânerie in Antonio Muñoz Molina's Texts*, analyzes Antonio Muñoz Molina's texts written between 1987 and 2009. In the five thematically organized chapters that are divided into sections, Sperber provides the readers with a thorough introduction to *flânerie* and underscores the ways in which Muñoz Molina's literature diverges from its Parisian roots. *Flâneur* comes from the French noun "flâneur" which means loafer, loungeur or stroller.