

also shows how it offers significant insights and critiques of those theories. Her work on materialism is especially noteworthy and the book is an essential addition to literary and cultural theory generally even as it serves as one of the most substantial inputs into science fiction criticism in Latin America.

Page has made several valuable contributions to Argentine cultural criticism over the years, and with *Science Fiction in Argentina* she continues in an ongoing project of showing the ways in which that Argentine film and literature serve as essential reading in ongoing theoretical debates and developments. The book is indispensable for scholars in a variety of fields and remarkable proof of the importance of including science fiction in theoretical and critical considerations.

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JAIME RODRÍGUEZ MATOS. *Writing of the Formless: José Lezama Lima and the End of Time*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017. 232 pp.

Jaime Rodríguez Matos's fascinating book is the most accomplished example of a line of inquiry into the work of José Lezama Lima that has been informed by deconstruction. However, the ambition and scope of this study is far broader than that of his predecessors. To start, it is not a monograph on Lezama. Rather, it is an anti-foundationalist reflection on politics and its possibility, and Lezama's text serves as the site to pursue this reflection.

From the moment politics posits itself as "the highest value" (99), it demands the assumption of some type of foundation that grounds and legitimates political power. Rodríguez Matos advances a thorough critique of this necessity, and makes a case for thinking the "non-necessary status of the political" (99). This entails confronting the "formless" (*informe*) void that always already exceeds and undoes any attempt at establishing a necessary ground for politics, even when such foundation is understood as contingent and provisional. The political act covers, represses and forgets this void. Hence the need, as Rodríguez Matos argues, to think and engage with the "politicity" (15) of the abyssal, formless void that in-forms politics. This undertaking is not political – it is an "infrapolitical" (38) act, and to think about it is the task of "infrapolitical deconstruction" (111). This constitutes the guiding thread of the whole book.

The introduction and Part I present a theoretical exposition of the genealogy of the metaphysics of political theology, and a formulation of the problem of its deconstruction. This analysis has two conceptual axes: the

formless and time. The starting point of the reflection on the formless concerns the impasse on how to represent the modern subject of politics. Once the embodiment of sovereignty disappears upon the death of the king, what “form” – if any – does the new sovereign (e.g., “the people”) take? The difficulty lies in the mismatch between the necessary imposition of a symbolic order that legitimates political power and the residual and uncontrollable excess inherent in the constitutive heterogeneity of the people. The category of the formless (coming from Bataille) opens a path to approach this question. Yet this is also a matter of time. Rodríguez Matos strategically begins to approach the question of the relationship between time and politics by using three distinct disciplinary perspectives – Cuba (teleological time), Latin America (fragmented time[s]), and philosophy (notably Hegel, via Derrida and Malabou). Then follows a discussion on how time is related to the problem of foundationalism by looking at the politics of romanticism, the revolution (notably *guevarismo*) and nihilism. The aim is to call attention to the persistence of the “Christian matrix” (37) as a structuring principle of the time(s) in/of politics, and to show that what lies at the core of “modern politics” is “nothing but [a] mastering of time, and times” (51). Hence the need to think what “makes” time and history possible in the first place: a “formless time, the absence of time as a formalized structure of any sort” (48), which is in turn the “time of a politicity that will only show itself as the radical reframing of what counts as politics” (52).

Why Lezama Lima? Rodríguez Matos answer is that Lezama’s writing hints at the formless, and at a position that he categorizes as “infrapolitical.” Some traits of Lezama’s work – for example, a style that verges on the illegible, the non-systematicity of the *sistema poético* – hint at the possibility of discerning the trace of the formless, but Rodríguez Matos focuses on something that has eluded critics: Lezama’s singular positioning with respect to politics and religion. The formless, as Rodríguez Matos argues, paradoxically emerges by way of Christianity and the Revolution (80). Lezama’s point of departure is decidedly theological: nothing can “wield any authority” upon the death of Christ (97); and yet, Lezama refuses to “foreclose” this “abyss” (128) and acknowledges that no form of politics, religion, or history can ever fill this void. Such recognition amounts to a “politicity” that withdraws from politics and a “religiosity” that withdraws from religion; it is an engagement with the formless excess that makes something like “politics” possible in the first place. Lezama’s writing – as a “writing of the formless,” – is a “record” of this engagement (98).

However, this “record” is “barely audible, barely readable” (122). This poses an obvious methodological challenge, for it is not a matter of

explaining Lezama's text or ideas. Part Two of the book is an attempt to uncover those murmurs and scribbles in a selection of Lezama's writings. In my view this project succeeds for at least two reasons. First, after Part One the reader should be aware of why Christianity and politics are so central and the readings in Part Two follow these considerations very clearly. Second, borrowing key examples from Lezama's early essays, late poetry, *Paradiso* and *Oppiano Licario*, Rodríguez Matos chooses to examine very diverse registers of Lezama's texts: philosophical speculations, tropes, individual objects, plot sequences from his novels, characters, marks on the page, style, etc. This shows how the "writing of the formless" emerges at various levels and in different modalities. I cannot comment on these readings in detail, but they follow a general principle: to show that Lezama's very own religiosity and understanding of poetry amount to a withdrawal from the grand narratives of legitimation of religion, humanism, art and literature in modernity. However, as Rodríguez Matos argues, such withdrawal should not be understood as an "alternative" mode of politics; rather, it intimates an encounter with a "something" that cannot be grasped or subsumed under any form of politics. The way to understand this, as Rodríguez Matos proposes, is through a *radical* engagement with Lezama's Christianity – to look attentively at Lezama's own, "singular" (155), unique, and untranslatable (writing of) Christianity. Penetrating into this singularity reveals how Lezama's writing discloses the constitutive mismatch with respect to the totalizing aspirations of (any) politics. Reading into this fissure lets us glimpse at the non-masterable, formless excess lying before and beyond politics.

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SAMUEL STEINBERG. *Photopoetics at Tlatelolco: Afterimages of Mexico, 1968*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016. 253 pp.

It is at best a cliché to afford the year 1968 a unique place in any examination of the global horizon of twentieth-century politics and culture. Scholarship about Mexico has long considered this year an especially central one, and not without reason. On the fall of that year, the single-party Mexican state – ruled by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or PRI – sponsored the first Olympics celebrated anywhere in the developing world, in the midst of a profound crisis of its legitimacy that had caused significant unrest at least through its preceding summer.

Perhaps the single most infamous event associated with this context is the state-sponsored shooting of protesting students that took place in a