

the proliferation of sex and gender plurality after the dictatorship by first meticulously studying stories by Pedro Lemebel and Pablo Simonetti, before examining diasporic cultural production. *Queering the Chilean Way* closes with a chapter on feminisms, femininities, and the female body in the Bachelet Era, thus nuancing the manuscript's general focus on masculinities.

While Fischer's overarching theorizations and analysis are excellent, the lack of engagement with Latin American gender and sexuality studies is surprising. While there is some attempt to discuss queer theory in the introduction (and later in a juxtaposition of Lee Edelman and José Esteban Muñoz), Fischer fails to productively engage with the thought of such scholars as Ben Sifuentes Jáuregui, David William Foster, and Héctor Domínguez-Ruvalcaba who have all meditated on the possibilities of a Latin American queer studies and the movement of queer theory from North to South. This critical void is especially important given Fischer's use of "queering" so explicitly in the title of the book and throughout its chapters. Equally puzzling is the absence of Lemebel's *Tengo miedo torero* from the corpus of study, as the text exemplifies Fischer's overall thesis vis-à-vis exceptionalism and heteronormativity. More importantly, the protagonical *loca* of the novel would add depth and texture to the assertion that the figure is a "useful way of rethinking a long, productive debate in Anglophone theory about the place of queer subjects in the transmission of political ideology and teleology" (187). I wonder why not instead discuss the possibilities of the *loca* along a Latin American genealogy? The style and edition of the monograph is excellent, but the Press should be more careful with its quality control as the copy under review had inexplicable jumps – page 64 towards the end of Chapter Two is followed by a considerable section of Chapter Four (page 139 onwards). These issues aside, Fischer's text is a valuable and much needed contribution to the field of sexuality, gender, and queerness in contemporary Chilean studies.

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RYAN D. GILES. *Inscribed Power*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017.
 307 pp.

Inscribed Power is a thoroughly researched and fascinating tome that reaches deep into medieval Spain to survey the presence and use of amulets in five adeptly planned chapters. Ryan D. Giles skillfully analyzes a number of well-known works in terms of their amuletic content, including

the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* and *Libro de buen amor*, as well as various lesser-known works.

In the introduction, Giles explains that, while some amulets may have appeared Christian in nature, they were not necessarily condoned by religious authorities, but were widely employed regardless of approval. Various amulets could also be easily mistaken for those of other religious traditions, which would have put the bearer at grave risk at certain times in Spain's history.

The first chapter, "Amuletic Manuscripts," focuses on instances of amuletic practices in writings that include the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* and *Razón de amor*. Giles expounds on the power of words and clarifies that medieval readers understood that certain words could be spoken or written to call for divine or demonic intervention. It was thought that the act of naming something encompassed actual power over the object, or demon in some instances, and thus amulets inscribed with words held much allure. Although many inscriptions appear Christian in nature, their use could be mistaken as a non-Christian custom because of their resemblance to other traditions, such as the wearing of miniature Korans as amulets, or the varying pagan traditions that predominated throughout Europe before the arrival of Christianity. While such practices are mentioned, Giles largely remains within the realm of Christian history and texts.

The second chapter explores the invocation of the sacred, and secret, name of God as IHVH or YHWH principally in the *Libro de Alexandre* and the *Libro de buen amor*. It references the fascinating legend of how Jesus had learned and subsequently employed this most sacred name of God to heal the sick and return life to the dead. YHWH also appears in the *Libro de Alexandre* when the protagonist avails himself of textual amulets to access divine assistance in battle, while the Archpriest relies on Paul's epistles to evoke a shield of faith in the *LBA*. Giles astutely explores the importance of numbers, such as the divine three of the trinity, both in textual amulets as well as in the parodies in the *LBA*.

The *Poema de Fernán González*, *Poema de mio Cid*, and the *Libro de Apolonio* are the core focus in the third chapter with special reference to a verse found on a red clay object that resembles a prayer in the *PFG*. Giles painstakingly examines the powerful effect that the inscription of sacred language was believed to have, which included deterring evil spirits, particularly when vocalized. He also notes that again the *LBA* parodies such practices.

Chapter four primarily concentrates on *Celestina* and *Lozana Andaluza*, with a meticulous discussion of the healing power believed to accompany the amuletic use of depictions of the wound Christ received on

the cross. Other types of non-verbal amulets such as Melibea's cord, pentagrams, and the mark on the forehead of Lozana Andaluza are examined as well.

In chapter five, Giles analyzes outlaw prayers through a discussion of *Lazarillo de Tormes* and *el Buscón*. Fifteen, as a multiple of the three of the trinity and the five of the number of Christ's wounds, appears frequently in textual amulets because these numbers were thought to wield apotropaic power. The author includes several paintings by Bosch that depict interpretations of one of the prayers, Just Judge, that was popular in amuletic applications. The presence of authoritative voices is suggested in the observation that even Christian prayer books were printed with a warning to not utilize them as if they were amulets. After the postscript, which reviews amuletic use as it spread to the Americas through the ages to establish a modern internet presence, Giles includes a detailed set of endnotes that further enhances the depth of his study followed by an exhaustive list of works cited.

The book, as a whole, illuminates the importance of amulets by identifying the various types, as well as the customs that surrounded them. Although Christianity had evangelized in Europe for centuries, older, pagan rituals still seeped in and helped shape Christian practices and prayers, especially with regard to amulets and talismans. While *Inscribed Power* focuses mainly on Christian traditions, prayers, and texts, it also includes a brief discussion of Jewish and Muslim influence on the Peninsula, and the book comprehensively encompasses healing, protection, love, and the invocation or expulsion of demons through amuletic manuscripts and inscribed objects. Religious authorities continued to attempt to control the limits of Christian prayer in order to eradicate unorthodox practices, such as those that accompanied the flood of amuletic *nóminas* that defied Church mandates after the printing press was invented.

Ryan D. Giles' study is impressive and his vigorous treatment of amulets, especially with regard to medieval and Renaissance Spanish literature, is a worthwhile work of scholarship.

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