

folklórica, para el paso de la oralidad primaria a la secundaria y para la creación de la nueva cultura popular urbana en el Perú.

Para resumir, es un volumen que ofrece una valiosa contribución al campo de la crítica literaria y cultural latinoamericana. Es un placer de leer. Está claramente pensado para ser enseñado, sea en su integridad o por capítulos individuales, a nivel graduado o a nivel avanzado de licenciatura, ofreciendo al lector la sofisticación del argumento bien mediado por la accesibilidad de la exposición. Ejemplificando esta naturaleza didáctica del texto, en la Introducción se definen los conceptos claves que explora la monografía, entre ellos “cultura de masas”, “espacio cultural”, “práctica intelectual”, “ciclo popular de la cultura de imprenta” e “Indigenismo”, lo que hará mucho más fácil la lectura del libro por parte de un estudiante y su posterior discusión en clase. Finalmente, cabe comentar que el libro brinda una extensa bibliografía y una robusta sección de notas al final del texto que ofrecen mayor profundidad histórica al argumento o explican en más detalle algunos aspectos del texto. Así, mientras el flujo de lectura de los capítulos queda ininterrumpido, un investigador puede recurrir a mayor información en dichas notas.

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ELENA LAHR-VIVAZ. *Mexican Melodrama: Film and Nation from the Golden Age to the New Wave*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016. 219 pp.

Elena Lahr-Vivaz's *Mexican Melodrama* offers an interesting consideration of Mexican film spanning from the heyday of Golden Age cinema between the 1930s and 1950s, up until 2005 with Carlos Reygadas's *Batalla en el cielo*. Across that period Lahr-Vivaz seeks to demonstrate how the idealized concept of “nosotros” common to Golden Age film – a romanticized vision of national kinship, born of Revolutionary Mexico and capable of bridging social divides – is re-envisioned and later disarticulated in recent Mexican cinema, presenting instead a fragmentary society in which the failed illusions of egalitarian nationhood are laid bare. Melodrama is the aesthetic lens through which Lahr-Vivaz conducts her study, presenting, on the one hand, how emotional rapport between film and audience was historically invoked to further projects of national unity; and, on the other, how that same sentimentality may be critiqued as providing a false sense of emotional comfort when, in fact, contemporary realities cannot be reconciled through the cleansing power of melodramatic tears.

The first chapter of the text provides a historical overview and contextualization of the study, in addition to a description of the key theoretical terms that are employed throughout the text. Chapter two, titled "Taming *Nosotros*" explores the use of the Mexican Revolution as a moment of foundational myth that Golden Age cinema attempts to solidify, but which is undone in films like *Como agua para chocolate* and *Entre Pancho Villa y una mujer desnuda*. The following chapter, "The Ties That Bind," offers a reading focused on melodrama and modernity as people from the countryside move to the city, confronting a series of problems in urban cohabitation. Chapter four, "*Nosotros* No More," considers fragmentation as central to melodrama across the years, and posits that films like *Nosotros los pobres* and *Amores perros*, though ostensibly quite different, reflect on a similar issue of social disjunction while presenting divergent visions of harmony and strife. "Seeing Stars" is the chapter that follows, presenting Golden Age melodrama as an attempted confluence of screen and the "real" where stars are presented as everyday people, so offering a sense of communal wellbeing. Conversely, contemporary cinema here is analyzed as an attempt to shatter that illusion through the use of actual everyday people in starring roles, as is the case in Carlos Reygadas's *Japón*. Finally, "Re-sounding *Melos*" examines the use of sound first as projection, and then as a rejection of nationhood in the films *¿Qué te ha dado esa mujer?!*, and later in *Sólo con tu pareja*, and *Y tu mamá también*.

The strongest chapter of the book is "The Ties That Bind," which analyzes the films *La mujer del puerto*, *La tarea prohibida*, *Modelo antiguo*, and *Ángel de fuego*. Here, Lahr-Vivaz reads Arcady Boytler's *La mujer del puerto* focusing on the representation of incest that occurs when a prostitute has sex with her brother: the two are unable to recognize one another after the years they have spent separated after family tragedy. Lahr-Vivaz observes, "[s]uggesting that even kinfolk are potentially unrecognizable amid the hustle and bustle of the modern city, Boytler underscores the need to protect the empathetically imagined community of *nosotros* from the dangers of those who transgress its moral confines" (68-69). Confronting this moral delineation of community in a Golden Age classic, Lahr-Vivaz views Jaime Humberto Hermosillo's *La tarea prohibida* as a meta-melodrama that, even as it auto-reflexively examines the tools of melodramatic narration, fulfills melodramatic viewing expectation. Moreover, because Hermosillo's film does not sanction incest between mother and son, it presents a transgressive story that exceeds the social censure of Golden Age film. Framing her reading within Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's anti-Oedipal analysis, Lahr-Vivaz comments, "[t]he ties of melodrama might bind us – *nosotros* – too tightly, but, should incest be released from the confines to which the directors of Golden Age

melodramas sought to contain it, these same ties might be countered by a 'manifestation of desire' that causes society's 'fundamental strictures [to] explode'" (76). Lahr-Vivaz's reading of this incestuous relationship in the film vividly problematizes the rigid structures of melodrama in imagining social order, and engages with the possibility to imagine different, if not dangerous modes of future social relations.

In contrast to the strength of this chapter, throughout Lahr-Vivaz's study the reader would have appreciated a more developed definition of exactly what the author understands as melodrama in relation to national allegory. It is sometimes unclear if they are entirely different entities, or if melodrama is the aesthetic through which allegory is articulated, seamlessly merging mode and structure. In the cases of the new wave films that Lahr-Vivaz analyzes, such melodramatic allegories run the risk of presenting melodrama as pure negativity; in those sections of the book, it is unclear what melodrama offers as a mode of imagining community, and instead seems only to recognize a contemporary malaise and state of disarray without proposing any way out of that impasse. Nevertheless, Lahr-Vivaz's study offers a stimulating panoramic approach to understanding Mexican film of the 20th and 21st centuries. Beyond its value as a work of film criticism, *Mexican Melodrama* is a useful tool to explore the rich history of Mexican cinema.

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ROBIN LEFERE Y NADIE LIE, EDS. *Nuevas perspectivas sobre la transnacionalidad del cine hispánico*. Leiden: Brill/Boston/ Rodopi, 2016. 228 pp.

Enredado en un complejo conjunto de prácticas (culturales, económicas, políticas y tecnológicas, entre otras), a mediados de los años noventa no solo hubo una explosión en la producción cinematográfica, sino también un surgimiento exponencial de investigación sobre el cine del mundo hispánico, cuyo significado amplio y pragmático en este volumen editado alude a la (re)configuración reciente del mercado *Spanish-speaking*. Sucesos paralelos en un mundo cada vez más (desigualmente) globalizado, el aumento de la producción e investigación cinematográficas suscitaron nuevas maneras de conceptualizar el cine, incluyendo el llamado giro transnacional. *Nuevas perspectivas sobre la transnacionalidad del cine hispánico* recoge ensayos que estudian tanto el fenómeno de cine