

fuera la mejor manera de defender la gran aportación española a la cultura europea. Para que esto se lleve a cabo, sólo que en otro contexto y con otros objetivos, habrá que esperar a la llegada del romanticismo.

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GUILLERMINA DE FERRARI. *Community and Culture in Post-Soviet Cuba*. New York/ London: Routledge, 2014. xv + 218 pp.

Guillermina De Ferrari's book is a welcome addition to an already substantial body of works studying Cuban literature and arts from the 1990s onward. Cuba during this period has often been read as an exception within Latin America and the Caribbean, remaining a country with a "frozen revolution" in Duanel Díaz's expression, socialist despite the dismantling of the Soviet Union in 1991. The end of Soviet subsidies to Cuba led to the declaration of the so-called Special Period in Times of Peace by Fidel Castro, which came to encapsulate a state of economic, political, and in De Ferrari's reading, "ethical" crisis that has not been resolved yet. Still, Cuba opened up its tourist market and literary, artistic and musical production allowing writers and artists to publish and travel internationally, with some restrictions, provoking an explosion of international attention and cultural exports and imports. A number of critics such as José Quiroga, Esther Whitfield, Rafael Rojas, Ariana Hernández-Reguant, James Buckwalter-Arias, Odette Casamayor and Duanel Díaz have analyzed the fascinating literary and artistic output of this period, focusing on the broader cultural context of the Cuban literary and artistic boom of the 1990s, the question of international and national markets, memory, the mechanisms of revolutionary or counter-revolutionary literary canon formation, and the neo-Kantian ideology of an autonomous aesthetic that became prominent in the 1980s and 1990s. De Ferrari turns to another topic, the "socialist social contract," as she calls it, that is, the conventions of fraternal sociality and friendship implicit in revolutionary rhetoric from the 1960s on, that are cited and questioned in many of the fictions of the 1990s and 2000s.

De Ferrari's readings of individual Cuban novels, short stories and artworks go beyond genre conventions such as the detective novel, the "special period" novel or conceptual art, offering us a carefully selected body of texts and artifacts from artists and writers based in Cuba in the 1990s. She focuses on plot analysis and close reading to argue that individual groups of novels relate to the friendship plot in fundamentally

two ways: either featuring modern ethical subjects who debate bonds of friendship and solidarity under dire political and economic circumstances or describing postmodern ethical subjectivities that disavow the claims of the revolution. Out of De Ferrari's six chapters, the first four follow closely along these lines of argument. Chapter two explains the friendship plot through analyses of novels by Jesús Díaz, Leonardo Padura and Abel Prieto, where masculine friendship and triangular desire plays a prominent role. Chapter three focuses on perversion and homosexuality as tropes of the disenchantment with the revolutionary pact of solidarity, appearing in the fictions of Abilio Estévez, Antonio José Ponte, and Ena Lucía Portela. Chapter four in turn analyzes what De Ferrari calls a "poetics of evil" in the works of Portela, Wendy Guerra, Pedro Juan Gutiérrez and Guillermo Rosales, with plots evoking situations in which human solidarity gives way to evil, in sometimes liberating, sometimes painful ways. In her last two chapters, De Ferrari argues that an aesthetics of "hyperrealism" is at work in some novels and in a number of artists; it is an expression of a new social contract resulting from Cuba's insertion into the global market, one in which the attempt to build an immediate relation between artists and their audiences has replaced the concern for political representation. Chapter five analyzes the fictions of Gutiérrez and Estévez, as well as Fernando Pérez's film *Suite Habana*, and selected artworks by Abigail González, René Peña, and José Manuel Fors arguing that photography as a trope and a trend advances a postmodern ethics of showing and consuming. Chapter six finally highlights the art curator himself as a prominent theme and agent in exhibits and picture books about Cuba and particularly Havana.

While inspired by a cultural studies approach to both literature and the visual arts as texts, De Ferrari applies a "comparative" method (134), insisting on the difference in medium between the visual arts and literature. She uses Charles Sander Peirce's semiotic theory to analyze both literary fictions and photography for the effect of "Firstness" or of a "raw experience" on the reader. This argument, while compelling in her analysis of Cuban photography, is less clear in her analysis of film and literary fiction, in which, as De Ferrari herself shows, photography might be present as an idea in the emphasis on materiality but is offset by plots that put into perspective the individual object or sensation. Interestingly, De Ferrari coincides here with what Fredric Jameson discusses in his recent book *The Antinomies of Realism*, where narrative impulse and the affective "real" are in a dialectical relationship. De Ferrari's own transition in her analytical vocabulary from "dirty realism" – a term frequently applied to Gutiérrez's fiction and commented in a previous essay of hers – to

“hyperrealism” in this book is telling of the potential of her analysis in regard to broader studies of realism and the literature of globalization.

All in all, De Ferrari makes us appreciate newly the literary and art works produced in Cuba since the 1990s, offering us an informed perspective on both the logic of Cuban revolutionary aesthetics and its confluence with postmodern aesthetic and ethics. By moving the discussion from cultural history to literary and art criticism, she invites her readers to consider the works of these writers and artists as aesthetic and ethical interventions in Cuba’s current and past intellectual conversation.

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MARVIN D’LUGO and KATHLEEN M. VERNON, eds. *A Companion to Pedro Almodóvar*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. xvi + 568 pp.

Pocos artistas españoles contemporáneos han atraído un grado de atención crítica comparable al que ha sabido provocar Pedro Almodóvar. Hoy por hoy, el aluvión de libros dedicados a la obra y la figura del director manchego incluye no menos de quince monografías y ediciones críticas, por no hablar de los libros de entrevistas, artículos de revistas y capítulos en libros no dedicados exclusivamente a este director, que se cuentan por centenares y cuyo ritmo de publicación no parece decrecer. Entre las monografías más destacadas hay que mencionar las de Alejandro Yarza, Paul Julian Smith, Mark Allinson, Gwynne Edwards, Marvin D’Lugo, Jean-Claude Seguin, Thomas Sotinel y José Quiroga, a las que se añaden los volúmenes de ensayos editados por Kathleen Vernon y Barbara Morris; Hermann Kappelhoff y Daniel Illger; Brad Epps y Despina Kakoudaki; A. W. Eaton; María Matz y Carole Salmon.

*A Companion to Pedro Almodóvar*, editado por Marvin D’Lugo y Kathleen M. Vernon, es el eslabón más reciente en la cadena de producción crítica sobre este director. Tanto D’Lugo como Vernon tienen tras de sí una notable trayectoria como estudiosos de Almodóvar. El volumen *Post-Franco, Postmodern: The Films of Pedro Almodóvar*, editado por Vernon en colaboración con Barbara Morris hace casi veinte años, abrió las puertas a una diversidad de aproximaciones críticas y teóricas sobre la obra de Almodóvar y sigue siendo un referente fundamental de los estudios almodovarianos en los Estados Unidos. Por su parte, la monografía *Pedro Almodóvar* de D’Lugo, publicada en 2006, es uno de los textos que más han influido sobre la producción crítica estadounidense sobre este director en los últimos años. En gran medida, se puede afirmar que *A Companion to*